

# PERCEPTION



In whom we have redemption through  
his blood, the forgiveness of sins,  
according to the riches of his grace.  
Ephesians 1:7

SPRING 2010

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<b>CONTENTS</b>	Page:
<b>Editorial</b> .....	1
Moral Issues	
<b>War and the Bible</b> .....	3
<i>Dr. P. Wilkins</i>	
<b>Church History</b>	
<b>Daniel Rowland</b> .....	8
<i>J. R. Broome</i>	
<b>Guido de Brès</b> .....	12
<i>Rev. C. Sonneveld</i>	
Doctrine & Truth	
<b>Particular Redemption</b> .....	15
<i>J. H. Gosden</i>	
<b>“But God”</b> .....	18
<i>C. Farncombe</i>	
Letters, Addresses & Sermons	
<b>The Christian Home</b> .....	22
<i>C. A. Wood</i>	
Reviews	
<b>Charles Jeffreys—A Spiritual Seceder by H. Sant</b> .....	30
<i>Dr. P. Wilkins</i>	
Current Events	
<b>The Equality Bill</b> .....	33

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## EDITORIAL

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

In our last editorial we wrote: “The doctrine of redemption draws our attention to our bondage as slaves to sin and to the ransom price Christ paid to deliver His people from that slavery.” It is a solemn truth that the Psalmist David confessed, “I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Ps. 51. 5). Paul describes our natural condition as “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2. 1). He goes on to say, “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace are ye saved...)” (Eph. 2. 4 - 5). Here lies the connection between sovereign grace and salvation through the redeeming work of Christ.

Redemption is a doctrine found in the Old and New Testaments. It is seen figuratively in Abraham’s sacrifice on Mount Moriah, in the blood on the lintels of the Israelites’ homes in Egypt, and in the sacrifices ordained of God in the Tabernacle. Job spoke of it in his words, “For I know *that* my redeemer liveth” (Job 19. 25). Isaiah prophesied, “And the Redeemer shall come to Zion...” (Isa. 59. 20). The act of redemption involves the payment of a ransom. A ransom is the securing of a release by the payment of a price. Elihu speaking to Job about the Lord regarding a sinner says, “Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom” (Job 33. 24). In Isaiah 35. 10 we read, “And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads...” Jeremiah writes, “The Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of *him that was* stronger than he” (Jer. 31. 11). The Psalmist, speaking of the Lord, says, “With him *is* plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities” (Ps. 130. 7 - 8).

Redemption, known by the application of the blood of Christ to the conscience, releases a sinner from the guilt, filth and curse of sin. The

apostle Paul says, “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us” (Gal. 3. 13). The price of redeeming His people, paid by Christ, was that He Himself was made a curse, as it was written, “Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree...” (Gal. 3. 13; Deut. 21. 23). Speaking of Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ said, “The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom” (Matt. 20. 28; Mark. 10. 45).

Anna the prophetess, when Jesus was taken as a baby into the Temple, “Gave thanks... and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem” (Luke 2. 38). Paul, in 1 Corinthians 1. 30, speaks of Christ being made of God unto us, “wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption,” and in Hebrews 9. 12 of “having obtained eternal redemption for us.” In 1 Timothy 2. 5 he writes of, “One mediator between God and men”, and adds, “who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”

This leads us to ask who the “all” are. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Baptists were divided into Particular Baptists and General Baptists. Particular Baptists held to the doctrines of Sovereign Grace and Particular Redemption. The General Baptists were advocates of Free Will and Universal Redemption. (We have included in this edition of Perception an extract from *What Gospel Standard Baptists Believe* by J. H. Gosden, Editor of the *Gospel Standard* from 1935-1964, on the subject of Particular Redemption). In Christ’s prayer following the Last Supper, He speaks of His Father giving Him power over all flesh “that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him” (John 17. 2) and adds, “I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine” (John 17. 9). Prior to this in His ministry, Christ had said, “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6. 37). The “all” of which Paul wrote to Timothy was therefore not the whole of mankind. They were the “all” who were “to be testified in due time”: that is, revealed as children of God by their call by grace and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The old Particular Baptist Confession of Faith of 1646 (Article 21) puts it simply: “Jesus Christ by His death did purchase salvation for the elect that God gave unto Him: These only have interest in Him, and fellowship with Him, for whom He makes intercession to His Father in their behalf, and to them alone doth God by His Spirit apply this redemption; as also the free gift of eternal life is given to them and



none else.” J. H. Gosden says, “That the merit of Christ’s sacrifice for sin is infinite, seeing His glorious person is divine, is thankfully admitted... but the application of the precious blood shedding of the Prince of Life is limited sovereignly to the elect of God”. It is limited in the divine purpose and in the act of substitution, as Peter says, “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree...” (1 Pet. 2. 24). Christ’s word to His disciples was, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark. 16. 15). The instrument in God’s hand is “the foolishness of preaching”. The Word preached is not “foolishness”, but we do well to remember that God’s chosen, sent servants are but human instruments in the purposes of God, and it is “the power of God” (1 Cor. 1. 24) resting on their labours that is the means of saving “them that believe” (v. 21); so that “no flesh should glory in his presence” (v. 29). Divisions have occurred in the Church of Christ over the centuries since the Reformation through men losing sight of Paul’s instruction to Timothy, “Preach the word” (2 Tim. 4. 2); that is proclaim the truth, “as the truth is in Jesus” (Eph. 4. 21).

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## **MORAL ISSUES**

### **War and the Bible**

**By Dr. P. Wilkins**

The topic of war is a controversial one among Christians. This is probably partially because the Bible does not give a black-and-white judgement on whether war is right or wrong. Some people (both Christians and others) have been puzzled by scripture’s seeming contradictions on the subject. When the Israelites were passing through the wilderness after leaving Egypt, they were frequently directly told by God to make war. For example, God told Moses to “Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites” and Moses’ immediate response was to command the people to arm themselves “unto the war” (Num. 31. 2, 3). But when Peter took out his sword to defend Christ, Jesus’ response was, “Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword” (Matt. 26. 52).

Harry Patch, who until his death in July 2009 was the last survivor of the trenches of WW1, gave a memorable definition of war, saying “War is organised murder, and nothing else.” Whether this is true or not

depends on what is meant by “murder”. The dictionary definition is “the unlawful premeditated killing of one person by another”. But this brings up another question: when is killing “lawful” and when is it “unlawful”? There are those who argue that all “killing of one person by another” is unlawful (perhaps Mr Patch might have been one of them). Others argue that such a view is inconsistent with the Bible.

What does the Bible say about killing and murder? The most obvious reference is the sixth of the Ten Commandments. In the Authorised (King James) Version, this is translated as “Thou shalt not kill” (Ex. 20. 13). Many newer versions (and also many Jewish translations of the Old Testament) choose rather to use the word “murder”. There has been and continues to be controversy about which of these translations is the most accurate, but in any case traditional Christianity has always held that, in certain circumstances, killing is not wrong. An example is the case of capital punishment, which was explicitly instituted by God in the Old Testament for various crimes (e.g. for murder in Ex. 21. 12). So the traditional Christian view of the sixth commandment has always been that it forbids only the “unlawful” killing of men; not all killing.

The quotation mentioned above – “all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword” – cannot therefore be interpreted carelessly as though it condemns everyone who ever uses violence. Such an interpretation is not supported by the rest of scripture, and is not supported by history – there have been many who used violence but did not die violently. Harry Patch is a good example; he manned a machine gun in the trenches and yet died from old age in a nursing home – he “took the sword” but did not “perish with the sword”. We cannot even argue that it means that all who use violence *unlawfully* will die violently; again, such an argument is not supported by historical fact. Dr Gill, in his commentary on this verse, probably comes closest to a correct interpretation when he says that it speaks of “private persons that use the sword, and that not in self-defence, but for private revenge; or engage in a quarrel, to which they are not called; and such generally perish, as Peter must have done, had it not been for the interposition of almighty power.”

“War” is defined as “a state of armed conflict between different nations, states, or armed groups” <sup>1</sup>. There can be no denying that war can and often does cost many lives (around 17 million people died in WW1), and that many of these lives are taken deliberately. There is

also no doubt that many of the lives that are lost during wars are lost through unlawful killing. For example, if a soldier deliberately fires on and kills his comrades, this would be unlawful and therefore classed as murder. But what makes this killing “unlawful”, when if the same soldier had fired on and killed an enemy soldier it would have been considered “lawful”? The answer surely lies in the fact that in the latter case the killing is authorised by the soldier’s government; the soldier is acting as the servant of the state, and the “powers that be” – those who control the state – are put into that position by God (Rom. 13. 1).

This doesn’t mean, though, that governments are free to declare war whenever and wherever they want. To determine whether a war is lawful it is necessary to consider the role of the state; why are those in authority given that authority? One important reason is that the state is responsible for defending its citizens – so Paul writes that prayers and supplications should be made “for kings, and *for* all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty” (1 Tim. 2. 2). In other words, Paul says, we should pray that those in authority might be able to protect us from those who wish to deny us “quiet and peaceable” lives. In order to protect us, the state may need to use violence to defend itself against those who attempt to attack us – whether they are an individual or another state. Police officers are lawfully able to use necessary force to restrain those inside the country who pose a threat to the public; and by the same reasoning, one can argue that the armed forces have the authority to use necessary force to defeat those from outside the country who pose a threat to the state.

Of course, there are many who would deny this. Such people sometimes argue that the teachings of Christ infer that Christians should not use violence under any circumstances. Pacifism has a long history and many Christians have been pacifists. They may claim to be following the example of Christ. But Christ himself, whilst on earth, drove the sellers from the temple with a “scourge of small cords”. In Revelation 19, John describes Christ as making war in righteousness and smiting the nations with a sharp sword, with armies following him. This is not a description of a pacifist.

Christian pacifists may base their beliefs on verses such as Matthew 5. 44 – “Love your enemies”. But to use this to deny the necessity of war is simplistic. There is no doubt that it is wrong for a Christian to hate, but a Christian judge may sentence a criminal to death without

hating the criminal. A Christian parent may discipline a child without hating the child. And a Christian soldier may fight against and even kill another man without hating that man. Just as a man has a responsibility to defend his family (and a right to use violence – as a last resort – to do so), so the state has always had a responsibility to defend its citizens, and a right (again, as a last resort) to use violence to do so.

It is sometimes objected that nowhere in the New Testament does it actually say that it is acceptable for Christians to take part in war. John Calvin answers this objection in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. First, the reason for carrying on war in Old Testament times still applies today; the nature of man has not changed. Secondly, Calvin says, we should not expect such a thing from the New Testament, which does not aim to establish civil laws, but the spiritual kingdom of Christ. Thirdly, Christ, when here below, instituted no change in this respect. In fact, soldiers asked John the Baptist “What shall we do?” In response, John tells them to be content with their wages (Luke 3. 14) and (to quote the commentator Matthew Henry) “does not bid them lay down their arms, and desert the service, but cautions them against the sins that soldiers were commonly guilty of”. When John tells the soldiers to “do violence to no man”, it is clear that he meant unlawful violence. Dr Gill interprets the phrase as saying that the soldiers should not “put a man into bodily fear, by threatening, hectoring, and bullying him, and drawing the sword upon him”.

The above reasoning gives some clues as to when a war is lawful and when it is not. To put it simply, if a state is fighting to defend its citizens, the war is lawful, and even then only if the use of violence is a last resort. Of course, the issue is rarely this simple. Adolf Hitler might have argued that the war he initiated against Poland in 1939 was to defend the German population of Danzig – the town, previously part of Germany and whose population was 98% German, was placed largely under Polish control under the terms of the Versailles Treaty after WW1. However, it would be hard to argue that war in this case was initiated as a last resort, and really the German population of Danzig were under no threat and were able to live “quiet and peaceable” lives. In addition, Germany had agreed the terms of the Versailles Treaty, so the citizens of the town were actually no longer the responsibility of the German state. So few today would argue that this act of Hitler was lawful. There have been and are arguments over



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whether the recent war against Iraq was lawful, or whether the current war in Afghanistan is lawful. These issues are highly complicated<sup>2</sup>.

It is obvious that war is something that should be avoided if reasonably possible (i.e. if it is possible for the state to avoid it without failing to carry out its responsibility to protect its citizens), but it is also obvious that, due to the nature of man, avoiding war is not always possible. There is no doubt that many wars have been unjust wars that should never have occurred. But the fact that there have been many wrong wars does not mean that there is no such thing as a right war. The fact that war has sometimes been conducted unnecessarily does not mean that war is never necessary. The duty of Christians surely ought to be to pray that wisdom might be given to those who have to decide when to initiate wars, and to those who have the responsibility of conducting wars; and to pray, with submission to the will of God, that wars might be brought quickly to peaceful conclusions with the minimum of casualties and destruction.

**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> Here we look mostly at “traditional” wars; wars between different countries. There are also civil wars (wars between different groups within a country) – the American Declaration of Independence is an interesting read relating to this area, as the writers justify their actions in resisting their recognised government (i.e. the British monarchy); something that, on the face of it, might be thought to be expressly forbidden in the Bible.

<sup>2</sup> The ongoing conflict in Afghanistan is usually described as a war. Initially it *was* a “traditional” war between the UK (and its allies) and Afghanistan itself, but the then-government of Afghanistan was quickly defeated. Now it is no longer a war between states but more of a peace-keeping or counter-insurgency effort; the UK is assisting (rather than attacking) the Afghan government. The same could be said of the recent Iraq war; again, initially (and briefly) a conflict between states, but subsequently a case of one state helping another to police its territory.

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# **CHURCH HISTORY**

## **Daniel Rowland (1713-1790)**

**By J. R. Broome**

**I**t is generally agreed that the two most prominent leaders of the 18th century revival in Wales were Howell Harris and Daniel Rowland. They had much in common. They were about the same age; the Lord called them both from darkness to light in the same year (1735); they had a common friend in the minister Griffith Jones, Daniel having been called by grace under his ministry and Howell having worked for him in connection with his Charity Schools; and both Howell Harris and Daniel Rowland were called to the work of the ministry early in life and were both preaching not long after they were twenty-one. In other ways they differed. Howell, as a great evangelist, travelled far and wide in Wales and England, while Daniel's ministry was confined to Wales, and that largely in the area around Llangeitho in Cardiganshire, between Tregaron and Lampeter. They had also another feature in common; neither of them had had a university education, yet Daniel was ordained as a curate in the Church of England and Howell was a staunch supporter of that Church all his life. It was to Daniel that Howell looked as the minister who, under the hand of God, was the means of bringing him into fuller revelation of the Lord Jesus to his soul. Yet in later life they had a grievous separation of over ten years when Howell became involved in error and Daniel had to write against his friend, though the friendship was healed before Howell's death in 1773, and Daniel lived on to a good old age, dying in 1790 at the age of seventy-seven.

But if they were thus connected, history will ever link their names, and the church of God will ever associate them as the two Welsh leaders of the Great Revival of the 18th century, and in this work their talents were dovetailed: Harris the zealous evangelist and organiser of the Societies, and Daniel the stable minister and theologian of the Revival who, while he itinerated little, led the flock of God committed to his charge and was used of the Lord to the salvation of many thousands, and the sending forth of many ministers of religion, over the fifty-five years of his ministry. Daniel had been born at Llancwnlle in 1713, and was the second son of the Rev. Daniel Rowland, Rector of Llangeitho. Nothing is known of the first twenty years of his life, except that his father was fifty-four when he was born, and died in 1731

when Daniel was eighteen years old. The boy's education was at Hereford Grammar School, and the fact that he did not go to university could possibly be connected with the death of his father. The next fact that is known about him is that he was ordained in London in 1733 at the early age of twenty, and returned to Wales to become curate to his elder brother, John, who had succeeded his father, and held the three adjacent parishes at Llangeitho, Llancwnlle, and Llandewibrefi. For two years after his return, Daniel gave no evidence of any fitness to be a minister. He was first brought into concern when hearing the godly minister, Griffith Jones, preach at Llandewibrefi in 1735. This brought a complete change into Daniel's life and ministry. He was now twenty-two and married. He began to preach as a man who knew the reality of sin and death, heaven and hell. It was said in his early ministry he preached the law, and that crowds who flocked to hear him were brought under deep conviction of sin. It was in this period, in February 1738, that Howell Harris heard him preach from Proverbs 8, which was made such a blessing to him. William Williams refers to another change which took place in his ministry, when he writes: "After preaching for some years the stormy law and wounding very many, his tone changed; he proclaimed full, complete, perfect salvation through the Messiah's death on Calvary. Henceforth the power of his sweet doctrines nurtured faith by revealing the Mediator, God and Man, as the foundation of free salvation; the One who freely redeemed by His precious blood; and all the treasures of heaven for a poor believer."

Now people came to hear him from all parts, and many were brought under deep conviction. As many as two thousand at a time were in his congregation. Writing of these occasions, he said, "There is such power as I have never felt before, given me in preaching and administering the Lord's Supper. The Lord comes down among us in such a manner as words can give no idea of. Though I have, to prevent nature mixing with the work, openly discountenanced all crying out, yet such is the light, view, and power God gives very many in the Ordinance, that they cannot possibly help crying out, praising and adoring Jesus, being quite swallowed up in God; and thus I was obliged to leave my whole congregation, being many hundreds, in a flame.... this is our condition generally every Sabbath." People came from as many as eight counties to hear him, and he found it impossible to confine his labours to his own parish. The circumstances which first led him to preach out of his own neighbourhood are of considerable interest. A farmer's wife from a

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little hamlet called Ystradffin in Carmarthenshire, a place about twenty miles to the east of Llangeitho across very open and rough country, came to see her sister who lived near Llangeitho. Having heard strange rumours about the oddities of Daniel Rowland's ministry, she went out of curiosity to hear him, and not in vain. Returning home she visited her sister, who was surprised to see her again on the following Sunday. When asked the reason for this second visit, she said that it was something that had stuck in her mind all the week, of the previous Sunday's sermon, and never left her night or day. She came again and again every Sunday, over the rough and mountainous road. After six months, she felt a strong desire to ask Daniel Rowland to come and preach at Ystradffin, and going up to him said, "Sir, if what you say to us is true, there are many in my neighbourhood in a most dangerous condition, going fast to eternal misery. For the sake of their souls, come over, sir, to preach to them." Her request took Rowland by surprise, but without a moment's hesitation, he said, "Yes, I will come, if you can get the clergyman's permission." This she obtained, and according to his promise, he went over and preached at Ystradffin. His first sermon was wonderfully blessed, and not less than thirty persons were converted that day, many of whom afterwards came regularly to hear him at Llangeitho. From this time onward he never hesitated to preach outside his own parish, wherever a door was opened to him, though such action often annoyed other clergymen, and offended the Bishop of St. David's. In 1741, the Bishop established a curacy at Ystradffin, which effectively stopped Rowland from preaching there, as he always had to obtain permission of local clergy, or else preach in the open air.

At no period, however, of his ministry or life, does he appear to have travelled to the same extent as many of his contemporaries, especially such a contemporary as George Whitefield. He rightly judged that hearers of the gospel needed to be built up as well as awakened, and for this work, he was peculiarly well qualified. Whatever, therefore, he did on weekdays, the Sunday generally found him at Llangeitho. Equally remarkable were the events which led to his first preaching in the open air. After his conversion, he had felt great anxiety about the spiritual condition of his former companions in sin. They disliked searching sermons, and refused to come to church at all, and their custom was to go on Sunday to a suitable place on one of the hills above Llangeitho, and there amuse themselves with sports and games. Rowland tried all means to stop this desecration of the Lord's Day, and failed, until at last



he determined to meet them on their own ground. He therefore went, and suddenly breaking into a ring as a cock-fight was going on, addressed them powerfully and boldly about the sinfulness of their conduct. The effect was so great that not a tongue opposed him: Sabbath desecration stopped, and for the rest of his life, Rowland never hesitated when occasion required him to preach in the open air.

The work which he did as he travelled round preaching beyond the confines of his parish was carefully followed up, and not allowed to fall to the ground. No one understood better than he did that souls required feeding after they had been awakened. Aided, therefore, by such men as Howell Harris, he established a regular system of societies throughout Wales, through which he managed to keep up a constant communication with all who had been blessed under the ministry, and also to provide an assembly of true believers locally within the framework of the Church of England, many of whose ministers were ungodly men. These societies were all connected with one great Association which met four times a year, and of which he was generally the moderator. This Association was the founder organisation of Welsh Calvinistic Methodism, which finally separated from the Church of England to form a separate denomination in 1811. But long before this, Rowland had been driven to leave the Church of England. His elder brother John had died in 1760, by which time Daniel had been Curate at Llangeitho for twenty-seven years. Instead of appointing him to the living, the Bishop of St. David's took the extraordinary step of giving it to his twenty-seven year old son John, and thus the father became curate to his own son. Finally, in 1763, after many warnings, the Bishop revoked Daniel Rowland's licence to preach, because he would not promise to stop preaching outside of his own parish. The Methodists had already built a chapel at Llangeitho in 1760, and this was replaced by a new building in 1764. Here he continued to preach, and Howell Harris reckoned that in 1763 as many as ten thousand were coming to hear him at Llangeitho. It was under Rowland's ministry in 1773 that Thomas Charles of Bala was converted (the minister associated with Mary Jones and the founding of the British and Foreign Bible Society).

No longer persecuted by bishops and clergymen, he continued preaching in Llangeitho for twenty-seven years, "in great quietness, undiminished popularity and immense usefulness until he died at length in Llangeitho Rectory on the 16th October, 1790 at the ripe old age of

seventy-seven” (J. C. Ryle). He had been a pillar of orthodoxy in his life, resisting his closest friend, Howell Harris, between 1752 and 1763 (when the latter became involved with Moravian errors), and carrying on the work when Harris died in 1773. All agreed that his ministry was most exceedingly blessed, though little can be fully realised of its power, since only a few of his sermons survive, not more than eight, and these have been translated from Welsh. Yet the results of his fifty years’ ministry were to turn Wales from being a godless principality to a country renowned for the Truth.

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## **Guido de Brès – Reformer in the Netherlands**

**By Rev. C. Sonneveld**

Around 31st October each year we remember Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin, and the beginning of the Reformation. How did the light of the Reformation break through in the Netherlands? Who was used by God for that purpose? Many names could be mentioned, but there is one man who comes to the fore in a special way; Guido de Brès. He in particular was the means of building God’s church in the Lowlands and providing her with a Confession, the fruits of which are still being reaped today.

### **Captured by God**

It was around the year 1540 in front of the town-hall of Mons that an announcement was made that anyone who adhered to the heresy of Martin Luther would be severely punished. In Guido’s case, this did not have the intended effect. He began to wonder what the content of that teaching was for which so many give their lives. Were Voes and Van Essen not the first martyrs in the Netherlands who had been burned at the stake? Guido started to read books which were forbidden by the Roman Catholic clergy, especially the New Testament and Luther’s *Catechism for Children*. As a result, he could not but conclude that the German Reformer was right when he nailed his Ninety-Five Theses to the door of the Wittenberg chapel on 31st October 1517.

Not much more is known about the conversion of Guido de Brès, but it is clear that the Lord inclined his heart to Himself between the age of eighteen and twenty-one. Moreover his conversion revealed itself in its fruits.

When the light dawned on Guido, he was unable to remain silent. He spoke about his discovery to his brother Stoffel and, later on, to other members of his family. Initially he met with much resistance from his parents, who regarded Luther's teachings as very harmful, but slowly they too were won over to the truth of free and sovereign grace. Then the house of the De Brès family became like a cave of Adullam, where many come together to search the Scriptures and to seek refuge in the greater David.

However, the Lord had said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." The little flock in Mons also had to experience this. When the authorities discovered what was going on and an investigation began, Stoffel was the first to be apprehended. Guido then realized that his turn would come soon, since he was the chief culprit and so, without waiting, he fled to England.

### **Belgic Confession**

After wandering through Europe, Guido finally returned to his home country to serve the church of Doornik. As a wanted man his life hung as by a silk thread. However, few knew his hiding-place. At night he stayed with friends and by day he worked in an old dilapidated garden house close to the city wall. Here it was that Guido de Brès drafted his Confession of Faith, under the searching eye of the enemy and yet under the watchful eye of his Master.

During the night of 1<sup>st</sup> November 1561, the Confession of Faith was hurled over the wall of the castle in Doornik, along with a long letter for Philip II of Spain. The letter was a vivid plea for those who, though persecuted for the sake of their faith, desired to be faithful subjects of the King. Guido asks the monarch to consider that these humble people, above everything else, wished to live according to the God's Word. When the letter landed on the courtyard of the castle, the writer himself had fled.

More than fifty years later, Guido's Confession was accepted by the Synod of Dordt in 1618, as a rule for doctrine and life. (This Dutch or Belgic Confession of Faith, as it is often called, is in English at the back of The Psalter of the Netherlands Reformed Congregations of America). This beautiful and deeply spiritual Confession is worth reading. May God grant you a new heart and may you may find your soul's experience in this Confession. It will protect you against every wind of doctrine!

### **Martyr for Christ**

A few years after the publication of the Confession, Guido and three of his friends again had to flee from their enemies. On their way to France, they reached a village where they entered an inn to rest. A suspicious farmer alerted the local mayor to their presence and moments later the four men were arrested. As sheep for the slaughter they were transported to Doornik, and from there to Valenciennes. Guido was locked in an underground dungeon, into which sewage from an adjacent house flowed. Guido's sentence was a forgone conclusion for he had administered the Lord's Supper against the command of the Governor.

During the time of his imprisonment Guido de Brès was able to write a few letters of farewell. One of them, addressed to his faithful wife, is a very touching one as it gives a glimpse into both of their hearts. He calls his wife his dear sister in the Lord and commends her, together with their five children, to Him who is able to keep them after his death.

On 31<sup>st</sup> May 1567, a warden entered the cell of the preacher and his friend. He told them to prepare for the end, for their sentence would be carried out at six o'clock. Upon hearing this, the prisoners praised the Lord and glorified Him. They thanked the warden for the good news he had brought them. Guido addressed his friend saying, "My brother, today I am sentenced to death for the doctrine of the Son of God." He also said, "I had never thought that Thou, Oh Lord, would grant me such an honour. I feel that my countenance has been changed by the grace which Thou hast caused to increase in me more and more. From moment to moment I am strengthened, my heart leaps for joy!"

### **The Victor's Crown**

Guido de Brès and his friend De la Grange were brought to the market square, the place where the gallows had been erected. De la Grange was the first to climb the scaffold. Then it was Guido's turn. When he knelt down to pray, he was kicked and pushed forward in a most brutal way. At the top of the ladder he once more addressed the people, who stood with clenched fists and watched breathlessly. He admonished them to subject themselves to the government but also to remain steadfast in their confession of the truth. However, Guido was not allowed to finish his speech. The executioner pulled the ladder from



under his feet. A few moments later he had entered into the joy of his Lord.

The end of the reformer's life was a testimony of what grace was able to accomplish. Despite much tribulation for Christ's sake, Guido de Brès remained faithful unto death. Do you also know what tribulation is, or are you still fighting in the wrong camp? Oh, turn before it is too late!

By grace, God's people may strive under the banner of King Jesus against a triple-headed enemy. They are often wounded and they feel like straying sheep, but the Lord is faithful. He blessed the life of Guido and his friend. In their dying we can see that when God gives grace in one's lifetime, He will also do so in the hour of death. Thus the living church will end in the LORD, the unchangeable covenant-Jehovah. With their eyes cast on Him, they may at times already sing of that glorious future:

“We'll wear the victor's crown, no more by foes assaulted,  
We'll triumph through our King, by Israel's God exalted.”

*(Reprinted from Insight Into; the young people's magazine of the Netherlands Reformed Congregations of the USA and Canada.)*

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## DOCTRINE AND TRUTH

### Particular Redemption

**By J. H. Gosden**

*“We believe that the eternal redemption which Christ has obtained by the shedding of His blood is special and particular (Gal. 3. 13; Heb. 9. 12-15); that is to say, that it was intentionally designed only for the elect of God, the sheep of Christ, who therefore alone share in the special and peculiar blessings thereof (Isa. 35. 10; John 10. 15, 25-28; Acts 2. 47; Acts 13. 48; Acts 20. 28; Rom. 5. 8-10; Rom. 8. 33, 34; Rom. 9. 13, 15, 16; Rev. 14. 4.)” – Gospel Standard Articles of Faith, Number 6.*

Truth may sometimes be simply illustrated by supposing its opposite and following that to its logical conclusion. There have been many who, unwilling to submit to divine election, have denied its existence, suggesting that God could not justly differentiate between

persons without an inherent cause in them. This, the natural effect of blinded human reason, would overthrow the sovereignty of Jehovah, render Him dependent upon influences without Himself, and reduce Him to a will-less being. But Holy Scripture declares Him to be perfectly free and absolutely sovereign in all His acts: "He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." (Eph 1. 11)

The attempt of the finite to measure the Infinite, of the creature to understand the Creator, of the subject to regulate the Sovereign, is a fruitful source of religious confusion. If God did not select from the mass of mankind some who shall enjoy His favour eternally, how do *any* escape the "wrath to come," seeing all deserve it? Because our puny minds cannot fathom the wisdom or the justice of divine grace distinguishing where all are equally unworthy, shall so clearly revealed a truth therefore be denied? What benefit derives from the denial? He who, though a worthless sinner, honestly prays, "Remember me, O LORD, with the favour *that thou bearest unto* thy people: O visit me with thy salvation; that I may see the good of thy chosen," etc., shall not fail of a full and surprising answer.

But this 6th article was formulated in view of the theory of those who, though professing to believe in divine election, asserted that there is a "residuum" of merit in Christ's death available for any who, though not elected, are willing to accept salvation: a theory which makes salvation contingent upon man's will – the doctrine of Arminianism. Doubtless, such an idea furnishes food for the universal-charityist who deems himself wiser and kinder than God. But error is filthy and, however humane the intentions of its promoters, it benefits none though it deludes many into false security. Besides, it grievously dishonours God. To say that Christ redeemed all who will believe, whilst not untrue, is less than the complete truth of the matter, and liable to grave misconception. Regeneration is brought undesired, faith and repentance are free gifts, but marriage to Christ is no willy-nilly matter. The heart, the will and the understanding are all renewed by invincible grace. The will to believe does not regulate the extent of redemption, but the extent of redemption (fixed by the will of God) governs the will to believe. "Thy people *shall be* willing in the day of thy power" (Ps. 110. 3). And God's gracious purpose in election is the foundation and the fountain of both redemption and faith.

That the merit of Christ's sacrifice for sin is infinite, seeing His glorious Person is divine, is thankfully admitted. None but He who is

God and Man in one Person could redeem one soul from one sin, and the hell it deserves, to God and holiness and heaven. In that sense a *measurable* atonement is nil. But Christ's is immeasurable and more – it is infinite; enough to redeem from all sins all men. But the *application* of the effects of the precious blood-shedding of the Prince of Life is limited sovereignly to the elect of God. To affirm otherwise is to render the covenant indefinite (nay, invalid) and to refute Christ's express declarations: "I lay down my life for the sheep...Ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep." "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou (My Father) hast given me." We reverently ask, If Christ knew not for whom He *died*, how did He know for whom to *pray*? And does He not know whom He loves with an everlasting love? But He definitely says, "I know my *sheep*." Read under the unctuous teaching of the Holy Ghost, the 17th of John would obliterate from the mind any notion of a promiscuous salvation. And how does the Holy Spirit know whom to teach, if the redemption of Christ is indefinite? "They shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." And is not the eternal Father sure whom the persons are that He predestinated unto the adoption of children and gave to His divine Son?

Upon the hypothesis of an indifferent or a contingent application of redeeming grace, the whole Trinity is thrown into confusion. On the other hand, when we realize that the divine will (the "good will of him that dwelt in the bush") determined our election, our predestination, adoption, the atonement for our sins (redemption by blood), regeneration (redemption by power), our repentance, faith, love, patient perseverance unto eternal life, our victory over sin, death, hell and the grave – then God is seen to be triune, as in subsistence, so in salvation. And this is deeply humbling to the sinner, and glorifying to his God and Saviour. It is most certain that all thus blest will say,

"Why me, O blessed God, why me,  
Why such a wretch as me?  
Who must for ever lie in hell  
Were not salvation FREE."

As for such as are non-elect, but participate (as is said) in the "residuum" of merit in Christ's death because they believe, we know not what are their reactions, but suppose they could hardly say, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy

mercy, *and* for thy truth's sake." God save us from a contingent salvation, and bring us experimentally into that covenant "which is ordered in all *things* and **sure**" and which, being sealed with divine blood, can never be broken.

*Extracted from What Gospel Standard Baptists Believe by J. H. Gosden. Gospel Standard Societies 1993 pp. 29-31.*

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## **But God**

**By C. Farncombe**

**T**his little word "BUT" has been on my mind for some time and I now put my thoughts into writing. Our pastor, Mr C. A. Wood, very often drew our attention to the words in Ephesians 2. 4: "But God". Mr B.A. Ramsbottom on a visit to me in the Bethesda Home quoted these words and remarked that it would make a nice study of the occasions in the Word of God where we have "Buts". I was confirmed in the reading of a devotional booklet on the verse in 1 Corinthians 15. 20, "But now is Christ risen," and the remark what a glorious "but" this is. Also, in a recent sermon I heard from Isaiah 43. 1, which begins, "But now", the minister spoke about these two words. The word is mentioned many times in the Bible, especially in the Proverbs. In some chapters, nearly every verse has the word, contrasting the blessedness of the fear of the Lord with the solemn state of the wicked. "But" is used as a connecting word between two sets of conditions or events.

The first "but" is found in Genesis 2. 5-6: "For the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth... but there went up a mist from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground". This was God's gracious provision. The last "but" in the Bible is in Revelation 22. 3. John is writing about the vision he had of the great city, the Holy Jerusalem, and of the tree of life: "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it".

Paul writing to the Ephesians says, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ" (ch. 2. 4). In the opening verses of the chapter Paul reminds them of their state by nature; "dead in trespasses and sins". How solemn to be left in this condition. But there is a blessed remedy for this condition, "But God", that is the work of God in our hearts, the new birth. There is also a precious "but" in



Ephesians 2. 13: “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ”. May we be favoured to know this blessed truth. In Romans 5. 8 we have, “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” In 1 Corinthians 6. 11, we have a cluster of “buts”: “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus”.

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

Hallelujah! Grace shall reign eternally. John Kent

There are other occasions where the expression, “But God”, is used in the Bible. In Genesis 45. 8 and Genesis 50. 20 the words of Joseph are recorded. The story commences in Genesis 37 where Joseph relates his dreams to his brothers. As they were binding sheaves in the fields, his sheaf stood upright and their sheaves bowed down to his sheaf. The result was that his brothers hated him and eventually sold him to the Midianites. Psalm 105. 19 records how the word of the Lord tried him, but in the Lord’s time His word came true. Joseph was exalted to be the second in the land responsible for distribution of food in the years of famine. Jacob was short of food in Israel and sent his sons to Egypt to buy corn. They came to Joseph who recognised them but they did not know him. He commanded them to return with Benjamin. When he saw his brother Benjamin he could not restrain himself and made himself known to his brothers. “Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither... God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now *it was* not you *that* sent me hither, but God...” (Gen. 45. 5-8). Then when Jacob died, the brothers thought that Joseph would requite them for all the evil that they had done to him, and sent a message to him confessing their sin and asking forgiveness. Joseph’s response was, “Fear not...as for you, ye thought evil against me, *but* God meant it unto good... to save much people alive” (Gen. 50. 19-20).

God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform;  
He plants His footsteps in the sea,  
And rides upon the storm.

William Cowper

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In the book of Jonah we have several “buts”, the last one being, “But God”. Jonah was commanded of God to go to Nineveh and proclaim the judgement of God against that city. How sad that Jonah should disobey God’s command. “But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish”. “But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea” (Jonah 1. 3, 4), with the resulting storm, and Jonah was cast into the sea. In Jonah 2 we have the prayer of Jonah: “They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving” (Jonah 2. 8-9). What a mercy that we may pray to God wherever we are. The Lord spoke to the fish and it vomited out Jonah on dry land. The word of the Lord came again to Jonah and he was again commanded to go to Nineveh and preach the preaching that God commanded him. He went and proclaimed the message, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown” (Jonah 3. 4). God blessed the message and the people of Nineveh repented. One would have thought that Jonah would have been pleased, “But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry” (Jonah 4. 1). What a sad state he was in, angry with a merciful God and even wishing to die. He left the city, sat under a booth and watched to see what would happen to Nineveh. God prepared a gourd to shade him from the heat and he was grateful. “But God prepared a worm...and it smote the gourd” (Jonah 4. 7). Jonah again wished to die and God spoke to him, “Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd?” (Jonah 4. 9). Jonah’s response was, “I do well to be angry, *even* unto death.” Then God pointed out to him how wrong his spirit was: “Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for which thou hast not laboured...and should not I spare Nineveh, that great city...?” (Jonah 4. 10-11). If the Lord would grant such a spirit of repentance in this country today, how it would rejoice His people.

There are occasions in the Bible where “but” is not followed by “God” and yet it is evident that it is God’s work and favour. “But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD” (Gen. 6. 8). In the preceding verses we have God’s account of the state of man: “Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually” (Gen. 6. 5). For many years the Ark was under construction. “By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world” (Heb. 11. 7). There was no repentance. The Lord Jesus said that as it was in the days of Noah, so would it be when the Son of Man returns.

This is the state of our nation today. May we be prepared for that time and be found in the ark of the covenant.

At the end of the Last Supper, the Lord Jesus spoke to His disciple Peter and said, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired *to have* you [all the disciples], that he may sift *you* as wheat: But I have prayed for thee [Peter especially], that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22. 31- 32). Peter loved the Lord but did not know his own weakness. His response to Jesus was, “Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death” (v. 33). Jesus replied, “I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me” (v. 34). Jesus was betrayed by Judas, taken to the High Priest’s house and Peter having followed “afar off” went in and sat with the servants. Three people challenged him concerning his association with Jesus. He denied all knowledge of Him and that with oaths and curses. “The Lord turned, and looked upon Peter” (Luke 22. 61). What a look of pity and love this must have been. Peter went out and wept bitterly. He would remember the occasion all his life. What a different man he was after the day of Pentecost. No fear of man now, no denial of his Lord but enabled to preach the gospel with power from heaven. “But I have prayed for thee.”

Jesus, let thy pitying eye  
Call back a wandering sheep...  
Turn, and look upon me, Lord,  
And break my heart of stone

Charles Wesley

Paul, writing to the Galatians about those who glory in keeping the Law, says, “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world” (ch. 6. 14).

Free election, known by calling,  
Is a privilege divine;  
Saints are kept from final falling;  
All the glory, Lord, is thine!  
All the glory, all the glory, Lord, is thine.

J. Adams

*Editor’s Note:*

*This article was sent to us by its author in January 2006, just three weeks before he died at over the age of ninety. He had been deacon for Mr. C.A. Wood at the Strict Baptist Chapel in Tamworth Road, Croydon for over forty years and for many of those years had led the*

singing. *He was a humble, gracious man, and in his letter enclosing the article wrote, "I take the liberty of sending you a copy of my notes on 'But God'. I hesitate, because I do not want to push my self forward." At the bottom of this article he wrote,*

But when this lisping, stammering tongue  
Lies silent in the grave,  
Then in a nobler, sweeter song,  
I'll sing Thy power to save.

William Cowper

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## LETTERS, ADDRESSES AND SERMONS

### The Christian Home

**By C. A. Wood**

*Address given at the Annual General Meeting of The Gospel Standard Trust on 18th May 1996 by Mr. C. A. Wood.*

Our subject this afternoon is The Christian Home. This gives us great concern about our homes and about what is read in our homes. Seeking the help of God I shall speak on this subject in three aspects.

First: The daily life in a Christian home, taking this scripture "As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Josh. 24.15).

Secondly: What is to be seen in our homes. Turning to this scripture "Then said he, [that is Isaiah to Hezekiah] What have they seen in thine house?" (Isa. 39. 4).

Thirdly: The presence of Jesus in our homes. The scripture for this - "It was noised that he [Jesus] was in the house" (Mark 2.1).

First then, "As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" - daily life in the Christian home. This may seem in measure to exclude those that are not married. It does not. The unmarried, perhaps living alone or with others, have their homes. I testify of the blessing I received in the days of boyhood and youth by two dear unmarried ladies that were a great influence spiritually upon my life. So whilst I speak at times of husbands, wives and children, this does not exclude those who are not married. Those of us who are married do well to remember the solemn vows that we uttered on our marriage day. It would be profitable for husbands and wives to read afresh those vows and to go down on their knees together before God to pray for renewed help to honour those vows. There is a wonderful testimony given concerning Zacharias and

his wife. We read, "They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless" (Luke 1. 6). What a testimony! How far one feels to come so solemnly short; our need is to pray for grace.

The head of the wife (as we heard in the Scripture read to us this afternoon) is the husband, largely denied in the days in which we live. But in what way is the husband the head? I love to think of Eve taken from the side of Adam, not above him, not beneath him but from his side; so that the wife is the help meet or the help mate of the husband. Husbands and wives should be one. What a mercy, what a favour when it is one in the Lord. The little word 'together' is very precious. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" We read (I know concerning church unity and fellowship in the gospel, but true concerning husband and wife who fear God), "being knit together in love" (Col. 2.2) stitch by stitch. One of God's servants, Mr. George Rose, said "You cannot easily tear knitting apart." "Knit together in love." "Heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered" (1 Pet. 3. 7).

I speak of very simple things. There is much instruction as God speaks to me through the simplicity of what I see. I go back now, must be fifty years ago, to my home town of Tunbridge Wells, Mount Pleasant, a steepish hill in the centre of the town, on a very hot day. As I looked across the road to the path on the other side there was an old man and woman, obviously husband and wife, walking together with a basket full after shopping. But what was the lesson? Both had a hand on that basket. They carried it between them, together. There is union and mutual help both in joy and in the sorrows of life.

The strengthening place in the Christian home is the family altar where husband and wife and family gather if possible in the mornings, certainly husband and wife, (I know it is difficult perhaps in these days of employment with young people going at different times), but certainly in the evening around the Word of God and to seek God in prayer. Now I am going to say something that I hope will not be misunderstood. But I do feel that where there are young children present it should be the simple part of the Word of God and perhaps where possible a little word put in and a question asked. We cannot save them, God does that, but I do feel if as a parent I was going to instruct my child in something that is secular, I would give my time to explain what I feel would be helpful to that child. How much more

when we come to the Word of God? It has been said that a home without prayer is a house without a roof.

I feel very concerned whether we are, in our churches, in our homes honouring the Lord's day? Is the day given to God in our homes? Right from early days of birth children should be encouraged to put away their pleasures and their toys and to be diverted to that which is profitable. The Lord's day should be a family day of love, of happiness, of encouragement and of teaching. I remember a girl, about eight years of age, in hospital on a Saturday who had a doll given to her. When her father and mother were about to leave her she said "Put it away in my locker. It's Sunday tomorrow." It is an example for us. The Lord's day should not be a morbid day. We need to come back to those words "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Ex. 20. 8).

What about our income? How is that given? Husbands and wives should prayerfully consider their giving in the service of God. How to give willingly, where to give, certainly to the church where they are worshipping, and then to pray for a willing heart to give and when they have given then that is not all - to pray that God will bless that gift.

Usefulness, talent, I do not think we should be frightened of such words in our churches. We are not speaking of what we are doing for God but Jesus speaks to us about talents, about using them and that will be done in prayer with an utter sense of one's unfitness, unworthiness, with one desire - self is nothing, the honour and the glory of God in all things.

I think it was Philip Henry, the father of the well known Matthew Henry, who said that he and his wife had never been reconciled. They had never had need of it. They had never fallen out. On another occasion at a wedding he said, "Many will wish you happiness, I wish you holiness; that will bring happiness." In my early days of ministry I was asked to take a wedding at Chippenham in the place of the late Mr. Herbert Dawson. He wrote a letter to the couple to be then married and I never forgot one thing he put in that letter, "There will be a day when one of you will stand at the graveside of the other; when you do, may you stand there with a clear conscience feeling that you have tried to love and care one for the other throughout your married life."

What about the children? Certainly some of us in the ministry love them. We are prayerfully concerned for them. They live, and I am sure of this, in more difficult days than I did for example, because in my school there was a high standard, Scripture instruction was good and



moral teaching. We live in a nation drenched with wickedness and the children need all the help and encouragement that we can give them. We cannot give them grace. I remember a dear Dutch mother, who attended our chapel with her husband for a short season, who gave birth to a child and I visited her. The babe was in a cot by her mother's side and she turned to it and said "There is a soul there." A soul, I never forgot it.

Discipline. I am not going to speak about discipline only. It is discipline and love blended together. Let me put it this way. If you had all harsh discipline and no love that is hard. Some say, "I will correct my children and punish them." With no love, that would be cruel. On the other hand just as cruel, and this is the danger, some may say "I love my child so much I will let them do what they like." That is cruel. May I speak to the children here and the young people. You may resent correction and discipline at times. I did. I thank God for the memory of my father and mother, particularly mother who was the one who corrected me even more than father. I thank God for that love. It was sacrificial love. They did much for me. But I see more love, or as much love, now in their corrections when they said "No" to something that I wanted to do. You may not see it at the time but I believe later you will live to see it. Why, discipline is to instruct, it is to train, it is to control, it is to regulate. The branches of a young climbing rose need to be trained in the way that you wish them to grow. We know that all that is spiritual must be of the Spirit. That does not remove from us our responsibilities in attempting to train and bring up the dear children in the way that they should go. Remember Eli was solemnly reprov'd by God because he did not frown upon the wrong doings of his children (1 Sam. 3. 11-14). David, too, suffered because he let Adonijah do just what he wanted and suffered later for it (1 Kings 1. 6). God said of Abraham, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Gen. 18. 19). There is the pattern.

Parents should be united. It's a very sad thing if father corrects and mother condones or vice versa. No favouritism - Jacob I think erred concerning Joseph. I know it was all overruled, but all should be equally loved and cared for. Children should be encouraged to read the Bible themselves when they can start to read. I say to my children at Tamworth Road as I pick up a Bible, "Has this been a closed book from

Sunday to Sunday?" You children will know the answer. We are also to speak of it: "Tell *it* to the generation following" (Ps. 48. 13).

The example that we set. A young lad said to his father, "Well, if this is evil that I am doing I have learnt it from you!" Our dear friend, Mr. Bouma, spoke recently in preaching, of a lad who was following his father. His father was a drunkard, a dreadful drunkard. It was snowing and the lad innocently said "Dad I am following in your steps." That stopped that man from drunkenness. What example are we setting before the children? We grumble at the children. We do well to examine our own hearts and lives before God. Brothers and sisters, may there be love and union and care one for the other.

What about the prodigal? I doubt not that there are some here that have boys and girls that are right out in the world. Have you shut your door, closed your heart? Some people do it. I cannot understand it. I love that letter of Paul to Philemon about Onesimus, the runaway slave. Who can tell, and I am a living witness to one very dear to me who for about twenty years very rarely came into our chapels but was brought back. We follow them with our prayers. A lad had gone away from home and felt that his father and mother would not receive him because of what he had done, but he found the world to be a hard place. He wrote a letter. "Mother if you will receive me back a little later, sometime (you will not know when), I shall walk past the house and if I see a white garment on the washing line I shall know you will receive me back." What did mother do? From end to end there were white garments on that line. Back! We pray and watch over their souls. We do not know the issue but I believe this, if God lays them in your heart and you have access to God in prayer for them, pray on, wait on, look up.

I come now to the second part of our subject - "Then said he, What have they seen in thy house?" (Isa. 39. 4). What is seen in the Christian home? What is to be seen in your house? We read in Luke concerning Jesus. "They watched him." What about idols? You do not bow down to stone or wood! No, but it is easy to form an idol. It can be a garden, it can be an organ, it can be a child, it can be a business. It can be anything but God. The houses were to be searched through for leaven on the night of the Passover. We do well to pray for grace to seek to remove from our homes that which is displeasing to God. What about the television? That dreadful instrument of wickedness and filth and evil. I had a document handed to me to me recently and I took an

extract from it because it was protesting against the evil. On ten programmes, there were two evil words that were spoken three hundred and seventy nine times, and the dear loved name of Jesus was blasphemously used, I think it was about fifty eight times. Has that a place in the Christian home? Some may say "But there is good on it." There may be. It could be used for good. If it was, it would not have such a great attraction.

Again "What have they seen in thy house?" Is there a right balance? Here I turn to a word in Deuteronomy because it is full of instruction, "Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small. Thou shalt not have in thy house divers measures, a great and a small. *But* thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have: that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee." (Deut. 25. 13-15). In my boyhood days there were scales and if I wanted say a quarter of a pound of sweets then the quarter pound measure weight would be put that side, the bag this side, and the sweets would be put into it. Now say that that man said the weight was a quarter of a pound but it was not a quarter of a pound it was less than that. It is false! It's a wrong balance. Now you may say, "But what is that to do with our homes today?" It has much to do with our homes today. In all the words we utter, the judgments that we make, is it balanced, is it true, is it straight, is it honest, is it fair, is it right in the sight of Almighty God? Even in our churches we can get prejudiced, we would not say a direct lie but an exaggeration would tilt the scales to where we want it to go. May God keep us from it. Throw away all false weights.

What else is in the home? We read of the man who said, "I prayed in my house." Who was that? Cornelius. Personal prayer, have they seen that in your house? Do they see the Bible; is there a lot of dust on the top of it? What have they seen in your house? Do they see love? Then I want to come just to one more point on this second point. When Legion had those devils cast out of him he wanted to follow Jesus. Jesus said "No, you are to go home." What is he to do at home? Now take the two records in the Gospel. One says "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee...." (Mark 5. 19). The other is "Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee" (Luke 8. 39). What have they seen in your house? Do they see something of Jesus there? Tell them and show them; your life should be a witness to the love of Jesus to your

soul. I am not preaching to you, I am preaching to myself, and am setting forth what I am trying to tell myself and preach to myself. I need this grace. There was a little heathen girl. In the village was a Christian doing good and she was fascinated watching him. In the next village she heard a missionary preach about Jesus and this missionary said to her afterwards, "Do you know Jesus?" "O yes" she said, "I know Him, He is in the next village." She did not know Him. But what she had heard of Jesus she had seen in that man in that village nearby. O how we pray for such grace.

Now thirdly, the presence of Jesus in our homes. "It was noised that he [Jesus] was in the house." Very briefly, it is a beautiful study, a beautiful meditation to look at the homes into which Jesus entered. It is amazing how many He did. It is not possible for me to name them all but I will name one or two. Doubtless the one that will come to your mind at once is the home at Bethany. "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus" - I would not have thought Martha should be first, she was the busy, troubled, burdened Martha but you know under that burdened spirit and anxious nature there was faith. We hear at the graveside of Lazarus, the testimony of her faith. She says, "Even now", though it is so dark and so black, "I believe..." (John 11. 22, 27). She had that faith. A dear Mary that sat at the feet of Jesus, a Lazarus, though we do not read he said a word, but was loved of Jesus.

I love to think of Matthew, the publican, called by Jesus from the tax table. Now Matthew and Mark do not tell us, but Luke tells us that when Matthew (also called Levi) was called, he made a feast for Jesus in his house. Matthew did not say "I made a feast for Jesus." Luke tells us that. We do not boast of anything of self. Jesus went to the home of Simon the Pharisee, who had very little love for Him. But there was a woman there. She wanted to find Jesus, she was a dreadful sinner. So are we, and there she found Him. Jesus had saved her. She could not get low enough behind Him weeping. What was she weeping about? Surely she should be full of joy, saved from her life of sin. Weeping because of the cold reception her Lord received at the hand of Simon. Tears flowing, flowing down on the dear feet of the Saviour in repentance and love, and not only the tears but the ointment and not only the ointment but the kissing, not just one kiss. "This woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet" (Luke 7. 45). Friends, would we receive Jesus like that? I am not speaking in a literal way. I am speaking of it in a spiritual way.

Jesus came to a home and He would have no man know it: but He could not be hid even from the poor woman that sought Him out. How that dear soul was bringing, in her burdened spirit, her daughter. Then it would seem that the Lord was cutting her off, shutting her up, sending her away. Faith clings, it cannot go, it cannot give up. "O woman, great *is* thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." I love to think of that word when He said, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast *it* to dogs." Then comes one little word that is so precious to my soul "yet." "Truth, Lord: yet." There's something which cannot be overthrown here. There are crumbs for the dogs under the table. Now I am that one, Lord (Matt. 15. 21-28; Mark 7. 24-30). Again, we go to the home at Bethany; I refer to Mary and "the odour of the ointment." We read it filled the house - all for Jesus.

The Christian Home covers everything. It covers our dress, the women's hair, every detail as we can think of. It is not for us to say, "That is out of date, it does not matter." I know it is difficult. We had three girls, it was in the time of the mini-skirts. What were we to do? I could have just dictated a word to them but I did not do it that way, but we talked over the matter together. We said "Look we wish you to be happy and you wish us to be happy." I believe there was a measure of working together, to do that which was right.

Now I must come to a close. It was most remarkable for as I stayed with my dear son-in-law and dear daughter last night I went across their room and there was a book, a small book. It was Philpot's *Sin and Salvation*. I just opened it casually upon an article "Teaching Children". I believe God put it there. I cannot read the whole piece but I will read this extract. "Grace, we know, is supernatural, the special gift of God. Religion, in the high, the only true sense of the word, we cannot teach children. To worship God in spirit and in truth must be the alone work of the Spirit. Why should not the nicest principles of honour, truthfulness, generosity, kindness, industry and the strictest morality be inculcated? And without ever leading them to hypocrisy or false profession, why should not such fundamental truths as the holiness and justice of God, the strictness and curse of the law, salvation by grace, pardon and acceptance only through the blood of Christ, the necessity and nature of the new birth be laid before them? Though it was not so with us, yet from the testimony of others, we believe there are many instances where the Lord begins to work on the conscience in childhood, or at least early youth. Is it wise, nay, more, is

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it merciful or consistent with godliness, rudely and roughly to crush all tender buddings of what may prove real grace for fear of hypocrisy?"

I must come to a close. I copied this verse out:

I have a dear and happy home  
And much my home I love  
But is there now prepared for me  
A happier home above?

"Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." "In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also."

A final word. Many, many years ago, a minister was called to the bedside of a young person who was dying. He did not know her. She said "I know you." Apparently this girl had crept in to where this man was preaching and was hidden. He did not see her. She said "I came and one day I was very, very sad." God showed her her sin and I believe for a season she went under that conviction until the Lord blessed her with blessings of the Gospel. She turned to the minister and she said, "Do not pray for me to get better. I know I am dying." The minister had the sweet assurance that here was a jewel, one prepared for glory, a stone prepared for heaven. He visited her again. "This is the last time", she said. "I am finished with prayer. It's all praises."

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## REVIEWS

***Charles Jeffreys – A Spiritual Seceder by H. Sant***

**By Dr. P. Wilkins**

*Published by The Huntingtonian Press, paperback, 41 pages, £3 inc. postage and packaging.*

The 1964 book *More than Notion* by J. H. Alexander "covers a small facet of the minor revival of religious experience which began with the ministry of William Huntington" (quoted from the preface). It tells the story of Sukey Harley, the Gilpin sisters, and others connected with them. It is well written and worth reading, but sometimes difficult to follow due to the large number of people featured in the book. There are also many characters who appear



occasionally, but whose lives are never given in detail. One of these characters is Charles Jeffreys, who was a friend (and eventually a brother-in-law) of Bernard Gilpin. *More than Notion* gives a few details of his life, but these are scattered throughout the book and are also incomplete. The book under review, obviously the result of much research, fills in the gaps and gives a comprehensive account of Jeffreys' life.

Jeffreys was born in 1801 into a family that eventually numbered sixteen children. He entered Cambridge University at age seventeen and was extremely successful, becoming a Fellow of the university six years later and being offered a tutorship after another six years. Despite his obvious brilliance, he rejected this offer, resigned his Fellowship, and moved to London, where he taught privately but also started preaching. Fifteen years later, and with his wife and five children, he moved north to Birkenhead, becoming the minister of a chapel there in 1847. However, poor health motivated him to leave England for New Zealand only four years later, where he spent the rest of his life as the pastor of a small church in Dunedin, dying in 1862.

Although it is evident that Jeffreys and his associates (who included James Bourne) loved the Lord and were truly converted, one wonders about a couple of aspects of the teaching that was common among them. Firstly, there is arguably an over-emphasis on experiences and feelings which could perhaps *almost* be labelled mysticism. Jeffreys and his associates were reacting against the then-prevailing "Sandemanian"<sup>1</sup> teaching, and one can understand why they might lean too far in the opposite direction. One wonders whether Jeffreys and his associates were occasionally too quick to conclude that feelings and experiences they had were from the Lord.

To quote Jonathan Edwards (in his book on *Religious Affections*):

It is evident, that any person may have high affections of hope and joy, arising on occasion of texts of Scripture, yea, precious promises of Scripture coming suddenly and remarkably to their minds, as though they were spoken to them; yea, a great multitude of such texts, following one another in a wonderful manner; and yet all this be no argument that these affections are divine, or that they are any other than the effects of Satan's delusions.

In other words, Edwards is arguing, the fact that an experience is caused (or accompanied) by words of scripture coming to the mind is no evidence that the experience is from the Lord or that the person having the experience is actually converted. Of course, this

immediately raises a question: how can a person know whether a scripture that comes into his mind is actually from the Lord or not? This issue is a complex one (far too complex to be discussed in detail here), but clearly it is very easy to go too far one way or the other.

A second area that might be questioned is an excessive degree of exclusivity which occasionally appears in the writings of Bourne and his friends. For example, Francis Jeffreys (one of Charles's brothers) spoke of acknowledging Bourne and his friends "and such as have the same religion only" as the true church of Christ. One wonders what he meant by "the same religion"; perhaps there was a tendency to separate from those who did not emphasise feelings and experiences to the same extent as Bourne and his friends. But then, there does not seem to have been much contact between Bourne (and his friends) and those associated with the Gospel Standard. One might have expected the groups to be close, as both contended for an experimental religion and both were influenced by William Huntington's ministry; perhaps baptism was the issue that separated them (Bourne and his friends not being Baptists). Whatever the reasons, Bourne and his friends, as a group, seem to have been rather inward-looking.

Of course none of the above is intended to question the grace that is seen in Jeffreys and those around him. This book has some notable evidences of their overcoming faith, and surely the Lord's people today would covet such experiences as they had. They evidently loved one another; their conversation was so often on spiritual things; and they had a real hunger and thirst after a deeper knowledge of the Lord and his word. Their lives demonstrate what is possible by the Lord's grace.

This book is an interesting and useful addition. It does assume some knowledge of those who are mentioned (the Gilpins, James Bourne, etc.), and is perhaps best thought of as an appendix to *More than Notion*. But at only £3, it is well worth the price, and may act as an introduction to that small section of the church often known as "the Huntingtonians".

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Sandemanianism teaches, essentially, that in order to be saved one only has to believe intellectually that the Gospel is true.

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## CURRENT EVENTS

### The Equality Bill

The Equality Bill has passed its various stages in the House of Commons and is now (14<sup>th</sup> Jan 2010) before the House of Lords for discussion. Its object is to promote total equality in the nation. If passed by the Lords it is likely to be implemented as early as September this year.

Professing Christian people have in the past year come under attack. Caroline Petrie, a Christian nurse, was punished for offering to pray for a patient. Lillian Ladele, a Christian registrar was threatened with dismissal because she could not officiate at civil partnerships with a good conscience. A five year old pupil at primary school in Crediton in Devon was reprimanded for talking about God, heaven and hell to her fellow pupils. The powers of humanism and atheism are rising up in this country, Europe and the United States. It is clear that the European Union intervened in the passage of this Bill in the House of Commons, advising the Government that they must bring British law on discrimination into line with EU law. The Bill is an instrument to consolidate all anti-discrimination legislation into a single, easily manageable Act. We have already seen police prosecutions of street preachers who have condemned sin and been attacked for it. The definition of “harassment” in the Bill is so general that almost any profession of the Christian faith in public or in the workplace could be considered as “intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive” and upon protest could result in serious disciplinary action, even dismissal or investigation by the police. The Bill will reduce the liberty of Christian churches to insist that their staff’s conduct is in accordance with Bible teaching. Under present law religious groups can restrict posts to those whose private lives are consistent with Bible teaching, but under this Equality Bill such protection will only apply “to those mainly leading worship and explaining doctrine” i.e. ministers. A secular group called Cutting Edge Consortium (CEC), which includes such organisations as the British Humanist Association and the TUC, is pressing Parliament to remove all religious liberty safeguards from the Equality Bill.

If passed into law, the Bill will introduce a degree of religious intolerance not seen in this country since the seventeenth century, with a suggested seven year prison sentence for those breaking anti-discriminatory laws. It will drive all religion out of the public sphere. In June 2009 the British Humanist Association said that the Bill would undermine the religious ethos of faith schools as children of any background would be able to apply for entrance to them and it would be illegal to refuse them. It is ironic that in the promotion of the abolition of religious, racial and sexual discrimination, with which all professing Christians would wholly agree, the state should demand that in those areas which are undoubtedly unbiblical, Christians should be required by law either to suffer for their conscience’s sake or remain silent. There is an amendment being put down to the Equality Bill in the Lords by Lady O’Cathain to protect the freedom of churches to choose ministers and employees who share their beliefs. It remains to be seen whether the Lords will vote in favour of this amendment. Christian freedom is under serious attack. It requires united prayer for the Lord to appear and maintain that freedom bought so dearly in generations past in days of persecution. For reference see the website: [www.christian.org.uk/equalitybill](http://www.christian.org.uk/equalitybill)

**We note with thankfulness to the Lord, what was an answer to many prayers, that the House of Lords passed the amendment by a majority on 25th January 2010, preserving for us our liberties in this regard.**

Jesu, let thy pitying eye  
Call back a wandering sheep;  
False to thee, like Peter, I  
Would fain like Peter, weep;  
Let me be by grace restored;  
On me be all long-suffering shown;  
Turn, and look upon me, Lord,  
And break my heart of stone.

Saviour, Prince, enthroned above,  
Repentance to impart,  
Give me, through thy dying love,  
The humble, contrite heart.  
Give, what I have long implored,  
A portion of thy grief unknown,  
Turn, and look upon me, Lord,  
And break my heart of stone.

See me, Saviour, from above,  
Nor suffer me to die;  
Life, and happiness, and love,  
Drop from thy gracious eye;  
Speak the reconciling word,  
And let thy mercy melt me down;  
Turn, and look upon me Lord,  
And break my heart of stone.

Look, as when thy pity saw  
Thine own in a strange land,  
Forced to obey the tyrant's law,  
And feel his heavy hand;  
Speak the soul-redeeming word,  
And out of Egypt call thy son;  
Turn, and look upon me, Lord,  
And break my heart of stone

Look, as when thy grace beheld,  
The harlot in distress,  
Dried her tears, her pardon sealed,  
And bade her go in peace;  
Vile, like her, and self abhorred,  
I at thy feet for mercy groan;  
Turn, and look upon me, Lord,  
And break my heart of stone

Look, as when thy languid eye  
Was closed, that we might live;  
"Father," (at the point to die,  
My Saviour gasped), "forgive!"  
Surely with that dying word,  
He turns, and looks, and cries, "'Tis done."  
O my bleeding, loving Lord,  
Thou break'st my heart of stone.

*Charles Wesley.  
Hymns and Sacred Poems 2 Vols. 1749.*



# PERCEPTION



"For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall  
of fire round about, and will be the glory in  
the midst of her."  
Zechariah 2.5.

**SUMMER 2010**

	Page:
<b>Editorial</b> .....	1
Current Issues	
<b>India: January 2010</b> .....	4
<i>Dr. I. Sadler</i>	
<b>The Reformed Political Party (SGP) in The Netherlands</b> .....	6
<i>H. J. Hooglander</i>	
<b>An Indication of the Great Flood</b> .....	9
<i>J. E. Kerley</i>	
Church History	
<b>William Williams</b> .....	12
<i>J. R. Broome</i>	
Doctrine & Truth	
<b>Extracts from J. C. Philpot</b> .....	20
Letters, Addresses & Sermons	
<b>Walls and Doors</b> .....	22
<i>R. C. T. Warboys</i>	
Reviews	
<b>The Calvinistic Methodist Fathers of Wales</b> .....	31
<b>by J. M. Jones &amp; W. Morgan</b>	
<i>J. R. Broome</i>	
Current Events	
<b>2010 Barton Conference</b> .....	33
<b>The Equality Bill</b>	

Cover Picture: The Mill at Buren in The Betuwe, The Netherlands.

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# PERCEPTION

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## EDITORIAL

*“For if, when we where enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement [margin: reconciliation]” (Rom. 5. 10-11).*

Two things are at once apparent in these verses of Paul’s letter to the church at Rome. The first is the great act of atonement by the eternal Son of God in His death on Calvary’s cross. The second is the fruit of that work in the hearts of His children in the experience of reconciliation. His sacrifice, in and of itself, made His entire church in all ages from Adam to the end of time “holy and without blame” (Eph. 1. 4) and “accepted” by God the Father “in the beloved” (Eph. 1. 6). Such were “chosen...in him before the foundation of the world,” (Eph. 1. 4) and by His death(the atonement) are “reconciled to God.”

The first verse speaks of that alienation between God and sinners, brought about by their fallen, sinful condition. They are described as “enemies” to God. By their acts they have alienated themselves from God. “Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear (Isa. 59. 1-2). God is not said to be reconciled to us, but rather that we are reconciled to God.

In 2 Corinthians 5. 18 we read, “All things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ...” Reconciliation has been accomplished by God, manifesting His grace toward His people, sinful men and women, in the death of His Son; a propitiatory sacrifice on account of the divine judgment due to their sins. His people, brought under the convicting power of the Holy Ghost, are brought experimentally to feelingly know this alienation from God. They find the heavens to be “iron and brass.” The Lord shuts out their prayers. They cry and shout and come to confess that it is their sins and their iniquities that have separated between them and their God. Now they



come as beggars to mercy's door, dependant on sovereign grace to extend the sceptre of mercy to them. Like Queen Esther, they say "so will I go in unto the king...and if I perish, I perish." To their amazement, like her they obtain favour in the sight of the king - the King of Kings - the golden sceptre of mercy is extended to them in the gospel and they receive the atonement in a sweet knowledge of reconciliation in their hearts.

They learn the blessedness of the truth, "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross [the atonement], by him to reconcile all things unto himself... and you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in *your* mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight..." (Col. 1. 20-22). As by the divine gift of faith, they believe in the eternal Son of God, and as His precious blood flows over their soul, so feelingly they enter into the sweetness and fullness of this reconciliation between their souls and God. The language of the hymn expresses their feelings:

Lord teach us how to pray aright,  
 With reverence and with fear;  
 Though dust and ashes in Thy sight,  
 We may, we must draw near.

Burdened with guilt, convinced of sin,  
 In weakness, want and woe,  
 Fightings without, and fear within;  
 Lord, whither shall we go?

God of all grace, we come to Thee  
 With broken, contrite hearts;  
 Give what Thine eye delights to see,  
 Truth in the inward parts.

Faith in the only sacrifice  
 That can for sin atone;  
 To cast our hopes, to fix our eyes,  
 On Christ, on Christ alone.

James Montgomery (1771-1854)

Now there is not a cloud between them and their God and they know "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding" (Phil. 4. 7). They walk out Paul's words to the church at Ephesus: "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of

Christ” (Eph. 2. 13). They are reconciled unto God by the cross (Eph. 2. 16). Experimentally, they enter into the benefits of the atonement and know in their souls the truth of the words: “I will hear what God the LORD will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints...” (Ps. 85. 8).

The doctrine of the atonement is prefigured in the Old Testament in the Day of Atonement. This was a great day of national humiliation; the only one commanded in the Law of Moses. It took place on the tenth day of the seventh month. It was kept as a solemn Sabbath. It is described in detail in Leviticus 16. It was to take place once every year and was the only time when the High Priest entered the Holy Place. The principle of the Day of Atonement was the shedding of the blood of the sacrifices to sanctify the holy places and make an atonement for the priests and for all the people of the congregation. Paul refers to it in Hebrews 9. The high priest went into the Holiest of all “alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and *for* the errors of the people,” (v. 7) which was for the Jews “a figure for the time then present” (v. 9). “But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*” (v. 11-12). Paul goes on to say, “For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (v. 13-14). Paul describes the worship on the Day of Atonement as “the patterns of things in the heavens” (v. 23) and again “the figures of the true” (v. 24). He goes on to compare the High Priest’s annual entrance into the Holiest of all with Christ’s entrance into glory to intercede for His people in the presence of His Father. “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are* the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (v. 24).

Christ prayed for this reconciliation in His prayer at the Last Supper. “The glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one...” (John 17. 22-23). Christ’s atonement at Calvary opened the way for this prayer to be answered and a full

reconciliation to be brought about; His church in all ages being reconciled to His Father eternally.

Complete atonement thou hast made,  
And to the utmost farthing paid  
Whate'er thy people owed;  
How then can wrath on me take place,  
If sheltered in thy righteousness,  
And sprinkled with thy blood?

Augustus M. Toplady (1740-1778)

## CURRENT ISSUES

### India: January 2010

**By Dr. I. Sadler**

My recent visit to Ponnur, Andhra Pradesh, India (12<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> January 2010) was one of much trial, in which one could only cry out for the Lord's appearing and an increase in faith. This was my first visit to India, although my books *Love of God* and *Jesus the Way* had been translated into Telugu by my host (Pastor Sudhakar Rao) and printed locally for free distribution amongst the poor. Yet the Lord was pleased to open a way for the word to go forth to many who made no profession of Christianity, and we pray that the Lord may be pleased to bless the seed sown. I was also mercifully preserved in all the travelling.

Prior to the visit there were repeated threats of cancellation of my flights (due to strikes by BA cabin crew and the severe winter weather), but the Lord answered prayer. Then a new trial began very unexpectedly on the Lord's Day at 6 am on 10<sup>th</sup> January. I was woken by a phone call that my father was just being taken into hospital with a suspected heart attack. I knew not what to do except pray, and also phone friends in India to ask them to pray. My wife was a great help at this point, and after further news came that my father's condition was not so serious, she said to get everything ready to go to preach and also my case and papers to travel on to my parents and then to India. Thus I had to say farewell to my family very suddenly at 8 am on 10<sup>th</sup> January. Mercifully, my father was discharged from hospital that evening and I stayed with my parents before travelling to Heathrow airport. The Lord

was merciful to uphold us each whilst apart. These difficulties pressed much upon me as I was going to the airport on 12<sup>th</sup> January, but a strange token for good was given when I was upgraded to a first class sleeper seat free of charge. This was like the Lord's provision to Elijah before a long journey, for after a ten hour flight there was then an eight hour car journey from Hyderabad Airport to Ponnur. After safely arriving in Ponnur, I was touched by the kindness and hospitality of the brethren, for which I am very grateful.

The program of preaching took place from Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> January to Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> January, in which I preached fifteen times. I was much reliant on my interpreter who laboured much, as very few in this part of India can speak English. The program began with the formal opening of a new building for Providence Orphan Children Home, which is run by Pastor SudhakarRao, and which we have supported. After the formal opening, I preached to a large open-air congregation and then spent some time speaking with the forty-two orphans.

The program involved preaching in the open-air at a number of villages and small towns (some as much as 1 hour drive away from Ponnur). The open-air services were organised by a local church, and all were invited to attend. On several occasions I felt a particular sweetness in preaching, especially from Genesis 28 about Jacob's dream at Bethel when I was at a village where there was indescribable poverty and no church building. I also preached at both of Pastor SudhakarRao's churches in the Ponnur area. At all these services, Bibles in Telugu were distributed to those nominated by the local minister. 200 Telugu Bibles were purchased for the visit, but these seemed like a drop in the ocean of need. However, all who wished to receive a Telugu translation of my book *Jesus the Way* were given a copy, as we had sufficient copies following a print run of 3000 copies completed in November. Many who took books were regular members of a congregation, but there were also many Hindus that had come to hear the word preached, who eagerly received the books to read. We exhorted them to pray unto God for the light of the Spirit to show themselves their sinful state, to see God in His holiness and sovereignty and to seek mercy through faith and repentance in Jesus Christ.

On 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> January I also spoke at a Pastor's Conference, in which about 80 Pastors and "Bible Women" (ladies who go amongst the women in their community with the scriptures) attended. I spoke on the theme of "Building on the Sure Foundation", beginning with a

Bible Study on Nehemiah who was a godly leader. I then spoke on the doctrine of Christ, both His divinity and His sacred humanity, followed by the blessing that flows from His precious blood shed at Calvary. I believe the Lord gave much help in the midst of weakness at this time, for I was suffering most of the visit from asthma and my voice was weak. This trial brought out much prayer and dependence on God to uphold me in what was impossible in my own strength. The worst time for my health was Lord's Day 17<sup>th</sup> January, yet I ventured to preach in the open-air at the orphanage from Revelation 1. 10 ("I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day") with much weakness in my voice and body. After the service I was amazed to be told that three members of Pastor SudhakarRao's congregation had come forward to be baptised. This is all of God's grace and mercy. Pastor SudhakarRao's wife was taken ill at this time, and much prayer was made for her recovery.

I was thankful that by 20<sup>th</sup> January I was strengthened in health, but the journey back to Hyderabad meant leaving at 5 pm, with an eight hour journey through the night to Hyderabad Airport. This again was not easy, as there was civil unrest there and we had to go a back route. Even so there were two unofficial night-time road blocks (apparently not manned by police, although there seemed evidence of weapons being carried). I was placed in the back of the vehicle away from obvious sight, and we passed through without hindrance and arrived at the airport in the early hours in good time for my check-in. The prospect of the long flight home was a trying one, but again I experienced the Lord's goodness in that my seat was again upgraded free of charge!

It was with much thankfulness that I arrived home ahead of time at about 4 pm (UK time) on 21<sup>st</sup> January with the felt knowledge that the Lord had preserved us and kept us from all harm, in answer to many prayers. It is my prayer that the seed sown may be watered by the Lord, that there be abiding fruit to His honour and glory.

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## **The Reformed Political Party (SGP) in the Netherlands**

### **By H. J. Hooglander**

*This is the first of two articles about the Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij (SGP, the Reformed Political Party). In this article, the emphasis is on the origin and the aims of the SGP. The second article*

*will outline how the SGP operates in the Netherlands and in the European Parliament today.*

### **The origin of the SGP:**

In 1917 a new electoral system – of proportional representation – was introduced in the Netherlands. This created the possibility that small parties can be represented in Parliament. So the SGP was founded in the city of Middelburg in 1918 by a number of persons who did not feel at home in the then-existing parties any longer. One of the founding fathers, a catalyst in the development and expansion of the party, was the well-known minister, Rev. G.H. Kersten. He and his political friends held the view that neither the then-existing Christian parties nor the liberals were voicing the feelings of those who aimed at a strictly biblical organization of political and social life.

The results of the parliamentary elections of 1922 were rather surprising: 26,700 votes for the SGP, sufficient for obtaining one of the hundred seats. Thus, Rev. G.H. Kersten, at only 30 years old, entered the Second Chamber (Lower House). In the following years, the SGP grew steadily. This resulted in a second seat for the party in 1925; a third representative came in 1929. The SGP has been represented in parliament without interruption ever since.

The SGP has never shown a spectacular expansion. However, this small party has not appeared to be a miracle tree, withering as quickly as it shot up. During all these years, the SGP has remained a small (2%) but constant party in a de-Christianising country, with two or three seats in Parliament.

### **The aim of the SGP:**

The aim of the SGP is expressed in its constitution. It states that the party strives for “our nation to be reigned entirely on the basis of the ordinances of God as revealed in the Holy Scriptures” – an essential word in this statement is “entirely” – and makes its object to “induce



Rev. G.H. Kersten

the principles of the word of God to greater recognition into the nation”.

Following the Bible (Romans 13), the SGP states that the governing authorities are God’s servants. Therefore, they are accountable to Him by whom all things exist. The Ten Commandments offer us a touchstone of this obedience and serve as the guidance for all authorities. They do not only contain rules with respect to relations between people, but also with respect to God and the public service of Him. Some of the consequences are that the government should not tolerate public blasphemy, that it should foster rest on the Lord’s day and that it should protect human life (including unborn life). In short, the government’s calling is to see to it that God’s Law is observed.

It is the intention of the SGP to stand in the Calvinistic tradition, consciously and firmly. The SGP claims to be interdenominational. Not tied to ecclesiastical denominations, it aims to unify all those church members who confess the reformed faith and teaching.

### **The SGP and its theocratic view:**

Based on the Bible, the SGP has a theocratic view of government. This idea can be found in ample detail in, for instance, the final chapter of John Calvin’s *Institutes*. This view is also formulated in the Dutch Confession of Faith.

In the reformed confession there are two main thoughts which we call a theocratic view. The first is the duty of the authorities, established by God, to govern, to regulate and – if necessary – to punish “in order to curb man’s lawlessness and to ensure that everything among men should be in perfect order”.

The second main thought expresses that governing authorities should never take a neutral or carelessly passive attitude towards the nation’s religious life. It goes without saying that it does not demand the governing authorities to organise church life. But it does emphasize the calling of the authorities to take away all obstacles that could impede the preaching of the Gospel. By doing this, they enable the church and its members to lead the tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity Paul’s letter to Timothy speaks of.

Today, the SGP believes that the governing authorities should not make laws which would lead our nation away from God, His Word and His service. Since, unfortunately, our society is alienating itself from the church and the Bible, the purpose of the SGP is to oppose anything



which furthers the process of de-Christianisation of our nation and promote everything which would bring the nation closer to the Word of God and His Commandments.

### **The SGP and other Christian parties:**

There are two other Christian parties represented in the Dutch Parliament. There is a big Christian-Democratic party (CDA) to which the Prime Minister, Jan Balkenende, belongs. Roman-Catholic, Protestant, Hindu and Islamic members participate in the CDA. They emphasize the equal rights of religion with a neutral government.

Another Christian party is the Christian Union (ChristenUnie) which participates in the government as well. Its view about the responsibility of the government towards religion lies between those of the SGP and CDA.

The SGP has never participated in government. In 2003 the Party was involved in negotiations for a new coalition, but these failed. Although it is difficult for the SGP to achieve its objectives, it would always be willing to participate in government.

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## **An Indication of the Great Flood**

**By J. E. Kerley**

Many evidences of the Great Flood can be seen around the world, and the ark itself is thought to have been found in the Elburz mountain range in Iran. Some say that it is being kept quiet by governments surrounding the area of Ararat, located in the politically troubled part of eastern Turkey, bordering Armenia and Iran. Yet even if this discovery was proven to be Noah's ark, and could be viewed by anyone who wished to see it, many people would still choose to discount it or push the reality of its existence to the back of their mind. Man refuses to believe in the story of the Great Flood, because this would mean that the Bible is true. They would then know themselves to be accountable to a great and terrible God and they do not want to entertain this thought. They would rather believe irrational theories. I do not want to review the many evidences of the flood, as these can be read in books such as *The Genesis Flood* and *Noah's Flood*. I want to present one contentious example and demonstrate the reluctance of man to believe in the Great Flood.

Eastern Washington, USA has a complex underlying geology, but essentially consists of a basaltic basement covered by up to 100m of loess (wind-blown sand.) Amongst this plateau landscape may be seen a network of immense valleys, known as the Channelled Scablands. These consist of carved out basins, up to 13km wide and 70m deep, littered by boulders twice the size of the average house. Hundreds of extinct waterfalls and spillway gaps can be seen along the edges of the valleys. Gravel bars, deposited by waning currents in even the smallest rivers, are found here, stretching for up to one kilometre and standing 150m high.

This landscape has of course been of great interest to many geologists and the area has been studied intensely. It could not have been due to glacial retreat as the valley is not 'U' shape, so scientists recognised that water was the cause. In 1910, Pardee, a recognised geologist, calculated that during the flood at this location the average water velocity would have been 70km per hour and discharge rates of the river would have been  $39.4\text{km}^3$  or ten cubic miles per hour. That's the amount of water that flows out of the river Amazon in three days. Furthermore scientists have worked out that the ripple marks that stand up to 10m high with a frequency of between 70 and 100m could not have been formed by flood water less than 700m deep. What a clear evidence this is of the Great Flood. Yet most scientists would try not to make this distinction and have therefore tried to explain it over a longer timescale. Today it is commonly accepted that 15,000 years ago, a large ice dam in western Montana failed, releasing this huge volume of meltwater from glacial lakes high up in the mountains. It is then supposed to have scoured out the Channelled Scablands in one day. Yet even some atheist hydrologists say this could not have happened and we know it cannot be true, as we believe the Earth to be approximately six thousand years old, certainly not fifteen.

Before the flood, the oceans were very small. The waters of the flood came from the fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven (water vapour). To accommodate the receding water (Gen. 8. 3. *And the waters returned from off the earth continually*) not only did a great wind rise up to evaporate the flood water quickly, but orogeny occurred. This uplifting of the continents is consistent with Psalm 104. 6-9. *Thou coveredst it [the Earth] with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains. At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away. They go up by the mountains; they go*

*down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them. Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth.* Bound refers to continental shelves or cliffs.

This worldwide orogeny is the best way of explaining the Channelled Scablands. No doubt the rate of uplift varied around the globe, yet at some point there must have been an immense draining of water from off the land into the North Pacific Ocean.

It is of common occurrence, since the theory of evolution was proposed, for longer time scales to be used as an answer to explain created landforms or phenomena. If the feature could not form over a short time under extremely high energy levels, they say that the feature was formed at lower energy levels, over a longer time period. How well this theory fits in with evolution!

Furthermore, modern scientists do not like to use catastrophism to explain the formation of these geological formations. They prefer to use uniformitarian principles i.e. everything has a cause which can be explained by their simple scientific laws in equilibrium. Scientists were worried about assigning the Channelled Scablands formation to a catastrophic event for fear of lending credence to the Great Flood. However, they eventually had to admit that it was caused by a catastrophic event. This highlights the conscience of these scientists.

Those that believe the Bible to be the infallible word of God, believe in the event of the Great Flood through faith. Nevertheless, this evidence is wonderful to observe.

### **Glossary:**

*Uniformitarianism:* The theory that geologic events in the past were caused by natural processes which are operating at the present time.

*Catastrophism:* The theory that drastic and sudden events in the past may have helped shape the world as we know it today.

*Spillway Gaps:* Dried up channels that carried excess water over or around an obstruction.

*Orogeny:* Mountain or high land building through uplifting of crust by tectonic movement.

*Basaltic Basement:* The lower geologic structure of the plateau is solidified lava.



# CHURCH HISTORY

## William Williams (1717-1791)

By J. R. Broome

William Williams was born at the farmhouse of Pant Y Celyn, in the Parish of Llanfair-y-bryn, near Llandovery in 1717. For his education he was sent to the Nonconformist academy at Llyn-llwyd in Breconshire. His ambition was to become a doctor. While attending the academy he lodged at Talgarth, which was the town in which Howell Harris had been so greatly blessed at the Communion Service in the Parish Church on Whit-Sunday morning, 1735. From his home at Trevecca, Howell Harris had gone forth to preach the gospel, and in 1738, William Williams heard him preaching in the churchyard at Talgarth, and that sermon was the means used to convict him of sin, and bring him to seek the Lord. It was to him a Damascus Road experience, and in his elegy to Howell Harris, he records it in these words:

This is the morning which I'll always remember  
I, too, heard the voice of Heaven,  
I was arrested by a summons from above  
Through his terrifying voice...  
On that very spot, while I live I'll never forget it,  
I first saw you in my life  
Before the porch of the Church  
Without any clear path beneath your feet  
In a solemn sobering spirit  
As though in the light of a coming day  
Exhorting your parishioners  
And warning of an impending judgment.

In one of his hymns, he refers to the same event:

I'll not forget the place, the spot  
Where wine was poured into my impotent soul  
In endless torrents, from yonder Heaven,  
Until my wound was healed, my terror was subdued.

His experience is better known to the Church of God in the words of his well-known hymn, translated into English about the year 1771, and included in the fifth edition of the Countess of Huntingdon's Hymns (1772):

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,  
 Pilgrim through this barren land;  
 I am weak, but Thou art mighty,  
 Hold me with Thy powerful hand:  
 Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,  
 Feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain,  
 Whence the healing stream doth flow;  
 Let the fire and cloudy pillar  
 Lead me all my journey through:  
 Strong Deliverer, strong Deliverer,  
 Be Thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,  
 Bid my anxious fears subside;  
 Death of deaths, and hell's destruction,  
 Land me safe on Canaan's side:  
 Songs of praises, songs of praises,  
 I will ever give to Thee.

Musing on my habitation,  
 Musing on my heavenly home,  
 Fills my soul with holy longings:  
 Come, my Jesus, quickly come;  
 Vanity is all I see; vanity is all I see;  
 Lord, I long to be with Thee!

The original in Welsh was published in his first book of hymns called *Hallelujah* in 1745.

Now his life was changed and his ambition to be a doctor taken away, and the work of the ministry was laid upon his heart. Two years later, in 1740, he was ordained a deacon by the Bishop of St. David's and for the next three years served as curate in North Breconshire at Llanwrtyd and Abergwesyn near Llanwrtyd Wells. The vicar under whom he served disapproved of his beliefs, and his parishioners were most ungodly, but the Lord blessed his ministry greatly, and Howell Harris, who went to hear him, reported in December, 1740 that William's ministry was with "great power." In preaching from Luke 7. 47 ("Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little") William Williams "showed the difference between Christ in the head and Christ in the heart." Howell Harris said that his heart was

“inflamed with love,” and he believed that “the spirit of Daniel Rowland is fallen on brother Williams. Oh! what earnestness had he.”

Together with Howell Harris, he became involved in the work of the Welsh schools, supervised by Griffith Jones. These schools were a vital part of the spread of the truth in Wales, as large numbers were enabled to read and profit from the Scriptures. In 1743, William Williams was in trouble with his Bishop. He was cited before the Ecclesiastical Court on a number of charges, which included failure to give the sign of the cross at baptism, and “rambling into several other counties to preach.” He had been encouraged to become an itinerant preacher by the Countess of Huntingdon and George Whitefield, with whom he had become acquainted. The outcome was that the Bishop of St. David refused to give him “full orders” on account of his “Methodism”, and although Daniel Rowland put in an appeal for him, he remained a deacon for the rest of his life in the Church of England, and was not allowed to administer the Lord’s Supper within the established Church. While he felt this keenly, as he moved amongst the Methodist Societies which were attached to the Church of England, yet it was more than made up to him in the liberty he was given, and the blessing of the Holy Spirit which rested upon his ministry. Howell Harris was able to report in these early years of his ministry: “Hell trembles when he comes, and souls are daily taken by brother Williams in the gospel net,” and later: “He is eminently owned by his Heavenly Master in his service: he is indeed a flaming instrument in His hands; and he is on the stretch day and night.”

In April, 1743, a number of the ministers of the Evangelical Revival met at Watford, and among them was a group from Wales, which included Howell Harris, Daniel Rowland and William Williams. At this meeting, it was decided that William Williams should leave his curacy at Llanwrtyd, and become assistant to Daniel Rowland at Llangeitho, twenty miles to the north west in Cardiganshire. In this way, William Williams began to travel in his ministry over a wider area, and was strengthened by the companionship of Daniel Rowland, who had been preaching in the area for the past eight years. Rowland was three years older than Williams, and the two men laboured together. By 1744, Williams was preaching in North Wales, where he met with considerable opposition, and had to endure great hardships, but Howell Harris says that his preaching was with “uncommon

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power,” and he was thankful “for the gifts and grace and power given to him.”

As well as preaching and writing hymns, Williams also conducted an extensive correspondence with many of those called out under his ministry, and these letters are often compared in Wales to the correspondence of Samuel Rutherford. In a letter written in 1744, he says: “I hope that your eye is fixed on eternal happiness. It is that will make you long more and more to be there, and to walk with God continually while here, freed from the world and all its pleasure, in an holy fear and an evangelical love; waiting upon the Lord, saying, ‘When shall this mortal put on immortality, and this corruptible put on incorruption?’ It is the view of this that increases eternal life in our souls, and makes us become as pilgrims on the earth, and go on cheerfully towards the heavenly Jerusalem. My dear sister, there is an ocean of happiness prepared for us; and what we experience here, is but as a drop, or a taste of that which we shall enjoy. A sight of His love is that cause of our love: and our thirst after Him is but the effect of His thirst after us: and our diligence in seeking of Him is the effect of His diligence in seeking of us. A sight of this will break our heart, and make us look upon ourselves as nothing in His sight. It is not our works that are the works of redemption, but the works of Jesus Christ. For it is right that we should be nothing, and He All in All. For it is no more we that live, but Christ that liveth in us. Then are we truly His temples; and He is within, and self without. Christ on the Throne, and self crucified. This is sweet to all those that know it, and are going out of sin and self. I hope you know this mystery more and more; for as the soul loveth the Lord, so it hateth self; and as the soul tasteth the Lord to be sweet, so it tasteth self to be bitter. For by going into God, we go out of self more and more. Thus let us go on comfortably hand in hand to the Kingdom of God.”

Williams was blessed with a deep experimental knowledge of the truth, and this comes out not only in his letters and preaching, but also in the way in which he was made a help to the Welsh Calvinist Societies. His ministry was searching, and like J. C. Philpot he was given the grace to outline the various conditions of the soul while, at the same time, preaching the comforts of the gospel. In writing a report about the Penylan Society, he said, “Here are many old professors with much knowledge, that will take reproofs lovingly. But they are very lukewarm without enjoying but very little of the Lord. But there are



some that are very zealous and lively, tasting much sweetness in the work of God, and feeling much of His peace and love, but there is much of self in them without being subdued. Here they grow in a conversation meet to the gospel and in more knowledge of the evil of their own hearts.” These Societies were drawn from members of various denominations, including the Church of England, and they proved to be a place of refuge to many who came from parishes where the truth was not preached. Williams says of them: “Of all the means of grace, none is more salutary than the private societies, to admonish, edify, build up and encourage the weak members who are inclined to stray – either to lust, pleasure, to love trinkets on the one hand, or to pride, presumption, self-conceit and jealousy on the other; or else are drawn by the fraudulent instructions of men to deceive, to false and erroneous teachings, and to many other things which do great harm to the Church of God.”

About 1750, a sadness came into William Williams’ life when Howell Harris, having come under the influence of the Moravians, began to veer away from the truth. The particular error of the Moravians is usually referred to as their “blood and wounds” theology and through it, Howell Harris began to preach that God himself had died upon Calvary, as he laid a peculiar emphasis on the Person of Christ. His Welsh brethren remonstrated with him, and in 1750 Daniel Rowland published a pamphlet against him entitled “*A Conversation between an Orthodox Methodist and a Mistaken One*”. The conflict was peculiarly bitter for William Williams, who regarded Howell Harris as his spiritual father, but Williams stood by the truth and supported Daniel Rowland in his defence of it.

The Welsh Methodist movement became deeply divided; “Rowland’s People” and “Harris’s People” being completely separated. Not only was the conflict deep, but it was long. In his elegy to Harris, William Williams asks, “Why did you forget the flock which you brought to God’s fold? Hundreds are crying out and asking, ‘What is become of the trumpet which sounded so clearly from Trevecca?’ ” Gradually Howell Harris’s friends all left him, and he returned to Trevecca to establish his “Christian Family”, a community consisting of over one hundred people, who lived together, and provided for their own livelihood using a large number of local crafts. After ten or twelve years, efforts were made to obtain a reconciliation, and William Williams was one of the first to act. In a letter to Harris, he wrote, “In

great need of you at present...Dear Sir come, come soon then, all is ready to receive you, you were never since you [became] a soldier of Jesus Christ more accepted in the Church than at this day, by preachers and [people]; the fields are white for the harvest, nothing is wanted but faithful labourers; you were and are owned more than any perhaps in Wales, you shall not go to heaven...until you settle some affairs in the church, until you help your flock and discipline the dispersed and scattered sheep.”

In 1759, Howell Harris had joined the local Breconshire Militia, and had been promoted to the rank of Captain. During the period 1759-62, he had travelled with the Militia in Somerset and Devon and other places, while at the same time preaching in the many places he visited. But by 1762, he was ready to leave this strange connection and return to the work of the ministry in Wales. Williams and Rowland were both pleased to hear that he was resigning his military commission and returning to the work in Wales. They wrote to him, “We understand that you intend to resign your present commission and (God willing) once more to fill up your place among us, which we sensibly acknowledge has been long vacant. We have followed you with our prayers through your various tours, and are satisfied you generally appeared doubly armed, to the furtherance of the Gospel, glory be to sovereign grace, and we unanimously conclude that your inclination to visit our several counties again is the voice of heaven, and we doubt not but all animosities will and must subside and a spirit of love take their place.” The return of Howell Harris was the same period, 1762, that the Lord visited Wales with a further measure of revival. This appeared particularly at Llangeitho under the ministry of Daniel Rowlands, and in it the hymns of Williams were made a great blessing. Written in Welsh, they were entitled, *The Songs of those who stand on the Sea of Glass*, and they soon went through five editions. Many who could not read soon learnt Williams’ hymns and their influence in the Revival of the time is immeasurable as they were the means of spreading the Gospel throughout Wales. The 1762 Revival at Llangeitho was one of the most powerful in the whole of the Eighteenth Century and it revealed Williams’ lasting source of usefulness to the Church of God as a hymnwriter.

He wrote not only in Welsh but also in English. In 1759 he published a volume of hymns entitled *Hosannah*. In 1772 he published

another volume entitled *Gloria in Excelsis*. In this latter volume appeared the beautiful hymn:

Jesus, lead me by thy power  
Safe into the promised rest;  
Hide my soul within thy arms;  
Make me lean upon thy breast.

Be my guide in every peril,  
Watch me hourly, night and day;  
Else my foolish heart will wander  
From thy Spirit far away.

In thy presence I am happy;  
In thy presence I'm secure;  
In thy presence all afflictions  
I can easily endure.

In thy presence I can conquer,  
I can suffer, I can die;  
Far from thee, I faint and languish;  
O thou Saviour, keep me nigh. (1101 Gadsby's)

Also in this volume of 1772, was published a hymn which has been translated into many languages, including several Indian dialects:

O'er those gloomy hills of darkness,  
Look, my soul; be still and gaze;  
All the promises do travail  
With a glorious day of grace:  
Blessed jubilee!  
Let thy glorious morning dawn.

In all, Williams wrote over eight hundred hymns, and it is these which he has bequeathed to posterity, and which have been made a great blessing in the Church of God.

After the time of revival in 1762, Williams lived on and laboured for nearly thirty years, and together with Daniel Rowland, was the leader of the Methodist Society in Wales throughout the last part of the 18th Century. He preached over a wide area of North and South Wales, often in fields, and travelled long journeys. Beside his hymns, he wrote other works of poetry, such as his *Elegy on the death of Howell Harris in 1773*, and other works dealing with Christian history, doctrine, biographies and sermons. As most of his work was written in Welsh, and very little has been translated into English, he is principally known

in this country as a hymnwriter. He was well versed in his Bible, the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, and the writings of the Puritans, particularly John Bunyan.

As he neared his end in 1791, he wrote to his friend Thomas Charles of Bala: "I have come to see that true religion consists of three parts: first, true light respecting the plan of salvation; God's eternal covenant with his Son to pay the debt of believing sinners, all the truths of the new covenant by which he becomes all in all in creation, in all-embracing providence, and in redemption...The books of Dr. Goodwin, Dr. Owen, Dr. Gill, Marshall, Harvey, Usher and others, have helped to enliven my understanding of these great truths; but now in this affliction of mine, I have come to see that I am very defective in a subject not less magnificent than the other, that is, being in intimate fellowship with God in all our dealings with the world, and in all the exercises and ordinances of religion ... The Scriptures which convey the promise of the Holy Spirit contain promises of this heavenly fellowship with God; and as the Holy Spirit is promised in some measure to every believer, this communion is the inheritance of every true Christian ... I have now, in my affliction, seen that I fall very short of this peaceful fellowship, which is like heaven on earth ... the third part of true religion – life and conduct, such as would reveal to the ungodly that there is a great difference between us and them." In this letter, Williams reveals the desire of those taught of God for the blessed experience of his sensible presence. Rather like John Owen, who died shortly after writing his work, *The Glory of Christ*, so Williams' end came as he was writing a work entitled, *A View of the Kingdom of Christ*. He died on January 11th 1791, and was buried in the churchyard at Llanfair-ar-y-bryn near Pantycelyn, where he had spent much of his life and the last years of his ministry. Thomas Charles remarked, "Mr. Daniel Rowland's sermons, and the hymns of Mr. William Williams, made the age in which they lived more remarkable than almost any age in the history of Wales."

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## DOCTRINE AND TRUTH

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

*"For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding"* (1 Chronicles 29. 15).

If you possess the faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, you, like them, confess that you are a stranger; and your confession springs out of a believing heart and a feeling experience. You feel yourself a stranger in this ungodly world; it is not your element, it is not your home. You are in it during God's appointed time, but you wander up and down this world a stranger to its company, a stranger to its maxims, a stranger to its fashions, a stranger to its principles, a stranger to its motives, a stranger to its lusts, its inclinations, and all in which this world moves as in its native element. Grace has separated you by God's distinguishing power, that though you are in the world, you are not of it. I can tell you plainly, if you are at home in the world; if the things of time and sense be your element; if you feel one with the company of the world, the maxims of the world, the fashions of the world, and the principles of the world, grace has not reached your heart, the faith of God's elect does not dwell in your bosom. The first effect of grace is to separate. It was so in the case of Abraham. He was called by grace to leave the land of his fathers, and go out into a land that God would shew him. And so God's own word to his people is now, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Separation, separation, separation from the world is the grand distinguishing mark of vital godliness. There may be indeed separation of body where there is no separation of heart. But what I mean is, separation of heart, separation of principle, separation of affection, separation of spirit. And if grace has touched your heart, and you are a partaker of the faith of God's elect, you are a stranger in the world, and will make it manifest by your life and conduct that you are such. —September 21st

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*"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"*  
(John 3. 3).

True religion begins with an entrance into the soul of supernatural light and supernatural life. How or why it comes the soul knows not; for "the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The wind itself is not seen, but its effects are felt. The sound of a going is heard in the tops of the mulberry trees, where God himself is not seen. The voice of the Lord, powerful and full of majesty, was heard by those who saw no similitude (Deut. 4. 12). Thus effects are felt, though causes are unknown. Streams flow into the heart from a hidden source; rays of light beam into the soul from an unrisen sun; and kindlings of life awake in us a new existence out of an unseen fountain. The new-born babe feels life in all its limbs, though it knows not yet the earthly father whence that natural life sprang. And thus new-born souls are conscious of feelings hitherto unpossessed, and are sensible of a tide of life, mysterious and incomprehensible, ebbing and flowing in their heart, though "Abba, Father," has not yet burst from their lips. A man's body is alive to every feeling, from a pin's scratch to a mortal wound, from a passing ache to an incurable disease. The heart cannot flutter or intermit for a single second its wonted stroke, without a peculiar sensation that accompanies it, notices it, and registers it. Shall feelings, then, be the mark and evidence of natural life, and not of spiritual? Shall our ignoble part, the creature of a day, our perishing body, our dust of dust, have sensations to register every pain and every pleasure, and be tremblingly alive to every change without and every change within; and shall not our immortal souls be equally endowed with a similar barometer to fluctuate up and down the scale of spiritual life? We must lay it down, then, at the very threshold of vital godliness, that if a man has not been conscious of new feelings, and cannot point out, with more or less precision, some particular period, some never-to-be-forgotten season, when these feelings came unbidden into his heart, he has not yet passed from death unto life. He is not in Christ, if he is not a new creature (2 Cor. 5. 17). —November 11th

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# LETTERS, ADDRESSES AND SERMONS

## Walls and Doors

By R. C. T. Warboys

*Based upon an address given at the Annual General Meeting of the Gospel Standard Trust on 17 May 2003 by Mr R C T Warboys.*

The chief thought upon my mind this afternoon is concerning *walls and doors*, especially, of course, spiritual *walls* and spiritual *doors and gates* although in passing I would mention something that perhaps may be a word in season. When I was first sent into the ministry nearly thirty three years ago, often visiting chapels that I normally was not acquainted with, I was often very discouraged to see the condition in which many places of worship were, especially perhaps having my meals in a well-appointed house. On one occasion I drew attention to 1 Kings 6 which concludes “So was he [Solomon] seven years in building it [the temple].” The next chapter commences “*But*”, by contrast, “*But* Solomon was building his own house thirteen years.” The words fell in fertile ground and a young couple who had spent much time decorating their own house then offered to do some decoration at the chapel. I am thankful that now as I go about I find invariably chapels are indeed well maintained and the facilities are now in good condition. If we have a love to the Lord we shall have a love to His people, a love to His Word, a love to His day and in this connection, a love to His house. But as I said, it is especially about spiritual walls, doors and gates that I want to speak this afternoon and with young people and children amongst us I would mention some simple things as well as perhaps, as the Lord enables, deeper things.

### **First, walls as a line of demarcation:**

Now some of you will have heard me say, probably many times, that we are surrounded by parables. The first thought; remember that the walls mentioned in scripture are invariably city walls although we may mention other walls as well; the first thought is concerning separation and the parable I would mention is this. Some years ago, having a few days staying near Chester in North Wales, one of the few cities in Great Britain with the medieval walls still almost completely intact, walking on those walls this thought came to the mind. If this was a sermon and not an address I would indeed have quoted it as a text. From Psalm 51. 18: “Build thou the walls of Jerusalem.” Now that Psalm was written



by David and I will remind you of the circumstances. David, the sweet Psalmist of Israel, a man after the Lord's own heart, had committed adultery. He had taken Uriah's wife as his wife and he had caused Uriah to be put to death. How much time passed before Nathan came to him we do not know, but the babe was born, indeed is spoken of as a child, so it may have been two or three years old but certainly at least a year must have passed. I do not think David wrote many Psalms that year. As you know, Nathan came to him with the parable of the rich man and his many flocks. David, of course, had several wives, Uriah had one. David was greatly incensed. "The man that hath done this *thing* shall surely die." "Thou *art* the man." Then David wrote or caused to be written the 51<sup>st</sup> Psalm, the Psalm that so many of us have had to pray under a deep feeling of our sinnership. But in the middle of that Psalm of repentance he suddenly says, "Build thou the walls of Jerusalem." What had the walls of Jerusalem got to do with his repentance? Now I said, city walls make a clear distinction between those that are *in* the city and those that are outside. David by his conduct in acting as other kings that worshipped idols, that had no fear of God, had acted just as they would have done. David had made a breach in the walls. He had blurred the distinction between those that fear God and those that live in wickedness. Do you and I have this wall of distinction in our lives and conduct, and in our conversation? In Judges 12 we read that when questioned whether they were Ephraimites, some said they were not. They were then told to say the word "Shibboleth." (This word means a stream or river, as if they were to ask "may I pass over the river," where they now were.) And they said "Sibboleth" for they could not frame to pronounce it right, and they were slain at the river Jordan. So we may pretend all our life that we are the Lord's but the proof will be known at the "River of Jordan." Also we read in Matthew 26. 73, then they that stood by said to Peter in the Judgment Hall, "Surely thou also art *one* of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee." (It was after that he began to curse and to swear.) It is a solemn thing if the world can see no difference between us and themselves. I remind you of Moses' words in Exodus 33: "For wherein shall it be known here," that is in this life, it will be quite clear in the Judgment Day, but how shall it be known here that we are thy people? "*Is it* not in that thou goest with us? so" – because of that – "so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that *are* upon the face of the earth." Well, much might be said in that connection.

**Second, walls as a defence:**

In Isaiah 26. 1 we read: “We have a strong city; salvation will *God* appoint *for* walls and bulwarks.” We sometimes sing:

Glorious things of thee are spoken,  
 Zion, city of our God!  
 He whose word cannot be broken,  
 Formed thee for his own abode;  
 On the Rock of Ages founded,  
 What can shake thy sure repose?  
 With salvation’s walls surrounded,  
 Thou may’st smile at all thy foes. (Gadsby’s 372)

However thick and strong a wall is, how essential it is for it to have a good foundation. Before the invention of gunpowder, to enter into a city sometimes the walls were undermined. If built upon earth, sand or chalk then that could be dug away and the walls would fall. But not if they were built upon a rock. Are the walls that surround you in your conduct built upon not your own works but upon Jesus Christ, the rock of our salvation? In Luke 6. 48 we read of the man, “which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock.” The digging deep was necessary to find the rock, but his house did not stand because he dug deep, but because it was “founded upon a rock.” In passing, although I do not dwell upon Solomon’s temple, but we have sung of Solomon and his prayer for wisdom. The temple was built upon the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite and a threshing floor in the east, as some of us have seen, was a flat rock in a windy situation. Of course, in many respects that sets forth the work of the Spirit so often likened to the wind and the need of threshing to separate the grain from the chaff. But it was built upon a good foundation and how essential that is.

Sometimes we visit castles and similar places and have observed that the walls invariably are very thick. Last Lord’s Day evening I was preaching at Reading chapel and as some of you may know, there one wall has a pronounced inward bow, which is rather unusual. Mr. Stephen Hyde, with his experience and his professional knowledge, advised them and now it has been prevented from further bowing. A wall may bow and that wall I understand had only four and a half inch brickwork which was far too thin for such a great height. Our walls at Oakington of similar height are fourteen inches thick. But when the wall has bowed it could not be restored. It could be prevented from

further bowing but it could not be put back. Again, referring to David, although God forgave his sins yet he suffered from its consequences the rest of his life. I remind you that in Deuteronomy we read, “When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any man fall from thence.” The houses in the east had flat roofs. David literally was on the roof of his house when he saw Bathsheba washing herself. She should have had more modesty than to be washing where she could have been observed. She was not blameless, but the great fault was David’s and, spiritually speaking, he fell on the roof but he did not fall from the roof to his destruction. He got a bruise that he suffered from for the rest of his life. His elder sons knew what their father had done. Amnon, Absalom, Adonijah, all followed their father’s wrong example. How we need to pray to be kept. Indeed we have that theme throughout the Psalms: “Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not”, “Lead me in thy truth, and teach me”, and so on.

I have been most concerned when I have heard of some who when asked the question, “How are you?”, that they reply, “We are kept.” Were Abraham, David, Peter and many others of the Lord’s people kept from falling? No, they were not. When we read 1 Peter 1. 5 let us remember the Lord’s people are kept from final falling, but they are not always kept from falls in their walk and conduct.

In Psalm 62. 3 David’s enemies are described as “a bowing wall.” The more a wall bows the greater the tendency for further bowing:

The way to ruin thus begins,  
Down, down like easy stairs;  
If conscience suffers little sins,  
Soon larger ones it bears  
Just as the broadest rivers run  
From small and distant springs,  
The greatest crimes that men have done  
Have grown from little things.” (Clifton Hymnal 324)

### **Third, starvation and thirst:**

Even if the walls and gates were strong and the watchmen diligent, the city might be overcome by starving the people in the city or depriving them of water so that they were weakened into submission. Do we not live in the days described in Amos 8. 11? “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the

LORD.” If we are the Lord’s people we have an enemy who is ever trying, when the Lord permits him, to starve our souls to death. This may be as it was with the prodigal son, by the sinful attractions of the world, or as later by attempting to feed our souls with the husks that satisfied the swine. Remember that dividing the hoof sets forth a separation in our walk from the world. But we are not clean in God’s sight unless we also chew the cud. That is, to meditate upon the Scriptures, the preaching of the Gospel, the spiritual significance of the parables of nature, and especially of course upon Jesus Christ who is the bread of life. Without good food we become weak. A farmer friend has told me he considers his cattle spend twice as long chewing the cud as they do in actually eating. I felt how short I came! An hour and a half at a service, do we spend three hours meditating on what we have heard? Five minutes reading the Scriptures night and morning, do we spend ten minutes meditating on what we have read? The ruminant animals do not profit from their food until after they have chewed the cud.

If the city had an abundant water supply within its walls, then how favoured it was in a time of siege. We read in 2 Chronicles 32. 30 how Hezekiah brought the water course straight down to the west side of the city of David. This conduit or tunnel was discovered about 50 years ago, once again proving the truth of the scripture. David speaks of the “well of Bethlehem, which *is* by the gate” (2 Samuel 23. 15); this was a type of Christ. See Gadsby’s 1091. But there were Philistines there, and the three mighty men (faith, hope and charity) had to break through the host to bring it to David. May we have the well within us spoken of by Christ in John 4. 14.

#### **Fourth, gates and doors:**

The weak spot naturally speaking of a city’s defences are the doors or gates and that promise was indeed given to Abraham: “Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.” If the enemy gains the gate then however strong the wall the city could be overcome. We have many prayers in scripture on this subject such as, “Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips” and in watching the doors; the gates as it were of our city; we need to be especially on our guard for traitors. In Isaiah 33. 15 we have a description of a man that fears the Lord: “He that...speaketh uprightly...that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood...” One way in which cities in those days could be

overcome was by a traitor pretending to be a friend and entering in and opening the gate and letting in the enemy. Now if you younger friends are not acquainted with Bunyan's *Holy War* I commend it to you. The city of Mansoul had many enemies, but there were two enemies that did more harm than those that fought against them, and these two men had names, as Bunyan so often uses to illustrate what they set forth. One was Mr. Covetousness and the other was Mr. Lasciviousness. Lasciviousness for you that are younger means immoral mirth, smutty jokes, that sort of thing. Now these two men changed their names to get into the city. Mr. Covetousness changed his name to Mr. Prudent Thrifty. Now we condemn covetousness, we commend thriftiness but what a narrow line often divides one from the other. Mr. Lasciviousness changed his name to Mr. Harmless Mirth and these two enemies crept into the city. Those guarding the gate were not properly on their watch and these men entered in and did so much damage. Indeed we read in one of the minor prophets (so called): "A man's enemies *are* the men of his own house" and that means especially of his own heart. The world, the flesh, and Satan will always oppose us but it is those traitors that creep into our hearts that cause the greater damage. May we ever be on our watch.

Now the Lord spoke a parable concerning gates in Matthew 7. "For wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait" (that means narrow, like the Straits of Dover for example), "strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." As if many are seeking it but not looking in the right place; "few there be that **find** it." Now how much more difficult it is to defend a wide gate than a narrow gate. The Lord spoke this parable concerning gates or doors: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." The eye of the needle refers to the small gate or door that was in or beside the main gate. The main gates would be shut at nightfall but sometimes a traveller arriving late would ask for admittance. When the guard was satisfied the traveller was genuine he would open the small door or gate – the needle's eye, not the big gates when an enemy hiding behind trees or something else might suddenly rush in. For a camel to enter the needle's eye all his rich goods would have to be removed from his back (no longer burdened by them), and indeed he would literally have to get down on his knees to enter through this needle's eye. We are warned in the

epistle: “the love of money,” not money itself, “the love of money is the root of all evil.” How we need to be on our guard with regard to that gate.

My thoughts go to Judges 9 where we read of that wicked man, Abimelech, who besieged the tower at Thebez and he took a bough upon his shoulder and told his army to do likewise and to try to set fire to the door. But a woman was watching and she cast a piece of a millstone from the tower upon Abimelech’s head and he was mortally wounded. She was a good defender was she not, although she was but, as we might say, a woman, not a strong soldier. In passing, how sad that even when dying Abimelech was filled with pride. He said to the young man, his armour bearer, “Draw thy sword, and slay me, that men say not of me, A woman slew him.” His heart was still filled with pride even in his dying moments.

I want to draw your attention to dear Nehemiah. Nehemiah was one of the captives in Shushan, and he received news that the walls of Jerusalem were destroyed and broken down and the gates were burned with fire and he was greatly concerned. Are you and I concerned about these walls of demarcation, of defence and the other things that might have been spoken of, that are so broken down in our nation, sadly in our denomination, and especially often in our own hearts? Does it cause you grief or are you unconcerned? Nehemiah did not say, “Well, there are quite a lot of other captives and there are people still living at Jerusalem, let them get on and build it.” No, he did what you and I should do first of all. He made it a matter of prayer. I do like his prayer, it comes down so low. Did he say, “O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, **who fear thy name?**” No, he did not even dare to claim that. Perhaps one here feels they cannot claim that they do fear the name of the Lord, but he came in lower, “**who desire** to fear thy name”; can you come in there dear friend? “Who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king’s cupbearer.” The king’s cupbearer had to taste the wine before the king drank of it, in case it was poisoned. So it was a responsible position. But he was sad. He had not been beforetime sad in the king’s presence. “Why *is* thy countenance sad?” He was sore afraid. The king had absolute power, naturally speaking, he could have said, “take him away, take off his head.” Before Nehemiah answered he prayed. Perhaps you may have a



telephone call, somebody suddenly asks you something. Breathe a prayer in your heart before you answer, if it may be only for a few seconds, do what Nehemiah did. "So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant hath found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it." He was asked that searching question, I have spoken of it on New Year's day, "For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return?" ("For dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return," but in this connection to go and build.) His prayer was answered. The king provided all that was needed.

But before we leave Nehemiah there is something else I would like to mention, where we read in chapter 13: "It came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath." Do you pray that the gates of your heart shall be shut against the things of time that you may be rightly and lawfully engaged in six days of the week? But O may they not enter into our hearts on the Lord's Day and especially in His house. O may these gates be shut as it were when it begins to get dark on the day before the sabbath.

I was grieved to hear, years ago, that when one of our members was asked to say grace where he was invited, those that had invited him (and they were members of one of our churches) did not turn the radio off while he said it! This was not shutting the door was it?

#### **Fifth, Christ as the Door:**

In John 10. 9 we read the words of Christ, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." If we consider the sheep in a fold as representing those who have made an open profession, then the only right way to enter that fold is through belief in Christ and in complete dependence upon Him for salvation. A sheep is still a sheep even if outside the fold, but having entered in, then it is made manifest as one of His sheep. The going in and out might represent the changeableness of our love. Sometimes close to Him and at His dear feet, sometimes straying from Him and having to be brought back (see Luke 15. 3-7). There are often sheep in the field next to where I live, sometimes I have observed them fighting, sometimes covered with mud, sometimes breaking out of the field. But



although those things are sad it has never changed one of them into a goat! In John 10. 1 we read, "He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."

If the fold represents heaven, then Christ and His sin-atonement sacrifice is the only door by which the soul can enter. Sometimes by faith we look into heaven and firmly believe that one day we shall be there. At another time we go out in our feeling and fear that we shall never enter. When present at the dying bed of a saint, we may, like Bunyan in the Pilgrims Progress catch a glimpse within the gates and long to be there.

Now we read in Revelation of the gates of heaven. It speaks of twelve gates which might, of course, represent the teaching of the twelve apostles, but John went on to say, "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Now that is not speaking of salvation by works. Remember what the Lord said, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." If we love Him it is because He first loved us and so those the Lord loves from eternity past, they in time are brought to love Him. They, constrained by love, will keep His commandments, not through fear of punishment but constrained by love, and enter in through the gates into the city.

There will come a time when the door of our life closes. I think of the parable of the wise and foolish virgins. Two words in that verse are so important, "They that were ready went in **with Him** to the marriage: and the door was shut" (Matt. 25. 10). They did not go in **to Him**, but with Him. In other words they were in His company this side of the door, that is, in this life. When the cry was made, "Behold the bridegroom cometh...they went to buy." The foolish were never in the company of the heavenly bridegroom. A closed door is a very definite object; we are either one side or we are the other. There is no halfway state. Do you walk with the Lord, do you know His voice, feel His touch? If so, when the door of your life closes forever, you will be shut in with the Lord in heaven for ever. If not, you will be shut out for ever. Sometimes, of course, like the two on the way to Emmaus, our eyes may be holden that we do not know Him, but we feel that burning in our hearts and afterwards He makes himself known in the breaking of bread. But what an infinite mercy if you and I are with Him in this

life; we shall then be with Him in eternity, when the door of our life closes forever, never to be opened.

In conclusion, we read in John 21 of the Lord's words that Peter's death should glorify God. Will your death glorify God, or will it bring a reproach upon your profession? It has been said, "Don't tell me how they died, tell me how they lived." O may you and I pray that we may not in life or on our deathbed make a breach in the walls of Jerusalem, and if we do so, may our prayer be, "Build thou the walls of Jerusalem." May the walls of salvation be our defence, built upon the rock Jesus Christ, and like Mordecai, may we sit in the King's gate, and not bow down to the enemies of the Lord, and at last enter in through Christ into heaven. Amen.

*(Mr Ralph Warboys was born in 1927; called by grace, convinced of sin and blessed with pardon of sin in 1941, at the age of fourteen; baptised in June 1959; and sent to preach in November 1970. He was a member of Oakington Strict Baptist Church for 50 years and a minister of the gospel for 38 years. He died 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2008 at the age of 81. His obituary, which appeared in The Gospel Standard (2009 p 375), is profitable reading and we recommend it to our readers.)*

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## REVIEWS

### ***The Calvinistic Methodist Fathers of Wales* by J. M. Jones and W. Morgan**

**By J. R. Broome**

*Published by the Banner of Truth 2008, hardback, two volumes, Vol.1: 738pp, Vol. 2: 784pp. Price £40.*

These two volumes were originally published separately in 1895 and 1897 in Welsh, under the title *Y Tadau Methodistiaidd* (*The Methodist Fathers*). They are now translated for the first time by John Aaron, a school teacher living in South Wales. This must have been a mammoth task but the final result bears no signs of being a translation. They are beautifully produced and are comparable to the Banner's two volume 1979 edition of Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana* (*The Great Works of Christ in America*).

The author, John Morgan Jones (1838-1921), was a minister of the Calvinistic Methodists in Wales for over fifty years. Realising that much of the history of the great Evangelical Awakening in Wales in the eighteenth century would be lost if not gathered together, with the help of his friend William Morgan J.P., he set about researching original manuscripts, many of which were lying untouched in the Trefecca College near Talgarth to the west of the Black Mountains. Between them they read such documents as the diaries of Howell Harris, which had never been fully examined before. There was an immense amount of material to be researched but out of their labours in 1895 and 1897 came these two volumes (in Welsh). They had planned a third volume but lacked the finance to complete the work. Until two years ago they were inaccessible to most readers. Now translated into English they are accessible to a far wider readership. They are a piece of excellent historical research based on original sources.

The Lord's work in Wales in the eighteenth century changed the whole character of their society, as it did in England. These two volumes contain full accounts, not only of the work of well-known leaders of the revival such as Daniel Rowlands (about whom we wrote in our Spring issue), Howell Harris, William Williams, John Elias, and Charles of Bala, but also of many lesser known, though no less important figures such as Griffith Jones; a lone figure preaching powerfully prior to the Revival; and later greatly used ministers such as Robert Roberts. The first volume comprises extensive accounts of the ministry of Howell Harris, Daniel Rowlands and William Williams, and lesser-known men such as Griffith Jones and Peter Williams, and the second volume describes the larger group of lesser-known ministers (about twelve in all), together with Charles of Bala and John Elias.

History is a valuable subject in any society, never more so than when it comes to spiritual matters. The Bible in Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, the Gospels and the Acts is full of accounts of the Lord's work in the past. These two volumes contain a small part of the Lord's work in the United Kingdom since the Reformation. They dovetail with such works as Arnold Dallimore's two volume biography of George Whitefield. We recommend them to those who love reading, especially reading of the great works of the Lord in revival in a bygone age. It gives us hope for the future, that he is able to do the same again.

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## CURRENT EVENTS

### 2010 Barton Conference

It is hoped, if the Lord will, to hold a day conference for young people on Saturday, 20th November 2010. This will be similar to the conference held in 2008 and once again the venue will be the village hall in Barton-le-Clay, Bedfordshire. This year the speakers will be Mr B. A. Ramsbottom, pastor of Bethel Chapel, Luton and Mr G. Chewter, deputation speaker for the Trinitarian Bible Society. For further details or to register an interest in attending please visit [www.thebartonconference.org](http://www.thebartonconference.org) or email [jamespskelton@hotmail.com](mailto:jamespskelton@hotmail.com). The lectures from the 2008 Barton Conference are also available on the website and can be downloaded in written and audio formats.

### The Equality Bill

We mentioned in the last issue of *Perception* that a Christian registrar, Lillian Ladele, who worked at Islington town hall in north London, had been threatened with dismissal because in all good conscience she could not officiate at civil partnerships. Her case went to Court and the Judge ruled in favour of the council. The case was then taken to the Court of Appeal where the Judges ruled that she had broken the law by refusing a service on the grounds of sexuality. She asked to be allowed to appeal to the Supreme Court but the Appeal Judges refused her request on the grounds that her case “did not raise legal points of general public importance” sufficient to allow her to do that. Now she is considering taking her case to the European Court of Human Rights. It would appear that never again can a true Christian be a Registrar of births, deaths, and marriages in this land. Conscience is no defence against the laws of “sexual equality.” The right to religious conscience is being trampled on and all three major political parties are complicit in it.

The Equality Bill completed its Third Reading in the House of Lords on 23<sup>rd</sup> March. It was introduced into the Lords late last year and has been rushed through with the agreement of the Conservative Party and the Liberal Democrats. As we said in our Spring Issue, it consolidates all anti-discrimination legislation: racial, religious and sexual into one Act. While Lady O’Cathain’s amendment was accepted by the House on 25<sup>th</sup> January, giving the Churches freedom to choose ministers and employees who share their beliefs, it only concerned those that were dealing with doctrinal matters, such as the ministry and teaching. In the last stages of the bill it was agreed that civil partnership could be solemnized in churches, but a provision was agreed for the Church of England to be able to prevent rogue ministers going against Church policy and registering such civil partnerships in a church. The question was then raised as to whether independent churches (Baptists etc.) could be sued if they refused to take up the new legal power to register such partnerships in a church. The Government gave an assurance that “it would not be possible to bring a claim for discrimination against independent churches,” but the Christian Institute has taken legal advice and believes that such a claim could be brought, in which case the churches would have to defend themselves in a Court of Law. The Equality Bill is very complex and there is uncertainty about some of the legislation until it is tested in a court of law. But it is obvious which way the tide is flowing. There is a constant attack going on against freedom of religion from a secular, godless society.

Glorious things of thee are spoken,  
Zion, city of our God!  
He, whose word cannot be broken,  
Formed thee for his own abode;  
On the rock of ages founded,  
What can shake thy sure repose?  
With salvation's walls surrounded,  
Thou may'st smile at all thy foes.

See! The streams of living waters,  
Springing from eternal love,  
Well supply thy sons and daughters,  
And all fear of want remove:  
Who can faint while such a river  
Ever flows their thirst to assuage?  
Grace which, like the Lord the giver,  
Never fails from age to age.

Round each habitation hovering,  
See the cloud and fire appear!  
For a glory and a covering,  
Showing that the Lord is near;  
Thus deriving from their banner,  
Light by night, and shade by day:  
Safe they feed upon the manna  
Which he gives them when they pray.

Blessed inhabitants of Zion,  
Washed in the Redeemer's blood!  
Jesus, whom their souls rely on,  
Makes them kings and priests to God.  
'Tis his love his people raises  
Over self to reign as kings,  
And as priests, his solemn praises  
Each for a thank-offering brings.

Saviour, if of Zion's city  
I through grace a member am:  
Let the world deride and pity,  
I will glory in thy name;  
Fading is the worldling's pleasure,  
All his boasted pomp and show;  
Solid joys and lasting treasure,  
None but Zion's children know.

John Newton (1725-1807)  
*Olney Hymns* (1779) Vol. 1. No.60

# PERCEPTION



For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.  
Hebrews 11:2

**AUTUMN 2010**



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<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>Page:</b>
<b>Editorial</b> .....	1
Current Issues	
<b>Oliver Cromwell on Liberty of Conscience</b> .....	4
<i>J. R. Broome</i>	
<b>The Reformed Political Party (SGP) in The Netherlands</b> .....	8
<i>C. Verdouw</i>	
Church History	
<b>J. C. Philpot and J. H. Newman - A Vital Difference</b> .....	11
<i>Dr M. J. Hyde</i>	
Doctrine & Truth	
<b>The Vital Necessity of True Doctrine</b> .....	17
<i>B. A. Ramsbottom</i>	
<b>The Roman Catholic Mass</b> .....	25
<i>J. R. Broome</i>	
Letters, Addresses & Sermons	
<b>Extract from a Sermon by the late John Green</b> .....	29
Current Events	
<b>The Visit of Pope Benedict XVI to Britain</b> .....	33

Cover Picture: Castle Point, north west of Carterton, North Island, New Zealand (Photo: taken by D. Baker)

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# PERCEPTION

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## EDITORIAL

*“But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor. 1. 30).*

In our editorials we have written about separation, justification, propitiation, redemption and the Atonement. Under the operation and teaching of the Holy Spirit sinners are separated in affection from this world that “lieth in wickedness”. They are brought to faith in Christ and are feelingly delivered from the “wrath to come”. They are taught that they have been bought with a price from the bondage of sin and Satan, and have been led into the reality of reconciliation between their souls and God. “And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross” (Col. 2. 13-14).

Now we come to write about sanctification. In the New Testament the word signifies a setting apart by and for God. In a child of God this work is accomplished through election, redemption and regeneration. The will of God which is at the root of sanctification is manifested by His free grace, “...According to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Tit. 3. 5); or, as Jude expresses it, God’s children are “...sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, *and* called” (Jude 1). The meritorious cause of sanctification is the shedding of Christ’s precious blood, and His spotless obedience in His humanity by which He wrought out a righteousness which He imputes to His people. “And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth” (Joh. 17. 19). “Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Tit. 2.14). It is God who sanctifies. “The very God of peace sanctify you wholly” (1 Thes. 5. 23). It is the Holy Spirit who accomplishes this work in a believer. Peter, as he wrote to the

churches, speaks of them as, “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, though sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 1. 2). Writing to the Thessalonian Church, Paul refers to them as chosen to salvation “through sanctification of the Spirit” (2 Thes. 2. 13). Speaking of the great evils at Corinth from which believers had been delivered, he writes, “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6. 11).

“Ye must be born again,” (John 3. 7) was the word of Jesus to Nicodemus. It is the Holy Spirit’s prerogative to call a sinner out of nature’s darkness into God’s marvellous light. The effectual call of God is heard: “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor. 6. 17-18). The heart of stone is taken away and a new heart of flesh is given, described by Peter as being made “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1. 4). Paul in his letter to the Church at Rome speaks of this new nature when he says, “I delight in the law of God after the inward man” (Rom. 7. 22). Yet he goes on to show in that seventh chapter that his old nature is still with him and that he has a great conflict within. The old nature is subdued, but not destroyed, nor will it be until laid in the grave.

But the Lord had promised, “Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace” (Rom. 6. 14). David and Peter might fall grievously, but the work of the Spirit in them could not be destroyed and in confession and repentance they would return to their God, brought closer than ever before. Of them both it was true in the words of Christ: “I have prayed for thee” (Luke 22. 32). Both of them had walked with their God in sweet fellowship prior to their fall, but the Lord was to show them that there was no such thing as progressive sanctification, whereby the longer they were in the way to heaven they would become stronger, sin less and reach a state of sinless perfection, such as John Wesley imagined was possible. The Lord was to try their faith and demonstrate that the work of sanctification was to deepen their knowledge of sin and self, keep them poor in spirit under a knowledge of their own sinful heart, make them as clay in the hands of the heavenly potter and conform them to the image of His Son. Rather than becoming less dependent on the grace and strength of their God,

the work of sanctification meant that they would become more dependent. The fruits of the work of sanctification in the heart of a sinner are beautifully portrayed in part two of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, in the hymn sung by the shepherd boy which Christiana and Mr Great-heart overheard:

He that is down, needs fear no fall,  
 He that is low, no pride;  
 He that is humble, ever shall  
 Have God to be his guide.

I am content with what I have,  
 Little be it, or much;  
 And, Lord, contentment still I crave,  
 Because Thou savest such.

Fullness to such a burden is  
 That go on pilgrimage;  
 Here little, and hereafter bliss,

Is best from age to age. John Bunyan (1684)

As the Lord taught the prophet Isaiah and led him in the way of sanctification, he could say: "But now, O LORD, Thou *art* our Father; we *are* the clay, and Thou our potter; and we all *are* the work of Thy hand" (Isa. 64. 8). Prayerfully, the people of God wish that they might fulfill the desire of the Apostle Paul for the Church at Colosse: "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1. 10). But they confess with Paul: "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members," and they have to cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" (Rom. 7. 23-24). Sanctification is a work of God both inward and outward. "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). So we say to our readers, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them...or ever the silver cord shall be loosed...then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Ecc. 12. 1-7).

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## **CURRENT ISSUES**

### **Liberty of Conscience**

#### **Some Extracts from the Speeches of Oliver Cromwell**

**T**he first extract concerns liberty of conscience, a subject always dear to Cromwell. It is part of a speech made to the First Protectorate Parliament on 12th September, 1654. Remembering the times in which he lived, that the Civil Wars had developed through religious intolerance of Charles I and were followed by a similar intolerance of his son Charles II in England and Scotland, this speech shows how far ahead of his times Cromwell was in thought and action, for during his period of rule Catholics, Jews and Protestants of all kinds enjoyed a far greater measure of religious liberty than ever before, so long as they did not interfere with the government of the country.

Is not liberty of conscience a fundamental? So long as there is liberty of conscience for the Supreme Magistrate [i.e. Cromwell] to exercise his conscience in erecting what form of Church Government he is satisfied he should set up, why should he not give it to others? Liberty of conscience is a natural right; and he that would have it ought to give it; having liberty to settle what he likes for the public. Indeed that hath been one of the vanities of our contests. Every sect saith: 'Oh give me liberty!' But give him it, and to his power he will not yield it to anybody else. Where is our ingenuousness [honesty]? Truly that's a thing that ought to be very reciprocal. The magistrate hath his supremacy and may settle religion according to his conscience. And as for the People – I may say it to you, I can say it: All the money in the nation would not have tempted men to fight upon such an account as they have engaged in, if they had not had hopes of liberty better than they had from Episcopacy, or than would have been afforded them from Scottish Presbytery – or an English either, if it had made such steps, or been as sharp or rigid as it threatened when it was first set up. It ought to be so. It is for us and the generations to come. And if there be an absoluteness in the imposer, without fitting allowances and exceptions from the rule, we shall have our people driven into the wilderness, as they were, when those poor and afflicted people, that forsook their estates and inheritances here, where they lived plentifully and comfortably, for the enjoyment of their liberty, were necessitated to go into a vast howling wilderness in New England – where they have for liberty's sake, stript themselves of all their comfort and the full enjoyment they had, embracing rather the loss of friends and want, than to be ensnared and in bondage.

Cromwell felt great affection for the Pilgrim Fathers. He had almost left the shores of this island himself at one period to seek freedom of conscience abroad, but divine providence ordained that he should stay here to lead the fight for the maintenance of that freedom in this land, and as he says in this speech, "It is for us and the generations to come!"

The second extract is from a speech Cromwell made to the Second Protectorate Parliament on 20th January, 1658, the year of his death. In it he scans the work of his life, and we may gather from it what he thought were the causes of the Civil Wars and the benefits obtained from it.

My Lords and Gentlemen of the House of Commons,

I meet you here in this capacity by the Advice and Petition of this present Parliament; after so much expense of blood and treasure, to search and try what blessings God hath in store for these Nations. I cannot but with gladness of heart remember and acknowledge the labour and industry that is past, which hath been spent upon a business worthy of the best men and the best Christians.

It is very well known unto you all what difficulties we have passed through and what we are now arrived to. We hope we may say, we have arrived at where we aimed at, if not at that which is much beyond our expectations. The state of this cause, and the quarrel, what that was at the first, you all very well know; I am persuaded most of you have been actors in it: it was the maintaining of the liberty of these nations; our civil liberties as men, our spiritual liberties as Christians. I shall not much look back; but rather say one word concerning the state and condition we are all now in.

You very well know ... after the beginning of the War ... that for some succession of time, designs were laid to innovate upon the civil rights of the Nation and to innovate in matters of religion. And those very persons that a man would have thought should have had the least hand in meddling with civil things [bishops] did justify them all ... in pulpits, in presses, and otherwise. Which was verily thought would have been a very good shelter to them, to innovate upon us in matters of religion also. And so to innovate as to cut out the core and power and heart of life of all religion by bringing on us a company of poisonous Popish ceremonies and imposing them upon those that were accounted the Puritans of the Nation and professors of religion among us – driving them to seek their bread in a howling wilderness, as was instanced to our friends who were forced to fly for Holland, New England, almost anywhither to find liberty for their conscience.

You see that the Petition and Advice that brought me hither hath, not through a little difficulty, restored us both in point of civil liberty as we are men, and liberty for all those that are of the Protestant profession amongst us, who enjoy a freedom to worship God according to their consciences.

Now if this thing hath been the state and the sum of our quarrel and of these Ten Years Wars, wherein we have been exercised; and that the good hand of God, for we are to attribute it to no other, hath brought this business thus home to us as it is stated in the Petition and Advice – I think we have all cause to bless God and the Nations have cause to bless Him,

I well remember I did a little touch upon the Eighty-fifth Psalm when I spoke to you in the beginning of this Parliament, which expreseth well that that we may say, as truly and as well as it was said of old by the penman of that Psalm. The first verse is an acknowledgement to God that He hath been favourable unto His land, and had brought back the captivity of His people; and that He had pardoned all their iniquities and covered all their sins and taken away all His wrath; and indeed of the sense of these unspeakable mercies, blessings and deliverances out of captivity, pardoning national sins and national iniquities. Pardoning as God pardoneth the man who He justifieth. He breaks through and overlooks iniquity; and pardoneth because He will pardon. And sometimes God pardoneth Nations so – and if the enjoyment of our present peace and other mercies may be witnesses for to us, – we feel and we see them every day.

The greatest demonstration of His favour and love appears to us in this: That He hath given us peace – and the blessings of peace, to wit, the enjoyment of our liberties, civil and spiritual. And I remember well the Church falls into prayer, and praises, great expectations of future mercies and much thankfulness for the enjoyment of present mercies; and breaks into this expression: “Surely his salvation *is* nigh unto them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land.” In the beginning He calls it His land; “Thou hast been favourable unto thy land.” Truly I hope this [England] is His land, and in some sense it may be given out that it is God’s land. And he that hath the weakest knowledge and the worst memory can easily tell that we are the Redeemed People. We were a Redeemed People when first God was pleased to look favourably upon us, out of the hands of Popery, in that never to be forgotten Reformation, that most significant and greatest the Nation hath felt and tasted. I would but touch upon that, and but a touch: How hath God redeemed us as we stand this day. Not from trouble and sorrow and anger only, but into a blessed and happy estate and condition, comprehensive of all the interest of every member, every individual – of those mercies, as you very well see.

And then in what sense is it our land; through this grace and favour of God, that He hath vouchsafed unto us and bestowed upon us, with the Gospel, Peace and rest out of Ten Years War; and given us what we would desire! Nay, who could have forethought, when we were plunged in the midst of our troubles, that ever the people of God should have liberty to worship God without fear of enemies? Which is the very acknowledgement of the promise

of Christ that He would deliver His from fear of enemies, that they might worship Him in holiness and in righteousness all the days of their life.

This is the portion that God hath given us; and I trust we shall forever heartily acknowledge it. The Church goes on there and makes her boast yet farther; “His salvation *is* nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land”. His glory; not carnal, nor anything related thereto: this glory of a free possession of the Gospel; this is that we may glory in. And it is said farther, “Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed *each other*.” And it shall be such righteousness as comes down from Heaven: “Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.” Here is the truth of all; here is the righteousness of God under the notion of righteousness confirming our abilities – answerable to the truth that He hath in the Gospel revealed towards us. And the Psalm closeth with this: “Righteousness shall go before him; and shall set *us* in the way of his steps”; that righteousness, that mercy, that love and that kindness which we have seen, and been made partakers of from the Lord, it shall be our guide to teach us to know the right and the good way; which is to tread in the steps of mercy, righteousness and goodness that our God hath walked before us in.

We have a Peace this day! I believe in my very heart, you all think the things that I speak to you this day. I am sure you have cause.

Men like Cromwell, of his generation, had suffered bitterly from religious persecution, especially from the High Church Party under Archbishop Laud and this speech and the previous one, show how much they valued political and religious liberty, and treasured the peace they possessed.

The last extract comes from a speech made to the First Protectorate Parliament on 22nd January, 1655.

Supposing this cause or this business must be carried on, either it is of God or of man. If it be of man, I would I had never touched it with a finger. If I had not had a hope fixed in me that this cause and this business is of God, I would many years ago have run from it. If it be of God, He will bear it up. If it be of man, it will tumble; as everything that hath been of man since the world began hath done. And what are all our histories, and other traditions of actions in former times, but God manifesting Himself, that He hath shaken and tumbled down and trampled upon everything that He had not planted? And as this is, so the all-wise God deals with it. If this be of human structure and invention, and it be an old plotting and contrivance to bring things to this issue, and that they are not the births of Providence – then they will tumble. But if the Lord take pleasure in England, and if He will do us good, He is able to bear us up! Let the difficulties be whatsoever they will, we shall in His



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strength be able to encounter with them. And I bless God I have been inured to difficulties; and I never found God failing when I trusted Him.

What words are these to echo out in the Houses of Parliament: "I never found God failing when I trusted Him".

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## **The Reformed Political Party (SGP) in the Netherlands**

### **By C. Verdouw**

*This is the second of two articles about the Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij (SGP, the Reformed Political Party) and outlines how the SGP operates in the Netherlands and in the European Parliament today.*

#### **The present time:**

The present time has become a post-Christian era. People think they have unlimited freedom: the freedom to scoff at useful traditions, freedom of abortion, euthanasia, homosexuality and blasphemy. Freedom to regard the Bible no longer as the Word of God. These are all indications of a radical break with the Christian past.

Both in society and in politics, the modern idea of freedom is leading toward a clear crisis of basic views and values. People have lost their sense of course and direction. Especially in this situation, a warm testimony and a moving appeal under the blessing of God can be of vital importance. The SGP understands that its calling is to point people to the fundamental norm, the Word of God.

Stewardship, sense of responsibility, charity and care for our fellow-creatures – all in the light of our responsibility towards God, our Creator – are themes which return continually in the contributions of SGP-representatives to the decision-making at a municipal, provincial, national and European level. The SGP wants to offer no testimony from the side-line, but a fundamental and practical contribution with a view of the present and a vision for the future.

#### **The Reformed Political Party in the Netherlands and in the European Parliament:**

Today, two of the 150 seats of the Dutch Second Chamber (parliament) are held by the SGP-parliamentarians. In the First Chamber (The Senate), two SGP-representatives hold two out of the 75 seats. As for the provinces, sixteen representatives of the SGP have

seats in seven of the twelve provincial governments. At the local level, about 300 councillors represent our party in about 100 municipalities.

Since 1984, the SGP has held one seat in the European Parliament, where it is represented by Mr B. Belder. This Strasbourg seat has been won in strong co-operation with another Christian political party in Holland, the ChristenUnie. After the European elections of June 2009, the two Dutch Protestant parties (SGP and ChristenUnie) were split by pressure from the British Conservative Party.

The Conservative Party did not wish to work together with the SGP, as the SGP believes that women should not be part of the government. Since then, Mr Belder has been part of the group 'Europe of Freedom and Democracy'. The EFD Group was created in July 2009 and is composed of delegations from various Member States whose aim is to fight against the bureaucracy in European Institutions and against the establishment of a European Super-State. Article 18 of our party programme states:-

The Reformed Political Party (SGP) does not reject the idea of co-operation in various areas by different nations. Still, it advocates the maintenance of national independence and, therefore, it is against a United Europe under a supranational government. This would strongly enhance the influences of Rome and humanism, undermine the work of the Reformation even further and, probably, lead to the abolition of monarchy.

On the basis of this article a minority within the party holds the view that as the formation and the existence of a European Parliament indisputably represent a step towards a United Europe, the SGP should not partake in the elections for this parliament. However, the majority are of the opinion that our calling, to stand up for the name and the sake of the Lord, is not confined to the Netherlands. Rather we should call all the people of the earth to return to His laws and commandments. Having an opportunity to do so in Brussels and Strasbourg, we should make good use of it. For this reason, the SGP takes part in the European elections.

### **The SGP in Gouda:**

Since 2002 the writer of this article has been a member of the local government of Gouda, which is a city between Rotterdam and Utrecht with about 73,000 inhabitants. The SGP has one or two members out of the 35 members in the local government.

An important subject for the local SGP group is the closure of shops and cafés on Sunday. Every time this subject is on the agenda, the SGP clearly states that the Sunday is not the day to do shopping. This day is a day of rest and should be used to go to church, to be with family or to visit people who are ill. Another reason is that small shops are having problems getting staff to work for so many hours of the week. As other parties know that this subject is important for the three Christian parties, they allow shops to open for only eight Sundays a year.

Another important subject for the SGP is help for poor people. People in Gouda should have sufficient money to have sufficient food, clothes and a proper house. Gouda helps the poor people to keep out of debt and, if no other option is available, settles their debts for them. But it has to be paid back at a later date. Also for unmarried mothers with children, life can be difficult. The SGP's policy is that these mothers do not have to work when the children are young (less than 12 years old). The reason for this is to let the children have a safe and stable home to grow up.

Finally the responsibility of the inhabitants of Gouda for their surrounding area is an important subject for the SGP; their aim is that each inhabitant should help their neighbourhood, for example by cleaning the footpath in front of their house if there is snow or the path is overgrown. But at the same time it is the task of Gouda to maintain safety in the city, to have a good shopping centre and well-maintained roads.

### **Personal experience:**

However, being part of the local government gives also the opportunity to explain our Bible-based arguments in personal discussions with other people in the local government. In these personal discussions it is found that people in general know so little of the Bible and its importance for everyone. Hopefully such discussions are blessed of the Lord.

In Holland a councillor is allowed to be a member of the municipal registry of births, marriages and deaths. In that position, the councillor can conduct wedding ceremonies for the local government. In Holland these ceremonies are purely legal and do not emphasise the importance of the step which is being taken in the life of the bride and groom. It is of value if at this moment it is possible to mention the importance of loyalty and love with references to the Bible and other good books.

### **The Reformed Political Party in the Future:**

Today, there is a lot of work for the SGP to do, not only by its representatives, but also by the staff of the party-organizations and, last but not least, by the great number of its members. The SGP will stand or fall by retaining or abandoning its aims. Our aims are the reason for our existence.

If we consider look to the future, it seems to be an endless task for the SGP to realize its aims. But this way of thinking is not biblical. We believe that the outcome of man's work lies in the hand of God. This knowledge gives us strength and courage.

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## **CHURCH HISTORY**

### **J. C. Philpot and J. H. Newman – A Vital Difference**

**By Dr. M. J. Hyde**

In 1821 a young clergyman's son matriculated at Worcester College, Oxford. Amongst the cleverest of his generation, he knew nothing of the wisdom which can only be imparted by the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul. Just previously, another young man, of similar academic capabilities, had graduated with an unexpectedly low third-class degree. Yet, in contrast to the first, this man professed to have known something of the work of grace in his soul, having been "converted" when he was 15 years old.

In time, both men, having been baptised and ordained as ministers in the Church of England, were forced by conscience to secede from it. Both cast in their lot with, at that time, minority churches. On the Lord's Day both rose early, preaching and ministering to the poor of this world. Today, both are still esteemed; their works are still printed and read. Yet what a gulf between them! Today, the one is about to be beatified because of a supposed miracle he has performed; the other whilst not regarded as a saint by the Lord's people on this earth, is amongst the glorified spirits above, not because of any good in him, nor anything he wrote or said, but because of what the Lord accomplished in his soul, by free and sovereign grace alone!

Of these two men, the first was Joseph Charles Philpot, minister amongst the Gospel Standard Baptists; the second was John Henry

Newman, a cardinal in the Church of Rome. What was the *vital difference* between these two men?

By 1821 Newman had confessed to a work of grace in his soul, but the Lord did not begin to move in Philpot's soul until 1827, by which time Newman was clearly showing his apostasy. What separated these men at conversion? Why did the one become an apostate, while the other was "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. 1. 5)?

It comes down to this: *the reality of the work of grace in the soul*. Newman describes his "conversion" as a young 15 year old whilst reading a book by William Romaine, as being brought to rest "in the thought of two and two only absolute and luminously self-evident beings, myself and my creator" (Newman (1909) *Apologia*, p. 5). Newman makes no mention of his sin or repenting of it, neither does he express any hope of salvation in the finished work of Jesus Christ; rather he seems to describe coming to an intellectual belief in the existence of God. In contrast, at a later date, Philpot was brought to feel his state as a sinner, his own inability to save himself in any way and his own hope of salvation as being in Jesus Christ alone. Of his conversion, Philpot says:

It was in 1827, now twenty-two years ago, that eternal things were first laid upon my mind, that I was made to know myself as a poor, lost sinner, and a spirit of grace and supplication poured out upon my soul. I may have had doubts and fears since as to the reality of the work of grace upon my soul; but I have never doubted, and shall never doubt, that if I possess grace in my heart, it was then first implanted.

(*The Gospel Pulpit*, 218 p. 4).

In time Newman's conversion experience was to prove itself nothing but imagination. We are not the best judges of the Lord's work in our own souls, let alone in other people's, but there are two principles which must, in measure, form the basis of every Holy Spirit-wrought work of grace in the soul. These are a knowledge of, and repentance over, personal sin, and, secondly, a knowledge of the Lord Jesus as our only hope of salvation. The latter may be only a "hope", not necessarily a full assurance; but there must be a realisation that as sinners we cannot save ourselves. Newman's conversion lacked both of these vital aspects. Consequently, his days were spent "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2

Timothy 3. 7). In contrast, the work of grace in Philpot's soul was to deepen with time, and he was to become an able minister of the Gospel.

In time the differences stemming from this vital difference between these two men became vividly apparent. The one held to Biblical, "Reformed" truths, the other the apostate teachings of the Church of Rome.

**First, while both considered the Bible to be the inspired Word of God, they differed on its sufficiency.** For Philpot the Bible was the complete revelation of God. All questions of doctrine, experience and practice can only be settled by bringing them to the testimony of Holy Scripture alone – man's opinion and historical reasoning has no place in such matters. Philpot's teaching is best summed up in the Articles of Faith he wrote for his church at Stamford:

We believe in the Authenticity and Divine Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, and receive them as a gracious Revelation of the mind and will of God; and we believe that therein are revealed **all** the Doctrines and Truths which we here state

(Article 1).

On the contrary, Newman taught that although the Bible was complete in itself, doctrinal revelation is still occurring. Therefore the Bible is insufficient for the Church to draw all teaching from; instead, he placed church tradition and the creeds of the church above the authority of scripture. He taught that the Bible was to be interpreted in the light of the creeds rather than that the creeds should be interpreted in the light of Scripture. It is by such teaching that the Church of Rome explains her innovations which are extra-Biblical, e.g. the Immaculate Conception and the intercession of Mary. It was this teaching of Newman's which resulted in his dismissal, on March 8, 1830, from the post of secretary to the Church Missionary Society – the vacant post was filled by none less than J.C. Philpot! (Stunt (1970) *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*. 30 p. 65-74).

**Secondly, the doctrines of grace.** While Newman initially held the doctrines of grace, he quickly gave them up. Why did these truths sit so lightly with Newman that he was able to quickly discard them? The reason is he never experienced them; they were never made living realities to him. Philpot, on the other hand, was taught well his heart's plague and as a consequence came to know and feel that salvation must be entirely of God's free and sovereign grace. Thus Philpot wrote:

I admire and love the grace of God; and the longer I live, the more do I love and admire it. My sins, my corruptions, my infirmities make me feel my deep and daily need of it; and as its freeness, fullness, suitability and inexpressible blessedness are more and more opened up to my heart and conscience, so do I more and more cleave to and delight in it. What, in fact, is there which you can substitute for it?

(Philpot (1987) *Sin and Salvation* p. 19).

**Thirdly, the view of soul-saving faith.** Newman held that faith is a product of probability or that probability is antecedent to faith. Simplified, Newman taught that man makes a rational judgement as to the fact of something on the basis of probability, but the outcome of this judgement is not faith, but faith is the act of the will in the final step of assent to the truth. Such that, “Faith, in other words, is ‘not a conclusion from premises [probabilities], but the result of an act of the will, following upon a conviction that to believe is a duty’” (Kerr and Merrigan (2009), p. 81).

In contrast, rather than having its origin with us, Philpot clearly held that faith is a gift of God implanted in the heart by the operation of the Holy Spirit. Of the origin of saving faith, Philpot says:

It is ‘not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead’ (Gal. 1. 1). Are we not expressly told that those who received Christ (and how could they receive Him but by faith?) ‘were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God’ (John 1. 13)?...Thus testifies also James – ‘Every good gift and every perfect gift’ (and is not faith both a good and perfect gift?) ‘is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning’ (James 1. 17). If faith, then, be of this divine origin we shall seek for it in vain among the children of this world.

(*The Gospel Pulpit*, sermon 62)

What a contrast between the intellectual faith of Newman and the living faith of Philpot!

**Fourthly, the doctrine of justification.** In 1838, Newman published a book on justification which attacked the Reformation’s central teaching of justification by faith alone. However, at this stage Newman did not hold fully the Roman Catholic teaching of justification by baptism, instead teaching a middle road: that we are justified by both baptism and faith. Or as a recent writer has summarised his teaching for us: “That the work of salvation is begun in baptism, sustained by



faith, hope and love, good works and sacraments, and transforms the believer in holiness and righteousness in the image of Christ from glory into glory” (*Cambridge Companion to John Henry Newman*, p. 8). For Philpot there was no middle way! Justification is by Christ alone, through faith alone, precluding any work on the part of man.

**Fifthly, the view of the church and its ordinances.** On 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1835, Philpot hung his gown up for the final time in the vestry at Stadhampton and seceded from the ministry of the Church of England. Of the Church of England, Philpot said:

I secede from the Church of England because I can find in her scarcely one mark of a true church. She tramples upon one ordinance of Christ by sprinkling infants, and calling it regeneration...I am told...that she derives her sacraments and ministers in a direct, uninterrupted line from the apostles, and that to secede from her is to be guilty of schism. But where are the outward marks of this only true church? Where are the ‘signs’ of these successors of the apostles, the seals of their commission, whereby they ‘approve’ themselves ‘as the ministers of God...?’ (2 Cor. 6. 4).

(Philpot (1835), *Letter to the Provost of Worcester College*)

In contrast, Newman, in his first sermon, preached in June 1824, stated that only those that had been baptised were Christians, and all who had been baptised (that is, sprinkled as infants) were Christians. This argument he based on the falsehood of baptismal regeneration (the notion that the soul is regenerated or made spiritually alive by the administration of baptism, which of course in the Church of England is by infant sprinkling) (*Early History*, p. 17). Newman held the doctrine of Apostolic Succession (that is, that the chosen successors of the twelve apostles, from the days of the apostles to the present day, have the same authority, power, and responsibility as was conferred upon the apostles by Jesus, and that this is conferred on a priest by holy ordination). Similarly, Newman accepted the sacramental teaching of Rome, embracing the doctrine of the “Real Presence” (transubstantiation – that the bread and wine become the real body and blood of the Lord Jesus when the priest blesses them during the mass).

For Philpot, secession was forced upon him because the Church of England continued to maintain vestiges of these Romish doctrines, while for Newman, secession was the only way to fully embrace the teachings of Rome.

**In conclusion**, the Lord’s people have held Philpot in high esteem, not for his sake, but for the Truth’s sake. Blessing still attends his

sermons and writings today. But what of Newman today? Newman's teaching remains central to the Church of Rome; indeed he was possibly the greatest ideological influence on the Second Vatican Council. Furthermore, during the visit of Pope Benedict XVI to the UK this year, the Vatican plans to beatify (declare blessed) Newman; the first step to sainthood. Lest any feels Newman can be forgotten, or that we need not concern ourselves with him, I leave you with these chilling words, in the biography of Newman published by the Catholic Truth Society:

Darwin, Marx and Freud were three men of the nineteenth century whose ideas shaped the course of events all through the twentieth, and all in the direction of atheism – disbelief in any creating Spirit beyond the world of sense. Newman's influence may seem weak in comparison with theirs, but it is like the yeast in Christ's similitude, slowly leavening the lump of human dough and still active a hundred years after his death.

(Trevor and Caldecott (2001), p. 5)

It was only the work of grace in Philpot's soul that brought about a difference between him and Newman, but what a *vital difference*! It is only a work of grace in the soul of the reader which will cause any difference between Newman's position and theirs. How do we stand? Our walk and confession can only be judged in the light of Scripture: "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us" (1 John 2. 18-19). Does grace separate us to be one with the Lord's people, or will a matter of time show us to be only one who followed the Lord because of the mere outward evidences? "Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed" (John 6. 26-27).

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# DOCTRINE AND TRUTH

## The Vital Necessity of True Doctrine

By B. A. Ramsbottom

*Address given at the Annual General Meeting of the Gospel Standard Trust on 15th May 1999.*

All of you must surely have noticed the great emphasis there is on doctrine in the New Testament, the many exhortations given to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Equally, there are many solemn warnings given. “If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed.” I think also you must have noticed this; that most of the epistles begin with doctrine, and then follows gracious experience, and finally, practice. Take for instance the epistle to the Ephesians: chapter 1 – doctrine; chapter 2 – experience; chapter 3 - a few things concerning the church; then you have chapters 4, 5 and 6 on practice. So there is this great emphasis on doctrine, true doctrine. It must be contended for, we must abide in it, we must not turn from it, we must reject those who reject it.

I suppose it would be wise right at the very beginning to ask, What do we mean by doctrine? Well, I suppose many, many answers could be given to that simple question. I will try to give a simple answer. Doctrine is what we believe. Doctrine is what Scripture teaches. So then any doctrine: is it true? is it what God has revealed?

How I was led to this vitally important subject is because there are so many in our congregations who seem to think that doctrine does not really matter. Of course, a gracious experience of the truth is absolutely vital, absolutely necessary – no hope, no salvation, no heaven without it. But it must never be experience at the expense of doctrine. Certainly it must never be experience *without* doctrine or experience *contrary* to doctrine. But my heart has been grieved of recent days when these errors have begun to appear in our churches concerning the person of Christ, His sacred humanity, and the imputed righteousness of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I hear remarks like this: “I do not understand these things,” or: “Do these things really matter?” or: “Are these things really important?” We hear on every hand: “Surely the vital thing is to have a right experience.”

The first question I want to address this afternoon is this: *Does it really matter what we believe if we have a good experience?* And the answer is very simple and very clear, that we cannot have a good experience, *a good experience*, if it is not based on sound doctrine. Whatever experience a person may have, and some people have very wonderful experiences, if that experience is not based on doctrine as revealed in Scripture by the Holy Ghost, then it cannot be good experience. Let me try to illustrate. There are many Roman Catholics who have most remarkable experiences. Many Roman Catholics will tell you how at the Mass when the priest is officiating, when the beautiful music is sounding, when the incense is being burnt, that they are almost overpowered with a sense of awe, a sense of holiness and a sense of God. Now we do not doubt that they have an experience, we do not doubt that they have a powerful experience, but it cannot be a *right* experience. It cannot be a gracious experience because it is contrary to the holy word of God and divine teaching. The Mass is blasphemous, the Mass teaches things contrary to Scripture, the Mass seeks to offer Christ a second time, the Mass dishonours God. Yet thousands of Roman Catholics will tell you of most wonderful experiences they have had at the Mass. If experience is not based on true, sound doctrine, then it cannot be good experience. Again, what amazing experiences we read of that Roman Catholics have concerning the Virgin Mary! The love they feel towards her, and even some will testify that the Virgin Mary has appeared to them, the Virgin Mary has blessed them. How many will tell us that as they pray to the Virgin Mary, they feel nearer to heaven than earth! Now we do not doubt that they have experiences, but these experiences are contrary to Scripture, and if contrary to Scripture, if not based on true doctrine, they cannot be good experiences.

I learnt a very salutary lesson in my early days spiritually in a very strange and unusual way. It was when I was a teacher, and I was listening to quite an eminent man speaking on the gift of poetry. I believe he was one of Her Majesty's inspectors of schools, and he delivered a wonderful lecture. He spoke of things like this. Sometimes you can be reading a poem and it speaks to your heart. You may wake up one morning and you feel very down, very dejected, very low, and suddenly a line of poetry flashes in your heart. You are completely set at liberty, your sorrow is immediately changed into joy. It is not always the same. You can read a poem one day, it means nothing to you, but

you read that same poem another day and it is inspired, and it fills your very being and you go forth like another man. You are a changed character. And so he went, on speaking like this perhaps for half an hour. Apparently he was an ungodly man. Some of the remarks he made were not very suitable. Yet he was giving a talk concerning experience, experience through poetry, and I thought how much of that experience was like the language which we use, and yet it was not based on Truth. It was not based on sound doctrine.

We must have an experience of the Truth. The new birth is an experience. Repentance is an experience, faith is an experience, love to Christ is an experience. All these things are absolutely vital, but if true experience, it will never be contrary to the Word of God, it will never be contrary to sound doctrine. It will always be based on true doctrine. To sum it up, if a person has a most wonderful experience, however wonderful it is, even if that person professed to be lifted up to the seventh heaven, if it is not based on true doctrine, if it is not based on Scripture, if it is not based on the Truth as in Jesus, then it is just like the man who built his house on the sand. There was nothing wrong with the house but the foundation was wrong. The building seemed alright, the house seemed good, but the foundation was wrong. It was only built on sand. When the trying time came, when the testing time came, it did not stand. It fell and "great was the fall of it," and so will all experience, however great, however remarkable, however high, if it is not based on the Truth of God, if it is contrary to the Truth of God.

It is a most solemn thing if experience is exalted, even above the Word of God, even above the teaching of the Holy Spirit, even above divine Truth, even above true doctrine. Now this does not honour and glorify the Lord. It is a most solemn thing when a vital truth is denied and people say, "But does it really matter?" "I do not understand it." "Is it really important?" "Surely the thing that matters is to have some gracious experience of the Truth." Does it matter that the Unitarians deny that Jesus is true almighty God, does it matter or does it not? Does it matter that the Roman Catholics have a system of salvation by works? Does it matter that the Arminians have a system of doctrine in which the Lord does His part and we do ours? Now do these things matter or do they not? Does it matter what we believe if we have a good experience? We *cannot* have a right experience, a good experience, a gracious experience unless it is based upon the doctrine of

Scripture, the doctrine of Christ, the doctrine made known by the Holy Ghost.

Now I come to the second question we have to address and on this I want to speak very advisedly and carefully and graciously. That question is: *How can it be that we have got to this position that it is possible that people say it does not matter?* In other words, how is it possible that people should ever come to a point of asking questions like this – “Does it matter what we believe? Surely it is the experience that matters.” How has it come about that questions like this are being asked and comments like this are being made? I want to speak very carefully and advisedly and graciously on this. The beginnings of our group of churches largely came about as a reaction against the dry, arid, unprofitable, doctrinal preaching that was then in vogue. So much of the preaching round about the year 1800 in the old Particular Baptist chapels had become so dry, so arid and so barren that there was no hint of gracious experience in it. There was the doctrine but it was no profit to the living family of God. The Lord raised up men like Gadsby and Kershaw and they contended firmly and fervently for the need of a vital, gracious experience of the Truth as in Jesus. Really, much of the old Baptist preaching about the year 1800 was just like a skeleton; dry bones. The doctrine was there but there was not any life, there was not any flesh, and really what the preaching of men like Gadsby and Kershaw did was to put flesh on the bones. There was life in the ministry and God blessed it, and that is why the living family of God throughout England were delighted with this preaching. You remember how John Kershaw especially, and Gadsby, spoke against what they called Sandemanianism. Sandemanianism, what was it? It was doctrine just like the skeleton, dry bones. Well, you just had the doctrine. Faith was simply believing the doctrine to be true. Gracious experience was completely left out, gracious experience was completely discounted, and there was no profit, there was no honour and glory to God in this dry, barren way of preaching and the ministry that was then prevailing. God raised up godly men like Gadsby and Kershaw, and there was flesh on the bones and there was life. So our group of churches came into existence and this was the great point, *vital gracious experience*.

It is just the same today as it was in 1799, and we still need to contend earnestly for it, and as much as ever because all about us, in many churches, you find a going back to this dry, dead, barren, empty preaching that just insists on doctrine. There is always the danger of

the pendulum swinging. I think you will find if you read the history of the church of God that there has always been this. When there has been one error, there has been a swinging opposite. Many, many instances could be given of this. With us there has been an insisting on experience perhaps at the expense of doctrine. The point I would emphasise is this, that if Gadsby and Kershaw made their great point, this insistence on vital, living, gracious experience, they never did it at the expense of the doctrines of the gospel. You will find that William Gadsby spoke very, very clearly on the doctrines of the gospel and you will find that John Kershaw likewise spoke very, very clearly on the doctrines of the gospel. Then J C Philpot came, and he was perhaps renowned as the greatest of all experimental preachers, but it was never at the expense of true doctrine. Look how those godly men opened up the doctrine of the fall, the doctrine of the covenant of grace, the doctrine of predestination, election, the doctrine of the person of Christ, the doctrine of the offices of Christ, the doctrine of the atonement, the doctrine of the righteousness of Christ, the doctrine of His resurrection and ascension, and so you might go on and on. I think that Gadsby and Kershaw would have been filled with horror if they had realised that two hundred years later some of their followers would be almost speaking as if doctrine did not matter. Well, Martin Luther said "Doctrine is heaven."

The godly experience in the days of Gadsby, Kershaw and Philpot was really this. It was the flesh on the bones. They preached the doctrine, but they used to sing as we sing, "Dry doctrine cannot save us," neither can it any more now that it could then. They preached the doctrine like this: "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew." Now rain and dew are not dry are they? That is not dry doctrine. Our godly forefathers preached the precious doctrines of the gospel and they were sweetly attended by the bedewing power and influence of the Holy Ghost and they were applied to sinners' hearts. I notice that J K Popham and J H Gosden likewise, O the holy, heavenly doctrine, how they loved it, how they proclaimed it along with this gracious experience! Really, you know, doctrine without experience is just like a skeleton, there is no flesh on it. But if you have experience at the expense of doctrine, experience with no true doctrine in it, it is like a body without any bones. The flesh is there but it is just a flabby mass.



Now may the Lord enable us to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints as the apostle Paul did – the vital doctrines of the gospel. It is a terrible thing; it is God-dishonouring to say, “Do they really matter?” “We do not understand them.” “We leave them to other people.” “They are not important.” To contend for the vital doctrines of the gospel especially concerning the person of Christ, especially concerning the work of Christ. It is vital that we have clear views concerning the human soul of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is vital that we have clear views of how He was made under the law as His people’s law-fulfilling righteousness, to magnify the law, make it honourable and fulfil it on their behalf. Now these things are vital, and we are in a solemn, awful state if people begin to say, “Well, surely these things do not really matter. They are not really important.” When you and I come to die, they *will* matter, they *will* be important. May we contend for the doctrine as revealed in God’s holy Word. May we never deviate from it at all. But may we not cease to contend like Gadsby and Kershaw for that vital, gracious experience, that vital, experimental knowledge of the Truth.

Now, I come to the third question we have to address. It is this: *Why is it vital, why is true doctrine vital, why is sound doctrine vital?* I just want to give you four or five answers, briefly and quickly, to this third important question.

First of all, if you have wrong doctrine it always results in wrong preaching and that leads to wrong experience and that leads to wrong practice. If the doctrine is wrong in the church and in the pulpit, it ends in confusion.

Second, right doctrine has always been honoured by God and has always been at the heart of any true blessing in the church of God. Now look at the glorious Reformation, how did it really begin? By the discovery of a precious doctrine which had been lost for about 1000 years. Martin Luther in his monastery cell groaning over his sin and guilt until he almost wore himself away, one day opening a Bible on the epistle to the Galatians chapter three he read “The just shall live by faith,” and he rediscovered there, under the teaching and influence of the Holy Spirit by divine revelation, that vital doctrine. The church of Rome had been teaching justification by penances, indulgences, masses, what people can do, and Luther rediscovered through the influence of the Holy Spirit this vital doctrine that justification is by

faith in Christ alone, and he preached it. That was the beginning of the glorious Reformation and Europe being turned upside down.

So it was at the time of the great Evangelical Revival in this country, Whitefield rediscovered the doctrine of the new birth. Most of the churches in our country were completely formal. It was just a sort of empty religion, a godless religion, a philosophic religion, people doing their best, morality being preached, and then under the sacred influence of the Spirit of God, Whitefield rediscovered this doctrine – the absolute necessity of the new birth. What it is, regeneration – “Ye must be born again” – he preached, and England, as a country, was turned upside down. The secular historians say that the preaching of Whitefield saved England from the equivalent of the French Revolution. England was turned upside down, and the beginning of it was the discovery under the teaching of the Spirit of God of vital doctrine.

The third thing, true doctrine is for the comfort of the people of God; false doctrine is not. Now let me give you an illustration of this. Years ago I knew an old Independent minister in Sheffield. I never knew anyone who was so firm and strong on the doctrines of grace as that old man. Some people thought he was almost extravagant in the way he extolled the doctrines of grace. I did not know him well but one day he told me his little story. He said when he was young the Lord dealt with him and blessed him but he never really heard the Truth preached. He just used to go along to the local parish church. He did not know where to hear the Truth preached but the Lord had dealt with him and blessed his soul. After a time Satan harassed him and tempted him and he came into awful darkness and bondage and distress. Now, not knowing any true doctrine and never hearing the Truth preached, he thought he had fallen from grace. He thought he was lost. He did not know the Truth, “once in Him, in Him forever.” He was in black despair. He felt he had once been a child of God but now he was lost and he was lost forever and there was no hope. The poor young man was almost demented. One day he was sitting in the parish church. The preaching was no help, the service was no help so he opened the prayer book and started looking at it and he came to the thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England and read there of predestination, election, effectual calling and the everlasting safety of the people of God. And it was that doctrine, just reading the Article, that if a sinner has once been blessed in Christ, then he is saved and he is saved to all eternity, and the Holy

Ghost so shone on that doctrine that he went out of that church rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory. That is why he was always such an ardent, zealous contender for the truth of vital doctrine. He had suffered almost to distraction under false doctrine and just a sweet revelation of the doctrine of the everlasting security of the people of God delivered him, as applied by the Spirit of God, and he went on his way rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Now a fourth thing, really doctrine, true doctrine applied by the Spirit of God, is what gracious experience is. That is why Luther said that doctrine is heaven.

But then fifth, it is only true doctrine that really glorifies God. The honour and glory of God is bound up here in our souls and in our churches. When people say “Well, does it really matter?” “Is it really important?” “I do not understand,” that is dishonouring God and that is failing to glorify His name. Is anything unimportant that God has revealed? If God has revealed the Truth, is it not important whether a person believes it or whether a person does not believe it?

This last week I picked up an old *Gospel Standard* and I came across this: “Glorify God. There is this glorifying of God in the church. There is a glorifying of God in contending for the Truth. We live in a day in which many, even among the godly, fail to see the vital nature of divine Truth. How often we hear people say it does not matter and they cannot see the importance of it. The Lord will bless His own Truth and where any church deviates from the Truth, they may think it is something that does not matter but it dishonours Christ and when Christ is dishonoured, the Holy Ghost is grieved. Then soon it will be ‘Ichabod, the glory of the Lord is departed.’ We cannot be too careful concerning divine Truth. The eyes of the Lord, we are told, are ever upon the Truth and it is precious to Him, and any deviation from the Truth, however small it may appear to man, dishonours God.” I found that was something I had spoken myself almost thirty years ago. If it was needful in our churches thirty years ago, how much more so today!

Let me just close by telling you something that happened in Scotland in the last century. After the great disruption of 1843 the Free Church of Scotland was set up. Many people have said that the Free Church of Scotland in its early days was one of the most pure, most godly churches that ever existed. Of course, we cannot really compare. But that church was full of many godly, eminent ministers. Now what happened? One of their well-known ministers, W Robertson Smith,

went into error. Well, the godly did not agree with what he had said, they agreed it was not right, they agreed it was wrong, but many said, “Well, it is not really important, is it? It does not really matter, does it?” He was a nice man, and he was a good preacher. “Well, it does not really matter, does it?” That error had come in so subtly and so gently but it began to spread until in the end that error began to infect many parts of that Church. People did not agree with it, but they said, “It does not really matter, does it? It is not really important.”

May this point be burnt in our hearts, *the vital importance of true doctrine*, and may we be enabled to stand fast for it. You know what we read in John chapter 10. The hired servants love feeding the sheep, feeding the lambs just as much as the shepherds – until the wolf comes! What happens to the hired servants? Well, they are no longer there, they have fled. We do not want to be like the hireling in these dark, solemn, evil days. It is alright until the wolf comes, until the error comes, but it is a terrible thing if we flee and say, “It does not really matter. It is not of any importance. It is not my concern.”

May the Lord give us grace in our churches and personally in our hearts to see the vital importance of true doctrine and how it affects the person of Jesus and the honour and glory of our beloved Lord and Master, and may we hold the Truth dearer even than life itself.

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## **The Roman Catholic Mass**

**By J. R. Broome**

**T**he central feature of the Roman Catholic religion is the Mass. Originally said in Latin throughout the world, it is now recited in the various languages of the countries in which it is performed. While the abandonment of the unintelligible Latin language was heralded as a concession to twentieth century enlightenment, the deep error of the Mass still remains the central feature of Roman Catholicism.

The elaborate ritual and concept behind the doctrine of the Mass does not have any basis in Scripture. But this means little to the Roman Catholic, who accepts that the Church is the origin of all dogma, and was the author of the Scriptures themselves, especially the New Testament, and that the Church consists of the Apostles, the Christian Fathers, the early founders of the church, followed by a succession of Popes and learned doctors, coming down in direct unbroken descent

from Peter. The Church, speaking by the voice of her Councils, such as the Council of Trent, and by her Popes, tells the Roman Catholics what to believe. Thus in 1952, the Roman Catholic Church, through the lips of the Pope, promulgated the concept of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, that is the resurrection and ascension of Mary to heaven.

Now the central feature of the Mass is the concept of Transubstantiation. This dogma states that at the time of consecration, the wine and the bread become the actual, real, entire body, blood and soul of the Lord Jesus Christ. If any think we exaggerate the position of the Roman Catholic Church on this point, we quote from her creeds and Councils to show exactly her position on this matter. The creed of Pope Pius IV, an official Creed of the Roman Catholic Church, says "I profess, likewise, that in the Mass is offered to God a true, proper, propitiatory sacrifice [that is a sacrifice which satisfies the justice of God and so offsets the penalty for sin] for the living and the dead; and that in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist there is truly, really and substantially, the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that there is made a conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood, which the Catholic Church calls transubstantiation." The Council of Trent declared, "The sacrifice [in the Mass] is identical with the sacrifice of the Cross in as much as Jesus Christ is a priest and victim both. The only difference lies in the manner of offering, which is bloody upon the Cross and bloodless upon our altars."

The problem for Roman Catholics is that after the consecration no visible change has taken place in the articles of the bread and wine, and therefore it is essential to have an explanation. That explanation is philosophical, in fact, it is medieval philosophy. H. M. Carson in *Roman Catholicism Today* (Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1964, p.65) explains it thus: "Take any body and you have, so it is taught, the 'accidents' which are available to your senses; that is, sight, taste, smell, touch. But you also have the 'substance' or the underlying reality in which the 'accidents' inhere. Thus if you have a piece of bread, it has a certain shape, a creamy colour, a softness and a characteristic taste and smell. Here are the 'accidents.' But there is the essential quality which makes what you see not just a collection of sense data but an actual piece of bread, and this essential feature is the 'substance' of the bread. Now according to the dogma, after the words

of consecration, the ‘accidents’ remain but the ‘substance’ is changed. Thus it still looks like bread, smells like it, tastes like it, but it has really only the appearance, for the substance has been changed into the body and blood of Christ.” Here is the explanation of how Catholics see no visible change and yet believe in transubstantiation. Even further than this, the Council of Trent declared that, “Entire Christ is contained in each kind (that is bread and wine) and in each several particles of either kind when separated, so every crumb of the bread, and drop of the wine is entire Christ.” In the Mass the priest partakes of the wine and the bread, but the communicant partakes only of the bread (or wafer) which is put into the mouth by the priest. Here we have a sense of the awful horror of the blasphemous concept. But turn to the Apostle Paul’s delivery of the Lord’s Supper to the Church in 1 Corinthians 11. 23-26 to see its simplicity.

“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when He had given thanks, He brake *it*, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of mM. After the same manner also *He took* the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till He come.”

Here the Lord took bread and after giving thanks (or, as the Roman Catholics say, consecrating it), He likened it to His body, and went on at the close of the service to refer to it again clearly as bread. There was no transubstantiation at the first Lord’s Supper.

It is important to realise that the whole edifice of the Roman Catholic church, and her immense power, rest on this heresy. Her ministers are priests, they perform a sacrifice, need an altar, they do not go forth primarily to preach the gospel, rather to offer a sacrifice, a real sacrifice that they claim can take away the sins of the living and the dead. It is of interest to know something about the Mass. When about eighteen, a friend in the VIth Form at school was drowned in Southampton Water and we attended his funeral, a Requiem High Mass in Portsmouth Roman Catholic Cathedral, performed by five priests in Latin, with acolytes(attendants), incense and holy water. All the ritual of the Church was brought to bear on his behalf. Loraine Boettner in his book *Roman Catholicism* (Banner of Truth, 1966, p.222) gives a description of a Mass. He says, “For its proper performance the priest in seminary

goes through long periods of training and needs a marvellous memory. Witness the following: he makes the sign of the cross sixteen times; turns towards the congregation six times; lifts his eyes to heaven eleven times; kisses the altar eight times; folds his hands four times; strikes his breast ten times; bows his head twenty-one times; genuflects [falls to the knees] eight times; bows his shoulders seven times; blesses the altar with the sign of the cross thirty times; lays his hands flat on the altar twenty-nine times; prays secretly eleven times; prays aloud thirteen times; takes the bread and wine and turns it into the body and blood of Christ; covers and uncovers the chalice ten times; goes to and fro twenty times; and in addition performs numerous other acts. The various articles of clothing worn by the priest at different stages of the drama represent those worn by Christ; the seamless robe, the purple coat, the veil with which his face was covered in the house of Caiaphas, a girdle representing the cord with which he was bound in the Garden, and the cords which bound him to the Cross. Add to the above the highly coloured robes of the clergy, the candles, bells, incense, music, special church architecture of the chancel, often in gleaming white, and you see something of the complexity of the programme. The artistry of the celebration was intended to appeal to all the natural senses of man simultaneously, and to please at once the cultured and the ignorant, the religious and the profane. Surely there was much truth in Voltaire's remark concerning the Mass as practised in the cathedrals of France in his day, that it was the 'grand opera of the poor'."

We personally witnessed the splendid performance for our school friend, of priests changing robes from black to gold, of music, incense, chanting etc., while the congregation watched until the final act at the committal in Portsmouth cemetery, when a bowl of holy water was handed round with a golden handled feather fan to sprinkle holy water on the coffin, and the priest, using English for the first time, absolved our friend from all his sins, unpardoned when he died. What power! We never forget the sudden August downpour, which broke at that moment over the cemetery and poured on the coffin of our poor friend more holy water than ever this ritual and its blasphemy could do for him. But his soul! What about it? Did that lad's hope of heaven depend on that performance and its attendant pardon? Could you or I rest there for salvation? We would point to the truth preached by the sent servants of God, to an experimental knowledge in our souls, now in time, of the verse in 1 John 1. 7: "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son



cleanseth us from all sin.” May none of us rest our hope of heaven in anything less than the application of that precious blood to our hearts and consciences. We are certain from experience that it does take away sin, and that no priest can ever apply that to your heart, only the Holy Spirit. The Lord’s Supper is not a sacrifice. It is, “This do in remembrance of me,” and as Loraine Boettner points out: “Whoever heard of the reality being present in an act of remembrance?” The poppies of Flanders are worn as symbols on Armistice Sunday; the reality, the dead millions, lie in the cemeteries of Europe. So the Lord’s supper is a remembrance of that one sacrifice for sin for ever. We look to Calvary for our hope of heaven, and we look to eternal electing love and mercy, which we trust, in faith, included us in the dying words of the Lord Jesus Christ: “It is finished.”

We are Particular Baptists because we believe, “Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none” (John 18. 9). “The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin” is a saving truth to be known and experienced. The Lord’s people have their Gethsemenes, and there walk in fellowship with the Lord *alone*. He was a man of sorrows; so are they. Their religion is in their souls not on an altar; it is spiritual not material; their hope is in the finished work Christ.

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## LETTERS, ADDRESSES AND SERMONS

**Extract from a Sermon Preached by the late John Green,  
Pastor, Gower Street Memorial Chapel, London,  
on Lord’s Day Morning 8<sup>th</sup> March 1959**

*“I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance” ( Luke 15. 7).*

“**I** say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.” What a wonderful thing this is, that these holy angels should find joy in the presence of their God when they behold a sinner truly repenting of his sins. They know that this is another sinner saved by grace. They know that this is one more sinner for whom the Lord Jesus Christ shed His precious blood. They know that ere long one more sinner will join them in heaven and will sing of

free grace to the honour and glory of their God. Has there been joy in heaven over you in the presence of the angels? Do you really feel that they have rejoiced over you?

Can you say this morning that there have been times when you have had to get away from everything and everyone and bow before your God? Perhaps with a broken heart and tears streaming from your eyes, you have been so sorry because you have sinned against God; and you may have felt that because you have sinned against Him, heaven's doors are closed for ever against you, and you will never be able to enter there. You say, "I spend the night watches sometimes doing that: mourning over my sins, fearing that my sins will shut me out of heaven." Sinner, there is joy in heaven when the holy angels behold you doing this. It is grace that enables you thus to mourn; grace that enables you thus to repent.

I trust there has been joy in heaven over this sinner that stands before you in the pulpit. I should not speak the truth were I to say that I have not had a broken heart because of my sins. It would not be true were I to say I have never mourned in secret over my sins. I thank God that I trust He has given me to experience something of this true repentance. My greatest trouble is that I do not experience more of it, because I have such a stony heart. I can read sometimes of the sufferings of Christ, and yet have no feeling. Isn't it sad? And I have a few companions. Perhaps some of you have heard the Lord's servants preach on Gethsemane and Calvary so sweetly, but your heart has not been affected by these things. Perhaps you have said, "Hard, hard, rocky heart, won't you ever break? Won't anything move you to shed a tear?" Friends, it is no small mercy to know this path, and to be seeking repentance, true spiritual contrition, praying that God will in His mercy turn you from the world and the things of the world to Himself.

We read of one good woman: the Lord blessed her, broke her heart, favoured her, and she sweetly repented. There is something sweet in real repentance, because it is a heavenly gift. It is a covenant gift. God made this provision in the covenant for all His people, and so there is something most sacred in real repentance. It is heaven on earth to be found where that woman was found. She loved much, because she had much forgiven, and she was found at Jesus' feet, and with tears she washed His feet and wiped them with the hairs of her head. That is

godly sorrow. That is real repentance. If you have been found at His feet, one day you will be found with Him in heaven.

Now this woman, she did love the Lord Jesus Christ; and it was that love in her heart that constrained her to do what she did. When she did it, there was joy in the presence of the angels of God. They rejoiced; they praised their Maker when they beheld that sinner at the feet of Christ, washing them, wiping them, and blessing and praising Him; thanking Him for His grace and His mercy towards her. All who thus truly repent, who are humbled, who are made gracious mourners, they will be forgiven. We sometimes sing:

Repentance flows freely thro' Calvary's blood,  
Produced by the Spirit and goodness of God.  
The living possess it, thro' faith, hope and love,  
And own it a blessing sent down from above.

It is sent down from above. "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." Now I do believe this: that when we are overcome by sin and Satan and by our own wicked hearts; when perhaps we have been hardened for a time through the workings of unbelief and sin within, and perhaps a giving way to the flesh, what a good thing it is to be brought to real contrition. When, like David in Psalm fifty-one, we are brought again to feel our sinnership and, after so much mercy manifested to us, to come once again to His feet, has not this broken some of your hearts? Have you not read that Psalm with some sweet feeling, with some real, inward contrition? Then there has been joy in heaven over you. The Lord grant that we may know more of this as we journey on.

Then further on in this chapter the Lord Jesus Christ gives another parable. He speaks of a man who had two sons. The younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance in riotous living. But presently he begins to feel want, pinched with hunger, and no man gave unto him. But he is brought to his senses and he begins to feel what a sad character he is, where he has got to; and he begins to think of his father's past kindness and love towards him. What can he now do? Well, he is driven, as it were, to return. He says, "If I do not return I shall perish with hunger." And so he goes home with a broken and a contrite heart – so different to when he went out. He returns to his father, and says unto him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more

worthy to be called thy son.” That is repentance. That is being humbled before God under a solemn, sacred sense of His goodness and mercy towards you.

Now those who answer to the character of publicans and sinners, they are the ones who feel to need repentance. All who truly repent of their sins shall be pardoned through Calvary’s blood. God will not leave one truly repenting sinner to die in his sins. In His own time and in His own way, he will grant them peace and pardon through the blood of the Lamb.

“I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance.” Really this was a word to these scribes and Pharisees, but they did not take it. By these words the Lord sets forth their wrong, their self-righteousness – “we are the people, we are all right, we have no need to repent.” It is sad when people speak like this; when they are left in this sad and awful state, and know not that God is infinitely holy and that their best is stained and dyed with sin, their all is nothing worth. It is solemn to go like one did into the temple and despise the publican and say, “I thank thee, that I am not as...this publican. I fast...I give tithes of all that I possess.” The poor Pharisee did not make any petitions to God for repentance, for help, for blessing; he made no acknowledgement of the Lord having done anything for him. We read of the other that he smote upon his breast, and said, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” I have felt a love and union to that publican. I feel I stand very much where he stood, and I feel my need of God’s mercy. And some of you feel your need of God’s mercy. You cannot do anything yourself which is pleasing in God’s sight. The Spirit alone can enable us to do things pleasing to God.

You learn that sin is displeasing in the eyes of that great God; and you feel your need of the Spirit’s grace to work in you that true spirit of repentance that you may mourn over your sins, and leave the hateful ways of sin. You say to the world, “You may have your pleasures.” You do not want the lusts of the flesh. You will be willing to let the worldling have them. But may I be given that godly sorrow, that broken and that contrite heart before God, to have that true repentance which needeth not to be repented of!

“There shall be joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.”

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## CURRENT EVENTS

### **The Visit of Pope Benedict XVI to Britain**

When Gordon Brown visited the Vatican on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2009, he invited the Pope to make a state visit to Britain in September 2010. The Papal visit is due commence on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> September and will last for four days.

The Pope will first go to Edinburgh, where he will be met in the Palace at Holyrood by the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh, together with members of the Royal Family. Having met the Queen, the Pope will travel to Glasgow where he will celebrate an open air Mass in the evening before 100,000 people in Bellahouston Park and then fly from Glasgow to London.

On Friday 17<sup>th</sup> the Pope will visit St Mary's College at Twickenham where he will meet a large group of about 3000 young people. Later that day he will go to Lambeth Palace to meet the Archbishop of Canterbury together with the Anglican and Catholic Bishops of England and Wales. After this he will address the members of Parliament and other representatives in Westminster Hall. The Pope will conclude the day by attending Evening Prayers in Westminster Abbey with the Archbishop of Canterbury and other Christian leaders.

On Saturday the Pope is due to celebrate Mass in Westminster Cathedral when a statue of the Virgin Mary will be brought from a Catholic Shrine in Wales, to have a lighted candle put in its hand and be blessed by the Pope. Later the Pope is due to visit an old people's home and conclude his day with an open-air prayer vigil in Hyde Park. On Sunday the Pope will visit Birmingham and celebrate a Mass at which he will beatify Cardinal John Henry Newman before a crowd of a 100,000 people.

There have been considerable problems surrounding the visit, not least the cost to the Roman Catholic Church doubling from £7 million to £14 million, with the cost to the British taxpayer being even greater. After much discussion between the British Government and the Vatican, it has finally been decided to hold the beatification ceremony of Cardinal Newman in Cofton Park, Birmingham, adjacent to Rednal where the Cardinal was originally buried, rather than at Coventry Airport which was the original intention.. A shrine has been set up at the Oratory of St Philip Neri, at Edgbaston, Birmingham for the Cardinal, where various of his relics are housed, and after the beatification, the Pope will briefly visit the shrine to pray.

There is in the country considerable opposition to the visit, which is seen as a gross betrayal of the Reformation, by giving formal recognition to a man who claims to be head of the whole Christian Church worldwide and whose Church burnt hundreds of English and Scottish martyrs in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, including Reformers in Scotland like George Wishart and leading Anglicans such as Archbishop Cranmer and Bishops Ridley, Latimer and Hooper for refusing to accept the Roman Catholic dogma of the Mass.

On the Internet there are numerous sites advertising the visit which show that the Roman Catholic Church is using it to proselytise. The Anglican Church, in supporting the visit, has moved far from its original Reformed Constitution based on the Thirty-Nine Articles of 1562. Article 31 reads, "The sacrifices of Masses, in which it is commonly said, that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, are blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits." The Reformers knew well the errors of Rome and hated them.

I saw, and lo! A countless throng,  
The elect of every nation, name and tongue,  
Assembled round the everlasting throne;  
With robes of white endued  
(The righteousness of God);  
And each a palm sustained  
In his victorious hand;  
When thus the bright melodious choir began:  
"Salvation to thy name  
Eternal God, and co-eternal Lamb  
In power, in glory, and in Essence, One.

While I beheld the amazing sight,  
A seraph pointed to the saints in white,  
And told me who they were, and whence they came:  
"These are they, whose lot below  
Was persecution, pain and woe:  
These are the chosen purchased flock,  
Who ne'er their Lord forsook;  
Through his imputed merit free from blame;  
Redeemed from every sin;  
And, as thou seest, whose garments were made clean,  
Washed in the blood of yon exalted Lamb.

Saved by his righteousness alone,  
Spotless they stand before the throne,  
And in the ethereal temple chant his praise;  
Himself among them deigns to dwell,  
And face to face his light reveal;  
Hunger and thirst, as heretofore,  
And pain, and heat, they know no more,  
Nor need, as once, the sun's prolific rays.  
Immanuel here, his people feeds,  
To streams of joy perennial leads,  
And wipes, for ever wipes, the tears from every face.

*Contemplation on Rev. 7. 9-17. by August M Toplady (1740-1778)*



# PERCEPTION



But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of  
God is made unto us wisdom, and righteous-  
ness, and sanctification, and redemption.  
1 Corinthians 1:30

**WINTER 2010**



<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>Page:</b>
<b>Editorial</b> .....	1
Current Issues	
<b>Remains of the Brain's Day</b> .....	4
<i>Dr. S. Buckingham</i>	
Natural History of the Bible	
<b>Birds in the Bible</b> .....	7
<i>Dr. J. Mercer</i>	
Church History	
<b>Iraq - the Cradle of Civilisation</b> .....	10
<i>N. Christie</i>	
Doctrine & Truth	
<b>Luther on the Law and the Gospel—Part 1</b> .....	14
<i>Dr. I. Sadler</i>	
<b>Extracts from J. C. Philpot</b> .....	21
Letters, Addresses & Sermons	
<b>The Signs of the Times</b> .....	23
<i>G. D. Buss</i>	
Reviews	
<b>Some Scots Worthies by J. R. Broome</b> .....	31
<i>Dr. P. Wilkins</i>	
Current Events	
<b>400th Anniversary of the 1611 Authorised Version of the Bible</b> .....	33

Cover Picture: Blea Tarn, The Lake District (Photo: Taken by F. Ashby)

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# PERCEPTION

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## EDITORIAL

*“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2. 8).*

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Holy men of old spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. The purpose of God was to reveal the way of salvation to His people. He ordained that human instruments should be used in His eternal purposes to write the Holy Scriptures. It pleased Him to use His ministers, led by the Holy Spirit into these scriptures, through the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe. He would save His people from their sins, delivering them from condemnation and the wrath to come, bringing them into the glorious liberty of the children of God and preparing them to stand before His face throughout a never-ending eternity, to praise Him for His salvation in the anthem of the redeemed: “Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins.”

The first prophecy of Christ’s incarnation is to be found in Genesis in the words of the Lord to Satan: “it [the seed of the woman] shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel” (Gen. 3. 15). When the angel revealed to Joseph that Mary would have a child, he told him that His name would be Jesus (the Saviour) and that He would save His people from their sins (Matt. 1. 21). When Mary visited Elizabeth and Elizabeth greeted her with the words: “Blessed *art* thou among women” (Luke 1. 42), Mary responded with the words: “My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour” (Luke 1. 46-47). When John the Baptist was born and named John by his father Zacharias, the old man prophesied concerning his son: “And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of their sins” (Luke 1. 76-77). When John entered upon his ministry he spoke of Christ in the words: “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1. 29).

The salvation of God's people is entirely of sovereign grace. Paul in his letter to Titus writes: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Tit. 3. 5). In his letter to the church at Rome he speaks of "being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Rom. 5. 9). James, in his epistle, speaks of receiving "with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (Jam. 1. 21). The Philippian jailer asked, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul and Silas directed him to Christ with the words: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16. 30-31).

The Psalms contain many prayers of the Lord's people asking for salvation. "Remember me, O LORD, with the favour *that Thou bearest unto Thy people*: O visit me with Thy salvation" (Ps. 106.4). "Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God" (Ps. 3. 7). The work of the Holy Ghost in the soul in regeneration brings a sinner to know his lost condition and the arrows of conviction enter his soul. Then there is a knowledge of the words of Joseph Hart:

Out of Christ, almighty power  
Can do nothing but devour.

Of such characters Jesus said: "The Son of man is come to save that which was lost" (Matt. 18. 11), and again, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick" (Matt. 9. 12). When sinners are raised up to a hope in God's mercy, then they have a confession to make. The Lord's mother, Mary, could speak of "God my Saviour." Paul writing to Timothy opens his first letter with the words, "God our Saviour" (1 Tim. 1. 1). Jude concludes his Epistle with, "To the only wise God our Saviour" (Jude 25).

On one occasion the disciples asked Jesus: "Who then can be saved?" (Matt. 19. 25). Scripture has much to say in answer to that question. Jesus told His disciples, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matt. 10. 22). The Psalmist says, "Thou wilt save the afflicted people" (Ps. 18. 27), and Zephaniah, speaking of the Church of Christ, says, "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD" (Zeph. 3. 12). Paul told Timothy: "This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1 Tim. 1. 15). Peter preaching in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost

said: “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2. 21). The closing words of Acts chapter 2 read: “And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.” “Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,” said Christ in his Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5. 3). Thomas Kelly wrote:

Poor and afflicted, Lord, are Thine,  
 Among the great unfit to shine,  
 But though the world may think it strange,  
 They would not with the world exchange.

Such were the characters whom Jesus came to save. There is also blessed certainty about salvation. Paul, in his letter to the Hebrews says, “But this *man*, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7. 24-25). The margin renders “uttermost” as “evermore”; that is eternally; and we think of the Lord’s words: “All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6. 37). The Psalmist said, “Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from Him *cometh* my salvation” (Ps. 62. 1). Paul points to the divinely-ordained means of salvation when he writes: “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (I Cor. 1. 21), and Isaiah, speaking of preaching, writes: “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth” (Isa. 52. 7). The Lord will save His Church and has said of them: “...bring My sons from far, and My daughters from the ends of the earth; *even* every one that is called by My name: for I have created him for My glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him” (Isa. 43. 6-7).

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## **CURRENT ISSUES**

### **Remains of the Brain's Day – a Christian's perspective on Dementia**

**By Dr. S. Buckingham**

**D**ementia is one of the hardest afflictions of old age, both for the sufferer and their carers. When our bodies are sick, we can call upon mental resources to help us cope. The essential person remains the same. But when the mind is lost, it is our very self that is decaying. When Ronald Reagan announced that he had Alzheimer's Disease (AD), he said: "I now begin the journey that will lead me into the sunset of my life". Watching a relative or friend suffer from AD is a terrible experience, and for Christians it raises many questions. Why has my godly father become so aggressive? Are the outbursts of anger the real person, hidden hypocritically all these years?

There are no easy answers to these questions. But we can begin to understand a little, by knowing something of what goes on in dementia, and reminding ourselves of some basic biblical facts.

Dementia is "an irreversible and serious decline in cognitive performance, more than would be expected given the age or circumstances of the person". The biggest cause of dementia is Alzheimer's Disease, and dementia is the biggest drain on our health services. All dementias are the result of massive loss of brain cells in specific parts of the brain. Scientists are beginning to understand what causes this loss, but there are far more unanswered questions yet to be solved, and we are a long way from a cure.

The Bible is a sufficient guide to living a godly life, and therefore contains all we need to know to help someone with dementia, and perhaps even to help us should it happen to us. To my knowledge, the Bible says nothing directly on what we would call dementia (the case of Nebuchadnezzar was reversible, and was clearly a temporary judgement of God with prophetic purposes), so we must use "good and necessary consequence" to try to deduce how we should react to AD.

#### **The believer with dementia is still a child of God:**

One aspect of dementia is a change in personality. Someone who was once a mild-mannered, gentle saint now uses words and does things that would shock any decent person. Sometimes this is the failure of the mind to suppress erratic, sinful thoughts. In life, we

(either under the Law or under the Gospel) deny (or at least should) ungodly thoughts. This requires active suppression and inhibition. As the brain deteriorates in AD, the censoring mechanisms break down. The person now no longer has the physical capacity to suppress certain actions, in the same way that a person who has lost his legs cannot walk. The bad words and bad deeds are still sinful, but the capacity to resist sin has been taken away as part of the extended dying process that we call dementia. This should not surprise us, as it is central to our belief as reformed Christians, that the sinner has lost the ability completely to stop sinning.

AD is an affliction and afflictions do not affect one's standing with God. If an elderly person was ever a Christian, whatever behavioural changes they have, whatever deeds they do as a manifestation of AD, does not cause them to lose their salvation. It is, of course, possible that they were never converted, and pretended all their life that they were, and that the loss of inhibition that is part of AD uncovers the deception. On the other hand, all believers retain a fleshly nature which, by grace, we are to subdue. In my view, it is possible that brain decay might cause a loss of some voluntary capacity, including that part of us which has been taught to deny ungodly lusts. When we see a praying mother utter terrible words or ideas, we wonder which of these scenarios is true. However, much as it might cause us worry, we are not the final judge of such things. It is also worth remembering, that in the early stages of the disease there remains some intermittent lucidity, and the affliction of AD, like all afflictions, may be used of God to bring the person to a saving sense of need.

**We have a duty to care for and respect the elderly:**

AD is an affliction affecting people, mostly (but not entirely) older people. We are duty-bound to respect older people: the scripture does not qualify rising in the presence of the *healthy* hoar head only. We are required to love all men, especially (but not only) them of the faith. But the elderly, whether afflicted with dementia or not, deserve our particular care. The efforts of those who care for people with dementia, whether at home or in care homes, are very much to be applauded and they need much grace to continue loving those under their care.

**Neither this man sinned nor his parents:**

We sometimes entertain the foolish thought that if someone is severely afflicted, especially in mental health, that they are being

punished for something they have done. Death and disease are indeed the result of sin, both federal (i.e. in Adam) and individual. But when a person is sick, we do not know whether it is a visitation upon a specific, personal sin (whether in judgement or for loving correction), or whether it is the “reward” we all inherit federally as members of Adam’s race. We therefore cannot conclude the affliction of AD reflects upon that person’s character. Rather, we should take it as a warning to ourselves, reminding us of what we all deserve as natural enemies of God. The Puritans often remarked that all sin is a form of madness, so affliction with dementia would be a just desert for all of us.

### **A rational response to an irrational world:**

Many things that are done by the mentally ill look very odd to us, but can make sense to the person given the strange world they find themselves in. If a person is suffering the delusion that there are snakes in their bed, it is perfectly rational for them to refuse to get into that bed. If someone is convinced you are reporting all their words to the Government, it is quite rational for them to refrain from talking to you. The actions of mentally ill people are often a rational response to a world that has become irrational. AD patients may accuse you of stealing from them, but that is because they have forgotten that they themselves have moved the object they have lost.

We have to remember that forgetting that happens in dementia is different from normal forgetting. When you or I forget something, we are usually aware that we have forgotten it. Personally, I can’t remember all the calculus I learnt at school. But I am fully aware that I have forgotten it, and I perceive the gap in my memory. But with dementia, even the gap isn’t there. Now, the brain is very uncomfortable with things not making sense, and is constantly making every effort to make consistent sense of what it sees. If there is a “hole” that doesn’t make sense, the brain will carefully fill around that hole without you even being aware of it. That is how so many visual illusions work. Many of the things AD patients deludedly think are actually the remains of the brain trying to make sense of what is going on – that is the brain’s job.

We very much hope that one day there will be a cure for Alzheimer’s Disease, Parkinson’s disease and other causes of dementia. The research effort into understanding dementia is increasing but has a very



long way to go. Even in a sinful world we would hope to die “an old man, and full of years”.

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## NATURAL HISTORY OF THE BIBLE

### Birds in the Bible

**By Dr. J. Mercer**

There are approximately 9000 species of birds in the world, in every habitat; from mountain-top to forest, lake and sea, and from the Arctic to the Antarctic. Of these, at least thirty-two types of birds are mentioned in the Bible, beginning at Genesis 1. 20: “And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly ... fowl *that* may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven”. Some of these texts are very familiar, such as, “Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows” (Matt. 10. 31) and, “But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles” (Isa. 40. 31).

The birds mentioned in the Bible are predominantly those familiar, both now and in Biblical times, in the dry landscapes (largely desert and mountains) that characterise the Middle East. These include species known or familiar to us, such as the Ostrich, Owl, Raven and Dove – and some less familiar ones, for example the Bittern and Osprey.

Understanding of birds and their movements was much more limited at the time of the translation of the Authorised Version, in 1611, than it is today, through advances such as the banding or ringing of birds to follow their movements. For example, the migration of birds (when they fly long distances to distant countries to avoid severe winters or drought), was not understood – indeed it was thought that some birds hibernated for the winter rather than flying south. Also, some bird names have changed since 1611 (see note at end).

I will briefly describe a few of these birds in more detail.

#### **The Stork\*:**

The White Stork is a rare visitor to Britain but is a familiar and common species in Europe, Africa and the Middle East, often alongside man in villages and farmland or rivers – its large nest is a regular sight in trees – “*as for the stork, the fir trees are her house*” (Ps. 104. 17). It

migrates from its wintering grounds in Africa, and large flocks move north through the Middle East in a sure sign of spring and the cycle of the seasons: “While the earth remaineth ... summer and winter ... shall not cease” (Gen. 8. 22).

### **The Turtle Dove\*:**

The purring call of the Turtle Dove is very common in spring in Europe and the Middle East, after its arrival from Africa, but not very familiar to us in the UK. This is referred to in the Bible: “the voice of the turtle is heard in our land” (S. of S. 2. 12), and its arrival is a prominent sign of spring in the cycle of the seasons.

### **The Owl:**

There are over 200 species of Owl in the world, in all habitats from forests and mountains to rivers and dry areas. The “owl of the desert” (Ps. 102. 6) referred to in the Bible is probably that now called the Eagle Owl (or “great owl”, Lev. 11. 17); a large and fairly solitary species, which often inhabits cliffs and ravines in desert and scrub, from where it hunts the surrounding country at night. The “screech owl” referred to in Isaiah 34 verse 14 is nowadays called the Barn Owl, and has an eerie screeching call it utters when hunting.

### **The Raven:**

Elijah was miraculously fed by Ravens (I Kings 17. 4). The Crow family, and Ravens in particular, are known to be amongst the most intelligent of birds; indeed one or two species of Crows can use tools such as sticks to solve simple tasks. They are naturally curious and often carry or hoard objects and food.

### **The Bittern:**

The Bittern is mentioned several times in the Bible in connection with desolation and ruin, particularly of habitable areas, for example, “the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it” (Isa. 34. 11). It is a secretive and solitary bird, which frequents marshes and pools, often in neglected or stagnant areas. It is rare in Britain but occurs across Europe to the Middle East, and was formerly commoner and more familiar to ancient peoples.

### **The Eagle:**

Eagles also feature prominently in the Bible, especially with reference to their high and soaring flight, signifying strength. “They shall mount up with wings as eagles” (Isa. 40. 31). There are twelve

species of Eagle in Europe and the Middle East, but only the Golden Eagle and the Sea Eagle occur in Britain, nesting on cliffs and high mountains in Scotland. In the Middle East, Vultures also have effortless and soaring flight, but they are carrion feeders without the noble nature of the Eagle.

### **The Swallow\*:**

The Swallow is a familiar insect-eating bird that returns to Britain, Europe and the Middle East in summer. It is closely associated with human habitation: “The swallow [hath found] a nest for herself” (Ps. 84. 3) and is very social, with a cheerful song and calls: “Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter” (Isa. 38. 14). It would have been very familiar in Middle Eastern villages in Bible times.

### **The Sparrow:**

Lastly, the humble Sparrow is a familiar bird around human habitation, well known for being conspicuous and social. It is also familiar and numerous in the Middle East, previously such that in ancient times it was trapped and sold to be eaten in significant quantities. “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father” (Matt. 10. 29).

Birds are and always have been a familiar and conspicuous part of our natural environment, both here and in the Middle East. As such, they are used in many Biblical texts as symbols and parables of many aspects of life. On a broader scale, their migrations are one of the most familiar and conspicuous markers of the passage and cycle of the seasons. On an individual level, birds can be a powerful symbol of such vital matters as faithfulness, freedom, sadness and joy.

### **Other Bible Birds:**

Other birds mentioned in the Bible, with references include:  
 Cormorant – Isa. 34. 11; Crane\* – Isa. 38. 14; Cuckoo\* – Lev. 11. 16;  
 Falcon – Job 28. 7; Glede / Kite – Deut. 14. 13; Hawk – Job 39. 26;  
 Hen – Matt. 23. 37; Heron – Lev. 11. 19; Hoopoe\* – Deut. 14. 18;  
 Lapwing – Lev. 11. 19; Nighthawk\* – Lev. 11. 16; Osprey\* – Lev. 11. 13;  
 Ossifrage/ Gier Eagle – Lev. 11. 13; Ostrich – Job 39. 13; Owl,  
 Great – Lev. 11. 17; Owl, Little – Lev. 11. 17; Owl, Screech – Isa 34. 14;  
 Partridge – Jer. 17. 11; Peacock – Job 39. 13; Pelican – Ps. 102. 6;  
 Quail – Num. 11. 31; Swan – Lev. 11. 18.

**Notes:**

Birds marked with an asterisk are migrants to Israel. The rest are residents.

Since the time of translation of the Authorised version of the Bible, some of the names used for birds have changed in meaning or fallen out of use. The Glede is an old name for the Red Kite, a scavenging bird of prey that was a common sight in the skies of London in previous centuries. They have since died out there but have recently been reintroduced in the Chilterns, from where they are spreading, and may in time return to London again.

Another name no longer used is that of the Ossifrage or Gier Eagle – this bird is now called the Lammergeier; a large Vulture that inhabits mountains such as the Pyrenees and Middle Eastern mountains. It feeds on carrion like all Vultures, and the name “Ossifrage” probably derives from its habit of dropping bones onto rocks from a height, in order to crack them open and expose the marrow.

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## **CHURCH HISTORY**

### **Iraq – The Cradle of Civilisation**

**By N. Christie**

**W**e hear a great deal about Iraq these days but very few people realise that it is the true cradle of civilisation. Many Christian historians believe that the garden of Eden was in Iraq. It was also home to the earliest civilised society on earth. Iraq, formerly known as Mesopotamia, had as varied and violent a history as present day Iraq, if not more so. The birthplace of Abraham, this ancient tract of land has also been the home of the Babylonians and the Assyrians who are mentioned many times in the Bible. The word “Mesopotamia” means “land between two rivers”, and it is literally the stretch of land between the Euphrates and the Tigris, making up the vast majority of Iraq. Running from the Mediterranean Sea to the Persian Gulf, it also forms the bulk of the Fertile Crescent. It was in Mesopotamia that the first cities were formed and a system of writing was invented (cuneiform in around 3500 BC). According to Josephus – a Jewish historian who lived in the first century after Christ’s death – when Abraham travelled into Egypt he taught the Egyptians arithmetic and astronomy. It would

thus appear that these sciences were first known by the Mesopotamians. Inhabited by a strong and warlike but intelligent people, Mesopotamia has been fought over for millennia. Many of its battles are chronicled in the Bible and have had great significance to the Israelites.

### **Ur - Capital of the Sumerians and Birthplace of Abraham**

The first known inhabitants of Mesopotamia were the Sumerians, who settled in the south around 3200-2800 BC, during what is now called the Bronze Age. The Sumerians divided the land into city states and temples were built in the centre of these cities. These temples developed into huge ziggurats, such as the Tower of Babel, which is believed to be at the site of Babylon. The Sumerians used columns, arches, domes and vaults in their architecture. They also used the principle of *entasis*; the walls of the ziggurats curved slightly outwards from side to side and base to top thus giving the onlooker an impression of great strength. This method was rediscovered fifteen centuries later by the builders of the Parthenon in Athens, thus showing how sophisticated Sumerian architecture was for its time. It was the Sumerians who invented the time system that we use today – twenty-four hours in a day, sixty minutes in an hour and sixty seconds in a minute – as well as defining a circle as three hundred and sixty degrees. Ur, the birthplace of Abraham, was the Sumerian capital between 2800-2300 BC. It is believed to have actually been founded in around the fourth millennium BC, archaeological evidence showing that the original city was destroyed by a huge flood. Many believe this to have been the Biblical flood.

The Sumerians were conquered by Sargon I of Akkad in 2350<sup>1</sup> BC. The Akkadians used a new method of war; they threw spears as well as using bows and arrows, which were greatly superior to the slow moving Sumerians with their huge shields and heavy lances. Sargon founded a major centralised state, but retained the cuneiform writing and language of the Sumerians, creating trade connections with India; thus gaining wealth. The Akkadian empire was connected with roads, and incredibly there was also a form of postal service with clay seals taking the place of stamps. However this was not a stable empire – the few hundred years following were fraught with invasions and battles by Semitic Canaanites and various tribes.

### **The Early Babylonians and their Writings**

In 1728 BC Hammurabi of Babylon came to power in the south of Mesopotamia and increased his territory by conquering the surrounding land. Hammurabi was a conscientious ruler, dedicated to reforming his lands, and towards the end of his reign he drew up the famous *Code of Hammurabi*, which contained reforming laws as well as setting out 282 rules and punishments such as whipping, maiming and execution. Hammurabi was a believer in *talion* – in other words an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. For example one of the regulations translated reads: “If a man has brought an accusation of murder against another without being able to produce proof – the accuser shall be put to death”. His subjects later inscribed on a stone, “he established justice in the land”, which is exactly what he did. *The Epic of Gilgamesh* was written during Hammurabi’s reign. This is an incredible piece of Ancient Mesopotamian literature. The complete version was discovered on twelve stone tablets in the library of the 7<sup>th</sup> century Assyrian ruler Assurbanipal, grandson of Sennacherib. It is believed to have originated from a series of Sumerian myths and legends containing stories of various gods. The most interesting part is the eleventh tablet, known as the “Flood tablet”, which is now kept at the British Museum. The Flood tablet tells the story of Utnapishtim, who was told by the gods to build a boat as they were going to flood the earth. Utnapishtim filled his boat with animals and then survived the flood in his boat for six days while the rest of mankind was destroyed. He then released a dove, a swallow and a raven to see whether there was dry land, and his boat landed on a mountain called Nimush. This story is remarkable in its similarity to the great flood that God sent, and was probably a legend based upon the true account as recorded in Genesis.

### **The Building of the Assyrian Empire and the Destruction of Israel by Tiglath Pileser III**

For the next few hundred years Mesopotamia was engaged in a series of struggles between the Hurrians from Lake Van (with a formidable army with horse-drawn chariots) and the Assyrians (based in the north of Mesopotamia at Assur), until the seventh century, when the Assyrians managed to form a huge empire. This period of time is commonly referred to as the Iron Age. The Assyrian Empire under Tiglath Pileser III (referred to as Pul in II Kings 15. 19) covered most of the near east, including the whole of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Syria and

Lebanon, Iran and Turkey. The world had never seen such a huge empire before. It was during this time that Rezin of Damascus and Pekah of Israel invaded Judah intending to place one of their own upon the throne. Ahaz, king of Judah, called upon Tiglath Pileser to help him, disregarding the prophet Isaiah who urged that Judah's safety lay in the hands of the Lord and prophesied the coming of Immanuel (Isaiah 7). Rezin and Pekah retreated and Tiglath Pileser then proceeded to destroy Israel and deport its people whilst subduing Judah. In later years Sennacharib, then ruler of Assyria, besieged Jerusalem in the reign of Hezekiah, but the Lord intervened and smote "an hundred fourscore and five thousand" (185000) (II Kings 19). Sennacherib was later killed by his own sons in his temple and Esarhaddon his son reigned instead.

### **Nineveh – Burial Place of Jonah and Capital of Assyria**

The capital of the Assyrian Empire was Nineveh. It is here that Jonah is believed to be buried under a mound at Nebi Yunus; the present site of a mosque on top has prevented further excavations. A huge hydraulic engineering project took place in Nineveh because the Assyrians needed a huge amount of water; this was the most ambitious ancient project of its time with aqueducts, subterranean canals, reservoirs and dams. A huge library has been excavated in the remains of the city; this belonged to Assurbanipal, grandson of Sennacharib. Assurbanipal ascended to the throne of Assyria in 669 BC and was a highly educated scholar. His library consisted of thousands of stone tablets written in the cuneiform that the Sumerians had invented. 28000 tablets were excavated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and now reside in the British Museum, having been interpreted and translated into English. It is from this library that a huge amount of valuable information has been learnt about the Assyrians and earlier inhabitants of Iraq.

### **The Destruction of Nineveh and the End of the Kingdom of Judah by the Babylonians**

In 626 BC Assurbanipal died; this was during the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign in Judah, and the same year that the Lord first spoke to Jeremiah. The Babylonians finally took Nineveh in 612 BC and ended the Assyrian Empire. Nineveh was made a ruin, its palaces falling to collapse, burying the libraries which remained undiscovered for nearly 2500 years. This is spoken of in the Bible in the book of Nahum: "Nineveh is laid waste: who will bemoan her?" (Nah. 3. 7)



Nebuchadnezzar, ruler of Babylon, caused the Babylonian empire to flourish. Pharaoh-nechoh, the king of Egypt, went against the Babylonians along with Josiah. Both were defeated and later Nebuchadnezzar laid siege for one and a half years to Jerusalem (II Kings 23-25), until the city fell in 587 BC. Most of the people in Judah were deported, thus ending the kingdom of Judah. It was during this time that Daniel was taken into Babylon. The power of Babylon gradually declined until the final decade of supremacy for which Belshazzar was regent and Darius the Mede took the kingdom (Daniel 5). Thus ended the second and last huge empire based in Iraq.

### **The End of Iraq's Supremacy**

Mesopotamia never returned to its former glory as centre of an empire as it remained in the hands of the Persians, then the Greeks under Alexander the Great, the Romans and finally the Arabs in modern day Iraq, where it still remains a war-torn land. Though it is hard to believe today, Iraq once held an incredibly advanced and sophisticated people for their time – in fact the forerunners of civilisation as we know it now.

#### **Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> The dates of events mentioned in this article vary from source to source. I have chosen the dates that I believe to be most accurate, which come from the most reliable sources.

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## **DOCTRINE AND TRUTH**

### **Luther on the Law and the Gospel – Part 1**

**By Dr. I. Sadler**

A great distinction is made in Scripture between the law of works and the gospel of free grace: “The law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1. 17). Paul also taught the Galatians: “If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law” (Gal. 5. 18). These are truths that the *Gospel Standard* and others, such as Huntington, have contended for, teaching that the believer’s rule of conduct is the gospel, not the law.

Many have opposed these things, but have chosen not to argue directly from Scripture. Godly ministers have been branded

“Antinomians”; that is, those who do not follow the law and supposedly give licence to all manner of sin. Yet the power of the Spirit so effectually wrought divine love in their hearts that no serious reproach could be laid against their conduct as Christians. Alternatively, it is said that the *Gospel Standard* has deviated from the teaching of the Reformers. However, this accusation is also built on a dubious foundation. To shed light on this, it is appropriate to turn to the great work of the Reformation, namely, Martin Luther’s *Commentary on Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians*. This is far from being a fruitless search, for Luther brings forth many blessed and sweet truths. The spiritual reader is often searched out in his own feelings, and is brought to pray, “O that I knew more of these things in my soul!”

Luther’s *Commentary on the Galatians* consists of lectures Luther gave to his students at Wittenberg University in 1531. Far from being dry theology, they are full of such divine life and power as are scarcely seen elsewhere. Given and published in Latin, they were first published in English in 1575; this Elizabethan translation (with revisions) apparently remains the only English translation. John Bunyan went so far as to say that Luther’s work on the Galatians was his favourite book after the Bible.

Luther’s great theme is the necessity of justification by faith in Jesus Christ as the only true way of salvation, which contrasts with the false way of seeking to be justified by the works of the law. One is a passive righteousness wrought out by Christ; the other is an active (supposed) righteousness, in which men attempt to perform good works that are nothing but filthy rags in the sight of God. Thus, Luther commences his *Commentary*:<sup>1</sup>

St. Paul goeth about to establish the doctrine of faith, grace, forgiveness of sins, or Christian righteousness, to the end that we may have a perfect knowledge and difference between Christian righteousness and all other kinds of righteousness. For there be divers sorts of righteousness (p. 17).

Among these Luther lists political, civil, ceremonial righteousness and the obedience to parents and schoolmasters. Then he comes to the righteousness of the law, or of the Ten Commandments which Moses teaches. This we also teach after the doctrine of faith:

There is yet another righteousness which is above all these: to wit, the righteousness of faith or Christian righteousness, the which we must diligently discern from the other afore rehearsed ....

But this most excellent righteousness, of faith I mean (which God through Christ, without works, imputeth unto us) is neither political nor ceremonial, nor the righteousness of God's law, nor consisteth in works, but is clean contrary: that is to say, a mere passive righteousness, as the other above are active. For in this we work nothing, we render nothing unto God, but only we receive and suffer another to work in us, that is to say, God (p. 17).

Luther thereby marks out from the beginning that chasm between the gospel and the papacy, salvation by grace alone as opposed to salvation by works. However, in our day many confuse grace and works by implying that saving faith in Christ is partly the work of man. Luther leaves no room for such notions by showing that faith is the gift of God and by utterly condemning man's free-will:

If any man feel in himself a love towards the Word of God, and willingly heareth, talketh, writeth and thinketh of Christ, let that man know that this is not the work of man's will or reason, but the gift of the Holy Ghost: for it is impossible that these things should be done without the Holy Ghost (p. 277; Gal. 4. 6).

To what purpose does the law then serve? As Luther remarked in his opening statements, he is principally dealing with the moral law. Although Luther refers to the ceremonial law revealing Christ in types and shadows to Israel under the old dispensation, the main application of his commentary is to those under the New Testament order:

The first use then of the law is to bridle the wicked ... This civil restraint is very necessary, and appointed of God, as well for public peace, as also for the preservation of all things, but specially lest the course of the gospel should be hindered by the tumult and sedition of wicked, outrageous and proud men (p. 225; Gal. 3. 19).

This civil use of the law, however, is not what Paul is speaking of in the Epistle to the Galatians: although Luther states: "It is indeed very necessary, but it justifieth not." Luther makes it abundantly clear that what he is about to speak concerning the law spiritually does not take away the necessity of civil laws. He was attacked (as were Gadsby and Huntington) of encouraging libertinism, which in Luther's day was seen in the excesses of some of the early Anabaptists in Germany. From such things Luther vehemently dissociates himself.

Now Luther comes to the divine and spiritual use of the law:

... which is (as Paul saith) to increase transgressions; that is to say, to reveal unto a man his sin, his blindness, his misery, his impiety, ignorance,

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hatred and contempt of God, death, hell, the judgment and deserved wrath of God.

But to the end that God might bridle and beat down this monster and mad beast (I mean the presumption of man's righteousness and religion), which naturally maketh men proud, and puffeth them up in such sort that they think themselves thereby to please God highly, it behoveth him to send some Hercules which might set upon this monster, with all force and courage, to overthrow him, and utterly to destroy him; that is to say, He was constrained to give a law in Mount Sinai, with so great majesty and with so terrible a show, that the whole multitude was astonished (pp. 225-226; Gal. 3. 19).

However, this revelation of sin (known as a "law-work" by our old ministers) has a blessed end; namely, to prepare and break up the fallow ground of our heart for the heavenly Sower. Luther continues by saying that the law:

... is a glass that sheweth unto a man himself, that he is a sinner, guilty of death, and worthy of God's everlasting wrath and indignation. To what end serveth this humbling, this bruising and beating down by this hammer, the law I mean? To this end, that we may have an entrance into grace. So then the law is a minister that prepareth the way unto grace. For God is the God of the humble, the miserable, the afflicted, the oppressed and the desperate, and of those that are brought even to nothing: and His nature is to exalt the humble, to feed the hungry, to give sight to the blind, to comfort the miserable, the afflicted, the bruised and broken-hearted, to justify sinners, to quicken the dead, and to save the very desperate and damned. For He is an almighty Creator, making all things of nothing (p. 229; Gal. 3. 19).

Luther proved in his monastery cell that in no way does the law justify or truly ease the wounded conscience. Scarcely has any man tried harder to be justified by fasting, observances and harsh treatment of the body; but it was to no avail. For it is "with *His* stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53. 5), not a sinner's stripes. Luther only found his sins increased, as did his despair. He spoke of what he proved, that fulfilling the law is impossible, and any attempt to be justified thereby leads to condemnation and despair. His only relief was in Jesus Christ, not in the law. It was Christ's righteousness, not his own, that availed for his justification and salvation.

Thus Luther draws a clear distinction between the law and the gospel; the law reveals sin to a believer's conscience, but the gospel reveals Christ. Luther says of the gospel, that it is:

... the revelation of the Son of God. This is a doctrine quite contrary to the law, which revealeth not the Son of God, but it sheweth forth sin, it terrifieth the conscience, it revealeth death, the wrath and judgment of God and hell. The gospel therefore is such a doctrine as admitted no law: yea, it must be separate as far from the law as there is distance between heaven and earth (p. 66; Gal. 1. 16).

In the law the holiness of God and His divine wrath and condemnation of sin are seen, whereas in the gospel Jesus Christ is revealed gloriously without type or shadow as His people's Saviour. Therefore, Luther teaches that if a believer seems to view Christ as a severe judge or law-maker it is a false Christ.

Christ is the only mean, and as ye would say, the glass by the which we see God, that is to say, we know His will. For in Christ we see that God is not a cruel exactor or a judge, but a most favourable, loving and merciful Father, who to the end He might bless us, that is to say, deliver us from the law, sin, death and all evils, and might endue us with grace, righteousness and everlasting life, spared not His own Son, but gave Him for us all (p. 292; Gal. 4. 8-9).

The devil is ever ready to appear to believers as a false Christ, passing severe judgements on the conscience, if we do not this or that; but the true Jesus Christ is a Saviour to His people, having fulfilled all the law's demands on their behalf.

Luther further teaches that the perfection and fulness of God's will is revealed in Christ, not the law; speaking of Abraham, Luther says:

The God of his fathers, whom he saith he worshippeth, promised to Abraham a Seed, through the which all nations should be blessed. Therefore God is known and the blessing is given, not by the law, but by the gospel of Christ (p. 294; Gal. 4. 8-9).

The law is also contrary to the gospel in the nature of the promises contained therein:

The promises of the law are conditional, promising life, not freely but to such as fulfil the law, and therefore they leave men's consciences in doubt: for no man fulfilleth the law. But the promises of the New Testament have no such condition joined unto them, nor require anything of us, nor depend upon any condition of our worthiness, but bring and give unto us freely forgiveness of sins, grace, righteousness and life everlasting for Christ's sake (p. 321; Gal. 4. 24).

Indeed, as the Scripture says by the Apostle Paul: "But *as* God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God,

Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, *even* by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in Him was yea. For all the promises of God in Him *are* yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us” (II Cor. 1. 18-20).

How is it then that the people of God are saved from the condemnation of the law? Luther teaches that it is through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God. His perfect, sinless life fulfilled the law, which no man could do, and His sin-atonement sacrifice paid the penalty of a broken law due to His people. Speaking of the words that Christ was “made under the law” (Gal. 4. 4), Luther says:

They declare that the Son of God, being made under the law, did not only perform one or two works of the law ... or only lived civilly under the law, but He suffered all the tyranny of the law. For the law, being in his principal use and full of power, set upon Christ, and so horribly assailed Him, that He felt such anguish and terror as no man upon the earth had ever felt the like. This His bloody sweat doth sufficiently witness, His comfort ministered by the angel, that mighty prayer which He made in the garden, and briefly, that lamentable complaint upon the cross: ‘O My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?’ These things He suffered to redeem those that were under the law (p. 274; Gal. 4. 4).

Luther goes further by teaching that Christ did not just pay the penalty for sin, but God “made Him *to be* sin for us” (II Cor. 5. 21); this displays the suitability of the Redeemer to poor lost sinners who feel to be nothing but sin:

For when a sinner cometh to the knowledge of himself indeed, he feeleth not only that he is miserable, but misery itself: not only that he is a sinner and is accursed, but even sin and malediction itself (p. 210; Gal. 3. 13).

His great work of reconciliation of God and man could be performed by none other than the God-man Christ Jesus. For in overcoming the law by His death on the cross, Christ proved His Deity; of which Luther speaks thus:

Seeing then that Christ hath overcome the law in His own Person, it followeth necessarily that He is naturally God. For there is none, whether he be man or angel, which is above the law, but only God. But Christ is above the law, for He hath vanquished it: therefore He is the Son of God, and naturally God (p. 275; Gal. 4. 4).

Given that Christ has vanquished the law for His people, Luther contends that a Christian is freed from the law. However, this liberty is not in the carnal flesh, but is in the conscience.

There is no life unless ye be without the law, yea, unless ye be utterly dead unto the law, I mean in the conscience. Notwithstanding in the mean season (as I have often said) so long as the body liveth, the flesh must be exercised with laws, and vexed with exactions and penalties of laws, as were the Egyptians. But the inward man not subject to the law, but delivered and freed from it, is a lively, a just, and a holy person, not of himself, but in Christ, because he believeth in Him (p. 126; Gal. 2. 19).

Luther, therefore, is clear that the carnal flesh (the old man of sin) is not free, but is subject to the law for the crucifixion of the flesh. Otherwise we would be free from all civil laws or restraints, and would be as the Libertines. The life of a Christian should shine as a light before the world. The liberty that Luther speaks of is not a carnal liberty of the flesh, but a divine liberty in the conscience from the everlasting wrath of God to come:

For who is able to express what a thing it is, when a man is assured in his heart that God neither is nor will be angry with him, but will be for ever a merciful and loving Father unto him for Christ's sake? This is indeed a marvellous and incomprehensible liberty, to have the most high and sovereign Majesty so favourable unto us that He doth not only defend, maintain and succour us in this life, but also as touching our bodies will so deliver us, that our bodies, which are sown in corruption, in dishonour and infirmity, shall rise in incorruption, in glory and power (p. 341; Gal. 5. 1).

As has been previously mentioned, Luther had to contend with the same accusations as those levelled at Huntington and Gadsby; namely, that his teaching neglected practical religion and encouraged slothfulness. Luther answers the charge thus:

Now after that a man is once justified, and possesseth Christ by faith, and knoweth that He is his righteousness and life, doubtless he will not be idle, but as a good tree he will bring forth good fruits. For the believing man hath the Holy Ghost, and where the Holy Ghost dwelleth, He will not suffer a man to be idle, but stirreth him up to all exercises of piety and godliness, and of true religion, to the love of God, to the patient suffering of afflictions, to prayer, to thanksgiving, to the exercise of charity towards all men (p. 119; Gal. 2. 18).

Thus one sees it is the power of God working effectually in the heart of a Christian that brings forth fruit to the honour of God. It is God



which gives the increase, not carnal exhortations and legal duties. A Christian's outward holiness is a precious gift of God, not a human work that will deserve a reward. May each know, as did Luther, that divine principle of the love of God moving our hearts to serve Him in the Spirit, for "where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty" (II Cor. 3. 17).

**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> The edition used is Lewis's 1760 edition. The verse Luther is speaking from in Galatians is given where appropriate.

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

*"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. 1. 18).*

What a mercy that he who was dead lives at God's right hand! that he lives as a risen head; that he is not a dead Saviour; but a Saviour that lives for evermore; that can and does bless; that can and does comfort; that can and does bring the soul safely through all. He is not a Saviour that stands as it were upon the brink of a river, and pulls us out when we have swum half way out ourselves; he is not a Saviour that will take us half way to heaven, and then, as Rutherford says, let us "fend" or shift for ourselves. He must take us to heaven throughout. We are nothing, we have nothing without him. He must be, as he is, our "all in all". We value him in his death, nothing but his death could reconcile us to God; we value him in his life, nothing but his life can save. We want salvation now; salvation in the heart; a spiritual salvation revealed in and unto the soul; a salvation worthy of the name, wholly, fully, completely, finally, and everlastingly to the praise of super-abounding grace; a salvation that can never be lost; worthy of God, worthy of the God-man; adapted to every want of the soul, coming into every trial of the heart, and able to save the vilest and the worst, "without money and without price." – September 23<sup>rd</sup>.

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*"The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power" (I Cor. 4. 20).*

It is through the word of God in the hands of the Spirit, that this kingdom is set up in the soul. All God's people are agreed on this point, that they have no more religion than they have inward power.

And all the living family are sighing, each according to his measure and season, after the manifestation of this divine power in their souls. Those that are under the law, and toiling under heavy burdens, are sighing after relief, and for that relief to come in divine power – power that shall cast all their sins into the depth of the sea. Those who having tasted that the Lord is gracious have lost their first love, are at times breathing out their inmost desire after power to revive their souls. Those who are beset with powerful temptations, and struggling, often ineffectually, with base lusts, are crying after power to deliver their feet from the fowler's snares. Those who are hard, need power to soften; those who are doubting and fearing, need power to give them faith; the backsliding need power to return, and the sinking need power to swim. By power I understand something solid, real, substantial, heavenly, supernatural. How do we measure the capabilities of a steam engine? We say that it has so many horse power. But who in his senses would construct a steam engine of two hundred horse power to break sticks and pick up straws? We measure power by its effects. We proportion the one to the other. Now the Holy Ghost, the God of all power and might, would not put forth his mighty and efficacious hand to break sticks and pick up straws in the soul. No. His work is worthy of a God; a "work of faith with power," because springing from a God of power. The God of Israel is not a Baal that is sleeping and needs to be awakened, or gone on a journey and therefore too far off to come when needed, but "a very present help in trouble." By this secret power false hopes are swept away, rotten props removed, creature righteousness brought to an end, and the soul is helped and enabled to lean upon the Lord. This power is not noise and rant; but the still small voice of Jesus in the soul. The people of God want no outward voice, but they are seeking after that secret voice of atoning blood in their conscience, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel. The inward whisper of heavenly love sounding in their soul – not the earthquake of terror, not the fire of divine wrath, but the still small voice of pardon and peace – makes them bow themselves before the Lord, and wrap their faces in their mantle.

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# LETTERS, ADDRESSES AND SERMONS

## The Signs of the Times

By G. D. Buss

*An edited version of the address given at the Annual General Meeting of the Gospel Standard Trust on 17th May 1997.*

Why should we be concerned about the signs of the times? Firstly, it was the privilege of the Old Testament church to look for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Over many generations the godly looked for the sign of His coming. We know they did not wait in vain. “When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law”. It is a measure of the grace evidenced in the Old Testament church that they were enabled to wait patiently for so long with so few evidences of His coming. There were signs, although recognised by only a few, just as when He came, there were only a few who recognised whom He was, the eternal Son of God in our nature.

The privilege of the New Testament church is to look in two directions. We look back to His coming. We look forward to His second coming. The vital thing is to look with God’s grace to Calvary, to see the Lamb of God bearing away our sins. Nothing less will do if our sins are not to condemn us in that great day. The Word of God expressly says that we do not know when the moment of His Second Coming will be. But He *will* come (I Cor. 4. 5; 11. 26). Our task is to see if we can discern the signs of our times. How near are we to that great event? Jesus said that there would be signs that we are to look for. “The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that He would shew them a sign from heaven. He answered and said unto them ... O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not *discern* the signs of the times?” (Matt. 16. 1-3) Now there we get the title of our subject, “the signs of the times”. The Pharisees and the Sadducees were asking for a sign. They needed a sign, for the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; the eternal God, was present with them. The sign of the prophet Jonas condemned that very generation as Jesus said it would when, as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so Jesus was three days and three nights in the belly of the earth.

One of the things the rich man in torments, in the parable, asked, was that Lazarus would rise from the dead and go and speak to his brethren,

that they might be saved from entering into the eternal torment he was suffering. The Lord Jesus Christ said, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead". Whatever signs God may send, without faith, man will not discern them. In Matthew 11 we read: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes". It is instructive to notice that when our Lord came the first time, it was to humble shepherds that the sign of His coming was given and to wise men who were not native to the land. They discerned the sign of the star. It was revealed to them, whereas it passed by the wise, the prudent and the religious.

In the Old Testament, God gave many signs. The rainbow is a sign to us that "seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease". King Ahaz was given a sign in Isaiah 7: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." When our Lord died there were many signs accompanying that solemn event. The veil of the temple was rent in twain, the earth shook with an earthquake and the sun was eclipsed. All these things were solemn, momentous signs, all signs of God's purpose.

What about our times? The first question to ask is – what is the time? And the second question is – what are we to expect at this time and in the times that follow? In I John 2. 18-20 the apostle tells us, "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time". There is much encouragement here. Although in the last times there are going to be some immense events, men's hearts failing them with fear, a shaking of the very foundations of creation, the little children are encouraged: "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things". Little ones are kept. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom".

What do we mean by the last times? We mean those times that immediately precede the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and if they were the last times that John spoke of all those years ago, nearly two thousand years ago when he wrote this epistle, then we are surely much nearer the end than he was. Yet he spoke of it still as the last time.

J. C. Philpot wrote, "It has almost passed into a proverb that coming events cast their shadows before them; and changes of great magnitude have rarely occurred in the Church or in the world without premonitory symptoms so plain and evident that he who runs may read them. If we

may so speak without irreverence, God does nothing in a hurry. His plans and purposes are indeed all laid down in His own eternal mind with infinite wisdom; but they are for the most part slowly and gradually evolved in a series of events, which, however seemingly disjointed and unconnected, are still linked together in a chain of predestinated order” (*Gospel Standard* 1854, Review).

In II Peter 3. 8 we read: “But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” Why is it that the Lord does not immediately descend? Surely there is enough iniquity on this earth for the Lord to bring time to an end? Yet He spares and waits. Why is He sparing and why is He waiting? He waits until the last elect vessel of mercy is born on the face of this earth, called by irresistible grace, prepared for glory and then will come the end. So in God’s long-suffering mercy the gospel is still to be preached and the precious tidings of Calvary and of God’s long-suffering forbearance still to be proclaimed. He also waits for another reason. We read that God called Abraham and told him that he would one day possess the land of Canaan. We may ask, why did not the Lord give Canaan immediately to Abraham? The reason was that the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full. A strange expression, but there is the long-suffering of God. The time came when it was full and they were driven out of Canaan. Paul tells us in Romans that the last times will be those times when the fulness of the Gentiles will come in, when the Lord will have gathered from the Gentiles all those whom He intends to save. At the same time there is another fulness. The Jews themselves will have their eyes opened to see the glories of the Redeemer, then when that has taken place, the fulness of the gospel will have been fulfilled as God intended to all eternity.

The Scriptures tell us that the world will end and that the times that precede the end will be exceedingly solemn. Chapters like Daniel 2, 7, 11, 12 and Matthew 24 and the books of I and II Thessalonians, II Peter, I John, Jude and Revelation, all speak in unequivocal terms of these times. The New Testament church has an even more explicit revelation of the second coming than the Old Testament church had about the first. The New Testament church has unmistakable records written both in Old and New Testament about the time that will precede our Lord’s second coming of which we should be aware. The prophet Daniel was given much insight concerning the days in which he lived and the days of the following generations right up to the last times.

One of the visions that Daniel had was of four beasts of varying kinds and these four beasts were representing four different kingdoms that were to arise in the earth. Now these four kingdoms which the Lord had revealed to Daniel are these: the ancient Babylonish kingdom, the Medes and the Persians, the Greeks and the Macedonians and the most mighty of all, the Roman Empire. Although the Roman Empire has long since gone, its influence remains and the Word of God seems to suggest that things that take place in Rome and around it will have their influence right until the end of time. Daniel saw that the fourth beast which had ten toes and ten fingers was broken up. Then Daniel saw that the “stone cut out without hands” would be revealed in those times. It was while the Roman Empire was almost at its zenith that our Lord Jesus Christ appeared in the flesh. That stone cut out without hands, in God’s hand, will be the destruction of every empire that man has ever built and of every city that Satan has ever constructed.

The beast in Revelation 13 relates to the four beasts that Daniel saw in Daniel 7. The meaning of it is this, that these beasts, or the four beasts in one, are really the very spirit of anti-Christ. There is evidence from the beginning of time, when Cain slew Abel, that this spirit has been at work in the world; although, as John says, we are to expect the spirit of anti-Christ to appear more and more, as is so evident in our generation. Yet does not even Solomon say, “There is no new thing under the sun”? The same spirit that caused Cain to slay Abel is just the same spirit which opposes Christ, the Word of God and the things of God in our generation. It is just that Satan works in different ways. There is evidence that in the latter days a power will arise greater than all that have gone before, in some respects like it, but in other respects greater. In the book of Revelation, it is clear that the period after the outpouring of the seventh vial of wrath is the period in which our Lord will return and that is the period I believe we are entering into now. At that time there will arise anti-Christian powers greater than those which have ever been seen before, to such an extent that the whole world will be gathered together under this dominion and there will be an authority not known to the same degree in the hand of man before. What is more, we are to expect this power to do those things that will fascinate men, draw them, make them believe in it and cause them to turn from the true and living God and especially from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The whole point of anti-Christ is to separate men from the Lord Jesus Christ. Not that he can separate the church from Christ. But the

power of anti-Christ will be such that men will be deluded. They will believe a lie that will turn them from the Word of God, and from anything to do with the Lord Jesus Christ. The false doctrine of evolution is just one example of these strong delusions in our day.

The Westminster Confession says that the man of sin is the papacy. The Roman Catholic church undoubtedly bears all the hallmarks of the great whore of the Revelation – Babylon the great. A power that will arise that will unite all false religions and unite all false teachers of whatever shade under this one banner. The three frogs of infidelity, popery and Islam will unite in one system. The aim of the ecumenical movement originally was to gather in one all shades of Christian opinions. Anyone who bore the name of Christ in a nominal way was to be brought under this banner and it has gone on apace, it has broken down barriers and doctrine and traditions, although you will notice that the Roman Catholic Church has neither compromised its doctrine nor its tradition. This gathering together under one umbrella will continue apace. The last Pope suggested that there might come a time when he could embrace the Muslims and the Hindus and they would all be under one banner. This is a very solemn thing because of the plausibility of it; it appears to be so charitable, some would say, even in accordance with the Scripture: “live peaceably with all men.” Yet it is against *truth*, and what is against truth is against Christ, and what is against Christ is anti-Christ. Such is the ecumenical movement and it has had terrible effects in our generation and even in our own churches. But there is no exception to the word, “Ye must be born again”: salvation is by grace; justification is by faith; nothing but the name and the blood of Jesus can save and anything that contradicts or supplants it is to be rejected. If any man brings any other doctrine we are not to receive it.

This is the day in which we live but it is more insidious than that. You cannot be altogether devoid of politics when you come to examine these things because Satan works through politics. You may wonder what power it is, for example, working among us to bring together the European Union. Why is it that nations that have been independent and have been blessed in independence over the years are seemingly willing to sacrifice so much to go under this one banner? It is the power of the beast. The Word of God tells us that there will be those who will be willing to give their power and their might and their mind to the beast. J. C. Philpot, who foresaw this would happen, wrote: “The leading tendency of the times is to blend together the great European



communities, so as to give them a unity of thought, feeling and action. According to the dreams of worldly politicians, ignorant of the depravity of human nature and of the power and craft of Satan, a thorough union and fusion into one mass of the separate nationalities would almost introduce a millennium of prosperity and happiness. Politically viewed, we admit that could peace and harmony be secured thereby, such an event would be most desirable; but with human nature what it is, and with such elements of jealousy and discord everywhere prevalent, the nearer the nations come together, the worse it may be for all. Union only gives strength to wickedness ... The closer the bonds and the greater the intercommunications of the European nations, the more sympathetic and the more diffused must every convulsion be ... The devil is never more thoroughly a devil than when, Iscariot-like, he comes with the kiss of peace” (*Gospel Standard* 1854 p. 34). That was written in 1854 and this movement for nations to get together is not just in Europe. It is the same on the American continent and elsewhere in the world, the whole idea being one world government and religion.

These are the solemn times in which we are living. The Word of God tells us that such things will take place. Also there is undoubtedly a solemn withdrawing of the Holy Spirit in our generation, and there are signs of it. In II Chronicles 12. 9-10, one of the Old Testament kings did something. We read that: “So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king’s house; he took all: he carried away also the shields of gold which Solomon had made. Instead of which king Rehoboam made shields of brass, and committed *them* to the hands of the chief of the guard, that kept the entrance of the king’s house.” When the gold departs something inferior replaces it and there is always the danger when the Holy Spirit withdraws that the vacuum will be filled with something of the flesh, something less than the pure gold of the Spirit’s teaching. There is not the power in the ministry that there used to be. There is less real fellowship, there is less exercise of heart, there are few tears over the decline. We have got used to the declining congregations, empty chapels and chapels being closed rather than opened. If the blessed Spirit was working in our hearts, we would break our hearts over it, but He has withdrawn. He is grieved. It is one of the signs of the latter days. “The love of many shall wax cold”. We can jump into a car and go to chapel in five minutes. Our forebears had to walk and they got there on time and what is more, their conversation

was concerning the things of God. They went home praying, and speaking of the things of God. We have lost the depth and fervency of our forebears. These are signs of the times. We should be aware of them. May God give us grace to confess even our own Laodicean state.

One of the master crafts of Satan is to cut away three pillars that made this nation great. First, the Lord's Day has become a holiday and we have a day of commerce as well as a day for man to carry on doing his own pleasure. The second pillar is the family. The God-given order: husband, wife, children is undermined on every hand. Immorality, profligacy and all sorts of other sins have undermined this and our nation shakes at its very roots because of it. The third pillar is the Word of God. Beginning with the so called "Higher Criticism" of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Satan has sent forth arrow after arrow against the Word of God so that now there are churches where there are no Bibles in the pews because the minister uses so many different versions. So the Word of God is turned out of the house of God. Satan has gained his end. He has undermined the Word of God with so many different translations that the confidence of many in God's Word has been shaken. So today the Word of God is, to many, no different to the writings of other men.

In II Thessalonians 2 there is a very solemn prophecy. It tells us two things. One is that the power of anti-Christ will grow until the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. Second, that there will be a person who will fulfil the position spoken of, for example in verses 3 and 4: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first," – and we are in the falling away now – "and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." Now who is this? It will be someone who will take to himself, with the almost universal consent of the whole world, political, temporal and spiritual power. The Pope, with his false claims of authority, bears all the hallmarks of this person. The whole world will give their mind and their hearts and their will as this power is more and more revealed. It will be a one-world religion, a one-world government; there will be one man who will draw in such a way that he will be deified in the minds of men almost as God. Because the church of Christ will not conscientiously be able to submit nor to fall under this

reign, the Lord Jesus tells us (Matt. 24) there will be tribulations such as have not been seen since the world began.

The Papacy contains all the seeds of this last appearing. The spirit of antichrist is at the very heart of that apostate system and is to be opposed with all the weapons of truth and grace. Other false religions bear many similar marks too. The probable outcome will be a satanic amalgamation of popery, other false religions and infidelity into a one-world religion and government of which the present papacy is the seed and is evidently growing fast in this evil day. J. C. Philpot, in his *Signs of the Times*, takes a not-dissimilar view. The move towards a European super-state is but one sinister example of this tendency.

Now these are things the Word of God tells us will happen. When they will happen we do not know but there are many signs to tell us they are happening. In particular, the seventh vial which is poured out in Revelation is poured out in the air and I suggest that we are seeing the power of antichrist particularly in the power of the air in our generation. I mean the media. What can be transmitted with telephone, videos, television, computers, radios and the internet, has gone beyond what man ever expected and the power that could be wielded through such things has now reached beyond man's wildest imagination. When the power of antichrist has got hold of that, I think you can begin to see the way in which this matter will begin to work out.

How are we to behave in such a day? One thing we must beware of is fatalism. Though these things will certainly come to pass, we must beware of fatalism. May God by His Spirit keep us exercised, humble in spirit and fervent in spirit. O what grace we shall need to be kept because of our fallen nature, a nature which would fall in with the spirit which is sweeping the world. Unless we are kept we will be swept along with this. Remember that the dyke often cracks a little before it bursts and it is a little wave by which Satan may get an entrance and then he comes right in. It has been suggested that a time of great worldwide reviving will come in the church of Christ before the end. J. K. Popham was one who thought this. There have been terrible times in the world's history before and then the Lord has sent a revival. At the time of the great evangelical awakening in Whitfield's time, the social and moral state of the nation was terrible. By God's mercy the preaching of the gospel brought about great change. We do not know God's purposes, but all we do know is that when our Lord will return, "Shall He find faith on the earth?" When He does come there will be

very little real religion on the earth. The question is, would He find faith in our hearts if He were to come in this generation? Are we led of the Spirit to trust in the love, blood and righteousness of Christ?

Daniel wrote: “And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what *shall be* the end of these *things*? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words *are* closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand. And from the time *that* the daily *sacrifice* shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, *there shall be* a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed *is* he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. But go thou thy way till the end *be*: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days” (Dan. 12. 8-13). In other words, the Lord said to Daniel, “You have seen many wonderful things, more than most, things you do not understand as well as things which are going to take place, but the great point for you Daniel is this, you will stand in your lot; you have a place in the Lamb’s book of life, you are found hidden in Christ and that is what matters. It is well for you”. Whatever may take place in our times, if this is said of you and me, “Go thou thy way till the end *be*: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days”, that will be all that matters.

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## REVIEWS

### ***Some Scots Worthies* by J. R. Broome**

**By Dr. P. Wilkins**

*Published by the Gospel Standard Trust 2010, paperback, 127 pp. Price £4.50 (excluding postage).*

Sometimes when reading a book there is one sentence or phrase which grips the attention more than any other, and makes one realise what the book is all about. In the case of this book I found that phrase in the account of the life of John Nesbit. This man travelled with three friends one Saturday night to an area of Scotland where he was a wanted man. He knew that capture would lead to death; he had already spent five years on the run, separated from wife and children.

And the reason for his journey was to attend a prayer meeting. It struck me: would I risk my life to go to a prayer meeting?

This book contains short accounts of the lives of fourteen Scottish Christians who lived in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Some are well known; like John Knox and Samuel Rutherford. Others I had never heard of. But they all had one thing in common; a strong faith in Christ, which was demonstrated by their lives and often by their deaths. The book also contains a very useful preface which helps to set the scene for the accounts which follow and to link them together.

What make this book especially interesting are the differences between the lives of the fourteen subjects. Some, like John Knox, lived their last days in comparative comfort, respected by many, and died in peace in their own beds. Others, like James Renwick, spent most of their lives hiding from the authorities, opposed by many both within and outside the Church, and were executed as criminals with the sound of soldiers' drums (beaten to drown out their last words) sounding in their ears.

The days in which these men lived were so different to the days in which we live that it is almost impossible to appreciate what they went through. It is too easy to read the book as a historical account and forget that these were real men, not really so different from us. We can hardly imagine how it must have felt for a man to have to choose between his wife and children and his religion. How easy (and excusable) it would have been for them to conform to the beliefs required by law in order to remain comfortably at home with those they loved! But they saw what we often do not see; that the things that we see and feel, the possessions we prize, even the people we love, are only ours for a comparatively short time – but the things which are not seen are eternal.

The book is well-researched and the result of a lot of work, but it is written in such a way that (for the most part) it is not difficult to read. It is a book that deserves to be read carefully and slowly; but it is easy to read it quickly and carelessly, forgetting that the things written really happened to real people. For those who know nothing or little about the Church in 16<sup>th</sup> century Scotland, this book will certainly be useful; and even for those who are familiar with those whose lives are contained in it, the book will act to refresh the memory. In both cases, hopefully the reader will come away with a desire to stand as these men stood and to be as steadfast as they were in their profession.

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## CURRENT EVENTS

### **The 400th Anniversary of the 1611 Authorised Version of the Bible**

Next year marks the 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the King James Version of the Bible. Throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> Century from 1525 to 1568, scholars, who included William Tyndale, Myles Coverdale, William Whittingham and the Elizabethan bishops, had translated the Scriptures into English from the original languages of Hebrew and Greek and between them refined the translation. This work was to be the basis of the new translation that was carried out on the instructions of King James I and completed in 1611.

Among the English versions of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century were Tyndale's New Testament (1525), the Coverdale Bible (1535), the Matthew Bible (1537), the Great Bible (1540), the Geneva Bible (1560) and the Bishop's Bible (1568). The Great Bible, sponsored by Henry VIII and his chancellor Thomas Cromwell, was the version appointed in 1541 to be used in all Anglican Churches. The Geneva Bible was the version favoured by the Puritans, but it had annotations which caused offence in Royal circles and prevented its use by the Anglican Community. The scholarship of its translators by far exceeded that of the Elizabethan Anglican Bishops whose version of 1568 was never fully accepted in the Church of England.

So while the Great Bible remained the official version of the Church of England, other versions such as the Geneva Bible were in common use. This led to a demand for a new translation, omitting all annotations, which would be nationally acceptable. A panel of forty-seven scholars was approved by the king on 30<sup>th</sup> June 1604 and the final revision came from the printers in 1611. The work of these scholars was not entirely original. They were following on from the work of previous translators beginning with John Wycliffe in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. They were conducting a revision of the work of other men. Between eighty and ninety per cent of their version was the work of William Tyndale, though his name is nowhere mentioned in the Authorised Version. A study of the work of each of the translators whose work preceded the 1611 version reveals that the new Bible of 1611 owed something to all of the scholars who had laboured throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, some, as William Tyndale, at the expense of their own lives. The TBS and Gospel Standard Publications are publishing commemorative books.

#### **Note**

The version of Psalm 23, on the rear cover, was first published in 1556 at Geneva in an early edition of the Psalms of Thomas Sternhold and John Hopkins. The Sternhold and Hopkins Psalms were used in England, Scotland and America for over 250 years, the last edition being published in 1828.

William Whittingham, its author, graduated at Oxford in 1545 and was a fellow of All Souls College. He was in exile in Geneva in the days of persecution in the reign of Queen Mary. In 1557 he published a revised translation of the English New Testament. He also took a major role in the Geneva Bible translation, first published in 1560. In the same year, he took over from John Knox as minister of the English exiles in Geneva. Among his companions at Geneva were not only Knox but also Myles Coverdale, John Calvin and Theodore Beza.

The Lord is only my support,  
And he that doth me feed:  
How can I then lack anything,  
Whereof I stand in need.  
He doth me fold in cote most safe,  
The tender grass fast by:  
And after drives me to the streams  
Which run most pleasantly.

And when I feel myself near lost,  
Then doth he me home take:  
Conducting me in his right paths,  
Even for his own Namesake.  
And though I were even at death's door,  
yet would I fear none ill:  
For with thy rod and shepherd's crook,  
I am comforted still.

Thou hast my table richly decked,  
in despite of my foe:  
Thou hast my head with balm refreshed,  
My cup doth overflow.  
And finally while breath doth last,  
Thy grace shall me defend:  
And in the house of God will I,  
My life for ever spend.

William Whittingham 1556