

PERCEPTION



I will lift up mine eyes unto the
hills from whence cometh my help.
Psalm 121:1

SPRING 2009

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Cover Picture: The Lake District - The head of Great Langdale Valley looking towards Bow Fell.

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The Annual Subscription (which includes postage) is UK £8, USA \$14, Australia A\$20, The Netherlands €12.

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PERCEPTION

Volume 1

SPRING 2009

Number 1

EDITORIAL

‘Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ [Matt.16, 16]

When the Lord Jesus warned the disciples to ‘Beware of the heaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees,’ they thought He was referring to the fact that they had not brought any bread with them. Then Matthew says, ‘Which when Jesus *perceived*, he said unto them...How is it that ye do not *understand* that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the heaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees?’ Shortly afterwards, Jesus asked the disciples, ‘Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?’ They replied that some thought He was John the Baptist, others Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets. Then He asked them, ‘But whom say ye that I am?’ Peter’s immediate response was, ‘Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ Jesus told him, ‘Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not *revealed* it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.’ [Matt.16, 5-17] In his Gospel, John relates how many of Jesus’ disciples ‘went back and walked no more with him,’ and how Jesus asked His disciples, ‘Will ye also go away?’ Peter’s response was, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.’ [Joh.6, 66-69]

These conversations demonstrate the *perception* of Jesus regarding the lack of *perception* of His disciples. Very blessedly, they go on to show the *perception* of Peter regarding the deity and humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ and its source in divine revelation. All *perception and understanding* of the truth, ‘as the truth is in Jesus’ [Eph.4, 21 *often misquoted*], has its source in the work of the Holy Spirit in the new birth. Jesus told Nicodemus, ‘Except a man be born again [margin *from above*], he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ [Joh.3, 3] Nicodemus asked, ‘How can a man be born when he is old?’ Jesus told him, ‘Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth

[pleases], and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.' [Joh.3, 7-8] The response of Nicodemus was, 'How can these things be?' The years passed by and there came a day when Nicodemus together with Joseph of Arimathea carried the body of Jesus to the grave. Love brought them to abandon their secret discipleship; divine *perception* had come to their souls, the wind of the Spirit had blown in their hearts, faith had been given to them, they knew that Jesus was the Son of God, and like the Eunuch, they believed 'with all their heart.' What a blessed *perception* had been given to them. The word of Christ had come to pass, but it was impossible to tell precisely when that wind had blown in their souls. Who has a hope that they have been given the same *perception* as Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and the Eunuch?

This subject of *perception* can be traced throughout the Scriptures. When the children of Israel were approaching the Promised Land, Moses spoke to them of all the way the Lord had led them and His miracles in Egypt, and said, 'Yet the Lord hath not given you an heart *to perceive*, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.' [Deut.29, 4]. They had murmured and wished to return to Egypt, they had been rebellious and angered Moses, the Lord had provided the Manna, but they were not satisfied. Little did they *perceive*, value or understand the 'good hand of their God upon them.' Much later in their history, the prophet Isaiah was sent to them with the same solemn message, 'Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but *perceive* not.' [Isa.6, 9] When Paul finally reached Rome as a prisoner and was 'suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him' [Act.28, 16], he called the chief men of the Jews in Rome to come and see him. He explained his innocence of any crime, and how unjustly he had been treated at Jerusalem, and went on to preach Christ to them 'out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.' [Act.28, 23] 'Some believed the things which were spoken [by him], and some believed not.' [Act.28, 24] Paul's final word before they left him was "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias [Isaiah] the prophet unto our fathers, saying, 'Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see and not *perceive*.'" How many are there who are in this situation when listening to the preaching of God's word? When the Lord's work was

finally accomplished in the heart of Job, Job said, 'I have uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not...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, 3-6] Divine *perception* had been given to him and he could say before his God, 'I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself...' [Job 19, 25-27]. Here was the eye of faith, here was a hope, 'Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul' [Heb.6, 19]. Also another *perception* was given to Job when he answered the Lord with the words, 'Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth' [Job 40, 4]. Now he had a sight of the holiness and majesty of his God and a sight of his own worthlessness. Have we had such a perception of ourselves and such a revelation of Christ as our Saviour and our God? Doubting Thomas could say, 'My Lord and my God.'

Perception, in a spiritual sense, does not exist in the heart of the unconverted. They see but do not *perceive*. But Scripture gives many examples of divine *perception* in the hearts of the godly. When the Lord called Samuel three times we read that 'Samuel did not yet know the Lord.' He did not *perceive* that the Lord was calling him. But Eli *perceived* that 'the Lord had called the child.' Eli had himself been called by God and so had spiritual *perception* and knew what was happening. [1Sam.3, 7-8] When Elisha visited the home of the Shunammite she told her husband, 'I *perceive* that this is an holy man of God' [2 Kin.4.9] and so when later she had a son and he died, she went straight to the man of God for help. The woman who had the issue of blood for twelve years had such faith that she said, 'If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole' [Mat.9.21]. Luke, recording the same event, quotes Christ's words; 'Somebody hath touched me: for I *perceive* that virtue has gone out of me,' and went on to say to her, 'Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.' [Luk.8, 43-48] By faith, she *perceived* that Jesus was the Son of God and could heal her, and he *perceived* the faith that was in her heart and that it had brought healing virtue from Him to her body. When Jesus met the woman at the well of Sychar in Samaria, after he had told her of her evil life regarding her five husbands, her response

was, ‘Sir, I *perceive* that thou art a prophet.’ Later in their conversation, she said to him, ‘I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ.’ Jesus replied to this, ‘I that speak unto thee am he.’ She then went into Sychar and said to her friends, ‘Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?’ Many believed on Jesus because of her word, and others came to hear him for themselves and said, ‘Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.’ [John.4, 4-42] The gift of faith brought with it ‘eyes to see and ears to hear,’ such as the Apostle Paul received on the road to Damascus.

This study of the scriptural truth of *perception* gives some indication as to why the word *Perception* was chosen as the title for this new magazine. Its object is to help those in the age group 15-25 to deal with an increasingly godless society; a world that despises the Word of God, worships the creature more than the Creator, and worships at the shrine of Darwin's Theory of Evolution.

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CURRENT ISSUES

The Holy Bible: The New King James Version [USA; Thomas Nelson Inc. 1982]

By J. R. Broome

When this new translation of the Bible was published in the USA in 1982, the publishers [Thomas Nelson] stated that their aim was ‘to produce an updated English Version that follows the sentence structure of the 1611 Authorised Version as closely as possible...to transfer the Elizabethan word forms into twentieth century English.’ The Preface to the NKJV stated that the Old Testament would be a translation of the Hebrew Masoretic Text and the New Testament would be a translation of the Greek ‘Received Text’, the same text as used by the AV translators in 1611. This appeared to be a major improvement on many previous translations, such as the New International Version [USA 1978], which is not based on the ‘Received Text’, but is widely used in Evangelical circles.

But in reading the Preface to the NKJV written by its principal Editor, Dr A.L.Farstad, it becomes clear that he himself is not happy

with the 'Received Text' and favours a Majority text. He writes, 'Today, scholars agree that the New Testament textual criticism is in a state of flux. Very few scholars favour the 'Received Text' as such, and then often for its historical prestige as the text used by Luther, Calvin, Tyndale and the AV. For about a century most have followed a Critical text... which depends heavily upon the Alexandrian type of text. More recently, many have abandoned this Critical Text... for one that is more eclectic. Finally a small number of scholars prefer the Majority Text which is close to the 'Received Text' except in the Revelation.' [In fact, the Majority Text contains nearly 1,900 changes to the 'Received Text', including the omission of 1 John 5.7.]

It is no surprise therefore to find that in the marginal references of the NKJV New Testament, there are regular references to variant readings of the Critical Text and the Majority Text. By their very existence, these variant readings cast doubt on the 'Received Text' and by implication on the Authorised Version itself. Dr J.Price, the executive editor of the Old Testament section of the NKJV admitted in an e-mail in April 1996, 'I am not an advocate of the 'Received Text'. I happen to believe that God has preserved the autographic text in the whole body of evidence that he has preserved, not merely through the textual decisions of a committee of fallible men based on a handful of late manuscripts. The modern critical texts like Nestle-Aland and United Bible Societies provide a list of variant readings that have entered the manuscript traditions and they provide the evidence that supports the different variants.'

The implication of Dr Price is that the AV Greek New Testament depends 'on a handful of late Greek manuscripts.' This is far from the case. There are three families of New Testament manuscripts: The Byzantine [Traditional] group emanating from the Asia Minor/Greece area, where Paul founded a number of churches: the Western group centred on Rome, and the Alexandrian group centred at Alexandria in Egypt. The Byzantine group is by far the most numerous [about 5000 manuscripts] and have a very large measure of agreement among them. It is among this group of manuscripts that the Traditional text has survived, which was published in the 16th & 17th centuries and became known as the 'Textus Receptus' or the 'Received Text.'

All of the existing New Testament Greek manuscripts are copies. None of the original writings of the Apostles have survived. The

Byzantine group of manuscripts are mostly later copies. But one 4th century manuscript of the Alexandrian group has come to light since the publication of the 'Received Text' in the 16th & 17th centuries. This is the Codex Sinaiticus [discovered in a monastery in Sinai in 1859]. Another manuscript of the Alexandrian group, The Codex Vaticanus, has lain unused for centuries in the Vatican Library, being deliberately rejected at the time that the Received Text was published. These manuscripts differ radically from the 'Received Text.' There are numerous omissions, which include the last 12 verses of the Gospel of Mark and John 8.1-11. Between them there is no consistency, there being 3,000 differences alone between the Codex Vaticanus and the Codex Sinaiticus. The Western group of manuscripts include the Latin Vulgate Bible translated from the Greek by Jerome and translated into English in the late 16th century at Rheims in France.

But since 1881, when Westcott & Hort produced the first Revised Version of the Bible, the Alexandrian Greek manuscripts have been preferred to the Byzantine 'Received Text' because of their date, the view being that the oldest manuscripts are the most accurate. All translations of the Bible since 1881 have been mainly based on these early manuscripts. The NKJV is the exception, yet while using the 'Received Text' it contains in its marginal references variant readings from the early manuscripts. These readings, when closely examined, are seen to cast doubt on such fundamental doctrines as the union of Christ's deity and humanity, the Incarnation, the eternal generation of the person of the Son of God, the deity of Christ and the eternal punishment of the wicked in hell. Here is a case of the Scripture, 'Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour.' [Ecclesiastes 10.1.]

Another aspect of the NKJV is the abandonment of the use of 'Thou' in preference for the more modern 'You.' The fact is that 'Thou' was not in common use in 1611 at the time of the translation of the AV. As early as the end of the 13th century 'You' had taken its place. But the AV translators were classical scholars and accuracy was uppermost in their minds. The use of 'You' alone conceals the difference between the singular and plural in the second person pronouns of the classical languages. This is seen in Luke 22.31,32: 'Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat [i.e. all the disciples] but I have

prayed for thee [i.e. Peter] that thy faith fail not.' There are in fact 14,500 uses of 'Thee' and 'Thou' in 10,500 verses of the AV. 'Thou' is a Biblical usage based on the style of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures and has been used in the English speaking world as an instrument of reverence toward God, peculiarly in prayer and worship. In this age of familiarity and lack of respect, the use of 'You' in relation to the Most High God has about it the stigma of irreverence. To a spiritually discerning ear there is a vast difference between 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,' and 'You are the Christ...', and this is not just a preference for the older word.

The question must be asked, 'Has the Lord permitted His Church to have an inaccurate Bible over all these centuries until the recent discovery of the early Codices'? It would appear that these early manuscripts have survived because they have not been used. The reason that they have survived for so long unused could be that they were inaccurate copies because they had been tampered with to suit some heretical sect. It is clear that in Divine Providence, the Lord has in His own mysterious way preserved his Holy Scriptures through the vast majority of manuscripts [mostly of the Byzantine school], copied and recopied carefully over many centuries, yet bearing a solid consistency one with another. That there are considerable and important differences between the few early Alexandrian Codices and the great majority of the Byzantine school of manuscripts is not in question. The translators, in producing the New King James Version have translated from the 'Received Text,' while at the same time giving [in their marginal references] equal credence to a form of Greek Text which is wholly different from it. When the position of the editors of this NKJV translation is known, then it would appear that they have used the 'Received Text' as an instrument to pave the way for the substitution of the 1611 Authorised Version by the eventual introduction of their marginal variants into the main text.

This translation, with its marginal references being given scholarly credence alongside the 'Received Text', has the appearance of a most subtle attempt to discredit the 'Received Text' and therefore the Authorised Version, which has been made such a blessing for many centuries not only in our own country, but also throughout the English-speaking world. In many ways it is far more dangerous than the modern translations which have openly abandoned the 'Received Text'

in favour of the Alexandrian Codices. It is simplistic to put this version in the hands of young people on the grounds that it is more easily understood. Reading the marginal notes, doubts are bound to arise in their minds regarding the variant readings. It is not a case of making the Bible more easily understood. The version which John Bunyan used for his 'Pilgrim's Progress' in the 17th century and which George Whitefield used to preach to the miners at Bristol in the 18th century is perfectly good for the 21st century.

(This article, written for the Gospel Standard Churches in October 2007, formed the basis of a more detailed booklet on the same subject, published by Malcolm H. Watts in May 2008 for the Trinitarian Bible Society.)

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Computers and the Internet: Warnings and Recommendations

By J. Kerley

Computer and Internet technologies are undergoing enormous growth in popular use. The Office of National Statistics estimated that 65 per cent of UK households had Internet access by 2008. This trend will affect many of us. Banks are replacing local branches with online banking services. Teachers expect that children will use the Internet as a source of information when conducting research. Sadly, as well as much good use of technology, there is also much evil. As use of computers and the Internet becomes ever more common, many of us and our children may encounter the hazards, whether at home, in education, or at work. Parents must advise their children and take difficult decisions in order to prepare them for the information age. Parents must know their own position clearly and fully discuss it with their family, particularly since children often understand the technology better than their parents do. Computer games and surfing the Internet can become an addiction and a dreadful waste of time. The Internet brings the world into the home, so it becomes easy to pick up active involvement in sinful things. May God lead us to abstain from all appearance of evil, and be in the world but not of it, as Christ prayed for His people before His death. This article describes some of the

Internet and computer technology and applications available today. While it does not seek to pass judgement on the Internet, various risks and dangers are highlighted, and antidotes suggested. It is hoped that it will prove useful to concerned parents, and their teenage and young-adult children.

World-Wide-Web:

Generally thought of as ‘the Internet’, the World-Wide-Web (WWW) is composed of millions of *pages* on websites linked by *hyperlinks*. These hyperlinks enable us to navigate from page to page by clicking them. The pages can contain text, images, and video, and are viewed using a *browser*. Anyone can publish information on the Internet – no license is required, and the cost is very small, sometimes even free. In consequence, there is a vast amount of data freely available on the Internet. Some of this information is good. As a computer programmer, I find many answers to programming problems online, and when shopping there are often many reviews of items and shops, helping to choose what and where to buy. Furthermore, gracious sermons and books are freely published online, and these are often no longer available in printed form.

However, much information is evil. While there are many websites presenting the evidence for creation, there are also very many supporting evolution. Worse, there are vast amounts of pornography, violence, and other filth propagated on the Internet. This is undoubtedly a real problem, and if precautions are not taken it is possible to view these pages, even accidentally. For instance, malicious hackers have broken into poorly-guarded websites, and replaced the good content with their own evil content, which is then seen by all visitors to the website.

It is possible to mitigate the risk of viewing wicked content by using filtering technology. This can be done by the Internet Service Provider (ISP), although not all ISPs provide this service. ISPs that claim to filter content from a Christian perspective include *Milestone Net* and *Innocence and Integrity*. Alternatively, a filtering software package, such as Net Nanny or CyberPatrol, can be installed on each computer. The advantage of filtering packages is that they protect the computer wherever it is connected to the Internet, for example at University, as well as at home. It is also sensible to have the computer in a family

room – not a child’s bedroom – as this naturally leads to more openness about the sites being visited.

E-mail:

Electronic mail (e-mail) is an electronic equivalent of the postal system. To send and receive e-mails an e-mail account and address are needed, and these can be obtained free of charge. Once an account is created, e-mails can be sent and received using online systems (websites), or software applications installed on a computer. Once an email is sent to a recipient (addressed to the recipient’s e-mail address), it will generally be received in the recipient’s mailbox within a few minutes, and the recipient can then view the message using their e-mail client. Unfortunately, like the postal system, e-mail is abused by bulk mailers sending unsolicited messages. This is known as *spam*. However, the cost of sending e-mail is virtually nothing, so vast quantities of spam are sent compared to the volume of paper bulk mail. Furthermore, spam often contains sexual content or otherwise distasteful content.

To reduce the quantity of spam a series of measures can be taken. Firstly, to prevent spam being received, be wary of disclosing e-mail addresses to a third party, particularly online. Some disreputable organisations sell e-mail addresses to spammers. Spammers also have automated technology that scans pages on the world-wide-web and ‘harvests’ e-mail addresses. Spammers also try random e-mail addresses, so it is almost inevitable that even with the best precautions eventually spam will arrive. Spam messages often contain an ‘unsubscribe’ hyperlink. Never click this hyperlink, as this will only confirm to the spammer that the address is valid, and more spam will be sent to the address. Filtering can automatically remove spam messages. Most e-mail providers now do this as a matter of course, but it is possible to install software to limit further the amount received. The free Mozilla Thunderbird email client has built-in spam filtering, while Spam Eater Pro and CA Anti Spam can be purchased.

Messenger, Chat room and Forum systems:

These allow conversations using text-based systems. Sometimes chat rooms provide a graphical virtual world. With messenger systems, the conversation is private between the participants. This is in contrast to chat room and forum systems, where most messages are visible to others (although they often also provide private messaging facilities as

well). The other difference between messenger and other systems is that the messenger user's address is private. This means they can only be contacted by those to whom they have given their address. Furthermore, the messenger user can choose to block unwanted people from communicating with them. In contrast, once a forum or chat room has been joined, any other user of the facility can engage in conversation with the user. It is not possible to verify the identity of other users on the Internet. Consequently, people can present a false identity. There have been numerous cases of older men posing as young females to gain the trust of young people. Be very wary of giving out personal information such as full name or address on these systems, or meeting people that are only known online.

Facebook, MySpace & other Social Networking Websites:

Until recently, a certain amount of technical expertise had been required to publish information on the WWW. What social networking sites do is make it very much easier to create pages about oneself and add links to the pages of family and friends. Pages on these websites tend to contain user's personal information, such as name, date of birth, location, and pictures. This information is usually hidden from other users until they are accepted as a 'friend', but Facebook and other sites have been known to publicise the information by mistake, which can lead to identity theft and other problems. As part of the information displayed, some people indicate the religious group they belong to, such as Gospel Standard Strict Baptist. In this case, they should be aware that the information they publish reflects on their religion as well as themselves. These websites make it easy to keep in touch with other Gospel Standard people throughout the country, and indeed the world. Common problems can be shared and discussed online: for instance, it can be helpful and encouraging to know that others meet with the same difficulties at school.

Internet Television:

Parents should be aware that with a *broadband* connection it is possible to watch television over the Internet. Established broadcasters, such as the BBC with its IPlayer, offer live-feed and replay facilities on their website, whereas YouTube and similar websites allow users to post their own videos for others to watch.

Mobile Phones:

With modern mobile phones, it is now possible to perform many of the functions of a standard computer, such as browsing websites and using messenger applications, and even viewing online videos. Since they access the Internet using the mobile phone network, it is not possible to filter or monitor the content viewed in the same way as for a computer. Some companies, such as O₂, provide a Parental Control package for mobile phones that will restrict usage of the Internet to validated sites. Alternatively, parents who wish to prevent any Internet connection could ensure that their children have basic mobile phones without GPRS or 3G connectivity.

Games:

Games can be played on websites, or installed on computers. Christians should feel uncomfortable with the content of some games (e.g. shooting games) as they trivialise sin and death. Some software, such as Cyber Patrol, can be used to prevent games being installed without parental consent.

Illegal Copying of Software:

As it can be done at the click of a mouse, many people copy software illegally, for example by installing their copy of Microsoft Office on friends' computers. It is unnecessary as well as illegal and amounts to stealing. There are free alternatives such as:

Office System (instead of Microsoft Office) – e.g. Open Office (mostly compatible with Microsoft Office) or Google Docs (internet-based)

Email (instead of Microsoft Outlook) – e.g. Outlook Express (comes with Windows) or Mozilla Thunderbird (very good anti-spam)

Picture Editing (instead of Adobe Photoshop) – e.g. Google Picasa, or Paint.NET

Internet Security:

A computer that is connected to the Internet is at risk of attack. Other malicious users of the Internet attempt to break in to unsuspecting computers across the Internet, so that the machines can be used by them. Often the owner of the compromised computer is unaware that this has occurred. A *firewall* should be installed and enabled on any computer connected to the Internet. This prevents the break-in from occurring. Microsoft Windows comes with a built-in

firewall that can be used, but more sophisticated commercial alternatives can be purchased. *Antivirus* software should be installed to prevent malicious software being installed. This malicious software can typically be sent as an e-mail attachment, or be downloaded from a website by masquerading as something legitimate.

Other bad software, known as *spyware*, can be prevented using anti-spyware software. Spyware is surreptitiously installed on a computer, and spies on user activity, looking for information such as bank details to send to the spyware makers. The simplest solution to Internet security is to purchase an Internet Security Suite, which will protect against intrusion, viruses, and spyware in one package. Examples include Zone Alarm Security Suite 6, and F-Secure Internet Security. It is important to note that the Internet Security suite should be kept updated to the latest version (this is usually automatic), as new threats continue to emerge, and the Suites are updated to counter them.

Steps to Safer Internet usage:

1. Place the computer in a shared room
2. Install an Internet Security suite
3. Install spam-filtering software
4. Install website content-filtering software, or ask your ISP to do so
5. Keep the Internet Security and spam- and content-filtering software updated.

We publish the above article, realising that some parents in our Churches feel unable to allow Internet Access in the home; but equally realising that it is now in use in many homes among our Congregations. Those working in Business or studying at School or University find it inevitable that they must use it. There is not a shadow of a doubt that it has the potential for great danger to children and adolescents. If used by young people in the home, it must be closely guarded. Parents who are not readily conversant with the technology of it are wise to keep it out of the home. Those in the age group at which this magazine is aimed [15-25], who must use it in their work and studies, need to be conscious of its serious dangers and their own fallen nature. They would be wise to use the technical protection recommended in this article, and to pray for the Lord to keep them from the subtleties of the adversary of souls in using it.

The Editor.

MORAL ISSUES

Marriage: What the Bible Teaches

1. A Blessing from God

By Rev G. G. Hutton

This is the first part of a paper given at the 2005 Free Presbyterian, Youth Conference.

Marriage is the oldest institution in human society. It is the foundation for all other lawful social institutions. The family itself arises from the marriage union. The visible Church began when the family became organised. Public worship is an extension of family worship. Civil government is, in practical terms, an extension of family government. These are examples of how the family, through marriage, provides a foundation for other institutions in our society with which we are familiar. It is to be understood from the start that this is a paper about the biblical teaching on this subject.

We all realise that, if the foundation of a structure is removed, the whole building is in danger of collapsing. Marriage is fundamental to the stability of all human society; so, if it is undermined, the whole fabric of society will very quickly begin to fall apart. And the fact that God our Creator instituted marriage at the beginning ought to impress upon us just how important it is. God meant it to be useful to every part of human society; He bestows great blessings on those who appreciate its worth and keep consistently to the principles He established. If we are to value marriage as we should, we must largely ignore what modern society thinks and apply ourselves to discovering – or perhaps rediscovering – what God in His kindness has given as the greatest blessing in this world, apart from personal salvation.

People may give the impression that a *church* wedding is superior to a *civil* wedding because one has a more religious aspect to it and takes place in a building set apart for divine worship. We must remember that the marriage ceremony has two aspects, which should be viewed separately. Firstly, there is the requirement of the state that marriages be registered, recording details of those who are marrying as well as the identity of their parents, with evidence that the marriage is according to the law of the country. This registration contributes to maintaining an orderly society. Secondly, there is the personal commitment of the man and woman to each other, with binding vows, in the presence of

witnesses. If there is no union of heart and spirit when the ceremony is taking place – whether in a religious establishment or a registrar's office or elsewhere – then all the ritual will only at best formalise a deception, legally uniting two people in a cold, loveless relationship. No ceremony, however solemn, even in a church, can guarantee the success of any marriage.

Sadly, we have to acknowledge that governments are introducing laws which ignore the fact that marriage is between one male and one female. But although men may attempt to legalise what is contrary to the law of God and nature, it remains true that the only biblically-lawful marriage is between one man and one woman. Everything else is a God-forbidden perversion. While Christians recognise the legal requirements for marriage and keep to them, as we believe they should, they seek the blessing of God on their union. They wish to call God as a witness to their vows; they bind themselves in a covenant, not only before men, but also before the Judge of all the earth, to whom they feel accountable for how they will keep their marriage vows.

I personally find it very sad when some young people getting married allow themselves to be carried away with all the outward show of the occasion, and use the place of worship as a mere platform for display. It is even worse when this is encouraged by their parents, whom we would expect to know better. God and religion are simply tagged on to what is sometimes little less than a competitive display of immodesty.

We should remind ourselves that “man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever”, and this includes marriage. If this principle is to be respected within marriage, it should also be applied before then. If young men or women think properly, they will seek to honour God as they consider marriage. They will seek a partner prayerfully and carefully. They will consult their parents for advice. They will keep to biblical standards of behaviour. No young woman who values her virtue, fears God, and seeks to please Him, will throw herself without thinking into the arms of the first young man who claims to be her admirer. And no young man with moral principles will think of treating a young woman merely as an object of carnal desire who may be abandoned when someone more attractive appears on the scene.

In beginning a courtship, young men particularly should act honourably. Any man who can lead a trusting young woman along,

telling her he loves her, and then for no good reason break her heart by deserting her, just because he has discovered someone else more attractive or more likely to satisfy his carnal desires, does not merit trust from any female. If he can treat matters of such grave importance so lightly, how can he expect to command genuine respect from anyone? Some young people today seem to think that while they are not actually married, they have liberty to flirt around. This is sinful and ought never to be found among young people who know the Bible. Even young people belonging to the church, with all the good influence of a Christian upbringing, need to realise that they must be pure in their thoughts, principled in their conduct and conscientious in their choices. Paul told Timothy to flee youthful lusts, and I am certain that such a warning applies to young men and women even in church circles. Youth, as we know, has its own special temptations, and grace is required to overcome them.

The Bible tells us that “marriage is honourable in all” (Hebrews 13:4). While we acknowledge that God does not require everyone to marry, it is desirable for most people. It is honourable because it was established by God our Creator. He knew the relationship which would most likely lead to harmony and well-being in human society. We should remember that the relationship between the first husband and wife was formed when there was no sin to disturb it. When Adam became a husband and Eve became a wife, they were both in a relationship of friendship with God; so there was no friction between Adam and his God-given wife. When sin entered into the world, everything changed. Sin infected every part of man’s being. His understanding became darkened; his will became the servant of his corrupt nature; and his affections became misplaced. Like every other human relationship, marriage suffered. So when two persons are joined together in marriage, they are united as poor sinners in need of mercy.

Our first father Adam was “the figure of Him that was to come” (Romans 5:14) – who of course was Christ. Adam’s marriage was a God-ordained relationship for the mutual benefit of both partners, but it also was a figure of a more glorious marriage – between the Son of God and His bride, the Church. He came into the world to procure a bride for Himself; so Paul uses earthly marriage as an apt illustration of the spiritual union between Christ and the Church. No human relationship can better depict that union. The end of time will bring us to the

glorious event of which John wrote: “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready” (Revelation 19:7).

Since Adam was a figure of Christ, his marriage must be considered not only as a truly useful relationship – God provided “an help meet for him”. The covenant between a husband and a wife is a symbol of the unbreakable covenant between Christ and His redeemed people. This is reason enough, even if there were no other, for God to declare: “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder”. Divorce is totally unnatural. When it must happen, it is one of the awful consequences of sin. But there will never be – there cannot ever be – a breakdown in the Redeemer’s covenanted marriage to His church. The heavenly marriage is the ideal marriage; it is the perfect marriage. By grace, it should be the pattern of earthly marriages, between fallen creatures; they are not to be conformed to the trends of a rebellious, Bible-rejecting, God-defying society. Husbands are told to love their wives even as Christ loved the Church. And wives are to be subject to their husbands, as the Church submits to Christ, her spiritual Head.

Reprinted with permission from The Young People’s Magazine of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, April 2006, pp. 66-68.

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CHURCH HISTORY

Robert Bruce (1554-1631)

By J. R. Boome

Robert Bruce was born about 1554 of noble parents, and his education was intended to fit him to take part in the political affairs of Scotland. For this reason, he was sent to France to study law. But when he returned to Scotland, God began to work in such a way upon his heart that he felt unable to follow this career, and could get no rest of conscience until he went to St. Andrew’s to study Divinity under Andrew Melville. The ministry was so laid on his mind that he was made to give up everything for it. Both his mother and his father were against him in this matter, and his mother went so far as to force him to give up his right to certain of the family property before she would consent to his entering the ministry. At the age of 33, he received a call

to become minister of the Church of Edinburgh, in place of James Lawson, who had succeeded John Knox. At first, he was unwilling to accept the call, but having preached on probation for some time, and felt the Lord's help in his ministry, he consented. The Lord blessed his preaching in a very clear manner, so that it was apparent to all – from the highest to the lowest in the land – that a remarkable authority accompanied it. Even King James VI (later James I of England and founder of the Stuart Dynasty) recognised him as a man whom he could respect and trust. But later, as James VI began to plan the restoration of Bishops in Scotland, he came into conflict with Robert Bruce, who was set on defending the Reformation as John Knox had established it in Scotland. And so in 1599, when Bruce was sent to the King to present the grievances of the Scottish Church, the King had him arrested, together with a number of other ministers in the Castle at Edinburgh. This was the beginning of a period of almost continuous persecution in the life of Robert Bruce, which lasted until his death in 1631. In 1600, the King banned him from preaching in Edinburgh, and forced him to leave Scotland, and go to France. Although he was allowed to return to Scotland in the following year, he was kept prisoner in his own house at Kinnaird near Perth, and not allowed to preach. When James became King of England on the death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603, Bruce had respite from persecution for a year or two.

In 1605, efforts were made to remove him officially as minister of the Church in Edinburgh. He appealed, but was prohibited from preaching, though he refused to respect the prohibition. King James then asked him to desist from preaching for nine or ten days, to which he consented, but quickly realised that he had done wrong in refusing to obey the Lord's command, and ever afterwards resolved never to obey such a command again. The King then ordered him to leave Edinburgh, and go and live at Inverness. This was a virtual exile, but he used it to good advantage, staying in Inverness for four years, preaching every Wednesday and Sunday afternoon and taking part in other services. Again, the Lord abundantly blessed his labours, for many were converted at this time by the means of his ministry, and a seed was sown in these remote parts of Scotland, which remained for many years afterwards. Later he was allowed to leave Inverness and wandered from place to place until he was allowed to settle in his home at Kinnaird again. In 1621, by the King's order, he was summoned to

appear before the Council, and in defending himself said, "The King hath exhausted both my estate and person, and has left me nothing but my life, and that apparently he is seeking. I am prepared to suffer any punishment only I am careful not to suffer as a malefactor or evildoer." He was then confined in the Castle at Edinburgh until, in April 1622, he was ordered to return to Inverness, and remain within four miles of that town during the King's pleasure. He stayed at Inverness until September 1624, and again his ministry was blessed with remarkable success. When King James died and his son Charles I came to the throne in England, Bruce was allowed more freedom for a little while. About this time, he became minister of the Parish of Larbert, near Falkirk, where he repaired the Church, and it was here that his ministry was made the means of the conversion of Alexander Henderson, who was then minister at Leuchars. Many are the stories told of the great blessing which attended his labours in the gospel in this place. He always retired for private prayer after the morning sermon. On one occasion, a nobleman, who had ridden some distance, sent a servant on ahead to find out if Bruce would preach a second time that day. The servant was told by a friend of Bruce that he did not think he would preach, for he had been overheard to say, "I protest I will not go unless Thou goest with me." However, later that day, he did preach, and it was clear to all that the Lord's presence was very much with him.

While in Edinburgh sometime before his death (now an aged man, over seventy) he was confined to his room. Hearing he was in the city, several godly ministers came to see him, and discuss with him the situation that was developing in Scotland through the work of Charles I and Archbishop Laud. A Prayer Meeting was held when the Lord gave a great spirit of prayer, especially to Robert Bruce. This was a time never to be forgotten by these men as they prayed for the Lord's help in the days of persecution. Bruce prayed constantly that in these times he might be kept faithful. He was a man of wrestling prayer. Once when a minister called on him at eight o'clock in the morning, Bruce told him he could not see him. When he asked why, Bruce told him that on the previous night, he had had a good measure of the Lord's presence, and that he had wrestled with Him for an hour or two in the morning, and had not yet gained access, and so he wished to be left alone. On another occasion when the same minister went to see him, he could see he had been weeping very bitterly, and on asking why, was told by

Bruce that he had been weeping over the tortures which had recently been inflicted on Dr. Leighton, a Scottish Divine, by Archbishop Laud in London. Leighton had written a book called “Zion’s Plea against Prelacy”, for which he had been fined £10,000, tied to a stake, given 36 stripes with a triple cord, and then had his ear cut, his face burnt, and his nose slit. Bruce added, “If I had been faithful, I might have had the pillory, and some of my blood shed for Christ, as well as he”. As his end drew near, he was mostly confined to his bed. On the morning of his death in August 1631, he had a stroke at breakfast and lost his sight. Calling for his family Bible, and finding he could not see, he said, “Find me the 8th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and set my finger on these words: ‘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.’” “Now,” said he, “Is my finger upon them?” Being told it was, he said, “Now, God be with you, my children; I have breakfasted with you, and shall sup with my Lord Jesus Christ this night”. And so, like Abraham of old, he gave up the ghost in a good old age, and was gathered to his people.

Thus died Robert Bruce, whose life spanned the period from Calvin to Oliver Cromwell. None in his time preached with such evident power of the Holy Spirit, and no man had more seals to his ministry in his day. His delivery in preaching was slow, yet he spoke with great authority and weight, and many were cut down under the power of the Holy Spirit through his ministry. He was very short in public prayer, but spent much of his time in private prayer. He was a man who searched the Scriptures, and was much exercised in his religion. He was often tempted as to the great fundamental truth of the existence of God (so that frequently his sermons opened with the words, “I think it is a great matter to believe there is a God”) and thus he was able to help those under a similar temptation. He was one of those who sighed and cried for the abominations done in the land, especially when he witnessed many ministers unwilling to make a firm stand for the great truths of the Reformation. Though he did not live to see it, the power and effects of his ministry laid the foundations for the continuance of the spread of the truth in Scotland (by the ministry of men like Alexander Henderson) through succeeding generations.

DOCTRINE AND TRUTH

Extracts From J. C. Philpot

“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” Philippians 2:13

When God has worked in a man “to will,” and not only worked in him “to will,” but also worked in him “to do;” when he has made him willing to flee from the wrath to come; willing to be saved by the atoning blood and justifying righteousness of Jesus; willing to be saved by sovereign grace as a sinner undone without hope, and glad to be saved in whatever way God is pleased to save him; willing to pass through the fire, to undergo affliction, and to walk in the strait and narrow path, willing to take up the cross and follow Jesus, willing to bear all the troubles which may come upon him, and all the slanders which may be heaped upon his name; when God has made him willing to be nothing, and to have nothing but as God makes him the one, and gives him the other: and besides working in him “to will,” has worked in him “to do,” worked in him faith to believe, hope whereby he anchors in the finished work of Christ, and love whereby he cleaves to him with purpose of heart; when all this has been “with fear and trembling,” not rushing heedlessly on in daring presumption, not buoyed up by the good opinion of others, not taking up his religion from ministers and books; but by a real genuine work of the Holy Ghost in the conscience; when he has thus worked out with fear and trembling what God has worked in, he has got at salvation; at salvation from wrath to come, from the power of sin, from an empty profession; at salvation from the flesh, from the delusions of Satan, from the blindness and ignorance of his own heart; he has got at a salvation which is God's salvation, because God has worked in him to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Extracted from Ears from Harvested Sheaves – June 15th

“He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.” Psalm 107:20

What an effect a word from God can produce! Be it in reading; in hearing; on the knees; or in secret meditation; when a word

drops from the Lord's mouth with any divine power into the soul, what a change it produces! And nothing but this divine power can ever bring a poor sinner out of his miserable condition. When this comes, it does the work in a moment; it heals all the wounds which sin has made, and repairs all the breaches in the conscience that folly has produced. One word from God heals them all. The Lord does not come as it were with plasters to heal first one sore and then another. He heals now as in the days of his flesh. When he healed then, he healed fully, at once, completely.

The earthly doctor heals by degrees; he puts a plaster on one sore, and a liniment on another; and heals one by one. But when the Lord heals, it is all done in a moment. The balm of Gilead flows over all the wounds, heals them up, and makes them perfectly whole. It is then with the soul as with the woman with the issue of blood; "she felt in her body she was healed of that plague." And this is healing! Any word from God, really from God, does it in a moment. If you can get but one word from God into your soul to make you believe you are a child of God, and savingly interested in his pardoning love and mercy, every wound, though there be a million, yes, every wound will be healed instantaneously. This is the only healing worth having.

To be healed by 'evidences' is like being healed by plasters. You need an evidence here, and an evidence there, as a man that has his body full of sores needs a plaster upon every wound. One word from God is the real panacea, the true, the only "heal-all;" and Jesus (Jehovah-rophi, "the Lord my healer") the only true infallible Physician. Would you be healed completely, you must look to the Lord, and not to man; be a Hezekiah, not an Asa.

Extracted from Ears from Harvested Sheaves – August 29th

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Extract From John Bunyan

A summary of the Sermon preached by Mr Great-heart to Christiana after they had left the Interpreter's House taken from The Pilgrim's Progress Part II by John Bunyan.

Now supper was ready and they sat down. While they ate there was music and one sang,

The Lord is only my support,
And He that doth me feed;

How can I then lack anything
Whereof I stand in need.

Psalm 23.1 [*in Scots Meter after the form sung in the Kirke of Scotland 1632*]

Later they washed, were given a change of white raiment, and had a seal put in their foreheads. Then, led by Mr Great-heart, they set out on their way to Palace Beautiful. Soon they came to the place where Christian's burden fell from his back and tumbled into the sepulchre. Here Christiana remembered the promise given them at the Wicket-gate: that they would have pardon *by word and by deed*. She then asked Mr Great-heart to explain what pardon *by deed* meant.

Mr Great-heart explained that pardon *by deed* is pardon obtained by one for another who has need of it. He explained that the pardon Christiana, Mercy and the boys had obtained was by another; namely He that let them in at the gate. He obtained it in a double way; He performed righteousness to cover them, and spilt blood to wash them in.

Then Mr Great-heart went on to explain the righteousness of Christ. Christ, he said, had two natures in one person; plain to distinguish, impossible to divide. To each nature belonged a righteousness, and each righteousness was essential to that nature. Of these righteousnesses, Christians were not made partakers. Besides these, Christ had a righteousness which he had as his two natures were joined together - it was a righteousness that was essential to his being prepared of God for his work as the Mediator between God and man, the great High Priest.

So if he parted with His first righteousness he parted with His Godhead; if he parted with his second righteousness he parted with the purity of His manhood; if He parted with His third righteousness He parted with His perfection as the Mediator and High Priest of His people; 'made perfect through suffering.'

But he had another righteousness, which stood in the performance of, or obedience to, a revealed will. It was this which He put upon sinners, by which their sins were covered. Wherefore He said, 'As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous' [Rom. 5.19]. Great Heart pointed out that the other righteousnesses, while they cannot be communicated,

‘yet it is by virtue of them that the righteousness that justifies is for that purpose effective’ [efficacious].

The righteousness of His Godhead gave virtue to His obedience. The righteousness of His manhood gave capability [power, effect] to His obedience to justify. The righteousness that stood in the union of His two natures to His office as Mediator gave authority to that righteousness to do the work for which it was ordained.

Great-heart showed that the righteousness that Christ obtained in His humanity (in obedience to His Father’s holy will, and in the keeping of His holy law) was a righteousness that Christ had no need of, with reference to Himself. Therefore, He gave it to His people, and it is called the ‘gift of righteousness’ [Rom. 5.17]. Our Lord indeed had two coats and in accordance with the Law He gave one ‘to him that hath none.’ ‘And so,’ said Great-heart, ‘does pardon come by deed, or by the work of another man.’

Then Great-heart went on to explain that in order to pardon by deed, there must be something paid to God as a price, as well as something prepared to cover us. To be justified from the curse of the Law we must be justified by way of redemption, and this price is paid by the blood of Jesus Christ. As he stands in the place of sinners in His humanity, so He ransoms them from the curse of the Law.

Christiana now saw clearly what it meant to be pardoned by word and by deed. Christian had learnt this by a sacred revelation of the Cross of Christ to his soul when his burden fell from his back. Christiana learnt it under the preaching of the Gospel from the Lord’s servant Mr Great-heart. Bunyan almost certainly had in mind his own godly pastor, John Gifford of Bedford, when he portrayed Mr Great-heart as a teacher of righteousness to Christiana. Some learn these truths by direct revelation to their hearts under the teaching of the Holy Spirit; others learn them through the preaching of the Gospel by God’s servants.

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LETTERS, ADDRESSES AND SERMONS

Letter of Oliver Cromwell 1638

This is one of the earliest extant letters of Oliver Cromwell. It was written on 13th October 1638 at his home in Ely and was addressed to his cousin, Mrs Oliver St. John, who was living at that time in Essex. It is a confession of the work of God in his soul. He refers to his 'past life,' 'yet,' he says, 'God had mercy on me.' He knew 'darkness' but he also knew the 'light' of the Lord's presence in his soul.

“I thankfully acknowledge your love in your kind remembrance of me upon this opportunity. Alas, you do too highly prize my lines, and my company. I may be ashamed to own your own expressions, considering how unprofitable I am, and the mean improvement of my talent.

Yet to honour my God by declaring what He hath done for my soul, in this I am confident, and I will be so. Truly, then, this I find: That He giveth springs in a dry and barren wilderness where no water is. I live (you know where) in Meschek, which they say signifies 'Prolonging'; in Kedar, which signifieth 'Blackness': yet the Lord forsaketh me not. Though He do prolong, yet He will (I trust) bring me to His tabernacle, to His resting place. My soul is with the congregation of the first-born, my body rests in hope; and if here I may honour my God, either by doing or by suffering, I shall be most glad.

Truly, no poor creature hath more cause to put himself forth in the cause of his God than I. I have had plentiful wages beforehand; and I am sure that I shall never earn the least mite. The Lord accept me in His Son and give me to walk in the light – and give us to walk in the light, as He is the light! He it is that enlighteneth our blackness, our darkness. I dare not say, He hideth his face from me. He giveth me to see light in His light. One beam in a dark place hath exceeding much refreshment in it; blessed be His Name for shining upon so dark a heart as mine! You know what my manner of life hath been. Oh, I lived in and loved darkness, and hated the light; I was a chief, the chief of sinners. This is true; I hated godliness, yet God had mercy on me. O the riches of His mercy! Praise Him for me – pray for me, that He who hath begun a good work would perfect it in the day of Christ.”

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REVIEWS

'The Christian World Unmasked' by John Berridge

By Dr. P. Wilkins

Obtainable from Dr. Peter Wilkins, 63 Hop Garden Road, Hook, Hants. RG27 9ST; Hardback 128pp, £10; Paperback 194pp, £6, postage and packing in each case £3.

John Berridge was a Church of England minister in the late 1700s. He was converted around 10 years after he was ordained, and subsequently became well known for his 'eccentric' preaching. He had an unusual sense of humour, by which (as he accepted) he could be carried away; but he also used humour (rightly or wrongly) as a tool to keep the attention of his hearers. J. C. Ryle, although admitting that he did not "recommend Berridge as a model to young preachers," paid tribute to his "boldness", saying "better a thousand times for men to smile and be converted, than to look stiff, and grave, and sleepy in their pews, and remain dead in trespasses and sins."

Berridge was not a controversialist. He often advised others to "avoid disputings", and when once asked whether he had read certain controversial works, he replied; "I have them on my shelves in my library, where they are very quiet; if I take them down to look into them, they will begin to quarrel and disagree." Because of this, unlike many ministers of that time, he did not write extensively (in fact, his entire works were published in just one volume) and is now known mainly for his hymns. The only book he wrote was "The Christian World Unmasked".

The book describes a fictional conversation between a doctor (Berridge himself) and a patient – but a doctor who is not concerned about the body of his patient, but his soul. The patient initially thinks of himself as a good Christian, citing his "regular life" as the ground of his hope – though "not forgetting Jesus Christ, to help out some defects". Berridge argues that despite his claims, the patient knows nothing of love to God, His Word, or prayer, and therefore cannot be a Christian; "When a Bible and a newspaper are found upon your table, I can guess which your hand will take up first."

The patient accepts that he is not perfect, and resolves to put things right himself: "I must repent, and amend, and do what I can, and Christ will do the rest". Berridge replies that even his best efforts cannot save

him, and shows him that he is depending on a “mixed covenant” of works and grace – “a mere bubble, blown up by the breath of pride.” The patient, having had his false hope destroyed, asks Berridge to explain where he *can* find a title to heaven, and in response Berridge describes the progress of the work of grace in a person, from conversion, through conviction of sin, until the “invitation of Jesus reaches his ears.”

The patient listens, but thinks Berridge’s way is “more suitable for thieves and harlots than for honest folks”, objecting that it does not seem reasonable to “lay all the burden of salvation” on Christ: “So he must do all the work, and I must stand by as a lazy thief, to see it done? No, no, doctor, I shall not make a packhorse of my Saviour, but would use him with good manners; and, whilst I look for great things from him, will try to do something for myself.”

Berridge patiently explains that due to the fallen nature of man, he cannot contribute to his own salvation; and shows how Christ has already done all that is required. The patient objects that this doctrine opens the door to licentiousness, complaining that his alcoholic neighbour “stands as good a chance” of being saved as himself, “who goes soberly to bed.” In response, Berridge explains that we must be prepared for Heaven, but that even this preparation is not our work, but God’s; so that we are dependent on Christ for every good. Berridge shows how the new covenant consists of “a rich and gracious bundle of free promises”, as opposed to the old covenant in which a man “must work for life by his own will and power.”

The patient, not quite convinced, brings forward various objections – among other things, he argues that the doctrine of election is “a frightful notion, exceedingly discouraging,” which “seemeth not consistent with common equity”. Berridge shows how that doctrine, rightly understood, has no real tendency to discourage any, because it is not expected that any one should know himself to be elect before he seeks salvation – “Whoever thinks himself an elected person, and does not seek, as God requires, with all his heart, will find himself most dreadfully confounded. And such as seek with all their heart, yet doubt of their election, will find at length that God is their covenant-God in Christ.”

The book closes with Berridge giving a brief summary of the doctrine of faith; “Faith is the master-key to the treasury of Jesus; it

opens all the doors, and brings out every store. A heart, well nurtured in this precious grace, finds the gospel rest. In time of danger, sickness, or temptation it flutters not, nor struggles hard to help itself, but standeth still and sees the Lord's salvation. The eye is singly fixed on Jesus, the heart is calmly waiting for him, and Jesus brings relief. Faith calls, and Jesus answers, Here I am to save thee."

The book is written in Berridge's distinctive style – a good example occurring in Berridge's proof of the divinity of Christ: "if Jesus Christ is not Jehovah, to couple him with the Father in the same baptismal dedication is a thousand times more unseemly than to harness a snail and an elephant together." Some may object to this type of language, but it is clear that Berridge never uses it merely to amuse the reader. J. C. Ryle's description of his preaching could equally be applied to his writing: "His grand aim was to make his hearers understand, and to attain that aim he sacrificed everything." Nevertheless, Berridge's style of writing may not suit all tastes.

There are also places in the book in which Berridge defends his own position, most notably in his discussion of baptism. Berridge, being a Church of England minister, was a paedobaptist, and argues in favour of this position in his book. However, Berridge says charitably "I would hate no man, and do condemn no man, for thinking differently in this matter; yea, I feel a tender brother's love for many, and can lay them on my heart, though they do think differently."

Though some of the book is written in relatively archaic language, it is unusually easy to read for a book of its time, and is well suited to occasional "dipping into". Berridge's unique style of writing, coupled with his sound biblical exposition, makes for searching, humbling, and yet encouraging and stimulating reading.

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Student Information

It is hoped in the September and December editions of this magazine to publish information on the careers (post 16), whereabouts and courses of those in Further and Higher education; also the Chapel they are attending. We should be pleased for students to email us at jrbroome@talktalk.net with information on this subject.

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CURRENT EVENTS

Human-Animal Embryology

In the Summer of 2008 the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority, [HFEA] granted a licence to the Clinical Sciences Research Institute of Warwick University to create human-pig hybrid embryos for research purposes to take effect from 1st July 2008. This was an illegal act as the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act [1990] does not allow HFEA to grant such licences. Various Christian organisations have filed legal papers asking for a Judicial Review. While it is true that Parliament has recently passed legislation that *could* allow such licences to be granted, the 1990 Act did not do so. We hope in a future edition of this magazine to publish an article on the ethics of Human-Animal Embryology.

A Day of Bible Studies for Young People

A day of Bible Studies was held at the Village Hall at Barton-le-Clay on Saturday 15th November when about an hundred and forty young people gathered.

The day began when Mr G.D. Buss spoke on the life of Nehemiah, 'A Man who lived by Prayer.' He stressed how Nehemiah was used not only to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, but also to bring the Jews back to the Law and rebuild their society. In this connection he spoke of unlawful marriages, Sabbath desecration, pollution of the priesthood, pollution of worship, the covetousness of the rich and the oppression of the poor, and stressed how Nehemiah prayed privately, urgently, instantly, in times of danger, at work and in public for the Lord's help and presence and for help against his enemies.

After a short break Mr J.R. Broome spoke on 'Witnessing in the world of work.' He made in clear that only those in whose heart a work of grace had been begun and who had been separated from the world could be a true witness. Such alone would come under the word, 'They took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.' (Acts 4.13). Witnessing must be done quietly, unobtrusively and prayerfully. Believer's baptism was a witness when rightly undertaken. He then spoke of the use of the word 'witness' in Scripture especially as used by Luke in his Gospel and in the Acts. He mentioned the Lord's words to His disciples after His resurrection, 'Ye shall be witnesses unto me...' (Acts 1.8) and spoke of how witnessing for the Apostle Paul entailed 'bonds and afflictions.' Finally he spoke from his own experience of witnessing in his student days, in the Armed Forces and in his work as a teacher for twenty-seven years.

In the afternoon the three ministers answered a series of questions which had been previously sent in. This session was chaired by Dr. Tim Ramsbottom. In the final session Mr B.A. Ramsbottom spoke on the subject of 'Christ in the Book of Zechariah.' He spoke of Christ in the midst of His people, Christ our Righteousness, Christ the source of our supply, Christ the Royal Priest, Christ riding into Jerusalem, Christ the pierced One and Christ returning. The Gospel Standard Trust had a bookstall and the Savannah Education Trust had an information stand. It is hoped to publish all three Bible Studies in future editions of this magazine.

A New Book

The article on Robert Bruce (p. 17) forms chapter one of a new book, 'Scots Worthies,' to be published DV by the GS Trust in 2009.

Leave God to order all thy ways,
And hope in Him whate'er betide;
Thou'lt find Him in the evil days
Thy all-sufficient strength and guide:
Who trusts in God's unchanging love
Builds on the rock that nought can move.

Only thy restless heart keep still,
And wait in cheerful hope, content
To take whate'er His gracious will,
His all-discerning love, has sent;
Nor doubt our inmost wants are known
To Him who chose us for His own.

Sing, pray, and swerve not from His ways,
But do thine own part faithfully;
Trust His rich promises of grace,
So shall they be fulfilled in thee:
God never yet forsook at need
The soul that trusted Him indeed.

Georg Christian Neumark. 1621-81
tr. By Catherine Winkworth. 1827-78

PERCEPTION



I will say of the LORD, *He* is my refuge and
my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust.
Psalm 91:2

SUMMER 2009

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Cover Picture: Renswoude Castle (built 1654), to the east of Scherpenzeel, The Netherlands.

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PERCEPTION

Volume 1

SUMMER 2009

Number 2

EDITORIAL

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing...” (2 Cor. 6. 17). Written to the Church at Corinth from Philippi.

The apostle Paul knew what separation was in his own spiritual experience. First, he knew a type of separation when he was a Pharisee. Secondly, he experienced the power of Christ that brought him away from that Pharisaical separation. Thirdly, he knew what he had come away from and the separation to which he was now calling the members of the Corinthian church. Do we know anything of what the apostle John speaks of when he says, “And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness”? (1 John 5. 19). Can we trace in our experience what it is to be brought out of a world that lies in wickedness? It would be a great blessing if in your own heart, you could trace out something of this experience of separation and look back in your spiritual experience to see that you have walked out the path of the apostle Paul. He always spoke from his own experience, and that gave his ministry an undoubted authority.

Looking at his life as a Pharisee, it is obvious what sort of separation that was! The Pharisee said, ‘God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are.’ They said of the Lord Jesus Christ: ‘He eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners.’ In their eyes Jesus was not separate; He should have kept Himself away from publicans and sinners. The Pharisee’s separation was one of self-righteousness. The apostle Paul in that separation was resting on his own works, thinking that he kept the law. When he stood before the High Priest and the council in Jerusalem, he said, ‘I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee’ (Acts 23. 6). Before his conversion he had been well satisfied with that.

We need to be brought to see the nature of that separation. It cuts off others and separates in a false way. The apostle felt convinced he was right. Not only did he separate himself from the Lord Jesus and His followers, he persecuted them. He was holier than they were. But the Lord Jesus, in His prayer that concluded the Last Supper, prayed so

differently. He said regarding his disciples, “I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” (John 17. 15-17). The Pharisees were like Luther when he went into the monastery. He was going to separate himself from the world, cut himself off from it. He learnt that he had taken his sinful self with him into the monastery. The right way for a Christian is to be in this world, but not of it; to be part of it physically and yet not mingle with its evils.

The apostle had to learn this lesson, and that leads to a consideration of the power that separated him. How great a power that was! It was a commandment, a divine call. This is a power that separates God’s people in the work of regeneration, the work of grace. The apostle knew that power on the road to Damascus, when the Lord called him and separated him from the Pharisees for ever. The power that separated Nicodemus was the same power that separated the apostle Paul, but it worked more slowly and gently, in a similar way to the words of Christ to him: “The wind bloweth.” It was a gentle wind; it was a gradual work, but it was the same power. The words of Christ, as He spoke to Nicodemus that night, entered his soul. Christ said to him, “Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?” The day came when he did know them. There was a power in it, a gentle breath of heaven in his soul, and he was separated: a secret disciple like Joseph of Arimathea. The world saw that power. The Pharisees detected it. They could see that the Holy Spirit was working in him. The world will see the change in our lives if the Lord separates us. When He separated Nicodemus the Pharisees said to him, “Art thou one of them?”

Has that power separated you? Has it brought you out of the company of the world and the company of unregenerate, religious professors? Has it brought you into the company of the living family of God? This power is the work of God’s Spirit in the souls of His children, when they are called out of nature’s darkness. The apostle Paul wrote in this same letter: “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).

Dangers of every shape and name
Attend the followers of the Lamb,

Who leave the world's deceitful shore
And leave it to return no more.

What a mercy if you and I can look back, like the apostle, to the moment when the Lord brought us out of a godless world forever! We had to make it known that we were separated. The world saw it and knew it. This, then, is what the apostle speaks of to the church at Corinth: a complete separation.

Finally, what did the apostle leave behind him? John Bunyan in his book, *Come and Welcome to Jesus Christ*, speaks of this. He says that Abraham came out of Ur of the Chaldees, Lot came out of Sodom, Ruth left her father and mother, Peter left his nets, Matthew left the receipt of custom, and the apostle left the Pharisees. They were separated from them. What have you come out of? What did the Lord separate you from? Your companions, your worldly companions? Did He separate you from a light ministry that you could not profit under? Some are separated, as Jacob, from their own brother, and some have even been separated from their own parents, as was Ruth. The Lord's people are brought out by a power, and we read in Scripture, regarding the disciples, Peter and John: "And being let go, they went to their own company" (Acts 4. 23). Blessed company! There comes then a bond of fellowship in the gospel and this is often between young and old. The Lord calls His children out; others are praying for them. They are carrying them in prayer. They are longing to see them separated from the world and brought out. The fruit of the Spirit is manifested in their separation. God's people are drawn to each other, not necessarily in conversation. There is a silent bond that draws one to another, and there is a communion one with another. The apostle John writes, "Truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." (1 John 1. 3) Then he adds, "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)

Sadly, we see there are those who make a profession, but still have one foot in the world. If they are converted, the time has to come when they are completely separated and no longer hide their light under a bushel. Others marry unconverted people and live to regret it, walking a lonely spiritual pathway for the rest of their lives, trying to bring their children up in a divided home, but often spiritually separated from wife and children. If we have any realisation of what the Lord suffered for

us on Calvary's cross – what He went through – it will separate us. If the love of Christ is made known in our hearts, it will separate us from the world. Paul admonishes the church at Corinth:

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate. (2 Cor. 6. 14-17).

May we be separated from the godless world, and brought in love, affection and understanding to the living family of God to be united with them.

(The substance of this Editorial was given by the Editor, as an address, at the morning Prayer Meeting of the Gospel Standard Societies at Clifton, Beds in April 2008.)

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CURRENT ISSUES

The Holy Bible: The Codex Sinaiticus

By Dr. S. P. Westcott

This letter, written by Dr. Stephen Westcott of the Reformation International Theological Seminary, first appeared in the British Church Newspaper and is reprinted here with the permission of the Editor. In the Spring issue of this magazine we wrote about the New King James Version of the Bible and discussed the Byzantine and Alexandrian text-types. The Byzantine text-type has the support of over 95% of the more than 5,000 Greek manuscripts in existence, all of which are largely in agreement. From them the "Received Text" was formed in the 16th and 17th centuries, which was the text used in the translation of the Authorised Version.

But another text came to the fore in the 19th century when the Codex Sinaiticus was discovered in a monastery on Mount Sinai in 1859. A similar manuscript had been in the Vatican Library for a long time. These two manuscripts are of a much earlier origin than the Byzantine text-type and form the basis of the Alexandrian text-type, which in most modern translations since 1881 has been given precedence over the

Received Text. Between the two text-types there are a vast number of variations, including the omission by the Alexandrian text-type of many verses of Scripture. Dr. Westcott's letter sheds an interesting light on the Codex Sinaiticus and its author, Origen, a known heretic. It has long been thought that while the Alexandrian manuscripts are undoubtedly much older than the Byzantine ones, they had survived because they were the work of heretical scholars. On the other hand, the Byzantine ones had been used and were worn out and had to be constantly recopied. Dr. Westcott's letter confirms this supposition.

Much mystery and misinformation seems to surround Codex Sinaiticus, (*British Church Newspaper* 147) but surely only by deliberately fostering confusion could this codex possibly be made a vehicle for an “attack on Bible believers”. Given some basic and indisputable facts, it is certain that there is no need at all for Bible believers to “do some explaining”. In truth, the very reverse is the case, for the codex is self-explanatory as to its own origin and pedigree, and with that information it certainly cannot disturb our faith in God’s inspired and preserved Bible.

Let us first look at the recent history of Codex Sinaiticus. In 1844 Constantine von Tischendorf found 129 loose leaves from a Septuagint OT “in a wastepaper basket” in the monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai. Here we might clear away one myth, for fundamentalist writers are fond of claiming that modern New Testament eclectic versions are based on two doubtful manuscripts, one (“B” Vaticanus) from the Pope’s library and the other (“Aleph” Sinaiticus) from a monastery waste basket. As the textual disputes concern mainly the New Testament, we should note that the New Testament portion was never in the “waste basket”. Of the 129 Septuagint Old Testament leaves Tischendorf was able to secure just forty-three, with the promise that the monks (now alerted to their value) would preserve the rest. This portion, after examination in the West, was given the title of “Codex Frederico-Augustanus”. In 1853 Tischendorf returned to the monastery, only to discover that the remaining leaves had since been mislaid, and were assumed to have been destroyed. However in a subsequent visit in 1859, Tischendorf returned, now armed with the authority of the Russian Emperor (protector of the Eastern Orthodox faith), and was shown, to his amazement, not only the missing portion of the Septuagint Old Testament, but a further 112 leaves of the Old

Testament, with a complete New Testament, and the previously missing texts of *The Shepherd of Hermas* and *The Epistle of Barnabas*. The entire codex (both testaments plus the apocryphal writings) was apparently produced at one time, although at least three major scribes shared the writing, and there was much later revision and alteration. All these portions were taken to the Imperial Library at St. Petersburg, where they were renamed as the “Codex Sinaiticus” and given the reference letter “Aleph”. In 1933 the then-Soviet government sold them to the British Library for £100,000.

Let us now backtrack to the early history of Codex Sinaiticus. As the Codex was originally a complete (and more than complete) Bible, we need not restrict our consideration just to the New Testament (a practice which has produced much of the confusion and error). Turn to the Codex’s own Old Testament and, lo and behold, at the end of the Book of Esther is a scribe’s annotation, in a space provided for it, giving a precise and detailed statement of the origin of the Codex. There simply is no mystery here, all is self-explanatory! The note describes how the Codex was compared and collated with a previous “very old” manuscript prepared under the authority of the martyr Bishop of Caesarea, Pamphilus (c.240-309 AD), and that his copy, in turn, had been corrected by a copy of Origen’s *Hexapla* which had been corrected by Origen himself. So Sinaiticus is self-confessed as an “Origenic” manuscript. Origen’s Septuagint-Hexapla version, exactly copied for Origen’s disciple Pamphilus, and again exactly copied to produce Sinaiticus. And so Origen of Alexandria is expressly revealed as the real author of Codex Sinaiticus.

What, then, can we say about Origen? Origen (c.185-254 AD) of Alexandria, later Caesarea, was a prolific theological writer. His major surviving work *De Principiis* makes Christ subordinate to the Father, (a teaching which would later be called semi-Arianism), whilst he teaches the ultimate salvation of all men and even devils (Apocatastasis). Origen’s theology was condemned as heretical by a Church Council at Alexandria in 400 AD. And what was his view of the Bible? “Scripture contains many things not true, but actually impossible and absurd” (*De Principiis* IV. 3-4). Origen became the leader of the Alexandrian allegorical school, which denies the literal sense of much of the Bible, and proposed a hidden and mystical “true sense” available only to advanced disciples (the *disciplina arcani*). Finding discrepancies in the Scripture copies he collated for his *Hexapla* he indulged in

conjectural emendation to such a degree that Dean Burgon could comment that, “the mischief done by Origen is not to be told.” Add semi-Arian views on Christ’s divinity and the Trinity, and redemptionist views on the resurrection, heaven and hell, and an Origenic codex is, by definition, unorthodox if not heretical. These facts explain, of course, why (being recognised as such by the orthodox) this Codex was shelved; mistrusted; disused, and thus happened to survive whilst its orthodox betters came and went with use. Where, we ask, is the mystery in all this? What is to explain, when Sinaiticus proudly proclaims its own origins and (predictably) errs just where we would expect it to? That there were corrupted copies of the Scriptures in the early Church, and that the orthodox knew which these were, are well-known facts. Why should the accidental survival of one such Codex “unsettle” anything?

A final word on the “*Epistle of Barnabas*”. This early Church document was known only by name until a copy was found written by the same scribes as the Codex Sinaiticus. As Pamphilus collected early Christian writings for his once famous library at Caesarea he naturally had his scribes copy *Barnabas* as well as the *Shepherd* along with the Septuagint and New Testament revisions by his master Origen. In no way does this hint that these works were ever part of the Biblical Canon – before or after Origen, Pamphilus – or the Sinai Codex!

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The Creation and Use of Human and Animal Embryos

By Dr. M. J. Hyde

For centuries the developing baby in the mother’s womb was hidden from sight and consequently our understanding of the embryo’s growth and development was limited. Today, science has revealed the intricate mechanisms by which the baby develops from conception to birth. While this has been beneficial, scientific advancement in the field of embryology has raised serious ethical issues, particularly regarding production and use of embryos in the laboratory or clinic.

In considering these issues, it is vital to have an accurate understanding of what is and has taken place. Not all are scientists, but we need to ensure our arguments are factual: failure to do so only weakens our stand.

First then, what is a *human* embryo? At conception, the male sperm and female ovum fuse to form a new organism (called a zygote – a single cell). The zygote divides and subsequent divisions form the blastocyst. With continuing cell division, cells differentiate into the tissues and organs that make up the body and after 42 days the recognisable baby is formed. Up to about 14 days after conception the blastocyst can divide, forming identical (monozygotic) twins. The term “embryo” has several meanings: it may be used scientifically to describe the fetus between 14 days and 8 weeks after conception (before 14 days is the “pre-embryonic” stage). In common parlance, “embryo” is used to describe the fetus from conception to 8 weeks post conception and this definition will be used in this article.

It is important to note that the embryo is not part of the mother – from conception it is an individual human being. By scientific definitions it is a living organism; it controls its own internal environment and produces energy for living processes, responds to its environment and grows. Consequently, given the right artificial conditions, it is possible to maintain embryos outside the mother for a short period of time. This is unnatural and it is only scientific advancement that has made it possible. Currently, by law, embryos can only be kept alive in the laboratory for 14 days.

Although God has allowed man to produce and maintain embryos outside the womb, this does not imply it is right. In order to ascertain whether it is right in the sight of God we must examine Scripture. The Bible makes it evident that the embryo is special from conception. David says the Lord knew him whilst he was in the womb, saying, “Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect” (Ps. 139. 15, 16), inferring that God knew him personally in the embryonic state, that is, before the fetus takes the recognisable form. Job supports this view, stating that his growth in the womb was an event of Divine command (Job 10. 8-12; cf. Ecc. 11. 5; Eze. 37. 7-10).

Furthermore, God does not only know about us while we are in the womb (He has known us from eternity), but we may be the objects of His special care and keeping. God told Jeremiah: “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee” (Jer. 1. 5). Similarly, Isaiah (Isa. 49. 1, 5) and the apostle Paul (Gal. 1. 15) suggest that embryos are precious and may be set apart by God, not only from eternity in Divine predestination, but also in time while in the womb.

Scripture is clear that prior to birth the fetus is not simply an entity or an animal – it is a human with all that this entails, including being the subject of original sin, imputed to us through Adam, our federal head, from the point of conception (Ps. 51. 5; cf. Rom. 5. 12-21). The embryo therefore, “whilst being unperfect” (Ps. 139. 15), cannot be regarded as a commodity to be created and destroyed at will, just as we would not kill a new born baby or a little child. Therefore it may be concluded that Scripture does not permit production of human embryos, outside the mother’s womb (termed “*in vitro* embryos” – literally “in glass” or in the laboratory), where death of the embryo is the endpoint.

The witness of Scripture has been adhered to by the Church through the ages, although there have been differences of opinion on when the embryo becomes a “living soul”. While the earliest church fathers believed the embryo has a soul from conception, misrendering of Exodus 21. 22, 23 in the Septuagint (the early Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament) led some later church fathers to suppose God views the early embryo as different to the later fetus. The mistranslation reads:

And if two men strive and smite a woman with child, and her child be born *imperfectly formed*, he shall be forced to pay a penalty; as the woman’s husband may lay upon him, he shall pay with a valuation. But if it be *perfectly formed*, he shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

By the Reformation, the prevailing view was that the soul entered the fetus some time after conception, but before birth (normally defined as between 40-90 days post-conception).

At the Reformation Luther believed the soul was present from conception, based on the theory of Traducianism, which proposes that the soul is derived from the parents. Conversely, while Calvin also held the soul to be present from conception (*Sermons on Job*: sermon 12) and the embryo to be a distinct human being (*Commentary on Exodus* 21. 22, 23), he held the opposing view: Creationism, that is, the soul is created and infused into the embryo by God. Creationism remains the prevailing view of reformed churches.

A further view emerged during the Renaissance, possibly attributable to Leonardo de Vinci (Jones, D. A, *The Soul of the Embryo*. CIPG: 2004 p 183), taking up an idea of the Stoics (a group of Greek philosophers) that the soul is breathed into the child during the first

breath taken after birth. Today, this view is sometimes used to argue for the production of *in vitro* embryos.

However, regardless of the view taken as to the time of ensoulment, it is evident that, excepting the misguided view of the church fathers reliant on the erroneous rendering of the Septuagint, the church from the earliest days has held embryonic life to be special and believed that the embryo must not be killed. *The Didache* II. 2 (an early Christian writing) states: “thou shalt not murder a child by abortion nor kill them when born.” This historical survey suggests that the Church through the ages would have unequivocally opposed embryo production, even with a termination point of 14 days post-conception.

It may be asked, does production of embryos in the laboratory always result in their death? Any embryo produced for research will be killed before 14 days post-conception, according to the law. While it is theoretically possible to create a single embryo for implantation into the mother’s womb for reproductive purposes, without destruction of any embryos in the process, practically this does not happen. The process is expensive, so multiple embryos are normally produced, screened for defects, and only the healthiest are implanted into the mother in order to give greatest likelihood of successful pregnancy. Embryos not implanted may be killed, used for research, or frozen for future implantation. Freezing embryos alone results in the death of up to 50 % of them. Consequently, in practice all production of *in vitro* embryos results in the death of some embryos. Some make a distinction between producing embryos for research and for reproductive purposes. However, no such distinction really exists. The fact is life is life, regardless of why it was created.

Additionally, while “reproductive therapy” may not be explicitly spoken against in Scripture, it appears inconsistent with God being seen as the only giver of life. Abraham and Sarah practised a form of surrogacy and the pain this later caused should warn any Christian against it. Rachel’s use of mandrakes (Gen. 30. 14), a herb traditionally believed to increase fertility, was not blessed with conception; her womb remaining closed until the Lord gave conception. Instead, Isaac’s prayer on behalf of Rebekah (Gen. 25. 21) and the prayer of Hannah (1 Sam. 1) were the means blessed by the Lord in granting children. From Creation, the Lord has commanded fruitfulness (Gen. 1. 28), but in His all-wise purpose He withholds this blessing at times, for reasons He may not make known. Whatever view may be

taken of the various “reproductive therapies”, in the case of *in vitro* fertilisation, on the basis previously discussed, we can conclude it is not permitted by God.

What about the creation, modification, and selection of embryos in order to prevent disease? Scientists have attempted to help mothers who have serious genetic diseases conceive healthy children. Principally this is achieved by producing embryos in the laboratory, screening them for disease, discarding embryos with the disease and only implanting healthy embryos into the mother’s womb. Regardless of the sympathy we have for mothers with such diseases, particularly as any children they have may suffer from the same condition, the same principle regarding the sanctity of embryonic life must still apply. Such techniques cause the death of embryos. Just because an embryo carries a disease should not necessarily preclude it from life – who are we to make such decisions? From the point of view of the embryo, the process is no different to an early abortion and should not be used even if it may seemingly benefit health.

What about using spare human embryos for research? If embryos are produced they should never be the subjects of live experimentation any more than any baby should be. However, use of dead embryos for research purposes cannot be wrong, any more than using other donated human tissue for research, whether collected during surgery or after death. Nevertheless, this must not be used as a reason to create *in vitro* embryos in the first place or to kill them having created them.

What about the production of animal embryos or animal/human embryos? Scientific research on animal embryos dates back over 100 years. Schenk reported *in vitro* fertilisation of guinea pig ova in 1878, although it was not until 1959 that Cheng successfully used *in vitro* fertilisation in rabbits to produce live offspring. Animal embryos have allowed valuable insights into the developing embryo and my own research has involved the study of liver from embryonic piglets.

If we would not use human embryos in research, why use animal embryos? Well, animals are not man (1 Cor. 15. 39) and have no immortal soul. Animals were given to man to have dominion over and to subdue (Gen. 1. 28), but it must be remembered that a righteous man regardeth the life of his beast (Prov. 12. 10). We should not torture or use animals for our own selfish ends, such as in the cosmetics industry, but where animals can be used for medical and scientific advancement, while limiting any suffering they are subjected to, the Bible does

not speak against it. The UK has some of the toughest animal experimentation legislation in the world and we may be thankful for it, but must bear in mind that God gave the animal kingdom to man and that animals are not men. Research using animal embryos continues to play an essential role in furthering our understanding of biological processes and, in time, may lead to improvements in medical care. It may be appropriate to state here, that in contrast to animal embryos, the use of *in vitro* human embryos in research has so far failed to produce any significant developments and scientists have questioned the value of research based on them.

What about animal/human embryos? Recent legislation allows production of embryos derived from both animals and humans (so-called “admixed” or “inter-species” embryos) under licence. Production of admixed embryos is strictly regulated and none of these embryos can be implanted into the womb of any animal or woman. Admixed embryos include “cybrids” (cytoplasmic hybrid; discussed below), “true hybrids” (developed by fertilisation of a human ovum with animal sperm, or vice-versa, and containing 50 % animal and 50 % human DNA), “human chimeras” (embryos containing both true animal cells and true human cells mixed together) and “transgenic humans” (a human embryo with pieces of animal DNA inserted).

Excepting those true hybrids which have been created for several years using hamster ovum and human sperm in clinics as a way of ascertaining sperm viability (although this practice is becoming increasingly uncommon), there are presently no plans to create true hybrids, transgenic humans or human chimeras for research purposes.

However, licences to create cybrids in three UK research institutes are currently active; therefore it is useful to know a little about the production of a cybrid. Within human and animal cells there are two distinct parts that contain genetic material. These are the nucleus, containing 99.5 % of the cell’s DNA, and the mitochondria (the part of the cell that produces energy), containing the other 0.5 %. Mitochondrial DNA contains the codes for just 37 genes but all are involved in essential cellular processes, including energy production via the electron transport chain and protein synthesis. To produce a cybrid, the animal ovum has its nucleus removed (but retains its mitochondria) and a human nucleus (from a diploid human cell – containing a full set of chromosomes and not the half set contained in the “haploid” sperm or ovum) is inserted into it. As a result 99.5 % of the DNA in the

cybrid cell is human but 0.5 % is animal (the mitochondrial DNA). Given the right conditions this cybrid cell will multiply to form a cybrid embryo.

Is the embryo human or animal? What would it look like if it were allowed to develop? Does it have a soul or not? These are questions we may guess at but cannot really begin to answer. Why do we object so strongly to their creation? The problem lies in crossing the boundaries clearly settled in the Bible regarding man's uniqueness (1 Cor. 15. 39). Man was created in the image of God (Gen. 1. 27; 9. 6) and has an immortal soul, (Gen. 2. 7; Ecc. 12. 7; Matt. 10. 28) something animals do not possess. Furthermore the possibility of naturally producing human-animal "true hybrids" (by natural fertilisation of a human ovum with an animal sperm or vice-versa) is clearly spoken against in Scripture (Ex. 22. 19; Lev. 18. 23; 20. 15, 16). If *in vivo* creation of hybrids is wrong, we must conclude *in vitro* methods are also wrong. However, we should note that natural fertilisation can only produce "true hybrids" (50 % human and 50 % animal DNA) and not a cybrid (99.5 % human and 0.5 % animal DNA).

All of the aspects of embryo production are covered to some extent in the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008. The Act updates the previous Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990. Quoting from the HFEA's website (www.hfea.gov.uk), the 2008 Act covers the following points:

- "Ensuring that the creation and use of all human embryos outside the body - whatever the process used in their creation - are subject to regulation"
- "A ban on selecting the sex of offspring for non-medical reasons"
- "Retention of a duty to take account of 'the welfare of the child' when providing fertility treatment, but removal of the reference to 'the need for a father'"
- "Provisions to recognise same-sex couples as legal parents of children conceived through the use of donated sperm, eggs or embryos"
- "Altering restrictions on the use of HFEA collected data to make it easier to do follow-up research"
- "Provisions clarifying the scope of legitimate embryo research activities, including regulation of 'inter-species embryos' (embryos combining human and animal material)."

Some have said the 2008 Bill should never have been introduced, but on this point it is possible to disagree. While *in vitro* human embryos have been produced in the UK for reproductive purposes since 1978, scientific progress has resulted in moves to produce embryos for purposes or in ways unregulated by current law – this is dangerous. It is important that this science is only carried out within clear boundaries. Therefore, though we do not agree with the boundaries established by the new Act, they are better than no boundaries. We must not blindly oppose, but constructively accept legislation closing ethical loopholes, even if it does not go as far as we would like.

In particular, the ban on selection of embryos for implantation on the basis of sex or other non-medical reasons must be welcomed, although we would have liked a ban on all selection or a ban on the creation of all *in vitro* embryos. Similarly, provision for wider dissemination of data from embryo research, in order to further scientific advancement, may be welcomed.

However, aspects of the Act dealing with the family cause grave concern and should be strongly opposed. The Government bowed to minority pressure to include a legal framework for the production of embryos without a “legal” father, principally to allow “production of children” within lesbian partnerships without any reference to a man in the process of procreation. It is, in essence, the pinnacle of feminism and ought to be strongly resisted, although it should be noted that the Act also allows production of embryos for male same-sex partnerships. By undermining the role of the father the Act violates the Biblical teaching regarding the family and in doing so touches the type of the union between Christ and the Church.

Regarding the legislation regarding scientific research, they are complex issues. Many unwise statements have been made on these aspects, mostly showing faulty understanding of the real issues. We may have to admit to not knowing what the answers to many of these issues are. Consequently, we should pray that Parliament might be given wisdom, particularly when we lack wisdom and yet expect “perfect laws”.

However the law may stand regarding the production of human embryos outside the womb, or the formation of any “admixed embryos”, the Bible has clearly spoken – they must not be produced.

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MORAL ISSUES

Marriage: What the Bible Teaches

2. The Foundation for Marriage and Some Principles

By Rev G. G. Hutton

This is the second part of a paper given at the 2005 Free Presbyterian Youth Conference.

The Foundation for Marriage

It goes without saying that a sound marriage is built on a sound foundation. And when little attention is given to the foundation, we should not be surprised to see so many marriages floundering. The real foundation is God's Word, and what it teaches about marriage. We must recognise that it was God who established marriage; so there are divine requirements. Some marriages are no doubt intended to bring social status; they are nothing more than a loveless social arrangement – a marriage of convenience. God is not brought into the matter at all.

On the human level, however, a proper foundation for a prosperous and happy marriage is trust. Those who enter into marriage must first be confident that they can trust one another. There can be no happiness or peace if either partner is suspicious of the other. Such trust is built on undivided love for each other. True love trusts! Any sign of instability or unfaithfulness should be treated as a warning for the future.

Love must have an object, and both partners thinking of marriage should be confident that they are definitely the object of the other's exclusive affections. The question of course arises: What is love? It is probably impossible to define love with perfect accuracy; it is much easier to illustrate it. God "is love", but He has demonstrated His love outside of Himself, and in such a way that His creatures may be conscious of it. This should be true of love within marriage. And love must reveal itself and prove itself before marriage if it is to blossom within marriage. Each partner in the marriage should be aware of being specially and particularly loved by the other.

The husband is required to love his wife "as Christ loved the Church". This tells us where we are to find out about the love to be shown in marriage. Let unconverted people define love as they will, Christians will want to learn how to love someone else truly as they learn by experience of the love of God. When a husband loves God as

he ought, he will love his wife and also his children as he should. This is illustrated for us in the experience of Joshua, when we read of him announcing: “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord”. It is a blessing for any family when its head has such a purpose. Joshua desired to serve God, but not in isolation from his family. He was going to serve God within his family and with his family. He would acknowledge God and worship Him in his family.

A home without God is a sad spectacle, and a family without the worship of God is a poor family indeed. Any young person intending to marry should resolve to put God first in everything, to observe His worship carefully and to treat the counsel of the Bible as the most important in all decision-making. It is from the Bible we learn what God requires of husbands, of wives and of children. It is from the Bible we learn how to live in harmony, how to conduct our domestic affairs, how to raise children and how to love each other. No better foundation for a successful marriage can be discovered than this: genuine love inflamed and maintained by the knowledge and experience of God’s covenant love revealed in His Word. A husband who loves his Bible will love his wife. A wife who loves God’s Word will also love her husband. If they both love God, they will delight in each other, while confidently trusting each other.

Some Principles

The first principle we will consider is *sustained love*. When Jesus told His disciples of His love for them, He went on to say, “Continue ye in My love.” It is so in marriage also: love must continue. Marriage is a delicate plant; it needs nourishment and careful cultivation. If true love does not nourish it, marriage will wilt and become sickly. Instead of bringing pleasure, it may become domestic imprisonment from which at least one of the parties will seek to escape. And the apostle Paul warns us that one indication of a society that God has left to itself is that it lacks natural affection.

God requires each of us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind and with all our strength; in addition, we must love our neighbour as ourselves. But the love required within marriage is described in a special way. In his Epistle to the Ephesians, Paul tells husbands to love their wives “even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it”. The man who takes on the role of a husband is directed to study Christ’s love for the Church.

If he takes the matter seriously, it should be obvious to him that he can never love his wife too much. A husband cannot possibly love his wife to the extent that Christ loved the Church, but the love of the Saviour is set before him as the standard towards which he must strive.

We do not suggest for a moment that the love of an unconverted man is somehow inferior to that of a Christian husband. But we believe that a godly husband will want to learn more and more of the love of Christ, in order to nurture his personal relationship with his wife. The love of Christ is an eternal love and therefore is far above any merely human love, however genuine. Yet the love of Christ possesses features which a husband should cultivate. For example, the love of Christ is consistent; it is tender and compassionate; it is merciful and forgiving; it is self-denying and self-sacrificing.

The second principle is *Scriptural order*. God not only instituted marriage but He revealed the most appropriate order for the marriage relationship to function successfully. Since God is not the author of confusion but the God of order, we would expect that He would lay down the ground rules for the parties within marriage. It is crystal clear from Scripture that God has appointed a head to exercise authority within a marriage. God has declared that the woman is to be willingly subject to her husband. "The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church." In the same passage, God's Word requires: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord".

No one concerned to obey the Bible can possibly argue with such definite pronouncements. The Saviour taught that love for His commandments, and obedience to them, shows love for Himself. No one who professes to love Christ can ignore His holy and just commandments about the order God has appointed within marriage. Without a recognized head there can at best be domestic chaos and at worst the death of the marriage itself. There cannot be two heads; this would be to create a monster. Modern man may imagine that he can produce a better way of organising a family, but whatever he does, many more marriages are breaking down. God, who is from everlasting to everlasting – knowing the end from the beginning – wisely designed what suits the needs of His creatures in every generation. If men imagine they can produce a better society by improving on God's plan for marriage, they must be considered fools.

The third principle is *sharing*. During His earthly ministry, the Saviour stressed the importance of what God said about marriage at the beginning of human history. He then quoted the words: “For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” It ought to be clear from this that God intended a husband and wife to be so close that their lives are completely bound up in each other; they become in reality part of each other. It is their shared experiences that bind husbands and wives together. They laugh together, they mourn together, they plan together, they suffer together. In fact they live and work together as a team. Each feels deeply the absence of the other; they miss each other’s support and companionship. Their lives are so entwined that one is not complete without the other.

Selfishness has no place in a marriage. Where it exists, it will inevitably lead to bickering, instability, lack of confidence and trust. If it is not dealt with, it may in the end bring about the breakdown of a marriage, as often happens. But when two people get married, they are not simply to concentrate on each other and their own interests, to the total exclusion of everyone and everything outside their own little world. Marriage should not just contribute to improving men as husbands, but men as men within the community. Nor should marriage simply make the woman a better wife and mother, but it should develop her into a better woman, capable of making a more valuable contribution to society around her.

Reprinted with permission from The Young People’s Magazine of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland (May/June 2006).

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CHURCH HISTORY

Howell Harris (1714-1773)

By J. R. Broome

Howell Harris was born at Trevecka, near Talgarth, in January 1714. His father was a carpenter, who had moved about the year 1700 from Carmarthenshire to the district of Talgarth in Breconshire. Howell was one of four children, having two older brothers and a sister.

He was brought up in an outwardly religious life, and vividly remembered, as a boy of seven, walking to Talgarth Church with his brother to recite his catechism. At this tender age, God's greatness and the importance of eternity pressed so heavily on his mind, that if he saw the village children playing on the Sabbath, he could not refrain from rebuking them. His eldest brother, Joseph, was a close companion, and his first teacher. While he followed the trade of a blacksmith, Joseph Harris was no ordinary man. He went to London in 1724, when Howell was ten years old, and became friendly with Halley, the royal astronomer. In 1737, he became assistant assay-master of the King's Mint, which gave him the right of residence in the Tower of London, and was appointed chief assay-master in 1748.

So, at the age of ten, Howell lost the friendship of his brother, though Joseph continued to take an interest in him, writing from London and urging his parents to give Howell as good an education as they could afford. In 1725 he went to a local elementary school, and in 1728 he was placed in a grammar school at Llwyn-Llwyd in the parish of Llanigon near Hay-on-Wye. Here Howell studied Greek and Latin, and used a good deal of Latin in his earlier diaries. These reveal how he joined in all the amusements and innocent mischief with his fellow students. At the end of the summer of 1729, he was dangerously ill, and this doubtless checked his spirit. In August 1730, his brother Joseph pressed upon him the need to seek out a suitable career, and it seems at this time he had thoughts of the ministry of the Church of England. His brother, who sometimes sailed to the West Indies, to test out nautical instruments, left England in 1730. While this was a loss to Howell, in March 1731, he suffered an even greater loss in the death of his father.

He was just seventeen, and was forced to leave the grammar school at Llwyn-Llwyd, and go out to seek some means of earning his living. In January 1732, he was appointed schoolmaster at Llan-gors, a small township near Syfaddan Lake, not far from his home. He was here for about eighteen months, possibly a little longer. Llan-gors was a place with a doubtful reputation in those days, and Howell's mother was very anxious for her young son of eighteen, with little to occupy him, and no father or brother at hand to guide him. He became involved in godless company; he loved arguments, and delighted in mocking the few Non-conformists in the area. He described Llan-gors as: "the place where I first broke out in the devil's service." When preaching there some

years afterwards, he said to his congregation: "Many of you used to go with me towards hell, and God's grace must have been free, or else I would not have received it, because I was the worst of you all." Yet his worldly amusements gave him no peace of mind. An occasional sermon would make his life distasteful to him, and on one occasion he dreamed that the great Day of Judgment had arrived, and that he was standing before the judgment seat compelled to give an account of himself. On such occasions he vowed to lead a better life, and even tried to pray. "I tried to turn to God in my own power, but I did not succeed until the day His power came."

When his brother returned from Jamaica, he came to visit him at Llan-gors, and found that Howell was dissatisfied with his position in life. Joseph advised him to stay where he was for the while, promising to look for something better for him as soon as he could. This he did, eventually finding for him an appointment as a schoolmaster in Hampshire. In November 1734, he wrote to him, telling him of this post and pointing out that it would give him an opportunity of taking a degree at Oxford. By the time he received this letter, Howell had left Llan-gors, and was in charge of a school on the other side of the lake, in the old Church of Llangasty (Tal-y-llyn). He was in lodgings with a gentleman named Mr. Lewis Jones of Trebinsiwn Mansion in that parish. While there, Howell regularly spent his weekends at his mother's home at Trevecka, and fairly regularly attended the Sunday services at Talgarth Church.

He was now twenty-one and his mind had been set upon the ministry for some years, yet he had never come to the Lord's Table. This could have been through sheer indifference, or quite possibly because he felt himself unfit and unworthy to approach the Table. Difficulties arose concerning his post in Hampshire, so that he was kept at Llangasty until November 1735. While he himself had no hand in this delay, he came before long to realise that the hand of God was in this matter, and this waiting period was to be the very time when God would call him by grace, and "make the insignificant schoolmaster of Llangasty, not a school-teacher in England, but the Apostle of Jesus Christ to the Welsh people, who at that time were in a condition of utter spiritual destitution." (Bennett, Richard, *The Early Life of Howell Harris*. Banner of Truth Trust 1962, p. 18).

In the established Church in 1735, there were a few gracious men left, while for the most part the clergy were content to leave their

parishioners to live just as they pleased. Some clergymen, who had a more cultured and moral outlook, supported the schools of the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, and the Society for the Reformation of Manners, but they had little success. "This is not surprising because the Doctrine of Grace had vanished from the pulpits" (Richard Bennett). Mostly, the ministry consisted of a dry morality, knowing nothing of the power of the Holy Spirit. Great emphasis was laid on men being ordained, and little on what they knew or preached. The Rev. Pryce Davies, the vicar of Talgarth, was one of these more moral clergymen. His worst faults were that he hunted, and was occasionally guilty of getting drunk. At the same time, he laid great emphasis on regular Sunday services, and services on weekdays, and when he became a magistrate, he tried to bring about a moral reformation, which he had failed to obtain through his pulpit. Yet for all his efforts few attended his church, and even fewer came to the Lord's Table.

On the Sunday before Easter, 1735, Mr. Davies preached on the necessity of coming to the Lord's Table, and among other things said: "You say that you are not fit to come to the Table. Well, then, I say that you are not fit to pray; yea, you are not fit to live, and neither are you fit to die." Howell Harris, who had come to morning service quite unconcerned, was deeply convicted by the vicar's remarks, and determined to come to the Table on the following Sunday. Returning home, he met one of his best friends, Joseph Saunders, a blacksmith in the hamlet of Trevecka, and to him he repeated the vicar's words, so solemnly that the blacksmith could not forget them, and they were eventually blessed to him as the means of his conversion. Further on, Howell Harris met Evan, the weaver, with whom he had a long-standing feud. Obeying the command read at the end of the sermon, he approached him, admitted his fault, begged forgiveness, and the two were reconciled.

His concern of mind remained with him during the following week, and he did attend the Lord's Table the next Sunday, an action that deepened the impressions already made on his mind by an apprehension that he had come unworthily. Now he resolved to follow a new life, while at the same time there remained in him a carnal spirit, seeking to draw him back to his old habits. On Sunday, the 20th April 1735, for some reason he did not return home, but stayed at his lodgings at Trebinsiwn Mansion. About nine o'clock that morning,

when the convictions of the last three weeks were almost forgotten, he casually picked up an old book: *The Whole Duty of Man*. Turning over the pages, he began to read one headed: "On self-examination", and as he read it, the Lord suddenly convicted him for the first time as a lost and ruined sinner. He says, "All my natural faculties were confounded in the shock." At the same time, he knew nothing of the way of salvation, and as he had no one to guide him, he set about working for his salvation. He returned to Trevecka the next weekend, and told his friend, Joseph Saunders, of the light he had received on his condition, and his resolution to fight his way towards life. The blacksmith agreed to join him, and the next Sunday they rose early, and keeping away from the villagers, endeavoured to keep the Sabbath perfectly. After this, three or four others joined them in their efforts.

Harris set out to keep a holy life: reading, praying and fasting, and striving against sin. He cut himself off from all his pleasures, friends, and everything he considered worldly, living on bread and water, fasting for three days a week, and sharing what little money he had amongst the poor. Such was his temptation that he considered it nothing to retrace his steps a long distance if he could not remember for certain whether he had closed gates or not. He really began to feel he was winning, until one Sunday he went to Talgarth Church, and heard a young clergyman preaching about the necessity of growing in grace. This led him into utter confusion as he felt he was just holding his own, but certainly not making any progress. Now he felt he never could succeed, and he was tempted with atheistic thoughts - the shafts of Satan sent into his heart. About the middle of May, he went one day to pray in the belfry of Llangasty Church, and there felt a strange compulsion to cast his soul upon the Lord's mercy. This seemed to ease his great struggle for a time, as he felt submission in casting himself upon the Lord, but his great desire now was to know the Lord's love to him. Reading a book called *The Practice of Piety*, he read of pardon to be obtained at the Lord's Table, when sin was acknowledged and confessed, and faith was given to believe in the Lord. On Whit Sunday Morning, 1735, he came to the Lord's Table at Talgarth Church, and there, while Satan roared about him: "there is no God", immediately before the Lord's Supper he felt Satan driven away, and in the service strength was given to believe that his sins had been pardoned on account of the shed blood of Christ. He says, "I lost my

burden, O blessed day. Would that I might remember it gratefully evermore.”

While this experience of forgiveness in Talgarth Church was sweet to him, yet he still had a feeling of further need in his soul, and it was later while in secret prayer in Llangasty Church that the love of God was more fully shed abroad in his heart. In his diary that he kept at this time, he tried to express what he felt on this never-to-be-forgotten occasion:

There his earnest prayer was answered,
There was heard his urgent plea,
And his hungry soul was sated
By Jehovah One in Three.

Shortly after this, when angered by one of his pupils, the devil tempted him that he had fallen from grace, and he contemplated suicide, but the Lord mercifully restrained him with the word: “I the Lord change not”, which came with great power into his mind, and brought peace. Never before had he heard this word of Scripture, but to his dying day, he loved it more than any word.

In the darkest periods, when every star was obscured, and all hope had vanished, his soul clung to this verse. This was his sure anchor, and it kept its hold a thousand times after all else had given way. This verse brought him to ‘the glorious liberty of the children of God,’ and to realise what alone mattered was God’s ‘mighty grasp of him.’”

(Bennett p. 27).

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DOCTRINE AND TRUTH

Extract From John Bunyan: Only Sensible Sinners Come to Jesus Christ

The Gospel Standard Articles of Faith, number 10, states that “every quickened child of God is brought, in God's own time and way, through the Spirit's teaching, from necessity to depend for salvation on Christ's blood and righteousness alone.”

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11. 28). Coming to Christ floweth from a sound *sense* of the absolute need that a man hath of Him.

(1) “They will come with weeping, and with supplication will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight

way, wherein they shall not stumble” (Jer. 31. 9). Mind it! They come with weeping and supplication; they come with prayers and tears. Now prayers and tears are the effect of a right *sense* of the need of mercy. Thus a *senseless* sinner cannot come; he cannot pray, he cannot cry, he cannot come *sensible* of what he sees not, nor feels. “In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping; they shall go, and seek the Lord their God; they shall ask their way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, *saying*, Come, and let us join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant *that* shall not be forgotten” (Jer. 50. 4, 5).

(2) This coming to Christ is called a running to Him, a fleeing to Him; a fleeing to Him from wrath to come. By all which terms is set forth the *sense* of the man that comes; namely, that he is affected with the *sense* of his sin, and the death due thereto; that he is *sensible* that the avenger of blood pursues him; and that therefore he is cut off, if he make not speed to the Son of God for life (Matt. 3. 7; Ps. 143. 9). Fleeing is the last work of a man in danger. All that are in danger do not flee; no, not all see themselves in danger; all that hear of danger, will not flee. Men will consider if there be no other way of escape before they flee. Therefore, as I said, fleeing is the last thing. When all refuge fails, and a man is made to see that there is nothing left him but sin, death and damnation, unless he flies to Christ for life; then he flies, and not till then.

(3) That the true coming is from *a sense of an absolute need of Jesus Christ* to save, is evident by the outcry that is made by them that come, even as they are coming to Him. “Lord, save me or I perish”, “Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?”, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” and the like. (Matt. 14. 30; Acts 2. 37; Acts 16. 30). This language does sufficiently discover that the truly come souls, are souls *sensible* of their need of salvation by Jesus Christ: and moreover, that there is nothing else that can help them but Christ.

Extract taken from Come and Welcome to Jesus Christ (see p. 28-9), Chapter 2 – ‘Coming to Christ Explained’.

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LETTERS, ADDRESSES AND SERMONS

Witnessing

By J. R. Broome

This is an abbreviated transcript of the first part of the lecture “Witnessing in the Workplace”, given by Mr. J. R. Broome at the Village Hall at Barton-le-Clay on Saturday 15th November 2008.

The first criteria for anyone witnessing effectively must be that they are called by grace and that there is a real work of God begun in their heart. Even if that work is very gentle and hardly discernable yet the world will notice. The Pharisees said to Nicodemus: “Art thou one of them?” Time proved that he was one of them when he came to the Cross to take away the body of Jesus to the tomb. Secret disciples cannot hide from the world for ever.

Then a witness of Jesus Christ (“ye *are* my witnesses” Isa. 43. 10, 12) will be completely separated from the world and will have learnt the meaning of what it is to be “in the world but not of it”. Not only will they be separated from godlessness, but like the Apostle they will be separated from all false religion and error.

A true witness will confess Him before men and not be ashamed of Him in a sinful and adulterous generation. (Matt. 10. 32; Rom. 10. 9; Luke 12. 8). The Lord Jesus counselled his disciples not to hide their light under a bushel (Matt. 5. 15; Mark 4. 21; Luke 11. 33) but to let their good works be seen by men, that they might glorify their Father which is in heaven. Jesus told them: “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid” (Matt. 5. 14).

What was the light that Jesus spoke of? That light was not a mere nominal profession of His Name. It was not a regular attendance at a place of worship. It was not the nominal name of “Christian”. Many give nominal credence to God. There are many erroneous churches and sects that all use the Bible and yet either deny or know nothing about the eternal Son of God. The light that Jesus spoke of was that which he spoke to Peter about: “Whom say ye that I am?” “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,” came the reply. And Jesus then said, “Blessed art thou Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father that is in heaven”.

A true basis for witnessing must be experience. A sinner must be born again of the Spirit of God and must have had Christ formed in his

heart as the hope of glory. He must be able to speak like John the Divine spoke when he said:

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ....

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness [*that is, unregeneracy*] we lie, and do not the truth: 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. 1-3, 5-7).

John said this: “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. 14).

Now if that is true there will be something to which to witness, or, Someone to whom to witness. When Peter was instrumental in the healing of the lame man at the gate Beautiful in the temple, and preached the gospel in the temple, he and John were arrested and brought before the High Priest. Peter immediately preached Christ: “Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even* by him doth this man stand here before you whole” (Acts 4. 10). And then we read this: “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus” (Acts 4. 13). What a word that is! Will the world take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus? If you are concerned to be a witness for Christ, will anyone take knowledge of you? This will be the only true, effective witnessing, witness to the truth that Jesus Christ has been precious to you.

Then, witnessing must be done quietly, unobtrusively and prayerfully. We should pray that the Lord would make an opening to speak a word in His name, or open a conversation that is spiritually profitable. The apostle Peter said we should always be ready “to *give* an answer to every man that asketh [us] a reason of the hope that is in

[us] with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3. 15). We should studiously avoid religious arguments; they are most unprofitable. James asks in his epistle:

Who *is* a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in yours hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife *is*, there *is* confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”

Then he says this: “the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace” (James 3. 13-18).

Some are naturally reticent in speaking about the matters of their soul. For many years, often, their lips are sealed, but their life and walk will speak. Also many suffer from unbelief, and have to admit that they hide their light under a bushel and are like Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus who were secret disciples for fear of the Jews. That is a solemn fear, unbelief and shame that leave us unwilling to stand alone amongst our peers. I am reminded, of James Griggs’ hymn in Gadsby’s:

Ashamed of Jesus! Yes I may,
When I’ve no guilt to wash away;
No tear to wipe; no good to crave;
No fears to quell; no soul to save.

But to many the day comes when, under the exercise of the Holy Spirit, there is a divine commandment laid in the soul to witness to a work of God in believers’ baptism. For many years that witness used to be in the open air. John Warburton baptized in Trowbridge in the millpond at Lady Down Mill on the River Biss. A large part of the town, the community, used to come out to watch. He had a great forum - it was in a valley and the people sat around the hills listening to him. It was a witness, but when a baptistry was built in his chapel in 1826, it split his church, because a substantial number felt that the baptizing ought to be in the open air.

Those who are baptized, whether in the open air or in chapel, witness to their faith in the Lord and come within the compass of the words of Christ: “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 10. 32).

I believe that where the Lord works in the heart a separation from this world and brings into an exercise of soul and gives that divine commandment, there will be a knowledge if you are walking in disobedience, but it is the witness which the Lord has laid in the Scriptures. It is the ordinance of believers' baptism and his table.

So witnessing is a solemn matter. Either we are a true witness or a false witness. What, in fact, are we doing? We are dealing with immortal souls. Who is able to make our witness bear fruit? Only God! The Scriptures say: "we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2. 10). We may sow the seed, but he alone will give the increase. Paul said, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (1 Cor. 3. 6). Either our lives speak, or they don't. And why is that? Why do they not speak? Because there is compromise. We need solemnly, seriously, to consider our walk, our conduct, our conversation, for be sure of this, we are watched by the world.

"Witness" in the New Testament is the Greek word "martus" and it denotes one who gives testimony to the truth at the expense of his life. From it comes our word martyr. Christ's death and resurrection was a witness in and of itself of his Godhead. The preaching of the cross is a witness in and of itself. "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matt. 24. 14). How many have invited an unconverted person, who has never heard the truth, to come and hear the gospel? The work of grace is God's work, and he can use the preaching of his ministers in salvation. God has decreed to use "the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1. 21). John the Baptist "came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all *men* through him might believe" (John 1. 7). Jesus said to Nicodemus: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness" (John 3. 11).

The Scriptures themselves are a witness to the truth. We read in Ephesians: "As the truth is in Jesus" (Eph. 4. 21). We read that commandment: "Search the Scriptures...for...they are they which testify of me" (John 5. 39). How often have any of you given anyone a Bible? The Trinitarian Bible Society has worked for years in spreading the pure Scriptures. Do you support it financially?

In the New Testament, the word "witness" is used extensively in the

gospels of Luke and John and the Acts of the Apostles. Luke records the words of Jesus spoken at Jerusalem to the disciples, after his resurrection and before his ascension: “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” (Acts 1. 8). When there was the choice of another disciple in the place of Judas, Matthias was chosen, because he was a witness of the life and death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. When Peter and John preached after their arrest we read: “With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 4. 33). And speaking of Christ they said of him: “To him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10. 43). Paul and Barnabas, speaking after the healing of a crippled man at Lystra, spoke of the living God and said that “in times past he suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness” (Acts 14. 17).

Paul, when he was addressing the elders of Ephesus, returning from his last missionary journey to Jerusalem, spoke of “testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ”. And he said this: “I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me” (Acts 20. 21-23). Witnessing for the apostle Paul entailed bonds, afflictions, suffering, persecution, opposition to the truth. If you follow in the footsteps of Christ, expect persecution. Don’t be surprised if the world hates you.

After arriving in Jerusalem, Paul was eventually arrested in the temple by Roman soldiers. Standing on the steps of the temple he addressed the hostile crowd of Jews, and told them of his conversion: describing how Ananias came to him and told him, “The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard” (Acts 22. 14, 15). And when the apostle Paul defended himself before King Agrippa, he spoke of the Jews trying to kill him in the temple, and added: “Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this

day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come” (Acts 26. 22). In his last letter from Rome to Timothy he told him this: “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim. 3. 12), and he warned him that God did not give him a “spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Tim. 1. 7). And he said unto him, “Be not therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God” (2 Tim. 1. 8).

And finally we read in the book of the Revelation, John’s sight of the day of judgment and the opening of the bottomless pit. “I saw thrones, and they that sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God” (Rev. 20. 4). What a witness in our land has been the martyrdom of Cranmer, Latimer and Ridley at the stake in Oxford, as well as many other humble people burned for the truth’s sake in the reign of “Bloody Mary”.

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REVIEWS

***Come and Welcome to Jesus Christ* by John Bunyan**

By Dr. M. J. Hyde

Published by Old Paths Gospel Press (Gospel Mission), obtainable from Christian Bookshop Ossett; paperback; 182 pages; price £4.50.

John Bunyan (1628-1688) has become widely known for a very small number of his writings. Justifiably, *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, *Grace Abounding* and *The Holy War* have had a place in the hearts of many Christians. Sadly, his other books have lain largely forgotten, including *Come and Welcome to Jesus Christ*. This book, first published in 1681, is an exposition of John 6. 37: “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

Bunyan begins by clearly establishing who the “all” that are given to Jesus Christ by the Father are. He demonstrates that “all” refers only to the elect and that they were given before time began. These are truths that it is good to have re-established in our hearts and minds, in a day when so much is thrown against them. He then explains what it is to come to Christ on a personal level. He shows that the coming sinner

will only come as moved by the Holy Spirit, made sensible of their sinful state by nature and enabled by faith to see a beauty in the Lord Jesus as their only hope of salvation. He delineates the many doubts and fears that beset a coming sinner and answers them in a beautiful manner:

But I am a great sinner,...an old sinner,...a hard-hearted sinner,...a backsliding sinner,...have served Satan all my days,...have sinned against light, mercy...' sayest thou. 'I will in no wise cast out,' says Christ. Thus I might go on to the end of things, and show you, that this promise was provided to answer all objections, and doth answer them. But I say, what need of it, if they that are coming to Jesus Christ are not sometimes, yea, oftentimes, heartily afraid, that Jesus Christ will cast them out?

(p. 125).

Bunyan speaks earnestly to those who were once coming, but seem to have lost their way; those who outwardly appeared to be coming, but turn back and follow no more. He deals solemnly with what it means to be "cast out" by Christ and the case of those who are. *Come and Welcome* is a good example of the discriminating and experimental ministry we as a denomination have held so dearly to. If you doubt whether you are coming or have come to Christ, Bunyan will show you where you stand in the light of Scripture. He will point you to the only remedy for your sins, doubts and fears: the one to whom sinners must come to for salvation, "the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1. 14).

This book has been made a blessing to many. It was especially blessed to Mr. John Gosden and Mr. Caleb Sawyer; both mention it in their writings.

This Gospel Mission reprint of *Come and Welcome* is to be preferred to the 2004 reprint published by the Banner of Truth. The Banner of Truth edition is nicely presented, with improved typeface, and the text has been subdivided into paragraphs, but there are strong reservations regarding it. Firstly, it has been modestly modernised and consequently in places it includes the use of "you" and "your" when addressing God, although this is inconsistent, for example, "Lord, if *thou* wilt, *you* canst" (p. 87 Banner of Truth ed.). Secondly, the publishers have used the reprint for their own agenda, championing in the preface the errors of Andrew Fuller, who believed that Christ died for sin in general and that all men could come to Christ if they were willing. However, in *Come and Welcome* Bunyan clearly shows that the offering of Christ

was for *sins in particular*, not for all men in general, but for *all the elect in full*, and that *only the elect* will and can come to Christ.

Some of the phraseology that Bunyan uses is open to interpretation, but when read in context, his presentation of the Gospel cannot be misconstrued as being any “well meant offer”, which the Banner of Truth cites Fuller as preaching. Bunyan addresses “sensible sinners” (p. 29) – a term Bunyan is not shy to use – and having shown who the sensible sinners will be, that is, the elect, he says to them: “He [that is Christ] calls you; he calls upon you to come unto him; which he would not do was he not free to give; yes he bids you” (p. 178). Furthermore, he clearly shows that the coming sinners he addresses are only coming because they know God’s call (Mark 3. 13), God’s illumination (Matt. 16. 17), God’s inclination (Ps. 110. 3) and God’s power (Phil. 2. 13) (p. 181).

This call therefore is no indiscriminate call, but it is the Gospel in all its beauty. If you are in the state Bunyan describes: coming weeping with supplications; fleeing from the wrath to come; sensible of the absolute need of Jesus to save (p. 27), crying, “Lord save me or I perish”, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”; pricked in your heart by the law (Acts 2. 37) and willing to leave all to find peace in Christ (Luke 14. 26, 27), then I warmly recommend this book to you, hoping that it may be blessed to the good of your soul and be a comfort to you.

Other forgotten works of Bunyan have been republished by Gospel Mission and are worth reading, including *Justification by an Imputed Righteousness* and *The Doctrine of the Law and Grace Unfolded*. For those who have both the means and the inclination, I recommend to you Bunyan’s complete works in three volumes, published by the Banner of Truth. All are available from the Christian Bookshop Ossett.

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Student Information

It is hoped in the September and December editions of this magazine to publish information on the careers (post 16), whereabouts, and courses of those in Further and Higher education; also the Chapel they are attending. We should be pleased for students to email us at jrbroome@talktalk.net with information on this subject.

CURRENT EVENTS

500th Anniversary of the Birth of John Calvin

This year marks the 500th Anniversary of the birth of John Calvin. He was born at Noyau in France of 10th July 1509.

He was by far the greatest of the Reformers. Luther, Melancthon and Zwingle had been used of God in the groundwork of the Reformation, but there was a need for a Reformer who could rise above the confusion of contention to survey the whole field of Scriptural Truth and present it as one harmonious whole.

Calvin possessed great intellectual and spiritual gifts which exactly fitted him for this work. Converted between 1528-1533, educated in Paris and Orleans Universities in Theology and Law, brought out of the Roman Catholic Church to devote himself to the preaching of the Gospel and to expound the truth, he undertook the great work of systematising the whole scheme of divine truth, bringing out in order and harmony all the doctrines contained in the Word of God.

The first edition of his great work, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* was published (in Latin) at Basle in 1536, when he was twenty-seven. His works have survived for over 450 years and made a lasting impact in the Netherlands, Scotland, England and the United States. The truths which he expounded are to be found in the *Canons of Dort* (1619), *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (1647), the *Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England* (1562), *The Savoy Declaration* (1658) and the *Particular Baptist Confession of Faith* (1689)

The Gospel Standard Trust Publications hopes this year to publish a brief account of his life in commemoration of this Anniversary.

200th Anniversary of the Birth of Charles Darwin

This year marks the 200th Anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin and the 150th Anniversary of his book *The Origin of Species*, which proposed for the first time the theory of evolution by Natural Selection. It is being called the Year of Darwin. The Royal Mail is issuing ten stamps and the Royal Mint a £2 coin with Darwin on one side of the face and an ape on the opposite side. The Wellcome Trust is sending material to all Primary and Secondary Schools. There are Exhibitions at the Natural History Museum in London and at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, beside numerous programmes on the BBC.

Unremitting propaganda is being used to promote the theory and ridicule those who believe in creation. The chairman of the Department of Education at the Royal Society (The British Academy of Science) was recently forced to resign because he expressed personal views sympathetic to divine creation. The theory impinges on Culture, Religion and Morals. It attacks the inspiration of the Word of God, the sacred humanity of Christ, the doctrine of Original Sin and the Atonement. The attitudes it induces account for the low respect for life as seen in abortion, euthanasia and assisted suicide and in the collapse of morality in the Western World. But for those with 'like precious faith' the Word of God remains. 'By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of the things which do appear.' [Heb. 11, 3] 'For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old and the earth standing out of the water.' [2 Pet. 3, 5]. 'For a thousand years in they sight are but as yesterday.' [Ps. 90, 4].

Ein' feste Burg is unser Gott. Ps.18

A mighty fortress is our God,
A bulwark never failing;
Our Helper He, amid the flood
Of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe
Doth seek to work his woe;
His craft and power are great,
And armed with cruel hate;
On earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide,
Our striving would be losing;
Were not the right Man on our side,
The Man of God's own choosing.
Doth ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is He!
Lord Sabaoth is His Name,
From age to age the same;
And he must win the battle.

And though this world, with devils filled,
Should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear for God has willed
His truth to triumph through us
The Prince of darkness grim,
We tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure,
For lo, his doom is sure;
One little word shall fell him.

That Word above all earthly powers,
No thanks to them, abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours,
Through Him who with us sideth.
Let goods and kindred go,
This mortal life also;
The body they may kill;
God's truth abideth still;
His kingdom is forever.

Martin Luther. 1483-1546

tr. by Frederick H. Hedge. 1805-90

PERCEPTION



Being justified freely by his grace
through the redemption that is in Christ
Jesus.
Romans 3:24

AUTUMN 2009

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Cover Picture: The Mackinaw Bridge between Lake Michigan and Lake Huron, U.S.A.

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PERCEPTION

Volume 1

AUTUMN 2009

Number 3

EDITORIAL

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3. 24).

Paul, writing in his letter to the church at Rome, speaks of the judicial sentence of God passed on sinners after the fall in Adam. He says, “the judgment *was* by one to condemnation, but the free gift *is* of many offences unto justification” (Rom. 5. 16). He amplifies it in a later verse with the words; “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 unto justification of life.” (Rom. 5. 18). The solemn word is “judgment”, and the truth is that “we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ” (Rom. 14. 10). “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. 14. 12). Well did the Philippian jailor cry out, “What must I do to be saved?” He felt the judicial sentence of God had fallen upon him; he knew that the wages of sin was death and he felt unprepared to die, just as Hezekiah felt unprepared in his day. Written in their hearts was the truth: “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3. 23). The Philippian jailor wanted to know how things could be put right for his soul for eternity. Hezekiah resorted to earnest prayer: “Like a crane *or* a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail *with looking* upward: O LORD, I am oppressed; undertake for me” (Isa. 38. 14). Sinners under condemnation want to know the sweet experience of justification. Paul led the jailor to Christ as the source of his justification. Hezekiah, in godly sorrow and confession of sin, also came to the cross and could say regarding his justification: “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” (Isa. 38. 17).

The Lord Jesus Christ is the source of justification. It is by His righteousness that the free gift comes upon His entire covenant church to justification of life. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. They have been called by grace; separated from this

world; brought to know themselves as sinners in God's sight; brought to their knees as mourners before God; brought to feel their lost condition; convinced of their sins and are humbled in the dust. Such come with a broken and a contrite heart, which the Lord does not despise. They possess a repentance not to be repented of. God extends His hand of sovereign grace to them in the person and work of His dear Son. They come with the publican: "God be merciful to me"; the dying thief: "Remember me", and as one said to Jesus: "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me". The Lord calls such to Himself: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light" (Mat. 11. 28-30). He said in his own lifetime: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out" (John. 6. 37). This was the truth that Luther learnt in his cell in the monastery at Erfurt in 1505, when seriously ill: the Lord blessed him with the words of the Apostles Creed: "I believe in the forgiveness of sins." Then and there under the powerful operation of the Holy Spirit he knew that his sins were forgiven and learnt that, "The just shall live by faith".

Salvation was for him no longer a question of how holy he could make himself. The great doctrine always associated with him came before him - salvation was by faith alone in Jesus Christ and not of works. No cloisters to avoid a sinful world, no indulgences or any other means could atone for sin. Luther learnt that Christ had loved Him and died for him.

(J. R. Broome, *Martin Luther*. Gospel Standard Trust Pub. 1991 p. 2).

So Paul wrote: "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5. 1). Later he wrote: "...being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. 5. 9). It is God that justifies. He is just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. His people are justified by Him from all things from which they could not be justified by the law. Speaking of the work of redemption and the price Christ paid for the salvation of His people, Paul writes of Him: "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4. 25). God knew his covenant people in eternity past, He predestinated them to be

conformed to the image of His Son, and thus He calls them, justifies them and glorifies them.

Extracted from J. R. Broome, Reformation and Counter Reformation. Gospel Standard Trust Publications 1988, pp. 37-39.

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CURRENT ISSUES

Schools in the Savannah The work of the Savannah Education Trust

By P. Ramsbottom

The background

The little village of Bagri, northern Ghana, is set in the attractive grassland of the beautiful West African savannah. The village is a scattered collection of mud houses next to the Black Volta river. Its people are either fishermen or farmers. But the simplicity and beauty of the village mask crippling poverty and a very difficult lifestyle. In the late 1990s, a minister from the Baptist chapel in the nearby town of Lawra, Charles Karbo, was called to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ in the villages surrounding the town, including Bagri. The people in the villages were still holding hard to traditional ancestor veneration and idol worship. In the providence of God (and through connections that we had in that country) we went to the north of Ghana in 2000 to meet Charles Karbo. At that time he told us, "Jesus has said 'I will build my church' and we are just privileged to be the tools. He will build his church. I am sure that He has His people in these villages." There were at that point no chapel buildings in the villages, and services consisted of a few benches in a clearing.

During our visit, we were deeply affected by the poverty we witnessed – much worse even than other areas of Ghana. The children were obviously severely malnourished and spent much of the year helping their parents to farm. In the long, hungry, dry season, they could be found in the bush, hunting for small animals (such as rats or snakes) to ease their hunger. It is shocking to think that nearly one out of every four children in these villages continues to die before their fifth birthday.

The work begins

When we returned home we could not forget what we had witnessed. On subsequent visits Charles Karbo and the village chief of Bagri asked if we could help, particularly in providing a Christian infant and primary school. We did not immediately give an answer, although we doubted that we could do anything useful. But I believe the Lord had given us a burden for these children and, after many months of careful consideration and prayer, we agreed that we would make the needs known - providing help as resources allowed. It was clear that a simple education for these children could have many spiritual and material benefits. In a village as poor as Bagri, the aim would not necessarily be to increase job opportunities. Education would help to ease the terrible difficulties of every day life - for example, through teaching basic literacy, health/hygiene and farming.

The path ahead seemed daunting. We spent a lot of time researching schools in Africa, speaking to a considerable number of other charities, and setting up financial systems in Ghana and the UK. We also established a registered charity with a small group of Trustees and undertook a further visit to Ghana, speaking not only to Charles Karbo, but also to local government officials and tribal elders. We felt our own weakness and our reliance on God for the necessary help and funds. Building work started in 2005. The villagers of Bagri were divided into three working groups, starting at dawn each morning. The tribal leaders contributed the land - a 22-acre site – and the local education office agreed to fund the ongoing salary costs of teachers (without compromising the Christian nature of the school). During the course of the following months a six-classroom school was constructed using traditional African building techniques - all painted a brilliant blue. A small borehole, providing clean water for the school and village, was drilled just outside the school. Subsequently we have added a nursery and teachers' accommodation to the site.

The School complete

In October 2006 we returned again for the opening of “Bagri Baptist Primary School”. At that time of year the dirt roads in northern Ghana are surrounded by lush landscape: tall grass with acacia and fruit-laden baobab trees. After a difficult journey, it was humbling and thrilling to stand at the gates of the beautiful school: the subject of many hopes and prayers. As well as attending a colourful and moving opening

ceremony, we also spent some time witnessing a typical school day, starting each morning with prayer. Very often the most destitute children are unable to attend African schools. The provision of a meal for each child each day, paid for by the Trust, has allowed the poorest children (including girls, who are often overlooked) to attend school. This meal not only keeps the children from being hungry, but also frees their parents to send them to school because on schooldays they know their children will be fed.

Of course, a Christian school needs Christian teachers. The school is managed by Bagri Baptist Chapel (where Charles Karbo is now the pastor) with the agreement of the village chief and elders. The Trust is also providing a teacher training programme. Prospective Christian teachers from the local area will be given scholarships to help fund their training. This will be on the understanding that, once training is completed, they will return to work in this remote district where recruitment of teachers is difficult. During training these prospective teachers help at Bagri School on an informal basis.

The Future

We are thankful that the Christian school in Bagri village is fully functioning with over 400 uniformed children attending each day. But we are also acutely aware that there are desperate needs in other surrounding villages and have been prayerfully considering the possibility of further schools in these villages, including one called Pavuu (about 12 miles from Bagri). As Trustees we are painfully aware of our limitations and particularly of increased pressures in our own family and work lives. We are also conscious of the financial problems facing many of our supporters at this time. And yet we cannot forget the generations in these villages of northern Ghana growing up



Bagri School, Ghana

in ignorance, without the benefit of a Christian education. During Spring 2009 we therefore felt it right to commence plans for a further Christian school in the village of Pavuu. In conclusion, we can only acknowledge the goodness of God in providing for all of our needs thus far.

There is much that could be written about how each need has been met, often at exactly the right time. It would be remiss not to mention too our loyal and kind supporters who have generously contributed toward the work. We pray that the Christian education provided through the “Savannah schools” will be an influence for good on both the children and these remote villages in northern Ghana.

More information available at www.savannaheducationtrust.org

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Darwin’s Theory of Evolution

By Dr. A. Baker and D. Baker

The year 2009 marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin. In 1859 Darwin published his now famous book *On the Origin of Species*, detailing for the first time the theory of evolution by natural selection. Now, 150 years later, evolution is no longer seen as simply a scientific theory, but has become a deeply ingrained way of thinking in almost every facet of our society. Many people think that it provides a way of explaining their existence without the need of a God to whom they would be accountable. Every day we see the results of this mindset around us in the degeneration of moral and social standards, as people believe they are accountable to no-one, and every man does that which is “right in his own eyes” (Judg. 21. 25). Little would Darwin’s parents have realised, when he was born 200 years ago, the profound consequences their son’s theories would have on mankind.

Darwin was born in 1809 into a nominally religious society where most attended a place of worship and accepted the existence of God. He received a formal, Anglican education and was therefore exposed to the scriptures from an early age. Initially, he planned to pursue a career in Medicine, travelling to Edinburgh University in 1825 to study, but in 1828 switched to Divinity at Christ’s College, Cambridge. Following his graduation in 1831 he was invited as a naturalist onboard *HMS*

Beagle as it embarked on a five-year scientific expedition, taking in the South Coast of America and Galapagos Islands. It was on this voyage that Darwin first read the eminent scientist Charles Lyell's book, *Principles of Geology*, which proposed the geological philosophy that natural processes occur over millions of years and at the same rate as is currently observed. This began to undermine Darwin's faith in the book of Genesis. He began to apply Lyell's principles to the huge diversity of natural life he saw on his travels, particularly among the Galapagos Islands. On returning to Britain in 1836, Darwin began to work on his theories, using his observations from his time aboard the *Beagle* to try to address fundamental questions regarding the origin and diversity of species.

When Darwin was a young man, the established view in the Church was that the "kinds" of Genesis (Gen. 1. 11, 21, 24) corresponded exactly to taxonomical species¹. So people thought that different species of animals and plants then existed in exactly the same form as when God had created them and had not changed at all. However, Darwin observed that species appeared to change over time. Darwin felt that his scientific observations contradicted and undermined the teaching he had received from the church, leading him to further question and gradually abandon the truth of the Bible. As Darwin abandoned the biblical standpoint on creation, his observations, along with Lyell's ideas suggesting that the earth had been around for millions of years, led him to propose his theory of evolution: that over millions of years small changes in species and a titanic struggle for survival has gradually led to the diversity of life we see today.

The word evolution literally means "gradual change" and therefore Darwin used the word to describe the process of single celled organisms like bacteria gradually developing into all the species of animals and plants we see today over millions of years, sometimes called "molecules to man" evolution. However, use of the word evolution is very flexible: often manufacturing companies use it to describe gradual changes in their products and scientists use it to describe observable changes in species as well as in the much more profound sense that Darwin defined it. We must therefore be very clear about exactly what we mean when using the word evolution. Changes within species have clearly occurred in the past and are still occurring today. As such "evolution", or change, is happening. Some bacteria, for example, have developed antibiotic resistance leading to serious

problems such as those posed by MRSA, but they are still bacteria. Scientists often claim that changes like this prove Darwin's evolutionary theory. They do not. Evolution in the sense of changes within created families or "kinds" has always occurred, but this does not prove Darwin's theory of evolution whereby bacteria, one "kind", have gradually evolved into the diversity of animal and plant life we see today. Darwin's theory therefore claims that "kinds" change into other "kinds", for example cats evolve into dogs, whereas the Bible teaches that God created all the animal and plant "kinds" during the creation week and variation within these has resulted in all the different species seen today. The Puritan Bible commentator Matthew Poole used this diversification of Genesis kinds to help explain how all the animals could fit on the ark. Many creationist scientists believe that lions and tigers for example, may belong to the same Genesis kind, having degenerated from a created cat ancestor.

Since Darwin initially proposed his theory of evolution it is now regularly mentioned in virtually every branch of science across the world. Thousands of well-known scientists are working on the assumption that the theory is true. So if we disagree with Darwin's theory, why is it that so many brilliant scientists, and countless numbers of ordinary people, are such staunch believers in evolution and enemies of creation and God's truth? The answer lies in their rejection of God's Word and God Himself (2 Pet. 3. 5). Without God, man must look to natural causes alone to explain his existence and that of the world around him. Without an Almighty God as creator of the heavens and earth (Ps. 19. 1), evolution over millions of years is currently the most popular explanation with which man is left.

Many books have been written supposedly proving evolutionary theory, so how do we account for this? When we examine the actual scientific evidence we find that it all fits with the Genesis account. It is important to realise that scientists endeavouring to prove evolution use the same observations as those who believe the Biblical account of creation; the difference lies in the interpretation of the evidence. For example, the changes within created kinds (see above) are what we expect from the Biblical description of creation: a result of small-scale genetic change, degeneration since the fall and adaptation. Also, the fact that information is encoded by DNA in all living things is again what we would expect from a Master Designer (just as a human designer may use common features typical of their design style) and not

the result of gradual change from a common bacterial ancestor as evolutionary theory would have us believe. So-called redundant organs and body parts, such as the appendix, tonsils and coccyx in humans, are explained by evolutionary theory as being left-over from our ancestors. All of these parts however have been shown to be important in their own right, the coccyx, for example, is a crucial anchor point for the muscles that we depend on for our posture, not a left-over spare part. Evolutionists often claim the fossil record supports Darwin's theory, however, most groups of organisms, such as the mammals or the flowering plants, appear very suddenly and fully-formed in the fossil records in dramatic "explosions"². Evolutionists' claims that half-human, half-ape fossils have been discovered are either proven hoaxes or artists' impressions based on extrapolation from a few bone fragments.

In attempts to reconcile evolutionary theories and the Biblical account of origins some have suggested that God may have used evolution to populate the earth. This is clearly contradictory to God's Word since evolution by natural selection requires death of weaker organisms at the expense of fitter ones in a lethal struggle for survival. The Bible clearly teaches that there was no death before the fall of man (Gen. 2; Rom. 5). If evolution had occurred in Genesis chapter 1, then death entered the world before the fall, thereby undermining the whole message of the Gospel. Evolutionary theory is therefore incompatible with the Biblical account of creation and compromise on evolution is often a first step in rejecting the infallibility of God's Word.

Criticism of Darwin's evolutionary theory also comes from the Intelligent Design movement, a growing body of scientists who seek scientifically to analyse features of the universe and living things to determine whether or not they are best explained by random natural processes or an intelligent cause. Intelligent design theory is purely scientific, and does not refer to the Bible or claim to be able to prove the God of the Bible as the designer. One of its approaches is to look for examples of irreducible complexity, that is, biological structures that require multiple components to function and which cannot do so if one is missing, hence the complete structure could not have evolved step by step as the intermediates would be useless. Using this approach, proponents of intelligent design acknowledge that many biological features, such as DNA, exhibit such complexity that they clearly point

to a designer as opposed to the random effects of natural selection as proposed in Darwin's theory of evolution.

If we start with the Biblical account of creation in Genesis chapter 1, all of our observations and true scientific discoveries from the world around us make perfect sense, and serve to remind us of the infinite wisdom and power of an Almighty God. When man rejects God and His Word he has to come up with alternative explanations of who he is and where he came from. This helps to explain the popularity of Darwin's theory of evolution. We are now living in a world that witnesses the devastating moral, cultural and religious consequences of evolutionary theory and the rejection of the very first chapter of God's Word.

Notes:

¹ Taxonomical species are the groups of organisms that we classify as species today. Scientists have classified organisms into species based on similarity and ability to breed and produce fertile offspring. The "kinds" mentioned in Genesis are not thought to necessarily correspond to the species we see today. It is likely that there were fewer created "kinds" than the number of different species we recognise due to gradual degeneration of a "kind" into a number of different species.

² Based on evolutionary theory we would expect to find different groups of animals and plants gradually appearing, along with intermediate forms, as we look through rock layers and the fossil record. However, scientists often describe sudden "explosions" in the fossil record where many different groups of animals and plants suddenly appear all at once in the same layer. This is what we would expect from the Biblical account of a global flood that led to the deposition of vast amounts of sediment and caused the death and fossilisation of large numbers of organisms all at once.

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MORAL ISSUES

Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide

By Dr. J. Mercer

There has been a lot of discussion in the media in recent times about the subjects of euthanasia and assisted suicide. This

publicity has been increased by several high profile legal challenges to the current law and associated public debate – and also by reports of British citizens travelling abroad to avoid the law in the UK. What is the current position? Euthanasia (so-called “mercy killing”) has always been, and remains, illegal in the UK, being considered murder under British law. In some other European countries, things are somewhat different. In Holland, although euthanasia is in most cases still illegal, since 2002 it has been allowed under certain circumstances, where a patient deemed to be in “unbearable suffering” requests it, and two doctors agree.

The related matter of assisted suicide is really indirect euthanasia, in that patients are helped to kill themselves. This is also illegal in Britain under the Suicide Act 1961 but is legal in some European countries, such as Switzerland, where much of the recent media coverage has emanated from in connection with the Dignitas suicide clinic.

These really are very difficult subjects for most people to think or talk about. The medical background concerns advances, and limitations, in knowledge where increasingly complex and advanced treatments can prolong life and stabilise severely ill patients who previously would have died. In the case of patients with diseases such as cancer, modern treatments can delay or prevent progression of the disease, but the patient may still be left severely weakened or incapacitated, and may potentially be in significant pain. This type of situation has led to some pressures in favour of euthanasia or assisted suicide, as a person’s quality of life is perceived as being unacceptable.

However, this view really ignores the recent advances in terminal care and in particular the establishment of hospice care, especially since hospices were pioneered by Dame Cecily Saunders in the 1960s. There have been major advances in the type and range of treatments available for all symptom types and also more focus on patients’ dignity and psychological needs; it should always be possible to maintain this dignity and relieve suffering, for example, if a patient is too weak to swallow, drugs can be given via a patch or needle under the skin. Fear of suffering has been one of the driving forces behind the higher profile given to euthanasia in recent years and this is in part because advances in care of the dying are not widely recognised.

The related matter of assisted suicide has achieved much recent attention in connection with British patients travelling to the Dignitas clinic in Switzerland (where assisting suicide is not illegal). This matter

is even more disturbing because not only terminally ill patients have been helped to die, but also those in stable health who are severely disabled. There have been recent legal challenges, as far as the House of Lords, in the UK, which have confirmed that assisting suicide remains illegal under British law, but in practice no relatives of those UK patients involved have been prosecuted so far. In a recent interview, the founder of Dignitas stated that he had no objection to the husband or wife of terminally-ill patients being helped to commit suicide at the same time as their partner – and also that he would be in favour of helping psychiatrically disturbed patients, with symptoms of depression (which may well be treatable), to kill themselves. This is a shocking aspect to their work that has even disturbed many of those who have been in favour of the clinic's work and who say they otherwise support assisted suicide in restricted cases of terminal illness.

The Christian approach to life, and death, has always been that our days are ordered and numbered by God – “a time to be born and a time to die” – even if periods of suffering and ill health may be difficult to understand. Man has no right to interfere in these matters, and I feel that the push towards euthanasia and assisted suicide by parts of society is a reflection of man's rejection of God and a desire to assert man's autonomy over all aspects of life, even the solemn matter of death. Arguments in favour of abortion have the same basis. From the point of view of a doctor, one of our primary aims at all times is to comfort and relieve suffering, even when a cure might not be possible. If patients ever felt that the doctor could be a means of death rather than help, this would completely change their perception of the medical profession; it would be tinged with fear. Such a situation would also greatly affect how the doctor perceived, and interacted with, the patient. There is, however, no sign that doctors in the UK have changed their opposition to euthanasia – two-thirds remain opposed to it - whereas four-fifths of the general public are apparently in favour: a reflection in part, I feel, of media coverage that neglects the alternatives such as hospices and “glamorises” euthanasia. This is a very difficult subject to approach, but I feel it is important to have information available as it is bound to continue to have a high profile in public discussion for the foreseeable future.

Note:

Scripture records at least four cases of suicide. Saul and his armour bearer both fell on their swords. Saul initially asked his armour bearer to kill him, which amounts to assisted suicide, but he refused to do it (1 Chr. 10. 4). Ahithophel (2 Sam. 17. 23) and Judas Iscariot (Matt. 27. 5) both hanged themselves. All were ungodly men.

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Marriage: What the Bible Teaches

3. More Principles and Blessings

By Rev. G. G. Hutton

This is the last part of a paper given at the 2005 Free Presbyterian, Youth Conference.

More Principles

The fourth principle is that of *Christ-like meekness*. Meekness is always a beautiful grace, completely opposite to pride and arrogance. It walks with gentleness and keeps company with compassion. The Saviour was very meek and we are exhorted to seek this grace and to exercise it. How often the spirit of meekness has prevented people from unnecessary conflict. On the other hand, how often friends have parted in great bitterness because neither party showed meekness! It is mistaken for weakness but it is one of the strongest of all human virtues. Meekness can tolerate impatience, it can withstand abuse, it can bear ridicule, it can persevere in the face of insult. It can win when everything else fails, because it is dignified and inoffensive. Such a spirit within a marriage will do much to prevent trivial differences running out of control. The Apostle Peter recognized the importance of meekness. He referred to meekness in wives as “*the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price”. He went on: “After this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands” (1 Pet. 3. 4-5). A home graced with such an ornament should be more desirable than any amount of money or worldly prestige. Meekness brings sweetness where sin would create bitterness. It calms the situation when sin would inflame passions. It will bring ease to the troubled spirit.

A fifth principle for sustaining marriage is *forgiveness*. The Apostle wrote to the Ephesians: “Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you”. He also told the Colossians to be “forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do ye*”. Here we have guiding principles for maintaining harmony in marriage. Husbands and wives are – like everyone else – poor sinners, liable to display sinful tendencies; this is inevitable. Neither the sinless husband nor the sinless wife has ever been discovered in this world. But in His goodness, God has provided us with a perfect manual from which we may learn how to deal with sin in every situation. To be conscious of our own sins will keep us humble before God, always relying on His mercy. It will make us more aware that we need forgiveness from others. And it will make us more ready to forgive others. Within the bounds of marriage, such an awareness is essential. Two poor sinners with such an understanding of their own and their spouse’s failings will learn to apologize and forgive each other. They will not start blaming each other, ridiculing each other and despising each other. Genuine forgiveness will prevent many problems from ever developing. It is undoubtedly the absence of forgiveness that so often leads to the breakdown of marriage with all its unpleasant consequences.

Young people may start out full of romantic notions about marriage, without realising that sin in themselves is bound to show itself in the real world of married life. So often a young man or a young woman thinks he or she has found the perfect partner, only to discover later that they are confronted with habits, attitudes and personal peculiarities they were totally unprepared for. Young love is often real but very idealistic while true love is realistic. I am sure we have all heard that love is blind. There may certainly be an element of truth in it, but I am sure that true love is not blind in the sense of being ignorant of reality. Love will overlook many a fault and may take little notice of blemishes and shortcomings in the one who is the object of the affections, but love does not rush blindly into a world of romantic fantasy. When two people enter married life together, they must be ready to meet the realities of possible trials, troubles and temptations as a result of the fall. They must also be aware, however, that because marriage was instituted by God, it will always be a special target for the devil and the enemies of God.

The Blessings of Marriage

The Westminster Confession reminds us that “marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife, for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue, and of the Church with an holy seed; and for the preventing of uncleanness”. In the light of this we may mention *companionship* as one of the blessings of marriage. When God created Adam, He gave him everything desirable for his well-being and comfort. Yet the divine Creator declared: “*It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him*”. Even in a state of innocence, man needed human company. God did not intend him to be alone. Remember, Adam enjoyed daily communion with God, and we cannot imagine that there could have been any imperfection in the company of Adam’s Creator and Sustainer. Yet God, who knows all things, understood that the man was not complete without a suitable companion who could meet his needs as a human creature and share in them. From the very beginning, the male of the human species required the company of the female. God had designed both the male and the female in His own image, perfectly suited to each other, so that they would both be fulfilled in each other as long as they lived in communion with their Maker. Our Creator has established the general rule that the man is to be socially, physically and emotionally fulfilled in the woman and, likewise, the woman in the man, while both are spiritually fulfilled in God Himself.

A possible benefit of marriage is *mutual spiritual help*. As Bible-believing Protestants, we reject Rome’s claim that marriage is a sacrament. Yet we have scriptural reasons to expect that marriage will contribute to the spiritual advancement of the husband and wife. “*Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord*” (Prov. 18. 22). “*Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him*” (Ecc. 4. 9-12). If we apply these principles, it should not be difficult to recognise the potential benefits for husbands and wives. This is one of the reasons why young people who profess salvation should prayerfully seek like-minded marriage partners. History testifies to the fact that many who have done most to advance Christ’s cause in the world have been assisted, encouraged and inspired

by their marriage partner. And, sadly, others with great potential are remembered because of their compromise, backsliding, or forsaking of duty, because of the bad influence of an unsuitable marriage partner. Through marriage, two become one. God's Word says that "they are no more twain, but one flesh". It is therefore impossible for them to live together as husband and wife without influencing each other in many ways, particularly in their spiritual lives. As they pray with and for each other, so they appreciate each other. As they follow the precepts of the Lord together, they are able to encourage one another. As they show their care for one another's souls, they grow ever closer. As they share their spiritual experiences, they learn to support each other and sympathise with each other in their struggle against the sin they discover in themselves and in each other. The Christian family is in reality the Church in miniature. It has Christ as its head; it has God-ordained rule and order within it; and it witnesses in the world to the power of the gospel and grace.

One of the most desirable blessings upon a marriage is *children*. They are God's gift to parents and ought therefore to be cherished as such. The Bible is clear on the matter: "Lo, children *are* an heritage of the LORD: *and* the fruit of the womb *is* His reward". It is normal for any married couple to desire children. God is sovereign in these matters; so – for one reason or another – not all married couples can have their own children. Yet Christian parents recognise that to be given children is a great privilege from the Lord, but one that carries tremendous responsibilities with it. Children bring much pleasure into a marriage but also make demands on time and money and maybe even on a parent's health. For these reasons some married couples choose not to have children. But such a decision demonstrates a sinful selfishness, which very often leads to problems within the marriage relationship. We are told that young women today are much better equipped for life outside the mundane drudgery of motherhood and home-making. Either the recognised, established roles within the family for husbands and wives are ignored, dismissed as old-fashioned, or reversed; or the wife and mother feels pressurised to add to these roles that of money-earner. The full-time wife and mother of today may, even in some Christian circles, be made to feel worthless and she may well be ridiculed as slothful, irresponsible, without ambition – someone who lives comfortably and lazily at the expense of others.

The Church has a duty to promote and defend the Bible's teaching on such matters. It is sad when she appears to be either too embarrassed or too weak to withstand ridicule from a degenerate society. Yet it remains a fact that, if there were better mothers, the Government would not have to contend with nearly so much crime. The bill for the taxpayer would be much smaller. Teachers in our schools would not have to contend with anything like the problems they now face with unruly pupils. I would suggest it is impossible to calculate the real cost – in spiritual, social and economic terms – of wives and mothers deserting their God-ordained role within marriage. In many ways the role of wives and mothers is the key to a well-ordered and prosperous society. What time and effort is considered necessary to produce competent doctors, nurses, teachers and engineers, for example! Yet it is assumed that no time or effort is necessary, or even desirable, for the task of homemaking and child rearing – either in preparing for it or in supporting it. It seems to me that the true meaning of marriage has to a large extent been lost in our society. I am certain that, if the present generation of young people were better instructed in biblical principles and morals, they would be better prepared for entering into marriage for the proper reasons. This would result in fewer domestic problems in our society, and so in fewer divorces.

Reprinted with permission from The Young People's Magazine of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland (July/August 2006).

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CHURCH HISTORY

John Huss – the Czech Reformer (1372? -1415)

By T. W. S. Pont

John Huss was born in the hamlet of Husinec, Bohemia in the early 1370s. His family were probably rural peasants, but little is known about them. Huss probably studied in the grammar school in Prachatice before entering Prague University in about 1390. He completed his BA in 1393 and his Bachelor of Theology degree in 1394. Although he endured considerable poverty during his early years in Prague, and supplemented his income by singing in a church choir, Huss did well at university and began lecturing soon after completing his MA in 1396. In 1938 Neville Chamberlain felt unable to ask the British to defend

Czechoslovakia: “a far away country of which we know nothing”. But in 1390 Bohemia was not unknown in England. The kings of Bohemia were also Holy Roman Emperors. Charles IV had founded the empire’s first university in Prague in 1348. Charles, a patron of learning and the Czech language, constructed Prague as an imperial capital. Young John was living in one of Europe’s most important capitals and was a member of one of the continent’s most prestigious universities.

European religion in this period was dominated by the Roman Catholic Church. Salvation was mostly perceived as being by works. By following the rules outlined by the church the amount of time spent in Purgatory before reaching heaven would be reduced. Prayers for the dead were thought to assist one’s ancestors to escape Purgatory and some priests were employed exclusively for this purpose. Saints, especially the Virgin Mary, were also prayed to and viewed as intermediaries with God. The vital importance of being born again and of experiencing by faith a personal and saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ was generally unknown and the Bible was a little-known book; largely inaccessible. Most worship was in Latin; even Charles IV opposed the publication of sermons in Czech.

Although during the 1390s Huss contentedly followed this prescribed path, a great change occurred in his life in about 1400. External means for his conversion were available in Prague. Since the 1350s a succession of preachers including Conrad Waldhauser, John Milic and Matthew of Janov had argued for church reform. These men also preached the gospel in Czech and German to the ordinary people, quoting the Bible as their ultimate authority. Huss was also influenced by the works of John Wycliffe, which reached Bohemia from England because a Bohemian princess had married the king of England. In 1402 Huss, now converted, was appointed as preacher at a chapel established in Prague by the supporters of Milic for preaching in the Czech language.

Between 1402 and 1407, Huss’s life was peaceful and successful, with numerous conversions under his preaching. His sermons became increasingly evangelical as he grew in grace and became more familiar with the Bible, to which he constantly referred. A gifted orator, he was equally comfortable addressing academics, barons or peasants and his ministry contained many illustrations from everyday life. Most importantly he preached the gospel in its fullness, telling sinners of the Saviour. Besides preaching the gospel, a faithful pastor must oppose

error and encourage practical godliness. Huss attacked errors within the contemporary church and immorality among the clergy. Initially he received support from many church leaders, including the Archbishop of Prague, but after 1407 opposition increased. By 1411, when opposing an indulgence proclaimed by Pope John XXIII to finance a war, he was almost a lone voice.

Huss also enjoyed a successful academic career, becoming rector of the university. He was involved in attempts to gain additional voting powers for Czechs in the university councils where German academics enjoyed a majority. Primarily a nationalist cause, this issue had theological undertones; most German academics opposed Wycliffe's teachings, while the Czechs supported them. Eventually some Czechs abandoned Huss's position. In 1410 Wycliffe's works were burnt and Huss was deserted by previously close friends. The church, everyone agreed, needed reform. The medieval church, headed by the Pope, claimed great spiritual powers. Salvation was considered impossible outside of the Roman church, the channel through which God's grace was distributed. As Christ's vicar, the popes asserted the ability to dispense grace, condemn souls to Hell and depose rulers. Reformers often compared the proud pontiff, clad in gorgeous robes and seated on a warhorse, to the humble Christ entering Jerusalem on an ass. Between 1378 and 1415 there was a great schism within the church. Following a disputed election, two separate Papacies claimed the churches' allegiance. By 1409 increasingly desperate reconciliation attempts produced a General Council, which nominated a third pope to replace the other two! These events caused despair among those who regarded the Papacy as being essential to salvation, but helped to reveal to Huss the true nature of the church.

Huss's attack on indulgences caused a final rift with the church authorities. In response Prague was placed under interdict, which meant a suspension of all church activities, including funerals. Huss withdrew from Prague, where other gospel preachers remained, into the countryside. He now enjoyed a period of peace. Many were converted by his preaching and he wrote his greatest book, *On the Church*, identifying the true church, not with the Papacy, but with God's elect. In 1413 the emperor Sigismund convened a Council at Constance in Switzerland to end the schism. This council deposed all three Popes and elected a new Pope. Huss was summoned to attend the Council. After being given a safe conduct he agreed to attend, but probably had few

illusions as to his likely fate. After protracted theological discussions, the Council condemned him to death as a heretic. His enemies were determined to prevent him resuming his ministry. He was burnt at the stake in Constance on 6th July 1415. His execution was intended to crush the evangelical movement in Bohemia. In this the Council failed completely. Many reformers remained in Prague and were able to continue the reform. Although no less than five crusades were launched against them, the Hussite churches survived until the Reformation.

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DOCTRINE AND TRUTH

Extract From Thomas Jacomb: The Reasonable Soul of Christ

I come now to consider Christ's humanity in its more large and extensive notion. So Christ was sent in flesh, that is, in the verity of man's nature; he verily took upon him the whole human nature, became true man, of the same make and substance with us, in all things like to us, some things excepted which do not in the least abolish or destroy the truth of his manhood. He is called "the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2. 5). "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor. 15. 21). "He was made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2. 7). He is styled "the Son of man" (Dan. 7. 13; John 3. 13); "the seed of the woman" (Gen. 3. 15); "the seed of Abraham" (Gen. 22. 18); "the seed of David" (Rom. 1. 3); "the Son of David" (Matt. 1. 1); "the branch of David" (Jer. 23. 5); he is said to be "of the fruit of his loins" (Acts 2. 30).

The two essential or constitutive parts of man are soul and body; where these two are, there is the true man; Christ had both, therefore he was such. That he had a real body hath been already proved, I am only now to shew that he also had a real soul. And indeed the former proves the latter; for if Christ would assume the body, which is but in a manner the bark, shell, or case of man; but the lowest and meanest part of him, but as the covering and garment of the soul; certainly he would assume the soul, the reasonable soul, that being the highest and the noblest part. This is that which principally makes the man, and hath the greatest influence into his being and essence; if therefore our Lord had only had a human body without a human soul, he had wanted that part which is

most essential to man, and so could not have been looked upon as true and perfect man; but it was far otherwise. For indeed Christ redeemed and saved nothing but what he assumed: the redemption and salvation reach no farther than the assumption; our soul then would have been never the better for Christ had he not taken that as well as our body; for if he will save the whole man from sin he must assume the whole man without sin. It is said of him (Luke 2. 52), he increased in wisdom and stature; here is stature for his body and wisdom for his soul; his growth in that speaks the truth of the former, and his growth in this speaks the truth of the latter; his body properly could not grow in wisdom nor his soul in stature, therefore there must be both. There are three things in a reasonable soul: understanding, will, affections; now it is evident all these were in Christ. He had a human understanding, distinct from his divine understanding, otherwise how could he have been said to increase in wisdom? And how could he have been under the nescience [absence of knowledge] of some things, as it is plain he was, for he knew not the precise time of the day of judgment (Mark 13. 32); as he was God he knew all things, so his understanding was infinite, he must therefore have some other understanding which was but finite, in reference to which there might be something which he did not know. He also had a human will, distinct from his divine will; for what could that will be which he did submit and subordinate to the will of his Father but this? (Luke 22. 42): "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." Then for those affections which are proper to the soul, it is clear Christ had them; as namely, anger (Mark 3. 5; 10. 14); love (Matt. 10. 21); sorrow (Matt. 26. 38; Luke 19. 41); fear (Heb. 5. 7); joy (Luke 10. 21; John 11. 15); pity (Matt. 9. 36; 13. 32). Now where these three things are, most certainly there is a true and real soul.

Yet here also our blessed Lord and Saviour is assaulted. He hath two natures which make up his person, his deity and his humanity, but both of them by several persons are taken away, as you heard but now; and there are two essential parts which make up one of his natures, his manhood, that is, soul and body, but both of these two by several persons are taken away also. Marcion divests him of a body and Apollinaris of a soul; the Arians also are charged with this heresy; these held that Christ had no soul, but that the deity was to him instead of a soul, and supplied the office thereof; that the soul is to us and doth in our bodies all that the divine nature was to Christ and did in his body. Oh what light can be clear enough for their conviction and guidance in

the way of truth, whom God hath given up to “strong delusions that they should believe lies”? (2 Thess. 2. 11). Are not the scriptures clear enough in this matter that Christ had a real soul? What was the subject of his inexpressible sorrow and agonies in the garden, but his soul? (Matt. 26. 38): “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death” etc. (John 12. 27); “Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say?” What did he in special recommend to God when he was breathing out his last gasp, but his soul? (Luke 23. 46): “When Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit, and having said thus he gave up the ghost”. What was the part affected in his sore desertion when he cried out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Surely his body could not be the immediate subject of a punishment purely spiritual; no, that must terminate in his spiritual part, the soul. By all this it appears then that Christ was as truly God, so also truly man, he having a true body and a true soul.

Yet a little further, that I may take in the whole truth, and leave out nothing which may tend to the heightening of Christ’s incomparable love and condescension to sinners; he was not barely sent in flesh, so far as the verity of the human nature is concerned, in his assuming the essential parts thereof, but he also submitted to the common accidents, adjuncts, infirmities, miseries, calamities, which are incident to that nature. He lay so many weeks and months in the virgin’s womb, received nourishment and growth in the ordinary way; was brought forth and bred up just as common infants are, abating some special respects shown to him to discover the greatness of his person, had his life sustained by common food as ours is; was hungry, thirsty, weary, poor, reproached, tempted, deserted, etc.; lived an afflicted life, then died a miserable death; was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Isa. 53. 3); made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, was made in the likeness of men (Phil. 2. 7), not only in the taking of their nature, but also in submitting to those abasements and miseries which now that nature is liable unto; his whole life was a life of sufferings, wherein as there was enough in his holiness and miracles, to shew him to be God, so there was also enough in his meanness, poverty, sufferings to shew him to be man. In a word, he took all our infirmities upon him; take it with a double restriction:

1. To all our sinless infirmities: such as are culpable and carry sin in them they must be excepted, for though he was made like to us in all things, yet without sin (Heb. 4. 15).

2. To all our natural infirmities: as to personal infirmities, such as are proper to this and that person, as blindness, deafness, lameness, etc., these Christ did not put himself under; for he did not assume this or that person, but the nature in common, and therefore was not liable to the particular infirmities of individuals, but only to those which properly belonged to the common nature.

I would carry this a little higher; though I have said so much concerning the reality and sameness of Christ's human nature with ours, yet you are not in all respects to equalise that nature as it is in him and as it is in us; for substance and essence it is one and the same in both, yet in other considerations there is a great disparity; for:-

1. The human nature is solely and singly in us; in Christ it is conjunctly with the divine.

2. We have it in the way of common and ordinary generation; Christ had it in a special and extraordinary way.

3. It is tainted and defiled in us; in Christ it is perfectly pure and holy.

4. In us it hath its proper subsistence; in Christ it subsists only in his Godhead.

Thus I have shewn what this sending of Christ in the flesh is, and what it imports, that is, the truth of his incarnation, of his body, and his assumption of the whole, entire, and perfect nature of man; and also, as the several heads fell in my way, I have out of the word given you the proof of them: I say out of the word, for these mysteries are only to be known and believed upon the light and authority thereof; if it asserts them, that certainly must be sufficient to command the belief of Christians, who profess in all things to make the scriptures to be the rule of their faith. And as to the credibility of Christ's incarnation from rational considerations, in subservience to and grounded upon gospel revelation, sundry authors, ancient and modern, have written very much, with great strength and evidence, to prove that it was neither impossible nor incongruous, neither absurd as to the thing nor unbecoming as to the person, for Christ to be made flesh; but I will not engage so vast an argument, having to do with those who are sufficiently satisfied with what the word reveals.

Extract taken from Thomas Jacomb, God Manifest in the Flesh. Gospel Standard Trust Publications 2008, pp. 101-6.

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LETTERS, ADDRESSES AND SERMONS

Christ in the Book of Zechariah

By B. A. Ramsbottom

This address was given by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom, editor of the Gospel Standard, at the Village Hall at Barton-le-Clay on Saturday 15th November 2008.

Introduction

The Holy Bible, the Word of God, is one - the Old and the New Testaments. It all testifies of Christ. Under the Roman Empire there was a saying that every road led to Rome. In the Word of God, every road leads to Christ. To begin with, I want to remind you of what the Lord Jesus Christ said after He had risen from the dead. In Luke 24. 27, speaking to the two men on the road to Emmaus, we read: "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." Later, speaking to His own disciples, he told them that "all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me" (Luke. 24. 44).

I want to emphasise one point that you will need to keep in mind and that is this: the Book of Zechariah is written against the background of the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. A little godly remnant led by Zerubbabel, prince of the house of David, and Joshua the High Priest had returned from Babylon with the one purpose of rebuilding the temple. The work had begun and then, for various reasons, for sixteen years the work came to a standstill. Really there were two reasons. There was opposition from without, enemies, foes, Satan, but then there was their own sloth and indolence. So the work of God, the building of the temple, came to a complete standstill. Then God raised up two prophets, Zechariah and Haggai, completely different men, to prophesy. Practically, they had to tell His people to carry on with the work and complete it.

I am sure you are going to ask: "What was the importance? What did it really matter? The temple, it was only stones, it was only a building." I don't think you and I can ever fully realise the importance of the temple at Jerusalem to a godly Jew. This was the old dispensation. Christ had not yet come. There was the veil of shadows and types. The way into the holiest was not yet made manifest. The temple at

Jerusalem meant everything. It spoke of Christ. There was a lamb slain there. There was a sacrifice. There was a priest. There was a mediator. There was intercession. There was precious blood. It would be a terrible thing for them if there were no temple. This is the background to everything in the book of Zechariah; this important matter: the temple, the foundation laid, the work begun, and then sixteen years and nothing happening. So God sent Zechariah and Haggai. You can read the background to it all in the Book of Ezra. It said that they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo and finished it.

What does it have to do with young people today? Very simply, the days of Zechariah were very similar to our own in many ways. Dark days! It seemed as if God's work had come to a standstill. It seemed as if nothing was happening; it seemed as if Satan and the powers of hell were triumphing. But you find in Zechariah, again and again, his thoughts, led by the Spirit, leap right out beyond the building of the temple and he sees that there is a greater temple, the church of God. There is a greater foundation, the temple built up of living stones, every sinner saved by grace, and that temple is going on to completion. There is a greater than Zerubabel. There is Christ the builder and His work is going to be successful, and completed. That is the background, that is the theme and that is the relevance of Zechariah for each of us today.

Christ in the midst of his people (Zechariah 1)

The prophet has a vision. In the vision he sees a man riding on a red horse and he is "among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom". It is very clear, as the chapter goes on, that these myrtle trees represented Israel then, the Jewish theocracy, and looking forward to gospel days, the church of God now. A myrtle tree, a little insignificant shrub; but it gives out a beautiful aroma when it is bruised. And it was dark and it was in a valley and it was "the bottom". That was the state of Israel then, the state of the church of God now. As the chapter unfolds, it is very clear that this man riding on the red horse among the myrtle trees is Christ. He is present, He is taking notice, and behind Him, there were "red horses, speckled and white". Now I am not going to give fanciful interpretations. Creatures of every shape and size, all at His control, they go out throughout the earth. They come back "and all the earth sitteth still and is at rest". If you will, the whole of the earth: everything is quiet, everything going well. The poor despised people of God: everything is going wrong! What does the man among the myrtle trees

do? Sometimes He is called the angel of the Lord, sometimes, the man on the horse, sometimes he is referred to as the Lord. It's clear that it is Christ. Well, He intercedes. A wonderful thing the intercession of Christ! "O LORD of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem?"

He receives a blessed answer: "good words *and* comfortable words". Some words are good, but they are not comfortable; some words are comfortable but they are not good. These were both. "Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy". You know what jealousy is? Have you ever thought about it? Two strong passions: love and hatred. If the Lord is jealous for His people, He dearly loves them and He hates all that opposes them. It is a wonderful theme: the Lord present with his people. Then this beautiful scripture: "I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies"; not forgotten. "My house shall be built in it, saith the LORD of hosts". That is the answer to the intercession of Christ, the man among the myrtle trees. It was the answer to God's people then. "My house shall be built." What about the power of Babylon? What about these people? "My house shall be built", and of course it looks forward to gospel days. "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." And there is a line, a measuring line, "a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem", the evidence that God's work is going on. It is a beautiful chapter and so suitable for us today, as it was for them. Christ is present with his people: "Lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world."

Christ Our Righteousness (Zechariah 3)

This is a glorious gospel chapter, speaking of Christ our righteousness. In this vision the prophet sees Joshua the high priest and to his amazement he is clothed with filthy garments. Then the Lord speaks: "Take away the filthy garments from him...Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment...set a fair mitre upon his head." To the prophet's amazement, in the vision, there is a complete transformation with Satan standing there watching to resist him and the Lord says, "Satan...*is* not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" Now immediately you see Joshua the high priest. He was the representative of God's ancient people. His filthy garments were in a dreadful state, but there was going to be a change, a difference, deliverance. Really this looks forward to the

blessed truths in the Epistle to the Romans. A sinner guilty before almighty God, who realises he is clothed with filthy garments. Satan is there accusing him, and his accusations are true. What is the Lord going to do? What is the sentence going to be? Is he going to perish at the Saviour's feet? "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" Oh, the wonder of it. Take his polluted garments off him. His sins are going to be forgiven. They are going to be washed away, and then he is going to be clothed with that pure white robe of Christ's righteousness. There is no greater blessing for us than to have our polluted garments taken away and to be clothed in the pure white spotless robe of Christ's righteousness.

Christ the Source of Our Supplies (Zechariah 4)

The vision in chapter four is a beautiful golden candlestick with the seven lamps. It is fed with oil to keep it burning and the prophet sees a dimly burning flame. It is not going out; it's burning brighter. He cannot altogether understand it but in his vision the prophet is shown on each side a living olive tree. I believe in all their fullness, these two living olive trees represent Christ and the Holy Spirit. He sees that there is a supply of living oil flowing, continually from these two olive trees to keep the candlestick burning. This is the word of the Lord: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit". Christ is the source of our supplies. He is an unfailing source! Then the promise: "Who *art* thou, O great mountain?" - the mountain of terrible obstacles in the way of the Temple being built. How can it be built? "Who *art* thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel *thou shalt become a plain*: and he shall bring forth the headstone *thereof with* shoutings, *crying*, Grace, grace unto it." When you turn to Ezra 6 literally Zerubbabel did that: he brought forth the headstone with shoutings. There were shoutings as the Temple was complete.

It is very, very clear to me that there are many things in the prophecies of Zechariah and Haggai that never could have been personally fulfilled in this man Zerubbabel. He is an eminent type of Christ. He was the prince of the house of David. But for us today, He (Christ, not Zerubbabel) shall bring forth the head stone. "Grace will complete what grace begins." The world only exists until this glorious temple is finished, and it is higher this afternoon than it ever was. When the last stone is laid in its place and the shout is heard, "Grace, grace unto it", then the world will come to an end. It is your mercy and mine, if we are found a living stone in Salem's streets above. But the

work of grace is in a sinner's heart. "Who *art* thou, O great mountain?" There are the problems you have got. "Who *art* thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel" – this is Christ in the book of Zechariah – "before Zerubbabel *thou shalt become* a plain." "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit." It is the theme of the chapter. There is an ever-flowing supply of grace, a wonderful fullness, everything Israel needed, everything you and I can need. That grace will "to the end stronger and brighter shine."

Christ the Royal Priest (Zechariah 6)

The first three chapters have been about three different visions. Chapter six is an actual happening, not a vision. Then we have the symbolism of it. Three men had arrived from Babylon bringing gold and silver with them to help in building the Temple. Their names were Heldai, Tobijah and Jedaiah, and the prophet was told to take their silver and gold and to make crowns and to crown Joshua high priest with these crowns. Then they had to be kept in the Temple as a memorial, to be remembered. Again, this is the setting forth of a humble man being exalted, and God's purpose being fulfilled. But, if ever a word looks forward prophetically, this does, and clearly to Christ. As the crowns were actually put on Joshua the high priest's head, then came the words: "Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne."

Now what a word the prophet had to speak: "Behold the man"! Does it not remind us of those awfully solemn words of Pilate when he brought Jesus forth wearing the purple robe and the crown of thorns and Pilate said, "Behold the man." "Behold the man whose name *is* The BRANCH." The Lord Jesus is often referred to in the Old Testament as The Branch. What does it mean? The next word explains it: "He shall grow up out of his place," not coming from heaven in great power and glory as one day He will, but He shall grow up "as a root out of a dry ground." He was born in humility at Bethlehem. "He shall build a temple of the Lord," and it's repeated, "Even he shall build a temple of the LORD", literally this Temple at Jerusalem, but also looking forward to gospel days; that glorious temple composing all God's chosen. "He shall bear the glory, and he shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he

shall be a priest upon his throne.” So we see Christ the royal priest. The Saviour was going to be a glorious priest but he was also going to be a glorious king “after the order of Melchisedec.” In the Old Testament there were some good kings but they were not allowed to be priests. There were some good priests but they were not allowed to be kings. You remember Uzziah. He was a good man, he was a godly man, but he foolishly tried to combine both offices. He was king and he presumed to be a priest, and the Lord struck him with leprosy. This honour is reserved for Christ alone. “He shall sit...he shall be a priest upon his throne.” “This *man*, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.” As well as being a priest, He is Zion’s anointed, exalted king.

Christ Riding into Jerusalem (Zechariah 9)

Chapters one, three and four were visions; chapter six is an actual happening. The last three chapters of Zechariah contain direct words of prophesy. Verse nine refers to Christ riding into Jerusalem. We are told precisely in Matthew that this was spoken in fulfilment of Zechariah’s words: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: 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.” This was literally fulfilled. It speaks of the Saviour’s humility. It speaks of His character, His justice; of His purpose: “having salvation.” He still comes to visit his people. His coming bids them rejoice. The purpose he rode into Jerusalem for was to die. In the context there are two other references concerning Christ, joined with him riding into Jerusalem. “By the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit” (Zech. 9. 11). The other: “Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope” (Zech. 9. 12).

Christ the Pierced One (Zechariah 12)

Now we come to solemn, sacred ground; Christ the pierced one. “They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him.” (Zech. 12. 10). We are told clearly that this verse was fulfilled at Calvary (John 19. 37). It is quoted again in the New Testament where it seems to be a promise of the salvation of the Jews at a latter day when they shall look on Him who was pierced (Rev. 1. 7). There are four prophecies concerning Christ in the Book of Zechariah that are fulfilled and actually mentioned in the New

Testament. One is where the Lord is riding into Jerusalem to die. One is this: “They shall look upon me whom they have pierced” (Zech. 12. 10). Another is where it says, “So they weighed for my price thirty *pieces* of silver” (Zech. 11. 12). The fourth is, “Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man *that is* my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts; smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered” (Zech. 13. 7). The eternal Father smiting His beloved Son, in order that the blow might never fall upon His people who shelter in Him. Ralph Erskine preached a remarkable sermon, *The Smiting of the Shepherd*, on Zechariah 13. 7. One remark he made in it was: “The sword of divine justice once drawn out of its scabbard could never again be returned to that scabbard until drenched in the blood of God’s Incarnate Son.” Here is a sermon in one sentence. Christ the pierced one! He died that sinners might live; He was pierced by the nails, the spear, the crown of thorns; He was pierced by the sins of His people; He was pierced by the sword of His eternal Father, that His beloved people might eternally be set free.

The Open Fountain (Zechariah 13. 1)

In chapter thirteen, verse one, we have the open fountain. “In that day”— the day when the Saviour was pierced at Calvary – “there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.” No more sacred comment can be made on this verse than William Cowper’s beautiful hymn:

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

“In that day”- personally and experimentally, when a sinner in faith looks to the pierced one, and “mourns for him” – “In that day there shall be a fountain opened.” “The house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem” refers to the people of God. John Bunyan used to speak of “Jerusalem sinners”, the vilest of sinners; those whose hands were literally responsible for the Saviour’s blood.

Christ Returning (Zechariah 14)

“And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which *is* before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and *there shall be* a very great valley” (Zech. 14. 4). Now this word is

speaking about the Lord. Some of the godly commentators feel that it is completely symbolical. Many refer it to Christ and his Second Coming. It appears clear that when the Lord Jesus comes again in great glory, that His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives. We believe it will be a personal coming, a bodily coming, just as the Lord originally ascended to heaven from the Mount of Olives and promised that He would come again “in like manner.” Whether it will literally divide or not, there certainly will be some remarkable things in that great day and there will be a rending of the rocks and of the mountains. On this point of unfulfilled prophecy, there are so many things we cannot understand. Have you ever thought that the ancient Jewish church, expecting the birth of the Messiah, were told that he would come from Bethlehem, that he would be a Nazarene (he would come from Nazareth), and that he would come out of Egypt. They must have been completely bewildered. But we, looking back, can see what a simple explanation there was to it all. When the time comes, the explanation of unfulfilled prophecy, in all these things that we do not now understand, will be so simple. But the great point is, He will come, and it will be your mercy and mine if we are ready. What a wonderful revelation of Christ there is in the Book of Zechariah. May you and I know Him personally, as our Saviour, the Christ as revealed in the book of Zechariah.

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REVIEWS

***God Manifest in the Flesh* by Thomas Jacomb**

By T. Abbott

Published by Gospel Standard Trust Publications; paperback; 146 pages; £3.50 plus postage and packaging.

This book, *God Manifest in the Flesh*, comprises extracts from chapters ten, eleven and twelve of *Sermons on Romans 8 verses 1-4* by Thomas Jacomb, first published in 1672, reprinted by James Nichol in 1868 and by the Banner of Truth Trust in 1996. Thomas Jacomb (1622-1687) was concerned to establish believers in the true knowledge of Jesus, as God manifest in the flesh. He wanted to fortify them against the incessant subtle attacks on this fundamental article of the Christian faith. Like Paul at Thessalonica he reasoned out of the scriptures with men who used those very scriptures to reject the

doctrine of Christ. Many of the errors of our day existed and were addressed by Jacomb in his day. The whole thrust of antichrist has always been to destroy the rock on which the church is built – that a man who walked in the coasts of Caesarea Philippi in Peter’s day is the Christ, the Son of the living God. So this is a very useful book for us.

But as, no doubt, with Paul’s hearers at Thessalonica, and as seen in the diligent application to the subject by the Bereans, so it requires concentration to follow Jacomb’s scriptural reasonings. True, his language of the 1600s is somewhat unfamiliar to us, but it is lucid and unadorned. He is very earnest in love to Christ and the souls of “ordinary” Christians.

Jacomb speaks of Jesus within the doctrine of the Trinity: the Trinity as one divine essence and three divine persons within that essence; and the doctrine of Jesus as having two distinct natures, one perfectly divine, one perfectly human, united in one person. When then he speaks of Jesus, he speaks of God the Son and of the Son of man. He opens up the doctrine in detail. Jesus was eternally begotten of the Father but never had a beginning. Jesus had a beginning in Bethlehem but did not there become the Son of God. He was sent from heaven, yet remained in heaven. God sent God but remained one God and the one who was sent was not thereby inferior to the one who sent Him. Jesus was formed of the seed of His sinful virgin mother Mary, but He was sinless, untainted by sin. His Father was greater than He was, but He was equal with his Father. We worship the one true God, the man Christ Jesus.

Jacomb does not handle these points as fine distinctions for theologians. He believes that life, salvation, eternity hinge on who Jesus is. He wants us to be instructed in everything the Bible tells us of Jesus, the great mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh. The extract from the book in this issue of *Perception* is an example of Jacomb’s gracious zeal and clear workmanlike dividing of the word of truth in its testimony to the incarnate Word. In effect he is saying in all his labours for Christ’s glory, “Yea, he *is* altogether lovely.” “This *is* my beloved, and this *is* my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.” He is my Saviour. He saved me, the very worst of sinners.

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CURRENT EVENTS

The Missing Link

In 1983, a complete fossil of a lemur like creature with a long tail was found in the lake bed of a volcanic crater at Messel, near Frankfurt in Germany. It is a warm-blooded tropical creature officially named 'Darwinius Masillae,' while being nicknamed Ida. It is well preserved with details of its furry coat, sex (female) and the contents of its last meal of fruits, berries and nuts in its stomach. It was found in a narrow band of shale which palaeontologists claim to be of the Eocene period, being 47 million years old. Recently it was bought for about £500,000 by the Oslo Museum of Natural History in Norway.

In this year, commemorating the 200th anniversary of the birth of Darwin, it has been hailed as the "Missing Link" that scientists have long been waiting to find to prove that man evolved from animals. In May this year it was the subject of a BBC Documentary introduced by Sir David Attenborough in which he claimed that, "This little creature is going to show us our connection with the rest of the mammals. The link that they would have said until now is missing, is no longer missing." The BBC said that Darwin would have been delighted with the find.

But palaeontologists are divided in their judgment as to whether in fact this is the "Missing Link." Professor Norman Macleod and Dr Angela Milner, Keeper and Associate Keeper of Palaeontology at the Natural History Museum, writing in an article in the Daily Telegraph [Tuesday 26th May 2009], say, "There is a problem. In order to be recognised as a true ancestor, a fossil must have no truly unique aspects: it must have passed all of its characteristics on to its daughter species, albeit it an altered form. Species do not interbreed (or at least do so very rarely), so all characteristics must be inherited..... Ida lacks some of the features common to modern lemurs, but does not appear to possess any features unique to our own lineage of anthropoid primates. This renders Ida's evolutionary status ambiguous, at best." Here is a Professor of Palaeontology, who accepts Darwin's theory of evolution but has serious doubts about the status of Ida as the "Missing Link".

An article in the *British Church Newspaper* [5th June 2009] says, "The circumstances of the fossil's burial point unerringly to its having been buried instantly in Noah's Flood around 4,300 years ago. The dating of rocks using radiometric methods has been utterly discredited; only carbon dating being reasonably accurate. Biologists have been unable to point to any genetic mechanism which would enable creatures to gain additional DNA; offspring can only inherit from their gene pool of their parents.....The lemur-like fossil was found in the same bed of shale along with literally tens of thousands of other creatures, including various varieties of shallow water fish, crocodiles, bats, lizards and small horse-like creatures. These findings are completely consistent with them having buried instantly in the latter stages of Noah's Flood as the floodwaters gradually covered what remained of the land surface."

"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things that do appear." [Heb. 11, 3] "By faith, Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear prepared an ark..." [Heb. 11, 7]. The Word, "All things were made by Him; and without him was not anything made that was made." "As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." [Matt. 24, 37] "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God..... [2 Tim. 3, 16]

O Sacred Head! sore wounded,
With grief and shame bowed down,
Now scornfully surrounded
With thorns, thy only crown!
How pale art thou with anguish,
With sore abuse and scorn,
How does thy visage languish,
Which once was bright as morn!

What Thou, my Lord, has suffered,
Was all for sinners gain:
Mine, mine was the transgression,
But thine the deadly pain.
Lo ! here I fall, my Saviour;
'Tis I deserve Thy place;
Look on me with Thy favour,
Vouchsafe to me Thy grace.

What language shall I borrow
To thank Thee, dearest Friend,
For this, Thy dying sorrow,
Thy pity without end?
O make me Thine for ever;
And should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never
Outlive my love to Thee.

And when I am departing,
Then part not Thou from me;
When mortal pangs are darting,
Come, Lord and set me free!
And when my heart must languish,
Amidst the final throe,
Release me from mine anguish,
By thine own pain and woe.

[Wenn ich einmal soll scheiden
So scheide nicht von mir,
Wenn ich den Tod soll leiden,
So tritt du denn herfur!
Wenn mir am allerbangsten
Wird um das Herze sein,
So reiss mich aus den
Angsten Kraft deiner Angst und Pein!]

Be near me when I'm dying,
O show Thy cross to me:
And, for my succour flying,
Come, Lord, and set me free!
These eyes, new faith receiving,
From Jesus shall not move;
For he, who dies believing,
Dies safely through Thy love.

Paulus Gerhardt. [1607-76]
Translated into English by James
Waddell. Alexander. [1804-59]

PERCEPTION



And he is the propitiation for our sins:
and not for ours only, but also for the
sins of the whole world.

1 John 2: 2

WINTER 2009

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Cover Picture: Loch Broom, Ross and Cromerty, Scotland.

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UK £9; Mr D.J. Christian, 5 Roundwood Gardens, Harpenden, Herts, AL5 3AJ

USA & Canada \$19; Mr J.K. Stehouwer, Zion, 1710 Richmond Street, N.W., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49504 USA

Australia A\$23; Mr H.J. Flitton, 33 Vermont Avenue, Corio, Victoria 3214, Australia

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PERCEPTION

Volume 1

WINTER 2009

Number 4

EDITORIAL

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood...” (Rom. 3. 24-25).

In our last edition, we wrote on the subject of justification, which draws our attention to God’s broken Holy Law and the manner in which God can be “just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Rom. 3. 26). The doctrine of redemption draws our attention to our bondage as slaves to sin and to the price Christ paid to deliver his people from that slavery. The doctrine of propitiation, about which we now write, draws our attention to the wrath of God against our sins and the divine provision in the work of His dear Son for the removal of that wrath.

These are not doctrines to be learnt in our minds. They are to be experienced in our hearts. How few, today, know of what John Bunyan wrote in his *Pilgrim’s Progress*, as Christian, mourning and in deepest sorrow, carried a load of sin to Calvary’s Cross and there knew what it was to lose it. God, as Paul records (1 Cor. 12. 6-7), works by the same Spirit but by a diversity of operations. But be certain, whether we know divine conviction in our early days, or whether we know it more gradually, here a little and there a little in life’s pathway; whether we know it in some deep affliction in life when we are brought face to face with eternity, or whether we know it in the last months or hours of our life; such conviction is vital to a knowledge of propitiation. A sinner, brought to possess the sins of a lifetime in the light of eternity, will know the wrath of God and will cry with the publican, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” When the Lord hears that prayer and answers it, and faith is given in the blood of Christ, then that sinner will know that, “*There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8. 1).

Blood has a voice to pierce the skies
‘Revenge!’ the blood of Abel cries;

But the dear stream, when Christ was slain,
Speaks peace as loud from every vein.

The word “propitiation” appears only three times in the New Testament – in our text above, in 1 John 2. 2: “He is the propitiation for our sins,” and in 1 John 4. 10: “He sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins....” The New Testament testifies to the need of propitiation in the words, “The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men...” (Rom. 1. 18) and in Ephesians 5. 6, where we read, “For because of these things cometh the wrath of God on the children of disobedience.” But in the Old Testament, the word “propitiation” is found many times in connection with the mercy seat, which covered the ark in the Tabernacle. This mercy seat was made of pure gold and covered the contents of the ark, which included the tables of the covenant. Aaron was instructed to kill a bullock, offer it as an atonement for himself and his house, and sprinkle its blood with his finger upon the mercy seat seven times. He was then to take two goats. One was to be offered for a sin offering for the children of Israel and its blood was to be sprinkled upon the mercy seat. The other was to be the scapegoat over which he was to confess the sins of the children of Israel. He was then to send it into the wilderness (Lev. 16. 1-22).

The condition of the Sinai covenant was unbroken obedience to God’s Holy Law. The moment it was broken God’s wrath came upon Israel. A covering was needed over the tables within the ark to hush the thundering of God’s Law. This was provided by God in the mercy seat. It had to be a pure covering, a divine covering, and a blood-sprinkled covering. To Israel it was a figure for that time; to the church of God in all ages it presaged “good things to come”; that is, Christ, whom God had set forth to be a propitiation or mercy seat. In the New Testament, the same Greek word is translated in Romans 3. 25 as “propitiation” and in Hebrews 9. 5 as “mercy seat”. So in Old and New Testament, Christ is set forth to be a propitiation (a blood-sprinkled mercy seat) for sins and “not for ours only,” says John, “but also for *the sins of the whole world*” (1 John 2. 2). This was the Church of God in all ages, saved according to the election of grace out of “every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Rev. 5 .9).

There is in Scripture the work of propitiation: “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the

propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4. 10). The work is referred to in Christ’s own words, “I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do” (John 17. 4). There is in Scripture the place of propitiation seen in the figure of the blood-sprinkled mercy seat overshadowed by the cherubims of glory, which Paul terms “the patterns of things in the heavens”; Christ ever living to make intercession before His Father on behalf of His Church as they come to the throne of grace, the mercy seat. There is also in Scripture the experience of the propitiatory work of Christ on Calvary’s Cross. Christ is described as the “shield” of his people (Gen. 15. 1), “the shadow of the Almighty” (Ps. 91. 1). We read that “He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth *shall be thy* shield and buckler” (Ps. 91. 4), and Boaz describes him to Ruth as “the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust” (Ruth 2. 12). Here is the covering known by experience: a hiding place and a refuge.

What a mercy that we, as sinners, having sinned against light and knowledge, and as wanderers, rebels, and fools (Ps. 107. 4, 11, 17), have a place of propitiation to which we can come in prayer. There, in godly sorrow and repentance, we can (through the Spirit) plead that blood that did for sin atone. There we can hear in our souls the words of Christ: “Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you” (John 15. 3); and we can know in our hearts that, “the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1. 7). As the word “propitiation” means to placate, appease, pacify, conciliate, so by it His children know reconciliation and peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

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CURRENT ISSUES

Let Your Light So Shine

By J. Skelton

One of the Bible’s great exhortations to Christians, to those who profess faith in the Lord Jesus, is to walk worthy of their profession. We are called to let our light shine in the world and to be witnesses to all around us.

In 2 Corinthians 3. 1–3, the Apostle Paul speaks of the members of the church at Corinth as being living epistles or living letters. He asks,

“Need we, as some *others*, epistles of commendation to you, or *letters* of commendation from you?” And what is his answer? “Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: *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, Paul is saying that the Christians at Corinth have the Spirit of God in their hearts and their lives are a testimony of this to the world around them.

One of the great difficulties facing the true Church today is that it is often grouped together by the world with many who are Christian in name only. Whether Protestant or Roman Catholic, reformed or liberal, charismatic or non-charismatic, mainstream or cult, each is given the title Christian. To the world in general there is little distinction between an Anglican, a Roman Catholic, a Baptist, and a Jehovah’s Witness. Whilst we must be very careful not to judge, and there are surely by the grace of God good people in many denominations, this general Christianity often hides the true gospel Church.

Writing in *The Times* newspaper last year, Jamie Whyte, an atheist, concluded that those who call themselves Christians do not really believe what they claim to believe¹. He writes, “The real test for genuine belief is not what people say, but what they do. To believe something is to be disposed to act upon it. The vast majority of Western Christians fail this test.” He argues that if “Christians” really did believe in God and eternity, they would live their lives accordingly. He goes on to say, “Yet the expected behavioural difference is not to be observed. The vast majority of Christians display a remarkably blasé attitude toward their approaching day of judgment, leading lives almost indistinguishable from those of us open non-believers. Put simply, they fail the behavioural test for belief.”

Although his article misses the point on a number of levels and epitomises the problem caused by nominal Christianity, Whyte highlights something that should challenge all real Christians. Do we live our lives as if we believe what we claim to believe? It is only through this that the world will ever see what true Christianity means.

Towards the end of last year, another article in *The Times* emphasised this point but from a different angle. Matthew Parris, also an atheist, wrote about the noticeable difference he had observed in Christian missionaries and their converts in Africa compared to those around them². He says, “In Africa Christianity changes people’s hearts.

It brings spiritual transformation. The rebirth is real. The change is good.” Parris struggles to align this observation with his atheistic worldview. Speaking about Christian charity workers he writes, “It would suit me to believe that their honesty, diligence, and optimism in their work was unconnected with personal faith.” However, he concludes that their faith changes them and makes them what they are. The article’s conclusion is very telling: “Missionaries, not aid money, are the solution to Africa’s biggest problem – the crushing passivity of people’s mindset.” Why? Because grace changes this mindset, it changes the ingrained attitudes, and Christians walk out this change, their lives being a witness to the Spirit of God in their hearts. It is encouraging that an atheist can see and acknowledge the wonderful effect of faith, but how sad that he remains an atheist.

How does all this apply to us? Quite simply, we need to examine ourselves, and to look honestly into our hearts before God. Do we possess the Spirit of God in our hearts? Are we real Christians, or do we just call ourselves Christian because that is how we have been brought up? Have we found forgiveness for our sins through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ shed on the cross at Calvary?

If we answer “No,” we need to pray and ask God to draw near and in love reveal Himself to us. There are some wonderful promises in the Bible. Jesus says, “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” And in his first epistle John writes, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” These promises can never be broken and are summed up by William Gadsby,

The vilest sinner out of hell,
Who lives to feel his need,
Is welcome to a Throne of Grace,
The Saviour’s blood to plead.

If we are blessed with the Spirit of God in our hearts, if we are true believers, we need to heed the command to be “salt” and “light” in the world. We need to be living letters showing forth the love of God to the millions still blindly running towards hell. This is not easy, and when faced with all the distractions and temptations of Satan how often we blend in with those around and hide our light. How often we turn aside. In Hebrews 11, Paul tells us of the faithful who did let their light shine, and since his day many others have done the same. When they

were being martyred for their faith, Bishop Latimer said to Nicholas Ridley, “Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle by God’s grace in England, as I trust shall never be put out.”

How can we be like those faithful men and women throughout history? The answer is in Hebrews 12. 1-2: “Let us run with patience the race set before us, **looking unto Jesus** the author and finisher of *our* faith.” We must go on looking unto Jesus and trusting in Him alone. Remember the words of Paul: “Know ye not that...ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

As we have therefore received Christ Jesus, let us walk in Him and by His grace may our light shine.

Notes:

¹ Jamie Whyte, “I don’t believe that believers really believe,” *The Times*, September 16th 2008.

² Matthew Parris, “As an atheist, I truly believe Africa needs God,” *The Times*, December 27th 2008.

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A Door Opens in Africa

By Dr. I. Sadler

When I was first burdened before the Lord about writing and publishing a book (*Mystery, Babylon the Great*, 1999), I little thought that this would lead to travelling, speaking and preaching in Africa. At that time I had never been to Africa, and I had no intention of doing so either! However, the purposes of God must be fulfilled. “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.” (Isa. 55. 8-9). Through some seemingly chance contacts, copies of my books were sent to several ministers in Ethiopia, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, and Zambia. Thus began a friendship with these ministers and an opening to send forth many more books to the poor in Africa (especially my smaller books *Jesus the Way* and *Love of God*, which were published subsequently). As books were sent, requests came back recording the Lord’s blessing upon the Word with requests for more books to be sent.

However, a moment that will not easily be forgotten came in October 2003, when I received a letter of invitation to preach in Zimbabwe (of all places!) and to speak about what I had written. Objecting that I was neither a minister (though exercised about the ministry), nor had the money and the opening to go, I refused. Nevertheless, the brethren in Zimbabwe would not take “no” for an answer. I proved that they were right and had discerned the call of the Holy Spirit; for in the Lord’s time and way, these obstacles were remarkably removed. I first travelled to Gaborone in Botswana to meet these Zimbabwean ministers and to speak in June 2005. The place of worship was located in a dusty and poor village in the suburbs of Gaborone, and consisted of two parts of a marquee joined together, but with a large hole in the roof. Whilst we were clearly from a very different denominational background, there was real seeking after sound scriptural teaching and openness to the warnings about modern corrupt Bible versions. My host from Botswana summarised the situation in many of the native African churches (most of which are from a very different background to ourselves) by quoting Hosea: “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hos. 4. 6). This visit opened my eyes to the great thirst after the truth in Africa, quite unlike that which we see today in Western Europe, and to the fundamental need for the uncorrupted Word of God to go forth to the multitudes of poor who cannot obtain a Bible.

Since then, I have been to Africa five more times, visiting Zimbabwe (three times), Zambia (twice), South Africa and Nigeria, where Bibles in the soundest available translation that the people can read (e.g. AV in English) have been distributed freely alongside copies of my books. I have been staggered at the enormous thirst for the Word of God and other scriptural literature. It has been a special joy to speak and preach amongst the poorest people, to see their earnest faces and their joy at receiving a Bible. Much prayerful labour has since been involved in arranging large Bible grants to supply their need. The assistance from the Trinitarian Bible Society, Bible Spreading Union, and Chippenham Bible Aid Fund in supplying Bibles is greatly appreciated, as is the literature provided by Gospel Standard Trust Publications and the support of a number of brethren.

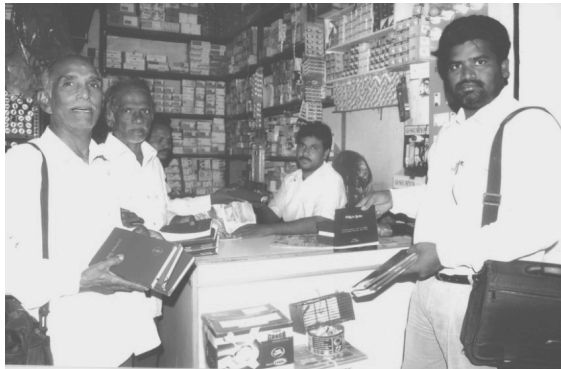
New openings also developed in 2007 by the Lord’s gracious hand. First, the way was made to print my books locally in Africa in large quantities for free distribution. In the two years that followed, a

number of print runs have been undertaken in Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Nigeria. Secondly, I was given the name of an Indian pastor from Andhra Pradesh, and I ventured to send a few books to him. Through this the Lord opened a door for Bibles and books to be distributed amongst the poor in Andhra Pradesh. Since many could not read English, I was asked if a Telugu version of *Love of God* (Telugu is the main language of Andhra Pradesh) could be published locally. The Indian pastor undertook the translation, and the book has been printed three times. A translation of *Jesus the Way* in Telugu has also been completed and its publication is pending the provision of sufficient funds.

Openings have also occurred for book and Bible distribution in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, and Mozambique. Furthermore, it is hoped that the work will shortly extend (D.V.) to Benin, Togo and Angola, partly through translations that are in progress of *Love of God* and *Jesus the Way* into French and Portuguese respectively.

My recent visit to Zambia and Zimbabwe (April/May 2009) entailed travelling deep into the rural areas; but it is there that a great thirst for the truth is to be found, particularly in Zimbabwe. However, most of the book and Bible distribution is undertaken by local ministers in Zambia and Zimbabwe, who the Lord has united in this non-denominational labour, in spiritual obedience to the Great Commission: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16. 15). Whilst I may go forth to teach and preach, I also go to learn. We in the affluent West have much to learn from the poor of Christ’s flock about walking by faith from their evident dependency upon His gracious hand.

In summary, I can testify to the mercy and faithfulness of God. Many prayers



Copies of the Telugu edition of *Love of God* and Telugu New Testaments being distributed in India. The translator, Pastor Veernapu SudhakarRao, is standing on the right.

have been answered and deliverances known through the blessed Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. We earnestly pray that the seed sown may be blessed of the Lord, that by the Holy Spirit it may bring forth abiding fruit to the glory of God. Our hope and trust is in the Lord's promise: "My word... shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it." (Isa. 55. 11).

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Climate Change and the Bible

By T.W.S. Pont

The issue of climate change is a controversial one. This article seeks to give an overview of the current evidence for climate change, examine the basis upon which predictions for future climate changes are made and provide a scriptural basis from which such evidence can be examined.

Reliable global weather records have been kept since approximately 1850. These data reveal that global average surface temperatures varied in no particular direction between 1850 and 1910 before rising by about 0.5°C until 1940 and then fell by about 0.3°C by 1950 (the 1940s was a decade of long, cold winters). Temperatures remained relatively stable until approximately 1980 but have since risen by about 0.6 or 0.7°C.

Various suggestions have been put forward to explain these trends. The potential cause that has gained most support is that changes in the levels of greenhouse gasses caused by human activities are at least partly responsible for observed climatic trends.

The "greenhouse effect" describes the process whereby naturally occurring gasses in the earth's atmosphere permit the transmission of solar radiation (energy) to heat up the earth's surface, but trap infrared radiation released from the earth. This natural process enables the earth to retain heat and helps to sustain life. It is argued that an increase in greenhouse gasses (GHGs) would trap more energy within the earth's atmosphere therefore causing the earth to warm up. Since 1750 levels of greenhouse gasses such as carbon dioxide (CO₂) and Methane (CH₄) have increased considerably. These increases are identified by many as resulting from changes in human activity associated with the industrial revolution. Indeed the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) state in their latest report that: "There is very high confidence

that the global average net effect of human activities since 1750 has been one of warming.” Furthermore: “Most of the observed increase in global average temperatures since the mid-20th century is very likely due to the observed increase in anthropogenic [man made] GHG concentrations.”

Having identified a likely cause, the IPCC then seeks to predict the likely future effects of climate change. This is done using computer modelling of climate changes under a number of different scenarios (in this case different levels of GHGs in the atmosphere). Such models are tested for reliability by checking them with past and present climates before they are used to make predictions. The IPCC’s best estimates suggest global temperatures will rise by between 1.8 and 4.0°C by 2099.

Such temperature changes could have considerable effects upon the climates of different regions and countries. Ecosystems could be affected and more animal species may become extinct. Also while food production may increase as levels of carbon dioxide increase (higher levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere would increase plant growth) other areas could have less rainfall. Droughts and other “extreme” events could become more common.

If the potential changes predicted by the IPCC and others did happen they could have massive impacts upon the planet and humanity. However there remain many questions to be answered before we should accept such forecasts. Firstly, we have only one hundred and fifty years of climate records on which to base our findings. Even in Europe, weather records extend back only to the 1600s or 1700s and for all previous periods we have to rely upon “proxy” data, such as ice cores and pollen data from peat bogs, to reconstruct past climates. When it comes to records for GHGs in the atmosphere we are in an even worse position, as direct records extend back only about fifty years. There are also still a number of climate indicators, such as the frequency of tropical cyclones where no clear trends are visible.

It is also possible that the climatic variations recorded since 1850 could be part of the earth’s natural variability. In Europe we have just emerged from the “little ice age” of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Before that the northern hemisphere experienced a warm period during the early middle ages when crops were grown in places like Houndtor on Dartmoor, which were abandoned as temperatures fell. Within the

last thousand years we have been both colder and warmer than we are at present.

From a biblical perspective there is no problem with the concept of climate change. An ice age almost certainly followed the flood and the book of Job may contain references to the effect of such an event on the Middle East (Job 37. 9-10 and Job 38. 29-30). This ice age probably ended no more than four thousand years ago, possibly less. We also have considerable evidence for historical climate changes in both biblical and post biblical times, which do not contradict scripture.

It has been suggested that the scenarios suggested by climate change contradict the biblical principle of God's care for and preservation of his creation as set forth in Genesis 8. 20-21 and other scriptures. However climate changes have occurred in the past and may even be recorded in God's word. Furthermore the changes we are currently experiencing may be caused by human activity, not simply natural climatic variation. God will surely prevent mankind from destroying the earth, but not necessarily from damaging it.

If climate changes do occur as predicted they will have an immense effect upon our world and way of life. However, when examining the data presented by the IPCC and others to support the current consensus it is possible to reach other conclusions. For Christians the main concern must be that such analysis does not contradict scripture. Where no such contradictions exist we should not reject reliable data collected by observation, but carefully consider these things and act accordingly.

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CHURCH HISTORY

William Gadsby (1773-1844)

By P. Ramsbottom

It is December 1839. The burning issue of the day is a radical campaign against a tax on bread, based around a campaigning group called the Anti-Corn Law League. In Manchester – centre of radical politics and wretched poverty – a large meeting is held in the town amid what the newspapers described as a “senseless and unreasoning mob.” While other speakers were jeered, one orator held the audience's attention for 45 minutes. “I come to my old standard, the Book of God,” he said in conclusion. “I consider the Corn Laws

degrading in every principle of humanity and insulting to God and man.”

The man was the Strict Baptist minister, William Gadsby. His hymns are much loved still over 150 years after his death, and he is also rightly renowned as a much-blessed preacher of the gospel. But from the pages of radical pamphlets and Manchester newspapers another story emerges: his actions on behalf of the poor and his involvement in radical political causes. This article briefly traces out the remarkable life of William Gadsby and particularly his politics. It also tries to outline the relevance of his role for today.

William Gadsby was born in Attleborough (Warwickshire) in January 1773. He received little education and was apprentice to a ribbon weaver at the age of 13. Called by grace while still young, he was baptized in December 1793. His preaching began on Whit Sunday, 1798, and he later became the dual pastor of Hogg Lane, Hinckley, and Desford.

In the providence of God, it was the search for funds for a new chapel that first took him to preach at St George's Road Chapel in Manchester in 1803 – a visit that had a marked effect on the congregation. During October 1805, he left the Midlands for a pastorate there in the heart of what has been described as the “shock city of the industrial revolution”. Thus, it was in Manchester that Gadsby's preaching had such a profound impact, and from Manchester that he travelled to preach – forming new churches in Lancashire and across the country. It was here that he was most prolific in his writings, including his well-loved hymns and, from 1835, a new magazine: *The Gospel Standard*.

But Manchester also provided the backdrop to his social activities. He was a man with the deepest sympathy for the poverty and distress he encountered, not least among his congregation – many of whom were handloom weavers (including John Warburton, the first person he baptised at Manchester). He used his friends across the country to aid during the devastating depressions in the local cotton industry (1826, 1829, 1832, 1837 and 1839-42). Letters to him reveal a constant flow of funds from men like Mr Tiptaft of Abingdon. During 1826 a member of his congregation, Mr Poole, opened his cooper's shop as a centre for the delivery of clothes and Gadsby returned from a London

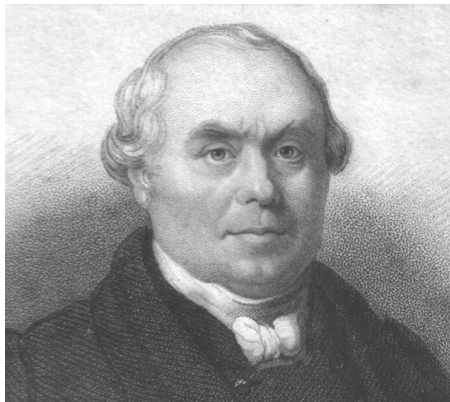
preaching tour with 29 cwt. of clothes and £28 to distribute. *Cowdroy's Manchester Gazette* not only commended his action but also called on others to “go and do likewise.”

Increasingly, William Gadsby also felt compelled to speak against “the *causes* of starvation.” Indeed this is the title of a short political pamphlet he wrote in 1838 (the only existing copy appears to be in the British Library). In particular, he was greatly exercised by the apparent lack of concern for the poor by the ruling class: the landed aristocrats. One character in *The Causes of Starvation* says, “they manage to spend other people’s shillings and feed with luxuries their own blood, and then by high rents and taxes ... they increase their own shillings and feed with luxury their own blood; and now we must starve.”

It is worth emphasising that Gadsby never lost sight of his primary calling as a minister of the gospel, nor did he advocate anything approaching violence or civil disobedience. He did not, for example, become involved with Chartism, the mass labour movement that called for political reform during the 1830s and 1840s.

In the immediate aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars (ending in 1815), the British government became increasingly alarmed about the possibility of revolution. It was after his return from the Hampden Club in Middleton (a meeting place for political ‘radicals’) – “where I had been to hear Mr Gadsby preach” – that the leading radical and writer Samuel Bamford was arrested. Middleton is some 5 miles north of Manchester and on occasion a member of Gadsby’s congregation, Thomas Spence, allowed his isolated house in Coal Pit Lane to be used by Bamford as a route of escape from the authorities.

Post-war unrest climaxed in the infamous (‘Peterloo’) government massacre of protestors gathered at St Peter’s Field in Manchester. At least 11 people were killed and hundreds injured when the magistrates ordered armed cavalry to storm the crowd. The country was horrified and,



William Gadsby
(1773-1844)

in a letter to the church at Conway Street in London, Gadsby condemned an “awful and unjust measure ... I can assure you that there is little in this town but oppression and tyranny.” Two of the magistrates who ordered in the cavalry were Church of England clergymen. Throughout his life Gadsby spoke passionately against the privileges and abuses of the Church. But it is perhaps unsurprising that he reserved particularly strong language for a letter he wrote about the Established Church (many years later) to a Reverend C W Ethelstone (“vile, presumptuous characters ... living in voluptuousness and uncleanness”). Ethelstone, it appears, was one of the two clergymen magistrates at Peterloo.

Unrest was still in the air the year after the massacre of Peterloo (1820). This was the year of the ‘Queen Caroline Affair’, when the estranged wife of the new King (George IV) returned to the country to claim her rights. The government introduced a bill (the *Pains and Penalties Bill*) to strip her of her rights, and dissolve the marriage. The issue caused a sensation in the country and Gadsby was outraged at the Queen’s treatment. The local press report him speaking at a public meeting in December 1820. In a sermon preached at St George’s Road, Gadsby denounced the aristocracy who aimed to have “the king, the queen and all the people within their grasp” before “totally destroying the constitution itself” and introducing “a constitution more suited to the minds and purposes of tyrants.” During the service, the King’s representative, Deputy Constable Nadin, appeared in thinly veiled disguise. He was the scourge of Manchester radicalism, and a prime mover behind the Peterloo Massacre. Boldly, Gadsby in his sermon referred to a “hot headed Tory with foul epithets.”

It was toward the end of Gadsby’s life that his activity on behalf of the poor culminated in his support of the Anti-Corn Law League. The League was a mass movement, based in Manchester, campaigning against the Corn Laws. These regulations governed the import and export of grain and were designed to keep bread prices high, thereby serving the interests of the landed (and ruling) elite. Gadsby sat on the National General Committee of the ‘£50,000’ Campaign (1842) and was on the central committee of the League’s Conference of Ministers (August 1841). He spoke at the start, typically requesting that the conference start with prayer.

John Gadsby, his son, was the League’s printer. Among other products he produced League slogans to stick on letters, including his

father's favourite anti-corn law texts (e.g. "He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him", Prov. 11. 26) and one of his father's couplets:

Hopeless trader answer me
What hath bread tax done for thee.

William Gadsby's congregation warmly supported their pastor in his stand. After a weeknight sermon condemning the corn laws in August 1841, a petition was signed by those present. The radical *Anti-Bread Tax Circular* noted that "the whole of his arguments were based on scripture." Later that year the chapel formed an Anti-Corn Law Association denouncing an "unjust and unscriptural, demoralising and inhumane" law. The annual Sunday School recitations even contained poems denouncing the law!

The Anti-Corn Law League became one of the most successful movements in British history – a model for later political agitation – and the Gadsby family remained at its heart. But, sadly, William Gadsby did not live to see the final repeal of the law in 1846.

William Gadsby lived over 150 years ago, and the debates and difficulties of his era, while interesting, may now seem rather remote. What is the relevance of Gadsby's political role today?

First, in Hebrews 12, we are encouraged by those who come before us – the great "cloud of witnesses" – to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us" and to "run with patience the race that is set before us." We know that among that number were those who, through faith, "subdued kingdoms" (Heb. 11. 33). William Gadsby was fearless in raising his voice against the evils of his generation. It is chastening to consider what he might have said about our current society.

Secondly, we are reminded that those constrained by the love of Christ will not be unmindful of the suffering around them. "Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me" (Matt. 25. 40).

When William Gadsby died in January 1844 the *Manchester Times* spoke of "thousands who lined the streets" in the snow on the day of his funeral. They remembered a preacher whose words had been made a blessing to many, and a poet whose hymns were loved – and remain

loved today. But they also commemorated a man who stood boldly with the poor and suffering.

For a full account of the life of William Gadsby, see B. A. Ramsbottom's William Gadsby and for John Warburton - mentioned on p. 13 - see J. R. Broome's John Warburton – Servant of a Covenant God (both available from Gospel Standard Trust Publications).

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DOCTRINE AND TRUTH

**Extract from a Sermon Preached by the late John Green,
Pastor of Gower Street Memorial Chapel, London,
on Lord's Day Morning 3rd February 1957**

“I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with the dew, and my locks with the drops of the night. I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?” (Song of Solomon. 5. 2-3).

We read in the 25th of Matthew of those ten virgins; five were wise and five were foolish, but whilst the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept – the wise as well as the foolish. Slumbered and slept – got into a sad, unexercised state and condition. The midnight was getting near, but they were all asleep. And that just shows apart from the gracious, enlivening influence of the Holy Spirit, it just shows apart from His rich, sanctifying grace, where you and I may get to.

A person who is asleep is unconscious of what is going on around him. A thief may be in his room and robbing him, and he be unaware of it. And there is not a shadow of doubt but what if you and I are left to get into this sleepy state, the devil will know it. He will come into our hearts as that thief and that robber, and he will spoil us. And it may be we shall have to go in that state and condition of being robbed and spoiled for many a day, for many a year. So the things of God are very solemn. “God is not mocked.” No, we shall not fool God. A solemn consideration, that! “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” If those of us who fear God sow to our own flesh, there will be a

sad reaping day for us before we die. There will indeed! And so the wise virgins – they slept as well as the foolish.

And then God spoke very solemnly to one church in the 3rd of Revelation. She had fallen into this sleepy state and condition. And God said, “Because thou art ... neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.” Terrible words! Words, I hope, that have made some of us tremble. “I would thou wert cold or hot.” If there is anything God abhors and hates, it is that lukewarmness in religion. And I am sure that the majority are in this state and condition in the day in which we live. O, I have felt this last day or two as this word has laid upon my heart, “O that God would give me grace to pray that I may not fall asleep; that God will keep me spiritually awake.” If the watchman goes to sleep, then the people are not warned, and the people may go to sleep too. It is not always the comfortable sermon or, as some people say, the nice sermons, that are the most profitable. Not by any means! I believe some of those sermons that have turned me inside out and searched me to the very marrow, have been some of the most profitable...

And if the watchman is awake, he will sound a note of warning – and woe unto those that disregard it! Woe unto those that find a thousand excuses! Ah, sinner, you and I will very soon be where there will be no excuses. No! You will have no excuses you can make in hell if you are lost. None whatsoever. We could find, perhaps, many an excuse today. I daresay a good many have their excuses why they are not at chapel: not very well; some, perhaps, genuinely so. But some, if we could look right into their heart, we should find the first two words of my text to be sadly true: “I sleep.” A spiritual slumber has come over them; there is not that gracious, healthy, lively exercise...

“I sleep.” Is that true of you, this morning, poor sinner? Are you asleep? Do you give way to the old flesh? It is so easy to give way to it. There are two kinds of sleepy people set forth in the Scriptures; those who are in that awful sleep of death, who have never been awakened from it by the blessed Holy Spirit; and those of God’s dear people who have left their first love, who have for the time being forsaken the fountain of living waters. A person asleep is not hungry, is not thirsty. Those who are awake feel hunger and thirst. And so spiritually. You are no help to the minister, you are no help to the church of Christ, if you are asleep. No. But if God has mercifully and graciously awakened you, then you will feel in your hearts that hunger, that inward thirst for the water of life, and you will come up to the

sanctuary longing and begging that God will give you something. And He will not pass you by...

“I sleep.” The midnight call came, and the virgins were all asleep. But, you see, the wise had oil in their vessels with their lamps. The church in my text was not dead, for she said, “I sleep, but my heart waketh.” She had a secret exercise right down in her heart. And I believe some of you know what it is to have that exercise – deep down in your heart you know things are not right; when you pray you know your prayers are not right; you know your hearing is not right. And there is a secret grief at the bottom of your heart. If this is so, then you are not a dead professor. You are not found among the foolish virgins if you know that exercise deep down in your heart, and amidst all the darkness you feel, and the sleepiness that you are in, there is a secret pleading with God that He would purge you, that He would help you, though you wonder what the end of these things will be unless He visits your heart again...

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Extracts from J. C. Philpot's *Ears from Harvested Sheaves*

“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed....” (John 8. 31-32).

The truth is not known at first in all its sweetness, liberty, and power. We have “to continue in the Word”; it may be at times in very great darkness, distress, exercise, temptation, and trouble; and yet, such has been the power of the Word upon the heart, it cannot, will not let us go. We see and feel the misery of departing from the truth, the wretchedness of getting back into the world, and being entangled in the spirit of it; and what must be the consequence if we leave those things we profess to know and believe, and embrace error or fall into the arms of sin! There is, therefore, a continuance in the Word, – it may be often, as I have said, in much darkness, much exercise, many trials, many temptations: but still we are brought to this point, never to give up the Word which has been made life and spirit to the soul. And though the Lord sometimes may very much hide his face, and we seem to be very poor, dull scholars, and to be much condemned for our unfruitfulness, to know so little of the spirit of the Master, and walk so little in His blessed ways; yet there is a looking unto him, a longing after him, a cleaving to him; and this manifests genuine discipleship.

Now, as we still cling, cleave, hang, trust, and hope, we begin to know the truth; it is opened up to the mind, it is made exactly suitable to our state and case; and the wonderful way in which it addresses and adapts itself to our various and pressing wants and necessities becomes more and more manifest. – *January 9th*

 “*Watch and pray*” (Mark 13. 33).

There is no keeping up faith except *by prayer and watchfulness*. As prayer declines in the bosom, so does the strength of faith. You may go on neglecting prayer and supplication until every grain of faith seems lost out of your bosom, and may come at last to think you never knew anything of a work of God upon your heart, and have been deceived in believing there was any grace there. By watchfulness also is the love of God maintained. Unless you watch against your besetting sins, against the snares spread for your feet, against the temptations that daily and hourly beset your path, against being overcome by the strength or subtlety of your unwearied foe, you are sure to fall; and if you fall you will bring guilt and bondage, darkness and distress into your mind, and cut off for a time all friendly intercourse with God. Therefore you must pray and watch; for without watchfulness, prayer is of little efficacy. And if we neglect the Scriptures, or read them carelessly, unbelievingly, they will do us little good. They must be read with believing eyes and heart, received as the revelation of God, and must be mixed with faith, or assuredly they will not profit us (cf. Heb. 4. 2). The life of God is a very deep, secret, and sacred thing in the soul. God, it is true, will maintain it; he will not leave his work unaccomplished; but unless we read and pray, watch and meditate, wage war against besetting sins, and seek the Lord’s face continually, we shall find the strength and power of faith very sensibly decline; and if so, there is no comfortable walking with God. – *January 11th*

 “*That I may see the good of thy chosen*” (Psalm 106. 5).

Did you ever see any good in God’s chosen? Oh! “How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!” Did you ever see what good God has blessed his people with, and how good it is to be one of them? All God’s people see that there is a “good” in God’s chosen family, peculiar to them, and *that* they sigh and long for. But some will say, had David never seen it when he penned this psalm?

Aye, surely; he had seen it. But did he not want to see it again? Yes; he had lost the sight of it, the sweet vision of it had retired, the old veil had come back, his eyes were dim, he wanted fresh “eye-salve”. So with us; we have seen, we trust, at times “the good of God’s chosen”, have felt our affections drawn towards them, and drawn up towards God, and have said, “Whom have I in heaven *but thee* and *there is none* upon earth *that* I desire beside thee.” That was to enjoy the sweet foretastes of heaven. But all these sweet foretastes became clouded; fogs and mists rested upon them, and hid them from our eye. Fresh sin brought fresh guilt, and darkness and deadness and doubts and temptations and fears and besetments came on of various kinds; and all these beclouded our sight. But we cannot forget the past; we cannot forget the solemn moments when we walked with God and talked with God, nor the sweet feelings that his presence enkindled. However dark, however dead, however disconsolate, however tried, harassed, and tempted, we cannot forget that. And having “seen the good of God’s chosen” we want to see again the good sight, to taste again that heavenly banquet. “That I may see the good of thy chosen.”— *May 29th*

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LETTERS, ADDRESSES AND SERMONS

Nehemiah – The Man Who Lived By Prayer

By G. D. Buss

This address was given by Mr. G. D. Buss, editor of the Friendly Companion, at the Village Hall at Barton-le-Clay on Saturday 15th November 2008.

One of the greatest privileges that almighty God has given to His church is the privilege of prayer. Those who possess the life of God in their soul will prove that prayer is a very necessary part of the walk of faith. Indeed if any live without prayer then we have to say with the authority of God’s word that such have not the faith of God’s elect. It is one of the surest evidences of being a child of God that there is a holy compulsion, wrought by the blessed Spirit within, to pray. Not always in the same intensity and in times of backsliding it may well be that prayer falls languid, but none the less, every true-born child of God will find they cannot live without prayer for long.

Nehemiah was just such a man. He lived by prayer and the wonderful thing is, he was not in the New Testament age. As yet the full revelation of Christ as the mediator between God and man had not been fully revealed, yet we believe he was a man who knew that he needed a mediator. I am sure that when his eyes looked back towards Jerusalem, and to the remembrance of the things of God there, he would remember that there was a mercy seat sprinkled with blood that he needed to present his prayers before the God of Israel.

Nehemiah was a very remarkable man and one of the many men God raised up in Holy Scripture for a distinctive and specific purpose. His name means, "God is my consolation". It is a very instructive thought that, very often, the names of the men God raised up to great prominence in his church, especially in the Old Testament, had a deep significance. Nehemiah meaning "God is my consolation" was a very apposite name for this man because he had a very lonely position. Sometimes God calls us to lonely positions and the man who is in a lonely position will often need God as his consolation.

Nehemiah was just such a man, a man who was often called to stand alone. He was a descendant of the Jews who were taken captive in 586 BC. So he was brought up in captivity far away from the Promised Land, yet he was a man who prospered there. We find him the cupbearer for Artaxerxes, the reigning monarch in Persia. When the 70 years of captivity were accomplished, Cyrus, who was ordained of God to be in power at that time, gave the Jews liberty to return to their own land. Those who returned at that time under Zerubbabel eventually rebuilt the temple. The prophecy of Zechariah shows how much opposition they had to endure.

About 100 years later, Nehemiah, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, became very concerned about the state of the cause of God back in his homeland. All that material prosperity which surrounded him did not make him forget the cause of God in Jerusalem. The cause of God became for him an oppressive burden because of the deplorable state of Jerusalem. The people of God there were very poor and the religious life of the people had fallen into a very low state. The enemies of the church had infiltrated the spiritual and moral fibre of Jerusalem. One of the profound characteristics of Nehemiah was his unselfish nature. He could have selfishly said, "I am alright. I am well looked after. I have got a good job. I have got a good position. Do I need to be burdened about these people hundreds of miles away?" But this man had the

cause of God and of truth in his heart. This was the prominent burden upon his spirit and it affected his work. Under Zerubbabel, the temple was rebuilt, but the work of Nehemiah was to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and, not only that, to rebuild the fabric of the social and religious life that had fallen, just like the walls, into disrepair. God ordains a work for every one of His people. Zerubbabel's work was to rebuild the temple. Ezra, who was contemporary with Nehemiah, had a work in rebuilding the law in the hearts of God's people. Nehemiah's work was to rebuild the walls and repair the broken society of Jerusalem.

God has never yet failed to raise up a man for the hour. It was Nehemiah's office, a God-given office, to confront an apostate nation. This was a nation that had once been favoured with God's presence, had once been favoured with the law of God and the types and shadows of the gospel age, but had now grievously departed. Immorality, ungodliness, and social disorder had taken over, very much like in our own nation today. It is very instructive to notice also how many of the Jews were promoted to high positions in Babylon. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and Nehemiah were all Jews; they were foreigners to the Persians and yet they were raised to very high positions. One of the reasons for this was that they were men who feared God and they were conscientious. One of the reasons why Nehemiah rose so high, was that he was a man who could be trusted

There are three books in Holy Scripture that deal specifically with apostasy. In the Book of Judges, we have the *character* of apostasy. You have only to read through that sad book and see how time and time again Israel strayed, went to idolatry. Time and time again, they were overcome by their enemies. They were apostate in the sense that they were falling away from the standard that God had ordained at Mount Sinai and in the Jewish covenant.

In the book of Jude, near the end of God's holy word, we have the *curse* of apostasy. It's a book we should all be aware of, as it speaks of the solemnity of finally falling away. Now we know that God's children cannot finally fall away, that is those that are called by grace and are in the election of grace. However, as a nation, and as a denomination, there can be an apostate spirit set in.

In the book of Nehemiah, we read how he was called to *confront* apostasy and to go and raise standards that had so grievously fallen! He had to go against the grain of the corrupt generation in which he lived.

He was enabled to do this by the power of the Spirit in prayer. The greatest weapon that Nehemiah had was prayer. He had other weapons, on one occasion we read of a sword in one hand and a trowel in the other, but, neither the sword nor the trowel would have been of any effect whatsoever, had he not been primarily a man of prayer.

Let me remind you of some of the fallen standards in our day, which concern me greatly. I mention two of them in particular. First, the Sabbath day is no longer respected as it has been in days of spiritual prosperity. I do not just mean that as a nation it has gone, but even denominationally it's not the day it used to be. It should be a day set apart for the worship of God's holy name and for the good of our souls. Yes, for the rest of our bodies I know, but how loose Sabbath day keeping has become.

Secondly, the institution of marriage has become increasingly despised and neglected. It is very grieving, and I'm not afraid to say this, but it grieves me and God's dear people very greatly, when we see young people taking it so lightly and even some from godly homes living as man and wife before they are married. Those things are creeping in and it is wrong, it is absolutely wrong; it is against God's holy word and it is grieving to the Spirit.

We can see other things also; the worldliness, materialism and leisure which have become the gods of our generation. It's the bigger holiday we can have, the bigger car, or the bigger house, all these things seem to be much more important than our souls or eternity or the honour of God in our lives and our nation.

Further, one thing that I think has been perhaps the chief cause of the ruin of this nation is the feminist movement. It has caused untold social damage. It has taken the mother away from her proper God-given role, to look after the children, which is now dangerously becoming a state role. The distinction between the man and the woman in dress and in behaviour is being blurred, obliterated, and this is all contrary to God's holy mind and will. These things are creeping in among our churches and we should be warning against them.

Again, the holy word of God, its infallibility and the reverence for God in its language, is being questioned and challenged. All these things are lowering of standards, but it needs a Nehemiah with God's grace to begin to reverse these grievous departures. Only God can reverse them, but may He give us the spirit of Nehemiah and the determination with God's help to raise fallen standards.

It was been said, by those who desire the ruin of a Christian nation, that the surest way to undermine a Christian heritage is to remove the pillars of marriage and the Sabbath day in that nation. Solemnly such satanic advice has proved all too true. These two pillars have been removed, amongst many others, and we see the solemn, dreadful effect of it. So, these are the challenges that we face today.

In George Whitefield's time, things were probably as bad as they are now in many respects – violence, disorder and immorality was the order of the day. God saved our nation at that time, neither was it through a political leader. God raised up a man called George Whitefield and others of his generation to preach, and the ministry of the word was so profoundly blessed, that the nation was turned Godward. If you read the journals of George Whitefield, you will see how great a part prayer had in the success that God gave to his ministry.

What did Nehemiah have to face in his day? What standards had fallen? He had a ruined wall. When the Chaldeans ransacked Jerusalem, they pulled the wall to pieces. They left an absolute ruin all the way around. It was a scene of desolation. There were also unlawful marriages that had been taking place that God had forbidden, yet were countenanced. The Sabbath was desecrated; they traded openly in the streets of Jerusalem on the Lord's Day. The priesthood was polluted by men who didn't fear God and worship was dishonoured by a mixture of idolatry as well as the supposed worship of almighty God. Any few rich there were, were exceedingly covetous, and oppressed the poor by using what God forbade in Old Testament days among his people; charging interest on loans; and many of God's people were greatly oppressed by these things. This is what Nehemiah faced when he returned to Jerusalem. What a contrast from the comparatively easy life he had had in Babylon, compared with this challenge that he now faced, that God had laid on his heart. How did he face these challenges? Nehemiah faced these challenges by prayer.

I will give **seven examples** of the prayers of Nehemiah and how the Lord wonderfully heard them. First then, what we call **private closet prayer**. The prayer in Nehemiah chapter one was a private closet prayer. All real reformation has begun with an increase of personal and private prayer. So it began with Nehemiah. As he prayed, he used that word "we". "We have sinned"; "We have fallen." He felt a part of the national sin. And we should remember that perhaps we look on wrongly, with a Pharisaical spirit at those who are walking in ways we

know are God-dishonouring. We should grieve over this, but let us remember, we are part of the nation that has fallen. We have our own part in it, something Nehemiah deeply felt. It was a secret prayer; it was a secret confession; a secret coming before his God, not just once or twice; day and night this man prayed with the burden God had laid upon him. I put it to you that we need private prayer. It is the secret behind a successful ministry. It is the secret behind an honourable profession of the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the secret behind a life that is God honouring and God glorifying. If we lack private prayer, then we lack the kernel of real religion.

The second thing I notice about Nehemiah was that his was an **urgent prayer**. I often think that when God's people pray most effectually it is when they are in real earnest. Sadly we have to say that many of our prayers are lukewarm and formal, but you know, when the Lord lays a burden upon us, when we get into some trouble at work or at college or in our calling then, if you are a child of God, you will come into the need of urgent prayer. I've often thought that that was the secret of Elijah's success. Elijah was another lonely man. How urgent was the prayer that often went up from his heart and how often he needed an immediate answer. I believe that often we are not urgent enough. May God make us more urgent. These are serious, solemn days. We are on the very brink of open persecution. Britain is on the brink of a very solemn judgment on this land which is already flooding in; economically and socially, we're in very dark days. If ever there was a need for urgent prayer it is now. May God grant it; he gave it to Nehemiah; may he give it to us.

And then thirdly, Nehemiah was an example of what I would call **instant prayer**. "Continuing instant in prayer," as we are told in one of the epistles. Before Nehemiah spoke before King Artaxerxes, he prayed. How different some of our lives would have been if, before we had spoken or acted, we had prayed! Prayer went before the opening of his mouth publicly. Prayer went before the actions that he had to take. It began with prayer; it was a secret prayer. It was not a prayer that is recorded; all we read in chapter two is, "then I prayed unto the God of heaven". It was a secret going up. Oh that we might have this example of instant, impromptu prayer. You know how often it is that some trouble comes and we immediately think, well I'm going to do this, I'm going to do that; pick up the phone; send the email. How much better if we turned aside, just for a moment, and went on our knees – "Lord

what would thou have me to do?” To be instant in prayer is to be always, by God’s grace, ready to pray at every turn in the way.

The next thing I notice about Nehemiah is that he prayed **in times of great fear**. You see in chapters one and two that Nehemiah was in a very dangerous position. It was a law of the Medes and Persians that no-one was to be sad in the presence of the king. The reason for that was that it was considered an insult to him. Everyone was supposed to be so happy with his presence, so happy with his reign, and to be content with it. Being sad was a capital offence and Nehemiah’s life could have been forfeited. But as soon as the king realised his sadness, we read Nehemiah was greatly afraid. Immediately fear took hold upon him, and dread, and then what do we read? But he did not despair, he prayed. It is a great mercy if when we suddenly come into dangers and difficulties, into trouble, that we turn to the throne of grace straight away. I think Jehoshaphat’s example is another very good one. When that vast army came against him, he didn’t call his generals together, count his chariots and his men, and then decide what to do. He called a prayer meeting first and therein was the secret of his success.

The next thing we notice is it was a prayer **in the workplace**. I wonder how many of you pray at work or at college or even at school if you are yet in education. Here was a man who prayed in the workplace and some of us have proved the power of God in answered prayer in the workplace. I was once a teacher in an inner city school in Coventry, which was a very challenging situation. Trying to teach mathematics to 15 year olds on a Friday afternoon who don’t like maths and who didn’t want to be there wasn’t easy! Many of them came from very difficult homes and were very disruptive. I used to dread teaching this class. Twice a week I had them and it became that by the time I had finished one lesson with them I was worried about the next one. So much so, that it became quite a phobia with me in the end. And I remember one afternoon it was as bad as ever and they wouldn’t do as they were told; it was chaos and I came out feeling absolutely wretched. It happened to be that night it was the weeknight preaching service at Coventry. Here was I worrying about the next Tuesday when I was supposed to have this class again and I thought I just can’t bear another hour with them. The text that night was this: “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” My pastor stopped in the middle of his sermon and he said, “Now you’re worrying about Tuesday already, but you haven’t got there yet”, and he said, “Make it a matter of prayer and see what God

will do.” Well it so hit me, I thought well perhaps that’s what I should be doing, so with God’s help I did make it a matter of prayer and I say this to the honour and glory of almighty God, and I say it to His glory and not mine, that when I went into that class on that Tuesday afternoon they were like lambs. They did exactly as I asked them, they worked and I had them for the rest of that academic year. They never caused me any more trouble. That was the hand of almighty God. I tell you, dear friends, you may some of you be in challenging situations, but there is nothing God *cannot* do, if we have this spirit of Nehemiah given to us by the blessed Spirit to bring it before him in prayer.

The next point is that Nehemiah was an example of **public prayer**. There are times when we should gather together for united prayer.

The force of their united cries,
No power can long withstand;
For Jesus helps them from the skies
By His almighty hand.

There was often united prayer in Nehemiah’s day. They gathered as a people and poured out their hearts together before the Lord. Peter in prison is another example. When he was about to be executed by Herod, “prayer was made without ceasing of the church for Peter,” and the Lord wonderfully delivered him. No one else could get in that prison but God could. I heard, some years ago, of an experience in World War II. The American ambassador was in London and he had a free evening apparently and he turned in with one of his staff into a Strict Baptist chapel during a prayer meeting and sat at the back. When he left, he was heard to say this: “I believe that the Allies will win the war, on this ground, because of the prayers of men such as we have been listening to”. That was a wonderful testimony. God did hear the prayers of his people at that time.

The next point is that Nehemiah, prayed **against his enemies**. This may surprise you because our Lord Jesus Christ, when He was crucified, the first words from his loving lips were, “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do”. So you say, why did Nehemiah pray like this? Well we must be very careful here. Imprecatory prayers are found in the Psalms and they are inspired. They are indited by the Holy Ghost, they show us God’s righteous, just anger against those who oppose the truth and who are Satan’s agents in the spirit of antichrist. So, yes, sometimes God does hear prayer in that way; you may get a

glimpse of that in the book by William Huntingdon, *The Naked Bow of God*, when more than once, as it were, God shot an arrow against the enemies of William Huntingdon in answer to prayer. But God answers that prayer sometimes in a different way. I've often thought, how were the church praying when Saul of Tarsus was wreaking such havoc? There he was sending men off to prison, slaying some, others were being exiled. How were the church praying I wonder? "Lord cut him off?" Well, the Lord did something better didn't he? He changed his heart, made him one of the noblest ambassadors for Christ there has ever been. So, in our prayers about those who may oppose and hate us we must never forget what God can do even in that way, if that be His most holy mind and will.

But Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem proved that God is not mocked. They opposed the rebuilding of the walls. Whenever God has a great work to do, he permits great opposition to it. Some of you may have been to the chapel in Kirkland, the most northerly of our chapels. When that little group of people began to meet, they met in a room and soon they needed a chapel. They needed land to build on and there was a piece of land came up just where they wanted. However, the landlord was determined that they were not going to get it. He was determined that they should not be the buyers. So he sent his agent on the day of the sale to make sure that the chapel people were outbid. The man who acted on behalf of the little group at Kirkland also went to the sale and on the way, he passed the agent for the landlord rolling drunk in the ditch. He went on to the sale and the little group at Kirkland got the sale; their prayers were answered in a most strange but remarkable way. God's people will prove that the opposition against the truth and the church will in the end always fail. God knows how to overturn the Sanballats, Tobiahs, and Geshems who come against his people.

In conclusion, what was the effect of Nehemiah's prayers? There are some most remarkable things here. First of all, the king was sympathetic. Artaxerxes was not a godly man and yet he was made sympathetic to give all the support and provision he needed. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord." You may have ungodly men to work for, to rule over you, but remember, their hearts are in God's hand and if, on our knees, we are enabled to bring these things before the Lord, there is no limit to what the Lord can constrain even an ungodly man to do on behalf of his people, albeit, unwittingly.

Secondly, God's people were made willing to work. I think that was one of Nehemiah's greatest troubles. The people of God had been content to see the walls in a dreadful state and do nothing about it. The lethargy, the despair, the indifference was one of the greatest hindrances and we are perhaps as guilty in our day. I know things are difficult and we often despair of things being any different, but we read, "They were made willing to work"; God made them willing, in answer to the prayers of Nehemiah and it took only fifty-two days to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

The next thing is, their enemies did not prevail. All their threats, all their attacks, their unkindness, their aggression, their bitterness, their malice, their subterfuge; it all faded like waves on the seashore. Again, the keeping of the Sabbath was reinstated, which was going against the grain. The gates of Jerusalem were shut by Nehemiah and he got a whip out and he beat those who kept coming to try to sell. Again, worship was reformed and the priests were now doing their duty (they had been out in the fields when they should have been offering the sacrifices) and the people supporting them now as God had ordained. The oppression of unjust interest was removed. Those rich men who were taking advantage of the poor were firmly reproved by Nehemiah. Unlawful marriages were dissolved. God's people had to come back to the word of God concerning this important point.

So what was the secret of Nehemiah's success? First of all, he led by example. The men who are most respected are those who lead by example and those who do not ask others to do what they will not do themselves. Nehemiah needed the wall built, but he stood on the walls himself and hauled stones up. The next thing is, he brought people back to the word of God. This is a vital point. It is not tradition, it is not opinions, it is the word of God that is our standard. We must come back to that every time, to the law and the testimony, if you do not speak concerning that then there is no light, as the Word of God says. Further, Nehemiah didn't yield when the going got tough. It was tough, very tough, very lonely, but by the grace of God, he didn't yield, because God had put him where he was. We would remember what John Bunyan said about that, "There is no armour for the back". Finally, the key to Nehemiah's book lies in his words, "So did not I because of the fear of the Lord." This was at the root of his prayers, his example, and his desire for the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem.

So I put it before you that this godly man sets a wonderful example to us of the power of prayer. It must be God-given prayer. It was like a burning fire in Nehemiah's spirit. He could not but pray, as all these great matters came upon him. But he was a man who had God's ear and God's right hand to support him and God's strong arm to defend him. May Nehemiah's God be yours and Nehemiah's grace likewise.

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REVIEWS

'Life and Letters of William H. Haddow'

By Dr. M. J. Hyde

Published by John Crowter, Haystacks, Green Lane, Potter Heigham, Norfolk, NR29 5LP; hardback, 167 pages, £12.95 (plus £2 postage & packing within the UK).

William Haddow was born in 1902. The Lord worked in his heart while he was young, particularly through the ministry of Samuel Curtis at Southill. Exercised concerning the ministry, he was sent out to preach in 1933. He received approaches by both the Church at Westoning and the Church at Welwyn with regards to a pastorate. After much conflict regarding these calls, Mr. Haddow accepted the call to Welwyn, formally taking the pastorate in January 1939. Sadly, his usefulness in the ministry was curtailed by a serious heart complaint which resulted in his sudden death in October 1939.

While Mr. Haddow's public ministry was short, we do not believe his labours were in vain. The eighty five "pastoral" letters contained in this collection were originally written to members of the church at Welwyn and Westoning, as well as to other friends and anxious enquirers he met through his ministry. One of his correspondents was the late Mrs. Constance Barker of Westoning (see *The Gospel Standard* 2005 p. 260). Many of these letters originally appeared in *The Friendly Companion* under the editorship of Mr. J. H. Gosden and some of our older friends still testify as to how eagerly they awaited each magazine to see if Mr. Haddow had anything to say to their soul.

What is it that marks out these letters as being special among other published correspondence? Firstly, many of these letters were written to young people, consequently they carry with them special warnings and encouragements for the young. In particular, Mr. Haddow was left

for a time to go into the world until the Lord brought him out of it, much against his will. As such he wrote from experience with regard to the influence and attraction of the world on the minds of the young. Secondly, many letters were written to those who may be termed “seekers”, those who find their case described by Newton:

’Tis a point, I long to know,
(Oft it causes anxious thought),
Do I love the Lord, or no?
Am I His, or am I not?

Many today discredit all doubts and fears as something the Lord’s people should never know anything about, but Mr. Haddow, knowing from his own experience of the trials, doubts and uncertainty, which at times plague the Lord’s people, deals tenderly with souls in such a case. Yet these letters are also faithful. We live in a day when many young people are encouraged by the teachings of easy believism to “close with Christ”, although they are still afar off from Him. To use another expression, “they are saved, before they are lost”. Mr. Haddow makes no such mistake, he makes no attempt to apply any plaster, without first probing the wound. He does however graciously set Christ before the exercised sinner. He also exposes the dangers of resting short of Christ, especially of resting on experiences, frames and feelings. He cannot be accused of setting any soul down short. Some extracts from his letters illustrate these points:

Something in you begins to rise almost to fretfulness, because you cannot feel the power and life in your soul that you want to feel. Other people’s plain and clear experience only makes you feel all the more out of the secret. If I dare go a step farther, perhaps you feel such things in your heart and mind sometimes, as to cause you much concern. Your feelings are at such times: “It cannot be that I am called by grace; I cannot be in the hands of the Holy Spirit to be taught aright”. A longing in your heart, unexpressed, rises up. You dare not call it a prayer; but it is a desire to be taught aright, laid hold upon by God’s grace, led in spite of yourself to know the Lord. You may say, “Oh that I could feel in my heart that overcoming grace!

What can you do? Prayer for more life may only seem to sink you into greater deathliness of soul. To take encouragement from different signs may only lead to greater disappointment. While you ponder these things over, you just seem to come to a standstill. Sometimes when in places like this, I have said, “Lord, how is it I seem unable to hope in Thee, and find

my comfort in Thee, yet I cannot get away from Thee?" It is a trying path to walk out, yet you cannot go very far wrong in it, because you are brought to such a sense of self-helplessness that you feel no effort to move unless the Lord comes and moves you. The soul is kept waiting in hope of the Lord's appearing.

Try and pray as best you can. All these things are not against you. Your helplessness does not affect in the least way the ability of God to help you.
(p. 126)

When asked, "What is your beloved more than another beloved?" we have to keep silence sometimes because we cannot explain what we see. But our little faith sees in Him her God and her ALL. It is this that has attracted your heart and has caused Mary to ponder these things in her heart. To be thus drawn to Him is the fulfilling of that word: "No man can come to me except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him." These souls must and shall come to Him though sin, temptations, self, unbelief, all say: "You shall not get to Him." But He whose word cannot be broken says: "They shall come to me." Oh, how great is the favour to that soul whom God declares shall come to Him! We look within, we look at our feelings, experience, desires, and we may say we shall never get to Him. But the soul is fenced with Jehovah's shalls and wills, and this is the anchor of our hope.

(p. 70)

Today letter writing has been overtaken by more immediate technologies such as telephone calls and the internet, but spiritual letters are precious to the Lord's people. They have the advantage of being easily dipped into, yet provide spiritual food. This is a book for seekers. The higher price reflects the fact that it is hand printed and bound.

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Student Information

So far, we have only received career information from four students and so at the moment we shall not be including this item in *Perception*.

CURRENT EVENTS

The New International Version (NIV)

The New International Version of the Bible, first issued in its complete form in 1978, is due to be reissued in a revised form in 2011. It was previously updated in 1984 and since its publication has sold about three million copies. The new translation, it is said, will bring it into line with present-day English usage and also take into account more recent Biblical scholarship. It will be published by Zondervan and will come out in the year that will celebrate the 400th Anniversary of the publication of the Authorised King James Version.

The translators of the NIV have consistently rejected the Received Text upon which the Authorised Version is based in favour of the Westcott and Hort eclectic text which makes use of the erroneous Vaticanus and Sinaiticus Codices rejected by the 4th century Christian Church. We reiterate that the great danger of these translations does not solely relate to the translation themselves, but to the text of the original languages upon which they are based.

The Isle of Lewis

It is sad to record that on 19th July 2009 the Caledonian Macbrayne Company eventually won their battle against the Sabbath-loving people of the Isle of Lewis. On that Sunday for the first time, the ferry from Ullapool on Loch Broom sailed to the island, opening the door for a stream of tourists to desecrate the Lord's Day on Lewis. Though we have never been to Lewis, we have always felt, since we read the *Diary* of Kenneth Macrae, what a favoured spot it has been in the past. Here, outside Stornaway, in Sandwick Cemetery, he lies buried. He was for many years Minister of the Free Church in Stornaway. On this very quayside at Stornaway, now to be so sadly desecrated on the Lord's Day, he was present on the last Sunday in August 1939 to witness a remarkable scene.

The British nation was on the eve of the declaration of the Second World War. This Sunday was traditionally the day for the summer communion services but differed from anything ever seen before on the island. Murdoch Campbell, in his book *Memories of a Wayfaring Man*, also describes the scene. On the quayside that evening was gathered one of the biggest crowds that had ever gathered there in the history of Stornaway. Nearly a thousand young men, the Royal Navy reservists (many local fishermen) were leaving Lewis to fight for their country and were boarding *The Lochness* for the mainland. Total silence fell over the crowd of grandparents, parents, brothers and sisters and friends as the men crowded onto the ship's decks, not a whisper rising from the great congregation. Deep sadness and anxiety gripped their hearts as they realized that many of their boys might never return. Then suddenly the silence was broken. A lone voice, in Gaelic, began to sing verses from the 46th Psalm to the tune Stroudwater:

God is our refuge and our strength; In straits a present aid;
Therefore although the earth remove, We will not be afraid.

Then the huge crowd took up the words of the Psalm which wafted across the harbour and the deserted streets of the town. The effects of the Great Revival which had swept over Lewis in the years 1818 – 1829 were still apparent in Stornaway on that Sunday in 1939. Where else in Britain could such an event have taken place at that time. Now, seventy years on, the great falling away is manifest in one of the last strongholds in Britain of Sunday observance and vital godliness.

Psalm XLVI

*God is our refuge and our strength,
in straits a present aid;
Therefore, although the earth remove,
we will not be afraid:
Though hills amidst the seas be cast;
though waters roaring make,
And troubled be; yea, though the hills
By swelling seas do shake.*

*A river is, whose streams do glad
the city of our God;
The holy place, wherein the Lord
most high hath his abode.
God in the midst of her doth dwell;
nothing shall her remove:
The Lord to her a helper will,
and that right early prove.*

*The heathen raged tumultuously,
the kingdoms moved were:
The Lord God uttered his voice,
the earth did melt for fear.*

*The Lord of hosts upon our side
doth constantly remain:
The God of Jacob's our refuge,
us safely to maintain.*

*Come, and behold what wondrous works
have by the Lord been wrought;
Come, see what desolations
he on the earth hath brought.
Unto the ends of all the earth
was into peace he turns:
The bow he breaks, the spear he cuts,
in fire the chariot burns.*

*Be still, and know that I am God:
among the heathen I
Will be exalted; I on earth
will be exalted high.
Our God, who is the Lord of hosts,
is still upon our side:
The God of Jacob our refuge
for ever will abide.*

Stroudwater

