

PERCEPTION



As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus
the Lord, so walk ye in him.
Colossians 2:6

SPRING 2011

CONTENTS	Page:
Editorial	1
Current Issues	
Zimbabwe - Sowing the Word of Truth	4
<i>Dr. I. A. Sadler</i>	
Church History	
Augustus Toplady (1740-1778)	6
<i>J. R. Broome</i>	
Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) - His Early Years	12
<i>J. R. Broome</i>	
Doctrine & Truth	
Luther on the Law and the Gospel - Part 2	17
<i>Dr. I. A. Sadler</i>	
A Sense of Sin	22
<i>Rev. J. S. Sinclair</i>	
Of the Mercy of God	25
<i>Dr. J. Gill</i>	
Letters, Addresses & Sermons	
Extract from a Sermon by John Green	28
Current Events	
Mr Clement Wood (1920-2010)	33

Cover Picture: An albatross in the Antarctic Ocean; taken by Dr J Mercer on a recent visit

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HEDITORIAL

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1. 12).

Fallen man cannot, will not, receive Christ. The unregenerate heart, the carnal mind, “*is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Rom. 8. 7). The Lord Jesus Christ according to Isaiah’s prophecy was to be despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Isaiah goes further and in the language of one called by divine grace and favoured with the gift of faith, adds: “We hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not” (Isa. 53. 3). This is the confession of all the children of God, as they look back to the days when they were “strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph. 2. 12). Paul, in his days as a Pharisee, hated Christ and persecuted His followers, standing by and consenting to the stoning of Stephen, hailing men and women to prison who were followers of the Lord Jesus. When he set out for Damascus “breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord” and the Lord Jesus stopped him with the words, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?”, we see clearly that it was a divine power, Christ Himself, that stopped him that day. Later when the Lord Jesus directed Ananias, one of His disciples in Damascus, to go to him, He told Ananias “Behold, he prayeth” (Acts 9. 11). The Apostle Paul had been born again by the Spirit of God, converted, and brought to receive Him, whom to know “*is* life eternal.” Now he pleaded that very name that he had so hated, even the name of Jesus. Now he bowed at the mercy seat and in his heart was the cry, “Jesus, *thou* Son of David, have mercy on me!” (Mark 10. 47).

Here was a man truly “born of God.” The Apostle John makes it clear how this great act of quickening was done and by whom. It was the work of God. “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the

kingdom of God” (John 3. 3). “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3. 5). The fact that our parents may have been converted in no way influences this work. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit,” Jesus told Nicodemus (John 3. 6). Nor was it of the “will of the flesh.” As sons of Adam, men and women are born “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2. 1) and are “by nature the children of wrath” (Eph. 2. 3). They have no will or power to come to Christ. But the psalmist David says, “Thy people *shall be* willing in the day of thy power” (Psa. 110. 3). John Berridge expresses this truth in a verse of one of his hymns:-

No wit or will of man,
Or learning he may boast,
No power of reason can
Draw sinners unto Christ;
So fallen is nature, such her flaw,
None come except the Father draw.

Another aspect of this work is that it is love which draws sinners to Christ. Augustus Toplady in his hymn, “Compared with Christ, in all beside, no comeliness I see...” says;

Loved of my God, for him again
With love intense I’d burn;
Chosen of thee ere time began,
I choose thee in return.

Once they hated Him “without a cause,” yet they were loved by Him. We think of the two thieves on the cross who “cast the same in his teeth,” “He trusted in God; let him deliver him.” Yet hours later one of them “received him;” received Him as the eternal Son of God, the King of Kings and creator of this universe, received Him as his Redeemer. He spoke in confession of his sin, “We indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss” (Luke 23. 41). Then he asked Jesus, “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.” The Lord’s reply was, “Today shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luke 23. 43). Here a dying sinner received Christ and Christ received the dying sinner. There was a blessed coming together in love, mercy, sovereign grace, atoning love, blood and peace.

“As many as received him, to them gave he power” – the right or the privilege, as the margin reads – “to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name” (John 1. 12). The dying thief

believed. The Ethiopian eunuch to whom Philip was sent in the desert believed. “*Here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (Acts 8. 36-37). The Apostle Paul has much to say about faith. In chapter eleven of his Epistle to the Hebrews, he describes faith as, “The substance” – the ground or confidence, as the margin reads – “of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11. 1). In his Epistle to the Ephesians he says, “By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God” (Eph. 2. 8). He tells us of the necessity of faith; “Without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb. 11. 6). He tells us of the working of faith; “Faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10. 17). In his Epistle to the Galatians, Paul tells us that faith “worketh by love” (Gal. 5. 6).

So we see that those who receive Christ as their God and Saviour have been brought by the work of the Holy Spirit to believe in Him, brought to possess their sins (Job 13. 26), convicted and convinced of their evil nature in the sight of God, brought to feel their need of the Good Physician as sick in soul and leprous in heart, coming in godly sorrow and repentance to Him, believing that He alone is able to heal them. They see a beauty in Christ as the Incarnate Son of God, and like Peter can say of Him, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16. 16), and again, “We believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God” (John 6. 69). They receive Him in faith and love and He receives them. To them He extends the gracious invitations and promises of the Gospel in all their fullness: “Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Matt. 11. 28-29). “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). It was on this latter text that John Bunyan wrote his book, *Come and welcome to Jesus Christ*. William Gadsby also wrote in a similar vein:

Come, whosoever will,
Nor vainly strive to mend;
Sinners are freely welcome still
To Christ, the sinner’s Friend.

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

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CURRENT ISSUES

Zimbabwe – Sowing the Word of Truth

By Dr. I. A. Sadler

This article gives a short account of my visit to Zimbabwe in November 2010 as Chairman of the Free Grace Evangelistic Association (FGEA), and records the Lord's goodness and watchful care over me and African brethren throughout the visit.

I left home at midday, and arrived at Bulawayo Airport just over 24 hours later, having travelled from Heathrow via Johannesburg Airport. I had packed my bags with twenty-five AV Bibles and 288 booklets, *Why the King James Version?* I arrived to find that the Zimbabwean customs required me to pay duty. After lifting my eyes up to the Lord and a deal of discussion amongst the customs officers, the demanded duty was reduced. This I paid, knowing that it would secure the distribution of the Holy Scriptures to another twenty-five souls. Having thus passed through the border formalities, I was met by Pastor Maxwell Msindo (FGEA Zimbabwe co-ordinator). Later that afternoon Pastor Duwen Musaka (FGEA Zambia co-ordinator) also arrived in Bulawayo after a 24 hour bus journey from Zambia. We were thankful that the Lord had brought us together over such distances.

At Pastor Msindo's house we inspected the stock of Bibles and books that were to be distributed. Thankfully all of the AV English Bibles for distribution (1100 AV English Bibles, kindly granted by the Bible Spreading Union) had been received by Pastor Msindo. There were also 300 TBS Ndebele New Testaments, 84 Shona (Union 1949 edition) Bibles, 600 TBS booklets on Bible Versions and 2380 books re-printed in Bulawayo (1080 *Love of God*, 1030 *Jesus the Way* and 270 *Mystery, Babylon*). Pastor Msindo also showed me the Shona translation of *Jesus the Way*, which is awaiting final formatting and checking prior to printing.

The main part of the programme was for me to speak at two FGEA conferences in Bulawayo and Zvishavane (120 miles from Bulawayo). At these conferences most of the Bibles and much of the literature were distributed. Whilst in Zvishavane I also preached at a church on the Lord's Day, as well as at a midweek house meeting.

Each conference lasted three days, with the final day being solely for ministers or leaders. In total over 200 people (at least half were ministers) attended the two conferences. The principal themes were Christ the eternal Word, and the Holy Scriptures which set forth the way of salvation. I spoke particularly about the inspiration of the Scriptures, their providential preservation, and the fundamental truth that God the Holy Spirit will never lead or teach anyone contrary to the Word of God. I also testified against modern corrupt translations of the Bible and the so-called "prosperity gospel" of health and wealth in this life. In doing so I knew that I would be contradicting much of what is commonly preached in Africa; however, it was quietly and graciously received by the hearers. It is my earnest prayer that the seed sown would bear precious and abiding fruit to God's glory, and the edifying of the church. I can testify that the Lord gave much liberty in speaking, and strength despite the challenging temperatures and conditions (in Zvishavane it was about 40° Celsius in the day, no running water, usually no electricity and multitudes of flies and mosquitoes).

Pastors Msindo and Musaka also spoke from an African perspective about Bible versions. It was a very striking moment when they asked someone with an NIV to read out Acts 8. 37 and Matthew 18. 11. One minister stood up and holding out his open NIV, said in amazement, "It's not there!" Likewise, Pastor Musaka asked one person to read out aloud John 8. 11 in the NIV concerning the Lord's words to the woman caught in adultery (AV – "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more"), but asking everyone else to shut their Bibles. The NIV ends the verse "go and leave your life of sin", but when an African says this it sounds like "go and live your life of sin"! When this was put to the test by someone reading aloud John 8. 11 from their NIV, a number of ministers exclaimed in astonishment, "What!? What did you read?" Pastor Musaka then explained that even when reading, many ordinary Africans cannot tell the difference between the English words "leave" and "live", but that the AV words are crystal clear. Many of the ministers testified to being very deeply challenged about what they heard about Bible versions – we encouraged all to read prayerfully the

booklets on Bible versions that were distributed, and above all to compare the AV with the modern versions many were using.

The conferences included a short session in which we spoke about the work of FGEA, and many ministers present desired to join FGEA (Zimbabwe). It was an encouragement to see the realisation amongst many for the need for African ministers themselves to stand, by God's grace, for these truths, and against the flood of error in their midst.

On the last morning in Bulawayo before going to the airport, we visited the Scottish Free Presbyterian Mission in Bulawayo. We had opportunity to meet with the lead translator for the Ndbele Bible and to discuss the early work being undertaken on a Shona translation. These translations are being done in conjunction with the TBS and on the same basis as the AV. There is a very great need for such versions.

Both Pastor Musaka and I were given safe travelling back home. Pastor Musaka took 300 books back to Zambia for distribution there. The remaining stock of books was for distribution by other FGEA contacts in Zimbabwe.

It is with thankfulness to the Lord that we knew a spirit of union and love one to another in Christ. Despite one's many fears and shortcomings, the Lord's mercies endure forever. Great is His faithfulness! (Lam. 3. 22-23.)

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CHURCH HISTORY

Augustus Toplady (1740 – 1778)

By J. R. Broome

Augustus Toplady was born at Farnham, Surrey on 4th November 1740. His father, who was a soldier, died soon after he was born. He was educated for a time at Westminster school. When still a boy his mother went to Ireland to claim some property there and he accompanied her. It was in Ireland that he received his final education taking a B.A. degree at Trinity College, Dublin. It was also according to his own writings in Ireland at the age of sixteen that the Lord met with him and opened his ears to the truth. In his diary for February 29th, 1768 he writes:

At night, after my return from Exeter, my desires were strongly drawn out, and drawn up to the Lord. I could indeed say that I groaned

with groans of love, joy, and peace; but so it was, even with comfortable groans that cannot be uttered. That sweet text, Ephesians 2. 13, 'Ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ,' was particularly delightful and refreshing to my soul; and the more so as it reminded me of the days and months that are passed, even the day of my sensible espousals to the bridegroom of the elect. It was from that passage that Mr. Morris preached on the memorable evening of my effectual call. By the grace of God under the ministry of that dear messenger, and under that sermon I was, I trust, brought nigh by the blood of Christ, in August 1756. Strange that I, who had so long sat under the means of grace in England, should be brought nigh to God in an obscure part of Ireland, amidst an handful of God's people met together in a barn, and under the ministry of one who could hardly spell his name! Surely it was the Lord's doings and is marvellous! The excellency of such power must be of God, and cannot be of man: the regenerating spirit breathes not only on whom, but likewise when, where and as he listeth.

Many years later another servant of the Lord was blessed on the shores of Ireland as he wrestled in great trouble with the Lord. We are thinking, of course, of J. C. Philpot, who as a staunch defender of the truth in its spirit and power and a lover of the doctrines of grace, was a strikingly similar servant of the Lord to Augustus Toplady. Early in life Toplady showed his gift for writing poetry. He published a small volume in Dublin in 1759 when only nineteen. Nothing seems to remain of his exercises to the ministry, but it seems clear from his later life that he did not take up the work lightly or unthinkingly. He was ordained on Sunday the 6th June, 1762. He first went to Farleigh Hungerford in Somerset; then later he ministered at Fen-Ottery and Harpford near Exeter; and finally took the living at Broadhembury near Honiton in Devon, where he preached until 1775. His health then showing signs of failing with consumption, he went to London for a change of climate. He stayed there for the last three years of his life, preaching regularly in the French Calvinistic Church in Orange Street on Sundays and Wednesday evenings so long as his health permitted.

His hymns were first published in 1776. He included in this volume the hymns of other writers such as Charles Wesley, and as he attached no names to any of the hymns, it is sometimes difficult to be certain exactly which were by Toplady himself. Many of his own hymns were first published in The Gospel Magazine in 1771 signed "Minimus" or "Concionator". His famous hymn, *Rock of Ages*, appeared in this

magazine in 1776 entitled *A Living and Dying Prayer for the Holiest Believer in the World*, signed “A.T.” Toplady was himself Editor of *The Gospel Magazine* from December 1775 until June 1776. He was a strong opponent of error and a great defender of the truth. In his life he came into much conflict with John Wesley. His own experience had showed him the utter futility of free-will and led him to be a consistent defender of the doctrines of grace. He was also a very loyal defender of his own church, The Church of England, for whose Thirty-Nine Articles he had a great affection. These he defended in an extensive work entitled *An Historic Proof of the Doctrinal Calvinism of the Church of England*, published in 1774. Besides this he wrote many other works. Considering how relatively young he was when he died – thirty-eight – his complete works, which run into a combined volume of well over 900 pages of close print, show how he expended his energies in study and the defence of the truth.

His memory today survives mainly in his hymns, and at Broadhembury, where he preached from 1768 to 1775 and where the Lord greatly blessed his work. In that Church, on the left hand side of the Chancel, there was erected in 1898 a memorial to him by lovers of his hymns. It reads:

In grateful memory of the Revd. Augustus Montague Toplady B.A.
Vicar of this parish from 1768 to 1778, and author of the immortal
hymn:

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me;
Let me hide myself in Thee!
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.”

to whose personal piety, brilliant gifts, sanctified learning and uncompromising advocacy of the gospel of the Sovereign Grace of God his writings bear abundant testimony. This Tablet is erected 1898 A.D., being 120 years after he entered into the joy of his Lord on the 11th August 1778, in the 38th year of his age.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.”
Ephesians 2. v. 8 and 9.

A little-known record is his diary which he kept for the period December 6th, 1767—December 3rd, 1768, entitled, *Short memorials*

of God's gracious dealings with my soul in a way of spiritual experience. The following extracts reveal the man in his approaches to his God.

Sunday, 27th December, 1767. In the morning read prayers and preached at Harpford, to a congregation tolerably large and very attentive. Afterwards administered the Lord's Supper to some who appeared truly devout communicants. It was indeed an ordinance of love to my own soul. I experienced the favour and presence of God. I sat under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was pleasant to my taste

Saturday, 9th January, 1768. This evening I felt unusual diffidence in myself, about the performance of tomorrow's duty. Free (blessed be God) from fightings without, I yet had fears within. I besought the Lord to manifest his strength in my weakness; and these precious words were returned, with unutterable power and sweetness to my soul. "Trust in the Lord Jehovah, for in him is everlasting strength." I was instantly enabled to cast myself with perfect acquiescence on the message from heaven: which though delivered as an exhortation, is in effect a most glorious and comfortable promise. My doubts ceased; my misgivings vanished away; and I was assured that God would certainly give me a supply of sabbath-day strength for a sabbath-day's work.

Sunday, 10th January. Found God faithful to his word. Great was my strength, both morning and afternoon: nor less the liveliness of my soul in preaching.

Sunday, 31st January. How sweet is the work of the ministry, when attended with the unction and power of the Holy One! My soul has been very barren since last Lord's Day; but this Sabbath has been a Sabbath indeed.

Wednesday, 10th February. The Lord was very gracious to my soul this afternoon. His spirit was the comforter, and Mr. Erskine's two sermons, on "The Rainbow of the Covenant", were the channel through which that comfort was conveyed. Amid my many seasons and long intervals of barrenness and want of joy, God sometimes makes me glad with the light of his countenance.

Sunday, 20th March. About six in the evening, being alone in my chamber, I was still more sensibly led forth beside the waters of comfort. I tasted some sweet droppings of the honeycomb and could say, "My Lord and my God." The embers were blown aside by the breath of the Holy Spirit; the veil of unbelief was rent; and the shadows fled away. Light sprung up and the fire kindled: even the light of God's countenance and the fire of his love.

Thursday, 7th April. That gracious promise was given to me today, "I will inform thee and teach thee in the way wherein thou shalt go; and I will guide thee with mine eye": I had been previously much dejected in spirit and exercised with various doubts; but that word of comfort came with such power and effect that I was soon set to rights again.

Thursday, 21st April. Riding home tonight from Exeter the Lord was with me in a way of spiritual communion. Applying to him for a blessing on my intended removal to Broadhembury this answer was given, "Go and I will be with thee" and a little while after, "Thou shalt shake off every weight."

Sunday, 24th April. What a day has this been! A Sabbath Day indeed, a feasting to my soul; a day of triumph and rejoicing. He brought me into his banqueting-house and his banner over me was love. I never was more assisted from above than this afternoon; very seldom so much. Lord, bless the people as thou hast blessed me.

Thursday, May 5th. My honoured and most dear mother's birthday. Gracious God, crown her inestimable life with many years to come; and crown each year with additional grace and redoubled happiness. After dinner removed for good from Fen Ottery to Broadhembury; where being arrived, I spent the evening in a comfortable frame of soul; humbly trusting that the God and guide of my life, who fixeth the bounds of our habitation below, will himself vouchsafe to be the dwelling place of my soul here and ever.

Friday, 27th May. Not withstanding my aggravated sinfulness and my absolute unworthiness, God gave me this night to drink of his consolations as from a river. "Pardon and sanctification," was my prayer: "Mercy, pardon and salvation," was the gracious reply.

Saturday, 18th June. All day at home. Wrote several hymns; and while writing that which begins thus: "When faith's alert, and hope shines clear," I was, through grace, very comfortable in my soul; so indeed I have been the whole day.

Sunday, 24th July. In the morning I rode to Sheldon; where I read prayers and preached. Returning thence, I read prayers and preached here at Broadhembury in the afternoon with uncommon strength and liveliness and to the largest congregation I have yet seen in the place. Blessed be the God of all comfort for the distinguished mercies of this delightful Sabbath. I was carried through the duties of it as on eagle's wings and amidst the vast auditory the word preached seemed to reach some hearts with power and demonstration of the Spirit. May it be fastened as a nail in a sure place and be found after many days.

Monday, 29th July. This evening after my return from Grange, God was very gracious to my soul. My meditation of him was sweet and he gave me songs in the night season. I had sweet melting views of his

special goodness and my own utter unworthiness. The united sense of these two keeps the soul in an even balance. I am then happiest as well as safest when my very exaltations lay me lowest.

At Broadhembury, Toplady had a very large congregation, though he said when he first went there he truly felt there were only about three in the parish in whom he had reason to believe the Lord had begun a work of grace. When his health began to fail in 1775 he felt he had to leave and go to London. His illness took a serious turn in April, 1778, and he only preached four times after this. In his end he was greatly blessed and his last days were in many ways his best days. Speaking to a friend, he said, "It is impossible to describe how good God is to me. Since I have been sitting here in this chair this afternoon I have enjoyed such a season, such sweet communion with God and such delightful manifestations of His presence and love to my soul, that it is impossible for words to describe them. I have had peace and joy unutterable..." He showed great resignation to the Lord's will and was brought in peace to his end on the 11th August, 1778. He was buried in Tottenham Court Chapel, London.

Of his hymns there are in Gadsby's Selection twenty-four, which include:

Awake, sweet gratitude, and sing	117
Rock of ages, cleft for me	143
Your harps, ye trembling saints	330
A debtor to mercy alone	340
A sovereign Protector I have	346
Lord, dismiss us with thy blessing	461
When languor and disease invade	472
Compared with Christ, in all beside	940
Happiness, thou lovely name	988
Emptied of earth I fain would be	991
At anchor laid, remote from home	1018
Redeemer! whither should I flee	1052

Augustus Toplady lived a comparatively short life, but at the same time a very full one. In an age of rationalism and godlessness, he was among a group of ministers whom the Lord raised up to proclaim the gospel and defend the truth; which included such names as John Berridge, John Newton and George Whitefield. He has left a sweet savour behind and his memory is blessed.

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Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) – His Early Years

By J. R. Broome

Jonathan Edwards was born on 5th October 1703 at Windsor, New England, on the banks of the River Connecticut. His ancestors were exiles from England in the great Puritan exodus. His father was minister at Windsor for about sixty years. He died in 1758 at the age of eighty-nine only two months before his son Jonathan. Jonathan's parents had married in 1694 and lived in partnership for over sixty-three years. His mother was Esther Stoddard, daughter of Solomon Stoddard, minister of Northampton, the place where, in later years, Jonathan himself was to be minister from 1727 to 1750. His mother lived to be ninety. She had ten daughters and one son. Four were older than Jonathan and six younger.

Jonathan was educated with care. He had godly parents and it was their desire that from a child he might know the Holy Scriptures. He was a sober and quiet boy, yet a strong and highly intelligent character. The blessing which attended his father's ministry did not pass him unnoticed. His earliest extant letter is written to one of his sisters away from home, dated Windsor 10th May 1716, when he was thirteen. He writes:

Through the wonderful mercy and goodness of God there hath been in this place a very remarkable stirring and pouring out of the Spirit of God, and likewise now is, but I think I have reason to think it is in some measure diminished but I hope not much. About thirteen have been joined to the Church in a state of full communion...I think there come commonly on Mondays about thirty persons to speak with father about the condition of their souls. It is a time of general health in this place.

The loving concern of Mr. Edwards for his family is seen in a letter he wrote home, while a military chaplain in 1711. He wrote to his wife:

Remember my love to each of the children, to Esther, Elizabeth, Anne, Mary, Jonathan, Eunice, and Abigail. The Lord have mercy on and eternally save them all, with our dear little Jerusha. The Lord bind up their souls with thine and mine in the bundle of life. Tell the children, that I would have them, if they desire to see their father again, to pray daily for me in secret; and above all things to seek the favour of God in Christ Jesus, and that while they are young.

In his youth Jonathan was the subject of various religious impressions, especially as a result of the blessing which visibly rested on his father's ministry at Windsor. About twenty years later he wrote of how the Lord had worked in his heart in the years from between 1713 and 1723, when he was between the age of ten and twenty. In the years up until 1716 he was at home under his father's tuition, until he entered Yale College at New Haven, where he studied for six years. He was licensed to preach the gospel at the age of nineteen and went to his first church in New York in August 1722, where he stayed for eight months and then returned to Windsor at the end of April 1723. In September 1723 he went to Yale to receive his M.A. and stayed there studying and preaching occasionally until June 1724 when he was made a tutor at the college. It is to this period of his life that the following account of the Lord's dealings with him belongs. As in America, he is regarded as a divine of comparable stature to John Owen, the English Puritan, it is of interest to know something of his spiritual experience. He writes:

I had a variety of concerns and exercises about my soul from my childhood; but I had two most remarkable seasons of awakening, before I met with that change by which I was brought to those new dispositions, and that new sense of things, that I have since had. The first time was when I was a boy, some years before I went to college, at a time of awakening in my father's congregation. I was then very much affected for many months and concerned about my soul's salvation, and was abundant in religious duties. I used to pray five times a day in secret and to spend much time in religious conversation with other boys, and used to meet with them to pray together...I with some of my school mates joined together and built a booth in a swamp, in a very retired spot for a place of prayer. And besides I had particular places of my own in the woods, where I used to retire by myself, and was from time to time much affected...I seemed to be much in my element when engaged in religious duties. I am ready to think many are deceived with such affections and such a kind of delight as I then had in religion, and mistake it for grace.

But in progress of time my convictions and affections wore off and I entirely lost all these affections and delights and left off secret prayer, at least as to any constant preference for it, and returned like a dog to his vomit, and went on in the ways of sin. Indeed I was at times very uneasy, especially towards the latter part of my time at College, when it pleased God to seize me with pleurisy; in which He brought me nigh to the grave and shook me over the pit of hell. And yet it was not long

after my recovery before I fell again into my old ways of sin. But God would not suffer me to go on with any quietness. I had great and violent inward struggles, till after many conflicts with wicked inclinations, repeated resolutions and bonds, that I laid myself under by vows to God, I was brought wholly to break off all former wicked ways and all ways of known outward sin, and to apply myself to seek salvation and practise many religious duties, but without that kind of affection and delight I had formerly experienced.

My concern now wrought more by inward struggles and conflicts and self reflection. I made seeking my salvation the main business of my life. But yet it seems to me, I sought it after a miserable manner, which has made me sometimes since question whether ever it issued in that which was saving, being ready to doubt whether such miserable seeking ever succeeded. I was indeed brought to seek salvation in a manner that I never was before; I felt a spirit to part with all things in the world for an interest in Christ. My concern continued and prevailed with many exercises, thoughts and inward struggles, but it yet never seemed to be proper to express that concern by the name of terror.

From my childhood my mind had been full of objections against the doctrine of God's sovereignty in choosing whom He would to eternal life, and rejecting whom He pleased, leaving them eternally to perish and be everlastingly tormented in hell. It used to appear like a horrible doctrine to me. But I remember the time very well, when I seemed to be convinced and fully satisfied as to this sovereignty of God, but I never could give an account how or by what means I was thus convinced, not in the least imagining at the time, nor a long time after, that there was any extraordinary influence of God's Spirit in it. However my mind rested in it and it put an end to all those cavils and objections. There has been a wonderful change in my mind with respect to this doctrine from that day to this...

But I have often since that first conviction had quite another sense of God's sovereignty. I have often had since not only a conviction but a delightful conviction. Absolute sovereignty is what I love to ascribe to God. The first instance that I remember of that sort of inward, sweet delight in God and divine things, that I have much lived in since, was on reading those words, 1 Timothy 1. 17, 'Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, *be* honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen'. As I read those words, there came into my soul a sense of the glory of God....Never any words of Scripture seemed to me as these words did....How happy should I be, I thought, if I might enjoy that God and be rapt up in Him in Heaven and be as it were swallowed up in Him for ever. I kept saying those words of Scripture to myself and prayed in a manner quite different from what I used to do,

with a new sort of affection. But it never came into my thought, that there was anything spiritual or of a saving nature in this.

From about this time I began to have a new kind of apprehensions and ideas of Christ and the work of redemption and the glorious way of salvation by Him. An inward sweet sense of these things at times came into my heart, and my soul was led away in pleasant views and contemplations of them. My mind was greatly engaged to spend my time in reading and meditating on Christ, on the beauty and excellency of His person and the way of salvation by free grace in Him. Those words in the Song of Solomon 2. 1 used to be abundantly with me; '*I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.*' The words seemed to me to represent the loveliness and beauty of Christ. The whole book of the Canticles used to be pleasant to me and I used to read it much.

Not long after I first began to experience these things I gave an account to my father of some of the things that had passed in my mind. I was pretty much affected by the discourse we had together; and when the discourse was ended, I walked abroad alone in a solitary place in my father's pasture for contemplation. And as I walked there and looking upon the sky and clouds, there came into my mind so sweet a sense of the glorious majesty and grace of God, as I know not how to express; I seemed to see them both in sweet conjunction; majesty and meekness joined together; it was a sweet, and gentle, and holy majesty; and also a majestic meekness, an awful sweetness; a high, and great, and holy gentleness.

My sense of divine things seemed gradually to increase till I went to preach at New York, which was about a year and a half after they began, and while I was there I felt them very sensibly in a much higher degree than I had done before. My longings after God and holiness were much increased. Pure and humble, holy and heavenly, Christianity appeared to me exceedingly amiable. I felt a burning desire to be, in everything, a complete Christian, and conformed to the blessed image of Christ, and that I might live, in all things, according to the pure, sweet and blessed rules of the gospel. I had an eager thirsting after progress in these things; which put me upon pursuing and pressing after them.

It was my continual strife, day and night, and constant inquiry, how I should be more holy, and more becoming a child of God and a disciple of Christ. I now sought an increase of grace and holiness, with much more earnestness than ever I had sought grace before I had it...but yet with too great a dependence on my own strength; which afterwards proved a great damage to me. My experience had not then taught me, as it has done since, my extreme feebleness and impotence, every manner of way, and the bottomless depths of secret corruption

and deceit there was in my heart. However, I went on with my eager pursuit after more holiness and conformity to Christ....

There was no part of creature-holiness that I had so great a sense of its loveliness, as humility of heart and poverty of spirit; and there was nothing that I so earnestly longed for. My heart panted after this – to lie low before God, as in the dust, that I might be nothing, and that God might be all, that I might become as a little child. I had the abundance of sweet religious conversation in the family where I lived, with Mr John Smith and his pious mother. My heart was knit in affection to those in whom was the appearance of true piety; and I could bear the thought of no other companions, but the disciples of the blessed Jesus. I had great longings for the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world; and my secret prayers used to be in great part taken up in praying for it....

I frequently used to retire into a solitary place, on the banks of the River Hudson, at some distance from the city, for contemplation on divine things and secret converse with God and had many sweet hours there. Sometimes Mr Smith and I walked there together, to converse on the things of God and our conversation used to turn much on the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world, and the glorious things that God would accomplish for His church in the latter days. I had then, and at other times, the greatest delight in the Holy Scriptures of any book whatsoever. Oftentimes in reading it every word seemed to touch my heart. I felt a harmony between something in my heart, and those sweet and powerful words. I often seemed to see so much light exhibited by every sentence, and such a refreshing food communicated, that I could not get along in reading, often dwelling long on one sentence, to see the wonders contained in it. Almost every sentence seemed to be full of wonders.

I came away from New York in the month of April 1723 and had a most bitter parting with Mrs Smith and her son. My heart seemed to sink within me at leaving the family and city, where I had enjoyed so many sweet and pleasant days. I went from New York to Wethersfield by water; and as I sailed away I kept sight of the city as long as I could. However, that night after this sorrowful parting I was greatly comforted in God at West Chester, where we went ashore to lodge, and had a pleasant time of it all the way to Saybrook. It was sweet to me to think of meeting dear Christians in heaven, where we should never part more. At Saybrook we went ashore to lodge on Saturday and there kept the Sabbath, where I had a refreshing season walking alone in the fields.

After I came home to Windsor I remained much in a like frame of mind as when at New York, only sometimes I felt my heart ready to sink with the thoughts of my friends at New York. My support was in

contemplations on the heavenly state. It was a comfort to think of that state where there is fullness of joy, where there reigns heavenly calm and delightful love without alloy, where there are continually the dearest expressions of this love, where is the enjoyment of the persons loved, without ever parting. And how will the mutual lovers join together to sing the praises of God and the Lamb. How will it fill us with joy to think that this enjoyment, these sweet exercises will never cease, but will last to all eternity.

Here Jonathan Edwards' account of the Lord's work in his soul ends. In it can be seen how he was struggling in his own strength to be holy, and also how, as he looked back on it when he wrote much later in life, he understood his youthful ignorance. As it stands it shows clearly the Lord's beginning with him, a man who was to witness a great spiritual awakening at Northampton under his own ministry in 1735 and 1741 and to be elected as President of Princeton College a few weeks before his sudden death on 22nd March 1758 at the age of fifty-four.

(For any wishing to study the life of Jonathan Edwards in greater depth, we recommend Jonathan Edwards, A New Biography, by Iain H. Murray, Banner of Truth 1987; also our own paperback In Search of Souls, Gospel Standard Publications 2002, from which the above article is extracted in a slightly amended form.)

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DOCTRINE AND TRUTH

Luther on the Law and the Gospel – Part 2

By Dr. I. Sadler

In the first part of the discussion of Luther's teaching on the law and the gospel, the condemning power of the law was contrasted with the blessings of free salvation that flow from the gospel through the power of the Holy Spirit. A Christian's liberty from the law is not a carnal liberty of the flesh, but a divine liberty in the conscience from the wrath of God toward sin, the Holy Spirit so working in a believer's heart to produce obedience to God's commandments out of love. It is now appropriate to come to Luther's teaching concerning the law in relation to a believer's rule of life. However, in preparation, it is first necessary to show more clearly the extent to which a believer is freed from the law.

In the Epistle to the Galatians Luther states that the Apostle Paul is speaking of the whole law, both ceremonial and moral, when he says, “I through the law am dead to the law” (Gal. 2. 19).

And here Paul speaketh not of the ceremonial law only (as before we have declared more at large) but of the whole law, whether it be ceremonial or moral, which to a Christian is utterly abrogate, for he is dead unto it: not that the law is utterly taken away: nay, it remaineth, liveth and reigneth still in the wicked. But a godly man is dead unto the law, like as he is dead unto sin, the devil, death and hell: which notwithstanding do still remain, and the world with all the wicked shall still abide in them. Wherefore when the Papist understandeth that the ceremonial law only is abolished, understand thou that Paul and every Christian is dead to the law, and yet the whole law remaineth still.

As for example: Christ rising from death is free from the grave, and yet the grave remaineth still. Peter is delivered from the prison, the sick of the palsy from his bed, the young man from his coffin, the maiden from her couch, and yet the prison, the bed, the coffin, the couch do remain still. Even so the law is abolished when I am not subject unto it, the law is dead when I am dead unto it, and yet it remaineth still. But because I am dead unto it by another law, therefore it is dead also unto me (p. 121; Gal. 2. 19).

This other law which Luther speaks of is one of grace and liberty. Luther says further: “But we know that when we apprehend Christ by faith inwardly in conscience, we enter into a certain new law, which swalloweth up the old law that held us captive” (p. 121; Gal. 2. 19).

After such unequivocal statements, could Luther uphold the moral law as the believer’s rule of life? The answer is no: for Luther speaks thus to put the matter beyond any doubt:

Some would bind us, at this day, to certain of Moses’ laws that like them best, as the false apostle would have done at that time. But this is in no wise to be suffered. For, if we give Moses leave to rule over us in any thing, we are bound to obey him in all things. Wherefore, we will not be burdened with any law of Moses. We grant he is to be read amongst us, and to be heard as a prophet and witness-bearer of Christ: and moreover, that out of him we may take good examples of good laws and holy life. But we will not suffer him in any wise to have dominion over our conscience. In this case let him be dead and buried, and let no man know where his grave is (p. 349; Gal. 5. 3).

The only rule of a believer’s life that Luther expounds from Galatians 6. 15-16 is grace and truth in a risen Christ working divine

love in a believer's heart. This is to rule the conscience, but in no way admits any licence for sin; rather it works to the contrary by the power of the Spirit.

This is the only and true rule wherein we ought to walk, namely, the new creature, which is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, but the new man created unto the image of God in righteousness and true holiness, which inwardly is righteous in the Spirit, and outwardly is holy and clean in the flesh (p. 432; Gal. 6. 16).

On the law and the gospel, Luther's doctrine is clearly consistent with that of Huntington and Gadsby, who were branded as Antinomians for speaking of their liberty from the terrors of the law and their blessed freedom in Christ Jesus. However, it must be said that Calvin, excellent as he was in most things, differed from Luther on this point. In his *Institutes*, Calvin taught that the moral law of the Ten Commandments is a believer's rule of life, although the believer is not under the condemnation of the law. However, Calvin's treatment of the subject is cursory compared with that of Luther. Moreover, Luther proved the condemning power of the law in his monastery cell to a depth scarcely any other man has experienced. Luther's doctrine flows from the heart, being experimentally tried and proved; it savours of the truth, and is altogether more convincing than Calvin's doctrine on this subject. The natural sinful heart is a slippery slope, down which one may easily slide. Holding the law as the believer's rule of life and believing to be under the law, a ready entrance is given for a legal spirit, which seeks to gain God's favour by one's own obedience, and not Christ's.

It is now appropriate to turn to Luther's doctrine on the preaching of the law and the gospel. Like Gadsby he contended for a discriminating ministry and an insistence on what is known as a "law-work"; namely, that knowledge of the law's condemnation precedes a revelation to the soul of salvation in Jesus Christ. Luther says of the law:

It cannot beget us into a new nature, or a new birth; but it setteth before us the old birth, whereby we were born to the kingdom of the devil; and so it prepareth us to a new birth, which is by faith in Jesus Christ" (p. 259; Gal. 3. 26).

Therefore Luther asserts that, "...afflicted and broken spirits must be comforted by Christ: but the hard-hearted Pharisees, unto whom the grace of God is preached in vain, must be terrified by the law" (p. 14; Luther's Preface).

Lest any should think such sentiments are just a passing comment taken out of context, the following passage, summarising his work on the Galatians, clearly sets forth Luther's doctrine concerning a discriminating ministry:

But it is a thing very strange and unknown to the world, to teach Christians to learn to be ignorant of the law, and so to live before God, as if there were no law: notwithstanding, except thou be ignorant of the law, and be assuredly persuaded in thine heart that there is now no law nor wrath of God, but altogether grace and mercy for Christ's sake, thou canst not be saved: for by the law cometh the knowledge of sin. Contrariwise, works and the keeping of the law must be so straitly required in the world, as if there were no promise or grace: and that because of the stubborn, proud and hard-hearted, before whose eyes nothing must be set but the law, that they may be terrified and humbled. For the law is given to terrify and kill such, and to exercise the old man: and both the word of grace and of wrath must be rightly divided according to the apostle, 2 Tim. 2. Here is then required a wise and faithful disposer of the Word of God, which can so moderate the law, that it may be kept within his bounds. He that teacheth that men are justified before God by the observation of the law, passeth the bounds of the law, and confoundeth these two kinds of righteousness, active and passive, and is but an ill logician, for he doth not rightly divide. Contrariwise, he that setteth forth the law and works to the old man, and the promise of forgiveness of sins and God's mercy to the new man, divideth the word well. For the flesh or the old man must be coupled with the law and works: the spirit or the new man must be joined with the promise of God and His mercy. Wherefore when I see a man that is bruised enough already, oppressed with the law, terrified with sin, and thirsting for comfort, it is time that I should remove out of his sight the law and active righteousness, and that I should set before him by the gospel the Christian and passive righteousness, which excluding Moses with his law, offereth the promise made in Christ, who came for the afflicted, and for sinners. Here is man raised up again, and conceiveth good hope, neither is he any longer under the law, but under grace (p. 18-19).

However, one might object here, that Luther said "offereth the promise made in Christ," and that elsewhere the word "offer" is used in relation to the gospel and to Christ. How is it that Luther teaches the necessity of a discriminating ministry, yet apparently teaches what is known as the "open offer" of Christ? Indeed, it is true that the word "offer" appears in the English translation and at first glance implies the

“open offer.” However, such an interpretation would indicate a glaring contradiction with the former quotations that have been given. Such inconsistency in Luther’s teaching is hardly likely from a great theologian and eminent professor lecturing to his students, especially when it is considered that his lectures were published to the world afterwards. However, the explanation is simple, when one considers the meaning of the English word “offer” and the words used in the Latin original.

The English word “offer” has two principal meanings: 1. to bring before, set forth or present: 2. to tender for acceptance or refusal. In modern English the second meaning is the prevalent use of the word, whereas in older English the first meaning often prevails. However, Latin distinguishes more clearly between these two meanings. In particular, the Latin word “offero,” from which the English word “offer” is derived, only means “to bring before, set forth or to present.” Therefore, a rendering of “offero” by the word “offer” in modern English may be misleading. A careful examination of the Latin words translated “offer” in Luther’s Commentary on the Galatians shows that the Latin words “offero,” “exhibeo,” “dono” and “annuntio” (all meaning to set forth, show, present, announce, etc.) have been used. In several cases the English word “offer” is a paraphrase of the translator, with no corresponding Latin word from which it was translated. In one instance the Latin meaning is ambiguous in respect of the precise meaning of the word “offer,” but the whole tenor of Luther’s work demonstrates his meaning. Thus, it is concluded that Luther does not teach the “open offer” as many modern Evangelicals interpret it, but his discrimination in preaching is akin to Gadsby and Philpot. The “open offer” that Luther teaches is clearly an open presentation of the gospel and the grace of God towards sinners.

To demonstrate that this is not isolated to Luther’s Commentary on the Galatians or some forced interpretation of the present author, the following quotation from Jerom Zanchius’s *Doctrine of Absolute Predestination* (translated by Augustus Toplady, p. 48) is given:

Now, if God invited all men to come to Him, and then shut the door of mercy against any who were desirous of entering, His invitation would be a mockery and unworthy of Himself; but we insist on it that He does not invite all men to come to Him in a saving way, and that every individual person who is, through His gracious influence on his

heart, made willing to come to Him, shall sooner or later be surely saved by Him, and that with an everlasting salvation.

This clear denial of the modern “open offer” came from a leading Reformer who lived a generation after Luther. Zanchius quoted widely from Luther and Martin Bucer (whom Zanchius succeeded at Strasburg) to refute those who called themselves Lutherans, but who denied the doctrines of free and sovereign grace.

By way of conclusion, it is seen from the many quotations of Luther that there is a close similarity between the teaching of the Gospel Standard Articles of Faith (especially Article 16) and the teaching of Luther on the law and the gospel. If many of the quotations from Luther had been given without the author’s name, no doubt there would have been the cry of “hyper-Calvinist”! But will any true Protestant dare to call the great Reformer a hyper-Calvinist? Scarcely since the time of the apostles has a man’s ministry, by the power of the Spirit, shaken whole empires like that of Luther. Only eternity will fully reveal what multitudes have cause to thank God for his ministry, especially through his great work of translating the Bible into German. If this is hyper-Calvinism, why should any be ashamed of such a reproach today?

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A Sense of Sin

By Rev. J. S. Sinclair

Many are the fundamental defects of the popular religion of the present day. One of its defects is the absence of a sense of sin. There are few sinners today in the felt sense of the word. A generation of people have arisen who are pure in their own eyes and yet are not washed from their filthiness. There is a great difference between the committal of sin and the sense of sin. Sin itself is of the creature, but a sense of it is of God. Indulgence in sin, instead of awakening a sense of it, has entirely the opposite effect. Indulgence deadens the conscience. Thus it frequently happens that hardened sinners are in their own opinion the most innocent people in the world. On the other hand, where a true sense of sin is, there is a sense of its constant presence in thought and action, its evil and its guilt, and there is a hatred of it and forsaking of it.

A sense of sin is produced by the Holy Spirit in conversion, and is maintained by the Spirit in sanctification. As to the sense of sin in

conversion, Christ spoke of it in John 16, when He said that after His departure He would send forth the Spirit of truth, who would “reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me.” This is seen in the conviction of heart of the thousands on the day of Pentecost, of Saul of Tarsus, and of the Philippian jailor. The experience of Christians in subsequent generations has been identical. Cases can be found where the first stroke of the Spirit’s power was the manifestation of the love of God, but that left a sense of sin behind it. It is a sense of sin and unworthiness that makes the love of God in Christ so inexpressibly precious in the eyes of the soul.

The Psalmist in the Old Testament and the apostle Paul in the New are witnesses to a sense of sin in sanctification. The Psalms bear testimony to the sense of sin in the process of sanctification. The writers are constantly conscious of being sinners in heart and life. They confess their shortcomings and seek the forgiveness of their iniquities and the light of God’s countenance. The apostle Paul in Romans 7 describes his own experience after conversion, that a living soul finds evil present with him. Here an inward conflict is described which involves a sense of indwelling sin. Regeneration is not sanctification. Regeneration is the creation of the “new man”, but it is not the complete casting out of the “old man”. The “old man” is cast down but not cast out. He is still alive and active, and though dethroned, seeks to regain the ascendancy that he has lost. Where there is a new creature, there must, of necessity, be a sense of the sin, a consciousness of its depravity and guilt, a conflict with its workings, and intense longings for deliverance from it. How conspicuous by its absence is such a sense of sin in the religion of the day!

This sense of sin is absent from many areas of contemporary religious life. It is absent from the preaching of the time. The inspired account of the Fall is treated by many as a myth, while the doctrine of Total Depravity is denied. The preacher of our time is a man who does not have any sense of sin. Sin is chiefly treated in relation to one’s neighbour. Moral evil between man and man, is strongly denounced, but sin, as committed against God and incurring his holy displeasure and righteous curse, is not mentioned. The Bible doctrine of sin and its consequent punishment in hell are regarded by many preachers as unsuitable for the present time.

A sense of sin is also conspicuously absent from public prayer. The Lord Jesus taught His disciples to pray: "Forgive us our sins..." The apostle John declares, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." These testimonies clearly show that a sense of sin is an important element of Christian experience, and that sin should be a matter of confession and supplication before God. But what is often heard is thanksgiving for blessings received. We do not decry a spirit of true thankfulness. This is necessary in its own place, but when no sense of sin or need is expressed, questions must arise about how there can be a rendering of thankfulness to God.

The sense of sin is, further, absent from many supposed conversions. This important change is now generally reduced to one category, a decision for Christ. All that the convert is expected to say is that he believes in and intends to follow Christ. There is no word of conviction of sin, and ruin, and helplessness. A lost sinner, crying to the Lord for mercy and pardon and faith through Jesus Christ, is not to be found. The absence of this consciousness of sin is clearly connected with the lack of those evidences of the new creature. Further there is today an absence of the fear of the Lord. Where this gracious fear is, there is a view of the infinite majesty and holiness of God, as seen both on Mount Sinai and Mount Calvary, a view which fills the soul with a sense of its inexpressible vileness and unworthiness. "This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acception, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." But today, unhallowed familiarity and presumptuous boldness have taken the place of reverence and godly fear.

There is a great deal of confidence in the flesh. The apostle Paul describes true believers as those who have no confidence in the flesh. Fleshly confidence is an outstanding feature of present-day religion, a fitting accompaniment of the lack of a sense of sin. When people's eyes are not opened to see their fallen and lost condition as sinners before God, and when there is no perception of the sin that cleaves to every thought, word and action, there must necessarily be a great deal of esteem for the works of the creature. If people knew in reality the deceitfulness and wickedness of their own hearts, how differently they would act.

There is also an absence of the life of faith. There is a resting on a natural faith, and men and women are not needy sinners entirely dependent upon the Lord Jesus Christ for righteousness, strength and all covenant blessings. Where there is genuine faith, there is a constant realisation of soul need, and a daily seeking the face of the Lord, an inability to live without some communion at the throne of grace with the Father, through the Son and by the Holy Ghost. Preachers make no distinction in their sermons between nature and grace, between a state of condemnation and a state of salvation. Unconverted sinners are not warned of their sin and guilt and danger, or directed to Jesus Christ. Nominal professors are allowed to sleep on in their carnal security. How many must pass into eternity with a lie in their right hand.

This piece, slightly abridged, was written by Rev. James Sinclair, (1868-1921) the minister of Knox's Tabernacle, Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, Glasgow, (where Rev. Jonathan Ranken Anderson was pastor), and first editor of the Free Presbyterian Magazine. The late Rev. Donald Maclean, Glasgow wrote of this piece: "When visiting the late Pastor J. H. Gosden in Maidstone, Kent, during the last war, he remarked to us that these articles made a profound impression upon him when he first read them and they never left his mind."

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Of the Mercy of God

By Dr. J. Gill

Taken from John Gill's monumental A Body of Doctrinal Divinity, Book 1, chapter 14.

Mercy is natural and essential to God; yea, it is His nature and essence: hence He is often described as "merciful" (Ex. 34. 6; Neh. 9. 17; Psa. 116. 5). It is not to be considered as a passion or affection in God, as it is in men; where it is attended with grief, sorrow, anguish and anxiety of mind for the party in misery, which become the more vehement, the nearer the relationship and the stronger the love and affection to the object. The Latin word "misericordia" signifies having another's misery at heart; but with regard to God this does not mean a miserable heart, or one made so by the misery of another; for with Him it is no other than a tendency of His will to help persons in distress, whether in a temporal or spiritual way. This is as essential to

Him as is His goodness; of which it is a branch: and therefore, as God is essentially, originally, independently, and underivatively good, so is He in like manner merciful.

This is one of the perfections which are in some measure imitable by creatures; “Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful” (Luke 6. 36). But though mercy is natural and essential to God, it is not naturally and necessarily exercised on every object in misery: for then all would share in it that are in misery, even all wicked men and devils; whereas it is certain they do not. It is guided in the exercise of it by the love of God; and is governed and influenced by His sovereign will; who “hath...mercy on whom he will *have mercy*” (Rom. 9. 15, 18). Just as omnipotence is essential to God, but is not necessarily put forth to do everything it could; so mercy is directed and guided by the will of God, who does whatsoever He pleases.

Mercy being essential to God, being His nature and essence, nothing out of Himself can be the cause of it; for then there would be a cause prior to Him, and that would be god, and not He Himself. The misery of a creature is not the cause of mercy in God; He is not to be moved and wrought upon as creatures are. Besides, if this was the case, *all* must partake of mercy, since *all* are miserable; which they do not; (see Isa. 27. 11). Nor are the merits of the creature, or works of righteousness, the cause of mercy. These are opposed to each other in the business of salvation (Titus 3. 5). Nor are those to whom mercy is shown, more deserving than those to whom it is not; they are oftentimes *less* deserving, or *more* vile and sinful (see Rom. 3. 9; Eph. 2. 3; 1 Cor. 6. 11; 1 Tim. 1. 13). Nor are even the merits of Christ, or His obedience, sufferings, and death, the cause of mercy in God; for they are the fruits and effects of it, and flow from it. It is “through the tender mercy of our God” that “the dayspring from on high hath visited us” (Luke 1. 78); that is, it is owing to mercy that Christ, who is meant by “the dayspring from on high”, became incarnate, obeyed, suffered, and died, in our room and stead, and wrought out salvation for us. The mercy of God arises from the goodness of His nature, from His special love to His people, and from His sovereign will and pleasure; who, as He loves whom He pleases, and is gracious to whom He will be gracious, so He has mercy on whom he will have mercy (Ex. 33. 19).

The mercy of God is infinite. As His nature is infinite, so are each of His attributes. “His understanding *is* infinite”, (Psa. 147. 5) and so His knowledge, wisdom, justice, holiness, and goodness, and likewise His

mercy are also infinite. It is so in its nature, and in its effects; and this appears both by Him bestowing an infinite good on men, which is Christ, who is the gift of God; and also by bestowing the love, grace, and mercy of God on them. Though, as man, Christ is finite, yet He is, in His divine person, infinite; and delivers His people from an infinite evil, sin. Sin, as an act of the creature, is finite; but objectively, it is infinite, as it is committed against God, the infinite Being (Psa. 51. 4). Therefore it is not only infinite with respect to its number (Job 22. 5) but also with respect to its object, and also with respect to the punishment for it. Its wages are eternal death and this cannot be endured at once, or answered for in a short time. It is carried on “ad infinitum”, without end; and therefore is spoken of as everlasting and eternal. Now mercy has provided for the forgiveness of sin, and for the deliverance of men from the punishment of it, and from being liable to it (Heb. 8. 12).

The mercy of God is eternal. The eternity of mercy is expressed in the same language as the eternity of God Himself; and, indeed, since it is His nature, it must be as eternal as Himself (see Psa. 90. 2; 103. 17). It is from everlasting, as His love is; which is proved by the instances of it, called His “tender mercies”, which “*have been* ever of old”, or from everlasting (Psa. 25. 6). The council and covenant of peace were in eternity, in which the scheme of reconciliation to God was formed, and the method of it settled; and this scheme was set up, even though the subjects of it were enemies, and so it considered them as fallen creatures, and objects of mercy. Indeed, the covenant of grace, which was from everlasting, is a superstructure of mercy (Psa. 89. 1-3), and since mercy is from everlasting, not anything in time can be the cause of it; not the misery of the creature, by the fall of Adam, nor works of righteousness done after conversion; nor the obedience and sufferings of Christ. The mercy of God is to everlasting, in its fruits and effects; it is kept with Christ, and for Him, the Mediator of the covenant; into whose hands are put all the promises and blessings of mercy; called, therefore, “the sure mercies of David” (Psa. 89. 24, 28; Isa. 55. 3). Even temporal blessings, which flow from the mercy of God, are new every morning, and are daily continued, while the spiritual ones always remain. The mercy of God never departs from His people, notwithstanding their backslidings; and though He chides them for them, and hides His face from them, yet still He has mercy on them (Psa. 89. 30-33; Isa. 54. 6-10; Jer. 3. 12,14).

Hence the mercy of God is immutable, as He Himself is, and His love also; and therefore the objects of it are not consumed (Mal. 3. 6). It is invariably the same in every state and condition into which they come. It is, as the virgin Mary expresses it, “from generation to generation”, without any variation or change (Luke 1. 50). It is common to all the three divine persons, Father, Son, and Spirit; for as there is one common undivided essence, of which each equally partakes, the same divine perfections and attributes belong to them. So the attribute of mercy is ascribed to the God and Father of Christ, (1 Peter 1. 3); and to our Lord Jesus Christ; not only as Man and Mediator, but as the true God and eternal life; to whom we are to look for mercy, (Jude 1. 21); and to the blessed Spirit, who helps the infirmities of the saints, and “maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Rom. 8. 26). Mercy is displayed only in and through Christ. God out of Christ is a consuming fire. It is only in Him God proclaims His name, a God “gracious and merciful”; He is the mercy seat, and throne of grace, at which men obtain mercy and find grace; He is the channel through which it flows, and through whom it, in its effects, is conveyed to the sons of men. They are right who cast themselves not on the absolute mercy of God out of Christ; but upon His mercy, as displayed in Him, as the Publican did (Luke 18. 13). In a word, it is represented, as great, large, and ample, and very abundant; we read of a “multitude” of tender mercies; and God is said to be “rich” and “plenteous” in it.

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LETTERS, ADDRESSES AND SERMONS

**Extract from a Sermon Preached by the late John Green,
Pastor of Gower Street Memorial Chapel, London,
on Lord's Day Morning 19th April 1959**

“My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever” (Psa. 45. 1-2).

The psalmist was in a most gracious, sanctified frame of mind when he penned this Psalm. The Holy Spirit had blessed him, and strengthened his faith so that his faith was set upon the Person and

the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. What a good thing it is when the Holy Spirit does thus favour the soul of a sinner, when Christ is first in the sinner's affections, and when they are favoured to worship Him! The Psalmist commences in a remarkable way, and he says, "My heart is inditing a good matter." There are two important words here – "my heart". A good thing if the Lord should engage each of our hearts in the worship of His great and holy Name! It is only heart-worship that meets with God's approval. All mere, external, heady worship, though it may entertain, it does not bring any glory to God. Heart-worship is that worship indited by the Holy Ghost.

We cannot be too exercised about this – whether our worship is heart-worship. If the Holy Spirit is at work in our hearts, we shall be very concerned about this; and our prayer will constantly be that the Holy Spirit might dwell in our hearts, creating therein a godly exercise, one which shall prove profitable to us, and one which shall bring glory to God's great Name. And where God does work in the hearts of sinners, that work will go on and on. Where once He commences a work of grace in the heart of one of His people, that work will never come to an end. That sinner will meet with much opposition. Satan will oppose that one. Their own wretched natures will oppose them day by day. And yet notwithstanding all the opposition, God will see to it that "the righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger."

Are you concerned about your religion, your standing? Do you sometimes feel searched out and tried? If you are a heart-worshipper of the true and living God, you will certainly be tried about it. But if you haven't any heart experience of the truth, you will meet with no opposition: your religion will be a very easy thing: it will just go along smoothly like the water in a brook. But O, if God is teaching you, if He is blessing you, if He is at work in your heart, then you will find very much opposition. The psalmist says, "My heart is inditing a good matter." There was not a lot of fleshly excitement. There was godly sobriety, a weight in the things to which he gives utterance, and he says, "My heart is inditing a good matter." In this wonderful Psalm, the psalmist speaks of many things that he considers to be good matter; and if we are taught by the same Spirit, we shall feel the same things are good matter in our hearts. A great blessing to be enabled to speak of a few things we hope the Lord has done for us, a few things which we know we could never do for ourselves! As some of you look back and

are enabled to recall one or two of those blessed seasons when the Lord favoured you and blessed you, you remember the sweetness and the peace and the love that you felt in your hearts then. And there may have been raised up in your heart a sweet hope that the Lord had been at work there. As you remember His past dealings with you, your soul will sometimes long for a spiritual revival, that God will come and do the same things for you again. Your heart will be on the stretch before God that he will mercifully come and regard you and do you good and confirm your soul.

“My heart is inditing a good matter.” When you can prayerfully and carefully consider the things of the Lord Jesus, and His blessed Person, what He is and what He has to give to poor sinners, this is a good matter. If some of you feel that there is in the Lord Jesus those things your soul truly needs, and if you are praying and imploring Him to give you these things, to make them your very own, then your heart is engaged in the real worship of God’s great and holy Name. Meditation on the things of God is sometimes very profitable to seeking souls. As the blessed Spirit of God opens up the things of God, the riches of the Lord Jesus Christ, you will find some response in your soul, and you will say, “Oh that I could come to Christ! Oh that I could receive from Him those things my poor soul needs!” That woman’s heart was inditing a good matter: she was greatly tried, she had spent all that she had, but she said, “If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.” I believe all taught by the Spirit, who know something of this woman’s experience, their hearts are inditing a good matter. There is a godly, gracious exercise there.

Then says the psalmist, “I speak of the things which I have made touching the king.” No doubt, the King here is the Lord Jesus Christ; and He is a King over His dear people. A wonderful King! He has blessed authority: He speaks with power to the hearts of His people. And the psalmist had known something of the kingly power and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a good thing, a good matter, a blessed thing to be enabled to speak of: something touching the King and His grace, His mercy, his love and His condescension. How attractive is the condescension of the Lord Jesus Christ to poor sinners! What an amazing thing it is, that He who is King of kings and Lord of lords should condescend to look upon poor sinful worms of the earth, and bless them and commune with them, and do them good, and speak with love and mercy to their hearts and grant them communion and

fellowship with Himself! Now the psalmist, he did enjoy this communion and this fellowship. If this verse of the hymn had been penned in his day, he would have endorsed the truth of it:

My heart grows warm with holy fire,
And kindles with a pure desire;
Come, my dear Jesus, from above,
And feed my soul with heavenly love

Isaac Watts

He was in a most blessed frame, and was enabled to speak of the goodness of that great King to him. Now what about you, poor sinner? Could you speak a little this morning of the things touching the King? Have you ever been invited by the King to come to Him to have communion with Him? Has He, so to speak, held out the golden sceptre to thee and said, "What wilt thou?"? Have you made your requests known to the King? Are you making your case known to Him? Have you a case that needs His attention this morning? Good it is if you want to come near to the King, if you wish to speak to the King, if your heart goes out towards him, and you feel that He alone can meet your case!

He speaks very kindly and tenderly to His people, as we shall see in the next verse, where the psalmist says, "Grace is poured into thy lips." He speaks these loving and gracious words; and the psalmist did hear His voice. The Lord had been pleased to speak wonderful things to the psalmist, and he did not forget them: the divine Remembrancer brought them from time to time to his remembrance. And when He did, the psalmist's cup ran over, his heart was filled with heavenly love, and his affections were then set upon things above. It is a great thing for the Lord to come and to speak to a sinner and to shed abroad His love in a poor sinner's heart. When there is love in the heart, there is a spiritual flowing together. And the psalmist knew what this flowing together did: he knew what it was to hear the voice of his God. He had spoken to him and He had told him some wonderful things. Now, if you want the king to speak to you, if there is that in the Word which has been made attractive to you, then, poor sinner, you must come to Him. It may be a fearing faith; but He will never despise one of his dear people who ventures to him. If you come to him and say, as Samuel was instructed to say, "Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth," then God will in His own time speak to your heart. And then the day will come when this clause of the text will be your experience, "I speak of the things which I

have made touching the king.” When God’s servants can speak thus, it is a very happy and blessed thing: their souls delight to speak of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We may not always refer immediately to what the Lord has done for us, but I trust we try to speak from that gracious experience as the Holy Spirit brings these things to our remembrance. Haven’t some of you been favoured to sit in the pew and to hear the Lord’s servants preach, to speak of the things which they have handled, tasted and felt; and you have felt, “The King has been here today”? You have felt that He has blessed you with sweet communion. And it may be you have retired for the night, and you have had to thank Him and bless Him for one more opportunity of meeting with His people to hear those things which have been set forth, and to feel that the Holy Spirit has made you a blessed possessor of these things. “I speak of the things which I have made touching the king” – the things which I have received from the King. And in the gospels we read of some blessed things that fell from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ – some things I trust which the Holy Spirit has made very attractive to us. We were reading this morning in Luke 4, in the 22nd verse, “And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.” And amongst those wonderful words were these: “The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.” Now we believe that although the psalmist lived many years before Christ was here on earth, yet he knew Him and he understood much of that great work of redemption which should be accomplished by Christ. And he speaks of Him and His work as if it were already accomplished: “I speak of the things which I have made touching the King: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.” He seemed so full-to-overflowing: the truth welled up in his heart, and he loved to give utterance to it. He felt Christ was so very, very precious to him that he longed to make Him known, and to speak of Him as he had been favoured to know Him.

To be continued.

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CURRENT EVENTS

Mr Clement Wood (1920 - 2010)

We record with sorrow the death of Mr Clement Wood, for forty-five years the Pastor of Tamworth Road Strict Baptist Church, Croydon. He passed away at the age of ninety on 30th November 2010 at the Bethesda Home at Studley, near Chippenham, where he had spent the last few years of his life. He first preached at Tamworth Road Chapel in 1958, and was pastor there from 1961 to 1996. He travelled widely in this country, preaching regularly in numerous chapels. He told us in his old age that he would rather wear out than rust out. Sometimes he left us in the West Country at 9pm after an evening service and crossed London late at night, latterly after the death of his wife, to go home to an empty house. On occasions he crossed the Atlantic to preach in the United States and Canada. He said at the end of his days, that if he was no longer able to preach, then it was his desire that the Lord would take him home. He preached his last sermon at Little Zoar Chapel, Studley, about five weeks before he died, from Matthew 28. 5-7, and concluded with the last words of the chapter, "Lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world." Those listening felt it would be his last sermon. In the last few years of his life while in Wiltshire, he often preached in the local chapels on Sunday mornings, when his ministry was greatly appreciated by the young people. This had been the case throughout his ministerial life; his great interest had been with the young.

His ministry was often very simple. We remember an occasion at Colerne Chapel, near Bath, when he preached from the words "drops of dew" (Job 38. 28), and spoke of it in the light of Deuteronomy 32. 2, "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew." We reminded him of this sermon just before his end and he said he remembered it well. His death was announced from the pulpit of the Netherlands Reformed Congregation at Lethbridge in Canada on the following Sunday, because the minister himself, as a young man in London, had been greatly blessed under his ministry and had often asked us, "Is that minister who preached at Tamworth Road still alive?" He often went to see ministers at the airport when they flew to America. He said after he was too old to fly, it was the nearest he could get to going himself. On 8th October 2001 he came to Gatwick to see us when we flew out only a few days after the 11th September attack in New York. In the tight security, we valued his prayers in the airport lounge that day. In the last eighteen months of his life he suffered much darkness in his soul and was often greatly tried and tempted, yet in the midst of it all there were moments when the Lord granted him comfort. On his dying bed he said, "Glory for ever and ever and ever," and, "How blessed is my God who loved me and saved me." His last discernible words were, "O bless the Lord my soul. How I love thee. O bless, my soul."

He has left a precious memory behind him as a servant of Christ and we shall always remember him by the closing words of his pulpit prayers: "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer" (Psa. 19. 14).

Jehovah Tsidkenu

“The Lord our Righteousness”

I once was a stranger to grace and to God,
I knew not my danger and felt not my load;
Though friends spoke in rapture of Christ on the tree
Jehovah Tsidkenu was nothing to me.

I oft read with pleasure, to soothe or engage,
Isaiah's wild measure and John's simple page;
But e'en when they pictured the blood-sprinkled tree
Jehovah Tsidkenu seemed nothing to me.

Like tears from the daughters of Zion that roll,
I wept when the waters went over His soul;
Yet thought not that my sins had nailed to the tree
Jehovah Tsidkenu - 'twas nothing to me.

When free grace awoke me, by light from on high,
Then legal fears shook me, I trembled to die;
No refuge, no safety in self could I see,
Jehovah Tsidkenu my Saviour must be.

My terrors all vanished before the sweet name;
My guilty fears banished, with boldness I came
To drink at the fountain, life-giving and free,
Jehovah Tsidkenu is all things to me.

Jehovah Tsidkenu! My treasure and boast,
Jehovah Tsidkenu! I ne'er can be lost;
In Thee I shall conquer by flood and by field,
My anchor, my cable, my breast-plate and shield.

Even treading the valley, the shadow of death,
This watchword shall rally my faltering breath;
For while from life's fever my God sets me free,
Jehovah Tsidkenu, my death song shall be.

Robert Murray M'Cheyne (1834)

PERCEPTION



But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen
that good part, which shall not be taken away
from her. (Luke 10:42)

SUMMER 2011

CONTENTS	Page:
Editorial	1
Current Issues	
A Boy Called Bery—the Savannah Education Trust	4
<i>P. Ramsbottom</i>	
University Life	7
<i>H. Skelton</i>	
Church History	
Colonel John Rede and the Porton Particular Baptist Church	10
<i>J. R. Broome</i>	
Doctrine & Truth	
Extracts from J. C. Philpot	17
Husbands and Wives	18
<i>J. C. Philpot</i>	
Letters, Addresses & Sermons	
The Book of the Revelation	19
<i>B. A. Ramsbottom</i>	
Extract from a Sermon Preached by the late John Green	28
Current Events	
Equality or Persecution	33

Cover Picture: Broughton House, Broughton, Hampshire, home of Anne Steele 1769-1778.

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PERCEPTION

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EDITORIAL

“Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith” (Prov. 15. 16).

The Lord Jesus told Martha, “...thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her” (Luke 10. 41-42). Mary was sitting at Jesus’ feet hearing His word, while Martha was cumbered about much serving. Mary had chosen that better part, a “...little with the fear of the Lord.” The psalmist David felt the same when he wrote in Psalm 37. 16: “A little that a righteous man hath *is* better than the riches of many wicked” and his son writing in the Proverbs 16. 8 expressed the same thought: “Better *is* a little with righteousness than great revenues without right.” Solomon again in the Ecclesiastes 4. 6 expressed a similar thought, “Better *is* an handful *with* quietness, than both the hands full *with* travail and vexation of spirit.” Jesus’ word to His disciples was, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6. 33).

The most important things in this world are not the material but the spiritual. Paul writing to Timothy speaks of being made “wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3. 15). Solomon in Proverbs 8. 11 tells us that “wisdom *is* better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it”. This wisdom is implanted in the soul by the Holy Spirit through the “foolishness of preaching,” which is the instrument in His hands for the salvation of immortal souls. “After that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1. 21). When the Holy Spirit makes a sinner “wise unto salvation” then he has a right sense of priorities, understands what the “little” is and how precious it is. The apostle Peter speaks of the things that were made precious to him, which included the “precious blood of Christ”, Christ Himself (“unto you therefore which believe *he is* precious”), “like precious faith”, and

the “exceeding great and precious promises”. These things to him were spiritual realities. He says in his first Epistle 2. 3, “If so be ye have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious.” He himself had indeed tasted that the Lord, whom he had denied with oaths and curses, was “gracious” as He had prayed for him and given him a look of love and mercy which had made him go out and “weep bitterly”, breaking his heart in true repentance and godly sorrow. Well could Peter write of the things that he had tasted. “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree ... by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pet. 2. 24). Here lies the substance of this “little” and the understanding of those things that are “better,” that “good part” which Mary so desired as she sat at Jesus’ feet. How gracious, tender and loving was Jesus’ gentle rebuke to Martha: “Martha, Martha ... one thing is needful” (Luke 10. 41-42).

There are some solemn things which Scripture tells us are “better.” “A good name *is* better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one’s birth” (Ecc. 7. 1). “*It is* better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that *is* the end of all men; and the living will lay *it* to his heart” (Ecc. 7. 2). “Sorrow *is* better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better” (Ecc. 7. 3). “Better *is* the end of a thing than the beginning thereof...” (Ecc. 7. 8). Some in Scripture, in the face of great trials sadly misjudged what they thought would be better. The Israelites, facing the Red Sea with the Egyptians behind them, told Moses, “*It had been* better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness” (Ex. 14. 12). When after forty years they came to cross the Jordan into the Promised Land and the spies returned with their report, only Caleb and Joshua counselled going in at once. The other spies, in unbelief, felt the obstacles were too great and the Israelites wept when they heard it and murmured against Moses and said, “Were it not better for us to return in to Egypt?” (Num. 14. 3). Jonah after his refusal to go to Nineveh, after his three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, after his great deliverance and confession, “Salvation *is* of the Lord” (Jon. 2. 9), after the blessing of his preaching in Nineveh, yet, when the Lord brought him into fresh trial, when the gourd withered and the east wind blew on his head, wished himself to die and said, “*It is* better for me to die than to live” (Jon. 4. 8). How wrong they all were. The Israelites were full of unbelief and Jonah had to learn that the Lord would have pity on Nineveh.

In the New Testament the apostle Paul speaks of many “better” things. In his letter to the church at Philippi he tells us of his dilemma: “For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you” (Phil. 1. 23-24). In his Epistle to the Hebrews, he writes of a “better hope,” “a better testament,” “a better covenant,” and “better sacrifices,” all in relation to a comparison between the old covenant and the new, between the law and the gospel. He writes of the blood of sprinkling, “that speaketh better things than *that of* Abel” (Heb. 12. 24). “The law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope *did...*” (Heb. 7. 19). Jesus was made a surety of a better testament. Speaking of Christ, he says, “By how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises” (Heb. 8. 6). Speaking of the old order of the tabernacle and its sacrifices he says, “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. *It was* therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices that these” (Heb. 9. 22-23).

So the Scriptures point us heavenward showing us that it is better to take the lowest place; better to be slow to anger; better to rule one’s spirit; better to give than to receive; better to be poor in spirit; better to mourn; better to be meek and hunger and thirst after righteousness; better to be merciful; better to be pure in heart and walk in our integrity; better to walk in quietness and be a peacemaker; better to be persecuted for righteousness’ sake; better to learn that wisdom is better than strength and walk in the steps of Paul when he said: “When I am weak, then am I strong” (2 Cor. 12. 10). Finally, better to be among those of whom the Lord has said, “Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off” (Isa. 56. 5).

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CURRENT ISSUES

A Boy Called Bery

– the continuing work of the Savannah Education Trust

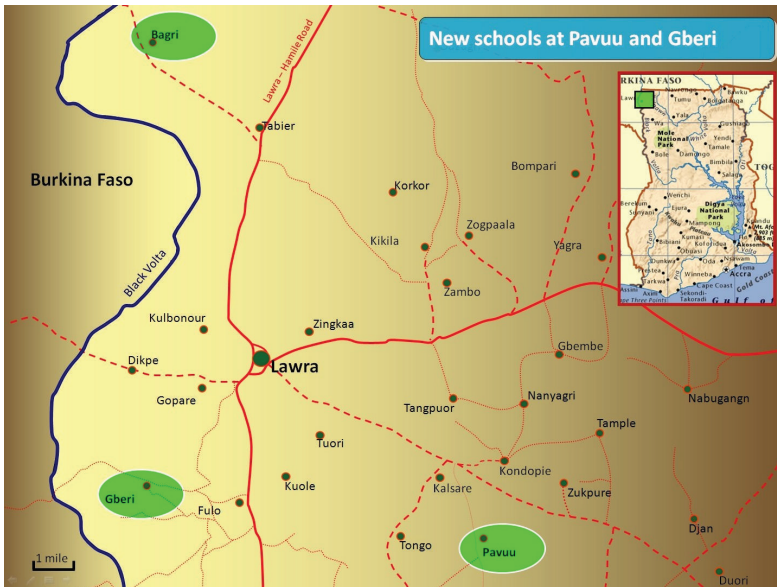
By P. Ramsbottom

Bery Banguu lives in the village of Gberi in the savannah grassland of northern Ghana. It is a small village and all of the people are farmers. The children in this village live a difficult life. They have to help their parents with the farming of crops and with other household chores, such as collecting water. Sadly, in this area nearly one in four of the children die before they reach their fifth birthday. Until a few years ago they had never heard of Christianity or of the name of Jesus.

Bery faces even greater difficulties than other children. He was born with severely disabled legs and is not able to walk. He scrabbles around in the dust as best as he can, using flip-flops to protect his hands as he pulls himself along. There has never been a school in Gberi; for Bery and his parents, the thought of going to school must have seemed like a dream.

But five years ago something happened that gave the children in Gberi some hope. They learnt of the opening of a Christian school in Bagri, a village some fifteen miles away. Inspired by the stories they heard of the “blue school” (as it is known in that area), they asked if it would be possible to have one in their own village.

The article about Savannah Education Trust published in *Perception* in 2009 described our work in providing a Christian education for some of Ghana’s poorest children, starting in the village of Bagri. Since that school was built, the needs of children such as Bery in surrounding villages have weighed very heavily on the Trustees. After prayerful consideration we felt it right to proceed with plans for schools in two more villages. One was a village called Pavuu. The other was Bery’s village of Gberi. Both are within fifteen miles of Bagri, clustered around a town called Lawra. The decision to build two schools at the same time was only made possible by a kind donation that covered the cost of Gberi school: a donation by somebody entirely unknown to us previously. In all of these things we are thankful to God.



Following a visit to Ghana by the Trustees in October 2009, work began at the two villages. Bery has watched as the school building has been constructed in his village, starting by the drilling of a borehole for a clean, plentiful supply of water and followed by the building of six classrooms and associated facilities. His house (a collection of mud-based buildings) is next to the site of the school building. Every day he has crawled to the building site to watch the new school rise. In advance of opening the school our programme manager, Pastor Charles Karbo, visited the homes of the children in the villages, encouraging parents to send their children to the new school. When he reached Bery's home the boy was overjoyed. He had not dared to believe the school was for him.

Gberi School is now nearing completion and the children in their brightly coloured uniforms have already started classes. We hope that Pavuu School will be finished later in the year. Alongside each new school building the Trust is making funds available for a meal each day for pupils while they are at school. It is shocking to realise that, without this provision, village children will often miss school during the "hungry" dry season to scavenge for food (rats, mice, birds and fruits) in the bush. During the farming "wet" season children are required to help their parents in the fields.

A meal eases acute pressure on families, and enables parents to release children from this type of work. The cook is employed by the villagers themselves as their contribution to the programme. The cost of feeding one child for a year is approximately £60 (or just over £1 per week).



Gberi School under construction

Among the many children now attending school in Gberi is Bery. We were rather touched to learn that at the end of the first term, the teacher set them a writing assessment. Bery wrote “so wonderfully” that the teacher didn’t believe he had done it himself. He was asked to repeat it with the teacher standing by him and again he completed the task extremely well. It is our prayer that these Savannah schools will prove a blessing to the children, not only in teaching them to read and write but also spiritually.



Children enjoying the meal provided for them each day

We are thankful to God for all of the progress that has been made so far, for the kind donations and above all the ability to provide a Christian education for children like Bery in very severe need. In the months and years to come we hope that the education will have a significant influence on the material and spiritual life of the village.

More information is available at our newly-relaunched website: www.savannaheducationtrust.org Readers can sign up here for updates as, if the Lord will, the work in Gberi and Pavuu progresses.

University Life – In the world, but not of it

By H. Skelton

When I went away to university, I told the people I met that I was a Christian, I attended chapel every Sunday, and I went to Christian Union Bible studies, but my daily life was inconsistent. The people living around me could see this. My profession was superficial; underneath I was no different to anyone else. I was not a true believer. God began to work in me and I was brought to see the inconsistency of my life. I attempted to do better, but I failed. Looking back, I was only able to resist temptation and have any consistency in my life when I realised that I needed to know forgiveness and the Holy Spirit to work in my heart, convincing me of sin and bringing me to repentance. It was only through the work of the Holy Spirit, bringing me to God for repentance, forgiveness, instruction, help and guidance in all things, that I was brought to be consistent in my life. Without this I could not have coped with all that I encountered when I left home and went to university.

For most people, going to university is their first experience of living away from home and making day-to-day decisions. This brings many practical hurdles: time and financial management, cooking, coping with fitting in all the required study and sharing accommodation with people who may have very different backgrounds to yourself. The greatest difficulty faced by a student from a Christian home is how to resist becoming involved in a typical “student lifestyle”. Certainly for me the greatest challenge of university life was how to be “*in* the world, but not *of* it” (John 17. 14-15). Universities are a melting pot of ideas and you will be challenged in all the things you have been brought up to believe. The aim of this article is to consider some general guidelines.

When the Lord Jesus began His ministry on earth, the first recorded words that he spoke were, “Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 4. 17). This is where we must begin if we hope to live in the world without being of the world: “Repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mark 1. 15). The Christian life must begin with the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, bringing us to God-given faith and repentance. This alone will teach us how to be in the world and not of it. There will be a daily conflict with Satan and our sinful nature. This will be particularly true of life at university, when living closely with

the world, surrounded by temptation, often twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. We shall need God to keep us.

So how can a young believer live consistently in the university environment? In The Acts of the Apostles, Luke records that the early Christians “continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship... and in prayers” (Acts 2. 42). They were taught by the Holy Spirit and their hearts were established in the truth. They knew what they believed because the truth had been revealed to them. They continued “instant in prayer.” Constantly bringing all things to the Lord in prayer and a prayerful reading of His word daily is a student’s only source of strength to lead a consistent life and be “in the world but not of it.” Added to this, attendance on a faithful ministry and keeping company with the Lord’s people are vital sources of strength and encouragement.

So it is essential when applying to university to make sure that there is a good ministry nearby. University Christian Unions are another place where you are likely to find some in whose hearts the Lord is working. While it is understood there may be a measure of anxiety about associating with those from different Christian backgrounds, some people you meet at the CU will share your basic beliefs and live separate from the world. You are bound to have differences of opinion, or not agree with everything that is taught at CU meetings, but if you approach the teaching prayerfully and like the Bereans, who “received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17. 11), you may find that you learn valuable truths. “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thes. 5.17). The Lord Jesus said, “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak” (Matt. 26. 41), and, “Men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Luke 18. 1). These verses highlight the importance of prayer at university. Pray to the Lord to keep you from the worldliness and temptations around you.

These points can be summarised by the words of the Apostle Paul to the Ephesians, “Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand” (6. 13). University is an opportunity to be a witness to those around you, to be separate from the world, and always be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in you. You will spend much of your time with ungodly students, whether it be cooking or having coffee with people you live with, being involved in university societies, getting to

know them while they get to know you. “And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? When Jesus heard *it*, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick” (Mark 2. 16-17). Those who most need to hear the Gospel are those who do not already know it. Living among unbelievers at university is an opportunity. The Lord can bless your presence, and make you a light to those around you. It was partly the consistent lives of some students studying with me that brought me truly to seek to know the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour.

Lastly, it is easy to get taken up with many of the activities on offer through the various societies at university, Christian or otherwise. Never forget why you are at university in the first place, to study for a degree. You can be a witness in such simple things as attending all your lectures, seminars and practical classes and being conscientious in doing your work. “Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10. 31). Neglecting your studies is dishonouring to God. I hope that these thoughts will be a help to those going to university, or leaving home for the first time. In whatever path you are walking, “Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring *it* to pass” (Ps. 37. 5). University may seem a daunting prospect, and life there even more so, but remember that the Lord Jesus prayed: “I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil” (John 17. 15), and you can always pray to Him for help and wisdom.

Editor’s Note:

When at University myself between 1951-55, I never felt able to join the Christian Union. But I did attend occasional meetings and remember hearing Gladys Aylward speak of her leadings to China and of her work among the orphans there. Students going to University will need much grace and wisdom to steer the delicate path that confronts them, namely to be “in the world but not of it”. I well remember when the Lord dealt with me at University, having to get down by my bedside on my knees in prayer, reading the Scriptures in front of my roommate, who was captain of the University football team. May students be firmly established in the truth and enabled to stand for what they know is right.

CHURCH HISTORY

Colonel John Rede and the Porton Particular Baptist Church

By J.R. Broome

The Porton Particular Baptist Church traces its origin back to 1653, to the days before the Cromwellian Protectorate. It was originally centred at Porton in Wiltshire, just to the east of Salisbury. It is possible that Richard Hooker, writer of the *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, who was vicar at Boscombe (just up the road from Porton) from 1591-1595, had first brought the Gospel to the area. Remarkably three volumes of the original Church Books (covering 1653-84 and 1710-49) have survived and are now kept at the Angus Library at Regent's Park College, Oxford. The first entry in the first volume is dated 3rd April 1653 and contains an account of the gathering of the Church, called the Church at Porton and Broughton. It reads:

On the third day of the fourth month the brethren and sisters residing about Wallop, Sarum, Amesbury, Stoford, Chalk, Porton and the parts adjacent, met together as a Church of Jesus Christ, and then with one accord declared their resolution for the future (Christ strengthening them) so to walk as becometh saints, according to the Gospel, in all obedience to His commandments, in love to one another as brethren and sisters, partakers of the same grace through Jesus Christ our Lord; and for their more orderly proceeding and profit they appointed John Rede, Henry Penn and Edward Bundy, orderly and by course to administer the ordinances as often as called for, and for the provision of the Church, and taking care of the poor saints, they have appointed Robert Blake and Thomas Webbe to oversee and take care in their places as their duties in all things that necessarily belong to the care of deacons. The same day were baptised by our brother Bundy, nine disciples.

While this meeting was taking place in the Church at Porton, when eighty-five members met and ministers and deacons were being appointed, in London great events were taking place in the House of Commons. On 20th April, just seventeen days after the Porton Church Meeting, Oliver Cromwell was to enter the Chamber of the House with his troops, drive out the members, ending the days of the Rump Parliament, and say regarding the Mace, "What shall we do with this

bauble? Take it away.” The Parliament was refusing to sanction funds for the New Model Army and so Army and Parliament were in conflict.

The Porton Church was not so far removed from these events as one might think. Their minister John Rede was not an insignificant figure. He had fought in the Civil War on the Parliamentary side and risen to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He had served in the regiment of Colonel (later General) Ludlow when there were twenty-five Baptist officers, he being one of them, having joined the regiment when it was raised in 1643. When Ludlow’s Regiment was disbanded, Colonel John Rede joined the New Model Army formed in 1645-6. He was mentioned for distinguished service in battle in one of Oliver Cromwell’s letters sent to the Speaker, William Lenthall, at the House of Commons after the battle of Preston on 20th August 1648. Cromwell writes of the “incredible valour and resolution” of his troops and says, “Lieutenant Colonel Rede and Colonel Ashton had the greatest work, they often coming to push of pike and close firing, and always making the enemy to recoil.” Rede had been entrusted with the siege of Tenby and later that of Pembroke Castle in Wales in May/June of the same year, at which time several Particular Baptist Churches were founded in South Wales. In 1649 he became Governor of Poole and Brownsea Castle and later commanded a garrison in Scotland. He was a Member of Parliament for Wiltshire and served on committees dealing with Wiltshire from 1647-1652 and in 1657, 1659, and 1660. In 1653 he was a judge concerning prisons and prisoners. It is not clear when he came out of military service, but the Porton Records show that he was preaching at Porton as early as 1651. He lived at Birdlimes Farm, Porton, just outside Salisbury, and was a landowner and a Justice of the Peace and an MP. As a JP he conducted several marriages under the Barebones Act (1653), when for a time marriage became a civil matter, conducted by JPs, and his signature appeared in the Parish Register of Porton-cum-Idmiston.

Birdlimes Farm exists today, but not the same buildings in which Colonel Rede lived. The early Manor House was demolished in the 19th century. Here it was that the Porton Church met. A sheepwash nearby in the River Bourne was probably the site of the baptisings. A burial ground still existed in 1908 with memorial stones to John Rede’s wife and his young daughter. It shows that his wife Sarah died in 1708 and the age of forty-nine and that his daughter, Sarah Carteret Rede, died in 1700, a few days short of seven. According to the custom of

using the maternal maiden name for children, it would suggest that the maiden name of girl's mother was Carteret. The Advocate-General of the New Model Army was Philip Carteret, who was a Baptist lawyer. This would suggest that late in life, John Rede married into the Carteret family. So here is evidence that John Rede knew leading men in the New Model Army and also knew Oliver Cromwell well and had served under him in battle, as well as knowing him on the floor of the House of Commons.

It is clear that John Rede was the founder of the Porton Particular Baptist Church. It seems that as the Parliamentary Army moved about the country with its Baptist officers, many Particular Baptist Churches sprung up in its wake. The officers were obviously evangelists and John Rede was one of them. He was a landowner, soldier, JP (probably, having regard to this office and being a judge in 1653, a lawyer) and an MP; a man of considerable importance in his locality. The Porton Church was led by a well-to-do, able man. This was not only true of Particular Baptists in the Wiltshire area, but also true of the City of London where their leader, William Kiffin, was a wealthy merchant and in 1687 an Alderman of the City of London. He had personally met Charles I, Oliver Cromwell, Charles II, James II and William III. In 1688, the Government of James II considered that if there were an Election, John Rede would stand as a candidate for the borough of Wilton and be elected a Member of Parliament. If many Particular Baptist ministers were men of the social calibre of John Bunyan, a tinker, a good number of others such as William Kiffin and John Rede were to be numbered among the upper echelons of society. The Porton Church was composed of weavers, farmworkers, yeoman farmers, carpenters, house builders and also business and professional men, who would sign their wills, "Gent."

The Porton Church Book shows that its members and leaders in 1653 were scattered along the valleys of the Rivers Wylye, Avon, Bourne and Ebbles and came from nearly twenty different towns and villages which included, on the Avon, Salisbury (Sarum), Bodenharn, Durnford, Amesbury, Bulford, Durrington, Netheravon and Enford; on the Wylye, Stoford and South Newton; on the Ebbles, Broad Chalke and Stoke; on the Bourne, Porton, Idmiston and Allington; and a further group over toward Broughton in Hampshire, Grimstead, Farley and Dean. Of their leaders, John Rede lived at Porton, Henry Penn at Broad Chalke and Edward Bundy at Amesbury. This little group was centred

at Porton in a circuit of about forty miles. It was about ten miles from Porton to Broad Chalke and the same from Porton to Enford, both villages on the outer edge of the circuit and five miles from Porton to Salisbury.

In 1655 Rede was actively involved in preaching and administering the Lord Supper and believer's baptism. On March 15th of that year, John Penruddock with 200 cavalry, entered Salisbury, arrested the High Sheriff and Assize Judges and set out into Somerset and Dorset to start a Royalist uprising. Troops from the Parliamentary garrison at Exeter confronted the rebels at South Molton in Devon and defeated them. It was in the autumn of this year that Oliver Cromwell instituted the rule of the Major Generals having himself been appointed as Lord Protector in December 1653 and having dismissed the First Protectorate Parliament in January 1655. These senior officers of his army were appointed to govern large areas of the country and watch for any further attempted insurrections by the Royalists. Major General John Desborough was appointed to govern Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire. It seems certain that Colonel Rede would have known him. The Porton Church in 1655 must have trembled at the possibility of further conflict on their doorstep.

The first clear record of Church business occurs when the Porton Church met at Salisbury (Sarum) on 17th November 1657. By this time the Church numbered 106 members, there having been about twenty members added to the Church in the previous four years. On 27th April 1658 the Church Book records that John Rede baptised brother Plumley and William Boodle at Porton. On 3rd September 1658 Oliver Cromwell died suddenly and unexpectedly. Richard Cromwell, his son was completely unfit to take his place and eventually King Charles II was invited back in April 1660 to take the throne. A delegation from England met him at Breda in Holland before he returned, when he promised that on his return he would declare a general pardon, religious toleration and satisfaction to the Army. The Porton Church met at Amesbury on 19th May that year for the last time until 1671. Almost certainly this meeting took place to discuss a plan of action for the days of persecution that inevitably lay ahead with the restoration of the Stuart Monarchy. The King never kept the promise of toleration. Within two years the Act of Uniformity was passed which drove over 2000 clergymen out of the Church of England on grounds of conscience. It required ministers to consent wholeheartedly to the

revised Book of Common Prayer and to be ordained by a bishop. This was followed by the Conventicle Act in 1664 which banned meetings of five or more persons “not according to the Book of Common Prayer.” In 1665 came the Five Mile Act by which all nonconformist ministers were banned from coming within five miles of a town having a Member of Parliament, or where they had been ministers before.

Within a few months of the Restoration, John Rede was arrested and imprisoned in The Tower of London. This was partly for political and religious reasons (he was suspected of being involved in a plot to overthrow the government) and partly on account of his military service. It is not certain how long he was detained there but on 1st September 1665 he was brought before Lord Arlington, a Secretary of State for questioning, a record of which survives and is kept in the Public Record Office. The questioning related not only to rebellions and plots against king and government but also contained questions regarding which church he attended, whether he kept the rules of the Conventicle Act, with which sect he was associated. He eventually satisfied his judges and was released and returned to Porton.

Four days later, on 4th September 1665, he wrote a long letter to Lord Arlington in which he pleaded fearlessly for religious toleration. In it he speaks of having “formerly met with rigidities” referring to his incarceration in the Tower, and says on this account he was surprised that he had been granted his liberty. He says that there is nothing more unwelcome than the restraining of part of that Liberty which was once indulged to tender consciences by His Majesty’s Gracious Declaration. Here he refers openly to the Declaration of Breda and how the promise of the King was being broken. He pointed out that not all conventicles (house meetings) of nonconformists were seditious and how awful it was to suppress them with “the terrors of transportation.” Many who worshipped thus were loyal supporters of King and Government. He said that there were many, “who yet cannot understand the Lord’s mind in Scriptures as to discern it to be their duty to be present at their Popish assemblies in the times of the appointed service of that Church, neither can they be persuaded thereunto, nor will they be compelled, whatsoever they suffer.” He spoke of these persecuting laws (the Conventicle Act 1664 and the Five Mile Act 1655) allowing ungodly men to become informers on the godly, saying that, “the godly render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s.” It was not fit that good men that were quiet subjects of the

King should be disturbed in their devotions in their houses. Here he fearlessly pleads for conventicles to be allowed at law. Then he went on to say, "Let this liberty be indulged at least if not proclaimed, that whilst the severe hand of God is stretched out in judgment over this nation that no sincere persons that can pray shall be prohibited their assembling together unto that duty in their houses ... this course I am persuaded, effectually performed, will prove the best remedy to assuage the pestilence ... Let the Scriptures be the rule of devotion for all Christians." He went on to plead for Christian liberty to be combined with civil obedience saying that such a policy of the Government would bring about a situation in the country, "far more peaceable and happy than now it is." He concluded his letter to Lord Arlington by pleading that he might have "a private protection under His Lordship's hand, desiring all officers forbearance to molest me in my devotions, services and prayers to God, so long as he had no grounds to believe that he [Rede] had done anything to disturb the peace."

It is a remarkable letter in that it has survived. It is remarkable in that it shows a man as fearless in religion as the Colonel who was reported to the House of Commons in 1648 for his bravery in battle. It is equally revealing of the man as being a very able, lucid thinker and writer, probably a lawyer by profession. What a giant he was as a leader of the humble Baptist congregation and poor unlettered members of the Porton Church. They were certainly a hardy people made ready, as the Apostle Paul, to endure unto the death for the truth's sake. The Porton Church Book (1653-1684) is silent from 1660-1672. There is no mention of any persecution which must have inevitably taken place. Thomas Crosby in his *History of the English Baptists* (1740) Vol. III p. 126 says, "Peter Coles, a Baptist preacher at Downton in the county of Sarum, Walter Penn, pastor of the Baptist church at Sarum, and John Kingman of Burford near Sarum were all for several years prisoners in the county gaol at Sarum for nonconformity." Walter Penn was one of the leaders of the Porton Church and later, in 1689, represented at the Particular Baptist Assembly together with John Andrews. In 1669, Bishop Ward of Salisbury produced a survey of the Particular Baptists in his diocese. He reported groups at Broadchalke [about 10, very mean, led by Henry Penn, a husbandman], and at Amesbury in the house of Thomas Webb about 30 "inconsiderable" persons; John Rede from Porton came over to hold a conventicler. The Quarter Session Rolls showed other conventicles at Rolleston and Stoford in South

Newton, also at Allington, Idmiston, Durrington and Farley, all places connected to the Porton Church. Bishop Ward wrote, "The teachers of the Anabaptists ... are vagabond, run-about, unknown fellows. The authority they all pretend is His Majesty's connivance and that they have some friends that, if occasion be, will interpose between them and the punishment of the laws." It was not entirely true to say their teachers were "unknown" but it was true to say that "they had some friends" who would "interpose" for them with the authorities. It is of interest to remember that this persecution was countrywide, and that many of the Particular Baptist teachers were in prison for preaching the Gospel. The most well-known of these was John Bunyan who spent much of the period from 1660-1672 in prison at Bedford.

Colonel Rede lived through the days of persecution and does not appear to have been imprisoned again. In 1685, the Monmouth Rebellion took place, failed and the Assizes of Judge Jefferies witnessed many hangings and transportation of Particular Baptists, including at least one of their ministers whom Colonel Rede must have known. Finally in 1688 with the Glorious Revolution, religious freedom came in large measure to the Nonconformists. In 1689 the Porton Church was represented at the Particular Baptist Assembly by Walter Penn and John Andrews. It would appear that Colonel Rede was too old to take the journey. In 1690, when they could now worship in the towns, the Porton Church divided. Colonel Rede stayed at Porton with part of the congregation and the other part moved to worship in Salisbury under Walter Penn. Sometime about 1698 Rede moved to Devizes, where he lived into great old age, until his death on 2nd January 1710.

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DOCTRINE AND TRUTH

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

“And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart” (Jer. 29. 13).

After the Lord has quickened our souls, for a time we often go, shall I say, blundering on, not knowing there is a Jesus. We think that the way of life is to keep God's commandments, obey the law, cleanse ourselves from sin, reform our lives, and cultivate universal holiness in thought, word, and action; and so we go, blundering and stumbling on in darkness; and all the while never get a single step forward. But when the Lord has suffered us to weary ourselves to find the door, and let us sink lower and lower into the pit of guilt and ruin, so that all our attempts to extricate ourselves have only plunged us deeper and deeper, and the Spirit of God opens up to the understanding and brings into the soul some spiritual discovery of Jesus, and thus makes known that there is a Saviour, a Mediator, and a way of escape – this is the grand turning-point in our lives, the first opening in the valley of Achor of the door of hope. And when the soul has once seen that there is a Jesus, and once felt a measure of the power of His resurrection, it never goes to any other quarter for pardon, justification, and salvation. When the Spirit of God begins to open up with power in his conscience that there is a Jesus, that He is the only Mediator, that the Son of God has come down and taken a holy human nature into union with Himself, and is now at the right hand of the Father, it is the first break of day, the first dawn of hope; and upon that bright spot does the shipwrecked soul fix his longing eyes till the Sun of righteousness arises upon it with healing in His wings. It is a great step in a man's experience to turn wholly and solely to the Lord, and renounce all creature righteousness, all forms and ceremonies as a way of salvation. It is a great mercy to turn away from them, as the shipwrecked mariner turns away from his sinking ship, and looks to the rising sun to shew him some way of escape, and thus afford him some gleam of hope. – *October 22nd*

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Husbands and Wives

By J.C. Philpot

Christian husbands are bidden (Eph. 5. 25-33) to love their wives. The whole of the exhortation is somewhat too long to quote fully, but we will give one verse: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5. 25).

Now look at the foundation of this exhortation. Why should a Christian husband, according to this precept, love his wife? Because it is his duty, or because conducive to his happiness, or because it is what she has a right to as his partner in life? None of these grounds is named, or even alluded to. But this is the foundation of the precept. Christ loved the Church as His mystical body, and gave Himself for it. Therefore, as the believing husband holds to the believing wife as her natural head, the same relative position which Christ holds to the church as her spiritual head, he is bound to love her for Christ's sake and after Christ's example. Christ and His church are one; she is His own flesh which He nourisheth and cherisheth. So a man and his wife are one flesh. When, then, he loves her he loves himself; and to nourish and cherish her is to nourish and cherish his own body, as Christ does the church. Is not this noble gospel ground full of the sublimest and deepest truth? Is it not a spiritual, heavenly and holy view of Christian marriage, and does it not baptize that social tie as with the very spirit and love of Christ? What a sanctity it throws round the marriage of Christians! How it elevates it above all worldliness and carnality, and brings down upon conjugal love the pure breath of heaven, more than reinstating it to what it was in Paradise in the days of man's primeval innocence!

Now take, as a counterpart, the precept to Christian wives: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing" (Eph. 5. 22-24).

This precept, perhaps, may be less palatable to those to whom it is addressed, for no wife minds how much her husband gives her of his love, but she has not always the same pleasure in giving him her obedience. But let her like it or not, the submission and subjection of a wife to her husband are here inculcated as one of the precepts of the

gospel. But on what high, holy and spiritual ground it is placed. How the precept is based upon and connected with the glorious gospel doctrine of the headship of Christ and the church's subjection and submission to Him as such. When, then, a Christian wife seeks not her own will but her husband's, when she submits to his desires and wishes (and of course the apostle assumes that as a Christian man these would be in harmony with the gospel), her very submission is her glory as well as her happiness. Is it not so in our submission to Christ? Is it not our glory and happiness to know no will but His, and to yield to Him the obedience of love? Thus ye Christian wives, when you submit yourselves to your husbands in love and affection, you do so after the example of the church. There is no loss of dignity or position in this, no giving up of your rights. When you can respect and love your husband as a Christian man as well as a Christian partner, and you can walk together not only in conjugal but spiritual love, as he will require nothing from you which you may not safely and scripturally yield to him, so will it be your pleasure as well as your privilege to walk with him as his equal in Christ, but now subordinate in present position.

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LETTERS, ADDRESSES AND SERMONS

The Book of the Revelation

By B. A. Ramsbottom

This address was given by Mr Ramsbottom at the 2010 Barton Conference, held on 20th November at Barton Village Hall.

The subject you have asked me to speak about this afternoon is the Book of the Revelation. When John Calvin was asked why he had never written anything on the Book of the Revelation, although he had written on most other parts of Scripture, he replied quite simply, "I just don't understand it." Well, it is a mysterious book, and it is a book that is hard to be understood. Yet have you ever noticed this: that it is the only one of the books of the Bible that has a special blessing attached to it. Right at the beginning, the Lord says that blessed are they who read the words of the book (Rev. 1. 3).

Let me say right at the beginning, I am afraid some of you – many of you – are going to be disappointed because I am not going to tell you what the mark of the beast – 666 – means. Neither am I going to tell

you where the Battle of Armageddon is going to be fought and who is going to be on one side and who is going to be on the other. And I am not going to give you explanations of all the horns and the heads and the crowns and why one of the heads was wounded, etc. etc.

What I am going to try to do is first of all, give you very briefly and roughly an overall view of the Book of the Revelation; what it is all about. Secondly, the various interpretations, because so many different people have understood it in so many different ways; good people, godly people. Then finally what the book of the Revelation meant to the suffering church at the end of the first century, when it was first written, and what the Book of the Revelation means to you and to me today.

The apostle John as an old man was in exile for the truth's sake on the island of Patmos. He was found in the Spirit on the Lord's day and the Lord gave him this revelation of things that were going to take place; essentially the struggle between the church and the world, the sufferings the church would have to endure, and the conflict between Christ and Satan. The book was revealed in an unusual way; in a series of pictures, one picture coming after another picture.

John is in the Spirit on the Lord's day. He suddenly looks. He can see seven golden candlesticks. There is a figure moving among them. Who is He? He seems a glorious figure. He has a long white robe. His eyes are like a flame of fire; His hair is as white as snow. The sound of His mouth is like mighty thunder. Then the scene changes. There is a throne in heaven. The throne of Almighty God. It is a majestic throne. There is lightning and thunder. And then he sees that the person seated on the throne has a book, a scroll in His hand – that is sealed with seven seals. But someone is approaching. Who is He? He is a Lamb. But He is also a lion, and He takes the scroll, and then there is singing and worship and harps playing, and burning of incense. The scene changes again: four horses: one white, one red, one black, one pale, and riders on them. Then various things happen. People suffer from hunger. People are slaughtered; there are wild beasts; the sun is black; the moon appears as blood; the stars fall; people hide. Then the scene changes again; four angels appear; there are 144,000 people, and the wind blowing, and the angels are stopping the wind from blowing. There are peals of thunder and lightning and an earthquake. This is just the beginning of the Book of Revelation. It is a series of pictures, flashing in front of the apostle's eyes, one by one.

To give an overview of the chapters: in chapter one, John sees the seven candlesticks representing the seven churches and Christ in all His glory in the midst.

Chapters two and three contain letters from Christ to the seven churches commending them for what is good, reproving them for what is bad.

Chapter four is a view of heaven and the glorious throne of Almighty God and Almighty God on the throne in complete control. I sometimes think that that is perhaps one of the most important chapters – it sets the whole scene. Whatever is going to happen or not happen, then or now, Almighty God is there, sovereign, in control, on the throne.

Chapter five speaks of the book of divine decrees. The book with the seven seals, which no one is worthy to take. And then, “a Lamb as it had been slain” (Rev. 5. 6) approaches the throne and takes it, and all heaven breaks out in acclamations of joy and praise and worship.

In chapter six, the seven seals start being opened one by one and they show all kinds of things that are happening – different kinds of suffering the church of God is enduring.

In chapter seven we have the 144,000 sealed with a seal and then we have that glorious view of the redeemed in heaven. It is not until after in chapter 8 that the seventh seal is opened.

In chapters eight and nine, begin the seven trumpets. These are trumpets of warning, and six of the trumpets sound and of each one we are told what the warning is. At the beginning of the eighth chapter is the seventh seal opened and then there is an interlude. The apostle is given a little book and he is told to eat it. It is sweet when he eats it, but bitter afterwards. And then the seventh trumpet sounds, but not until chapter eleven.

Chapter eleven describes the bitter experiences of the church. Two faithful witnesses, slain, are lying unburied in the streets, mocked at, despised, but then gloriously taken up to heaven. After that the seventh trumpet sounds.

It would seem that the first eleven chapters are one half of the book and the second eleven chapters the second half of the book. The first eleven chapters show the conflict between the world and the church, and then from chapter twelve you go beyond this to see what lies behind it: the conflict between Satan and Christ. So chapter twelve starts with a glorious woman and the birth of a man child and a terrible

dragon who appears. Clearly the dragon is Satan and the man child is Christ. The dragon seeks at His birth to destroy Him but he cannot and so he persecutes the woman, the Church.

In chapter thirteen, beasts appear; the beast from the sea – temporal power opposing God’s people. The beast from the land – spiritual power opposing God’s people.

Chapter fourteen, we are told so much of the glory of the Lord and the forecast of Babylon’s final overthrow; Babylon representing the world system with all its wickedness and the evil of an apostate church.

In chapter fifteen the glory of the redeemed is described and then the seven vials – or bowls – pouring out the wrath of God. We have already seen the seven candlesticks and then the seven seals one by one opened and the seven trumpets which warned, but the warnings were not heard. Then the seven vials: they punish, they pour out divine wrath, and then we have this chapter seventeen – this remarkable chapter – the scarlet woman. The whore, drunken with the blood of saints and riding upon one of the beasts, a beast with seven heads and ten horns, its tail sweeping away the stars of heaven. Interestingly, the word “antichrist” does not appear in the Book of the Revelation, but all godly commentators take it in chapter seventeen that we are dealing with antichrist. Without doubt, as it has always been held historically, the Roman Catholic church and the papacy appear here, drunk with the blood of saints.

Chapter eighteen, we have Babylon completely destroyed and the beast destroyed and then chapter nineteen, that wonderful chapter, describes the marriage supper of the Lamb. In chapter twenty, we have the millennium, the 1000 years’ reign and the final overthrow of Satan, the dragon. And then in chapters twenty-one and twenty-two, we have the new heavens, the new earth, the final punishment of the wicked, the final defeat of Satan, the final victory of Christ, the glories of heaven, the blessings of the redeemed. That is a very rough and very brief outline.

I am sure many of you are interested in this subject and will probably want to read more about it. May I recommend two books which are currently in print? One is called *More than Conquerors* by William Hendriksen. The other is called *The Momentous Event* by W. J. Grier. You probably will not agree with everything they say. But what I liked about them, is that they have got their feet firmly on the ground; there is not anything fanciful from beginning to end in either of them.

Quite often they say that this is just a suggestion of what this means because we have to accept that the most godly men have held very different opinions concerning so many of the details of the Book of the Revelation.

Perhaps if you forget other things, you might remember this: it can be likened to visiting a magnificent building, perhaps a beautiful cathedral. Some people go and they are so busy looking at an inscription on the wall or perhaps an old painting or a tombstone in the floor that they miss the grandeur of the building. As we enter this magnificent building, the Book of the Revelation, we may get lost, we may not understand, we may not really be interested in some of the little details. But I feel as led by the Spirit of God we can get something of this feeling of the magnificence of the building – the whole glorious theme that runs through from beginning to end. The conflict, the sorrow, but the glorious victory of Christ; the glorious victory of all His people in Christ.

The second point: how has the Book of the Revelation generally been interpreted? It is clear that it is speaking of things that are going to happen: suffering, trouble, deliverance. Over the years there have been various views. The first way some people interpret the Revelation is this: they believe that almost all the events that are foretold in this picture language, all the events prophesied, were fulfilled in the first century, in the years 60 and 70, the fall of Jerusalem and just after. Those who believe that have to think of an earlier date than most people hold for the Book of the Revelation. The second viewpoint is the very opposite: that none of the things have yet been fulfilled; all of them are to be fulfilled in the future, right at the very end of time, before the return of the Lord Jesus. A third interpretation of it is that these things are being fulfilled consecutively as you go through the book – one after the other, in order. And the fourth view point is this: that the Book of the Revelation is not a continuous historical account, one thing after another. Rather, the Book of the Revelation opens something up, but not in strict historical order. So you have the end of all things prophesied in one or two places.

Personally, I lean towards that last interpretation. Perhaps the main thing being that if you hold to some of the others, what comfort could it have been to the suffering church of God in those early days? And what comfort could it be to us today if it has all been fulfilled or if it is all still going to be fulfilled?

Obviously we cannot go into all the different points and things. But you see, the battle, the great battle of Armageddon that settles everything with this glorious victory of Christ. Some have set it in Jerusalem, and some have set it in Iran or Iraq. Some have said that on one side there are the forces of Europe and on the other side the forces of Islam, and so on. The opposite point of view is that it is just speaking in symbolical language, typical language, looking back to what Armageddon really means – Judges chapter four, in the valley of Megiddo, there was a battle where Israel were weak and helpless. Their enemies – on the side of Jabin – were dreadfully strong, but Israel conquered so it merely symbolically means that at the end there is going to be a conflict but Christ is going to be victorious.

And then of course the millennium, the 1000 years of Revelation chapter twenty. There are three real views on the 1000 years. One view is that the Lord Jesus will return to earth, in great glory, and then he will reign literally for 1000 years on earth and then the last judgment will be afterwards. I think most people who believe the doctrines of free and sovereign grace do not hold that view today. But we need to be careful: Dr Gill held that view, as did John Bunyan and Toplady – so we do need to be very careful. A second view is that the 1000 years of glory of Christ's reign on earth will come before the end of time. Most who hold that view do not think of it as being a literal 1000 years; they think of it as a period of time when there has never been such blessing before. I think you will find the godly Scots tend to hold that view. Most of the Puritans did, and J. K. Popham did, as did Mr Oliver Pack of Irthlingborough. The third view, which most people believing the doctrines of grace believe nowadays, is: that there is not going to be any literal thousand year millennium. After the dreadful days of heathen darkness and blindness and wickedness, the coming of Christ, the gospel age, is the millennium. I think most Strict Baptists tend towards that view. But let me repeat again – you find very godly people have differed on the details of interpretation in the Book of the Revelation.

Now let us come to the most important part. What does the Book of the Revelation mean to you and to me? What message has it got for young people in 2010? Also, what message did it have when John wrote it, as most people believe, in the year 96 AD, when the church of God was suffering appalling persecutions at the hand of the

Roman emperor Domitian? There are three things I want to say to you, two of them perhaps more by-the-way, and a third one the vital one.

1. The first thing is that the Book of the Revelation always delights me. It did when I was young; it still does today. Because, have you noticed, whenever it speaks of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, it calls him “the Lamb”? All through the Revelation it keeps coming in – the Lamb. “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain” (Rev. 5. 12) and hath redeemed us unto God by His blood; “These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Rev. 7. 14). And so it keeps coming in – the Lamb.

Really, across the whole Book of Revelation, you could write what John the Baptist said: “Behold the Lamb of God!” (Joh. 1. 36). In the Old Testament, you have the Lamb in type. Then you have the Lamb slain, the Lamb slain at Calvary. But in the Book of the Revelation, you have the Lamb exalted, the Lamb in all His glory, the Lamb living and reigning for evermore, yet still “a Lamb as it had been slain” (Rev. 5. 6) – which I take to mean that the value of His precious sin-atoning blood is the same as when John saw it, the same when we see it as when He hung bleeding, dying on the cross.

The Lamb with His fair army
doth on mount Zion stand.

And all through the book it is this:

The Lamb is all the glory
of Immanuel’s land.

As you go to the Book of the Revelation, perhaps you think: well I don’t altogether understand this. But if grace has touched our hearts, we do understand something of the dear Lamb of God. And you know, one or two of our beautiful hymns on the Book of the Revelation are not singing about the millennium, the beast, or 666. They’re singing things like this:

Behold the glories of the Lamb
Amidst His Father’s throne.

These are the things that matter.

2. Now the second thing. What I find as I read the Book of the Revelation, again and again and again is that I keep stumbling across important texts, many of them really beautiful texts. You find that in

places in the Word of God; for instance the minor prophets. In places they are hard to be understood but you suddenly stumble across a really beautiful verse and in the Revelation again and again you keep stumbling across these lovely verses:

“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day” (Rev. 1.10).

“Fear not; I am...he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen” (Rev. 1.17-18).

“Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Rev. 1. 5).

“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat” (Rev. 7. 16).

“Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord” (Rev. 14. 13).

“Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth” (Rev. 19. 6).

“I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely” (Rev. 21. 6).

And we could go on and on and on. These beautiful texts are scattered about, strewn here and there in the Book of the Revelation.

3. Now the third thing, and this is the most important thing of anything in the Book of the Revelation and anything I am going to say. Amid all these visions and beasts and dragons and seals and trumpets and vials, there is a struggle going on between the Church, the people of God, and the world that lies in wickedness. A struggle between Christ and Satan. But the great truth of the Book of the Revelation is that the Church will be victorious, not the world. That Christ will be victorious, not Satan. Satan is a defeated foe. The victory is sure.

That is what it meant to these poor suffering believers in the year 96 AD. Their loved ones were being murdered, massacred, thrown to the lions; there was most appalling persecution. But the Lamb was on the throne and in control, fulfilling His purposes and the dead were enjoying eternal blessedness in glory, and Christ was going to be victorious, and all their enemies were going to be defeated. That is what it meant for them, and that is what it means for us today. For our young people, sometimes the outlook seems to be very bleak. The dreadful things that are going on, the falling of standards, the open enmity to anything connected with Christianity, especially within the last four or five years. And then euthanasia, abortion, things in the world, the uncertainty, the conflict. Sometimes it seems as if worldly things are triumphing and Satan is triumphing. But the clear, simple truth of the Book of the Revelation is that Satan is not triumphing. He is a defeated

foe. He is having his last fling. And the world is not triumphing. It is you who are the Lord's people who will be triumphant. You will wear the crown, not the world. Perhaps the key verse in the book of the Revelation is chapter 17, verse 14: these – all these enemies – “these shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him *are* called, and chosen, and faithful.”

And then you see, with you young people personally. Your Christian life, your spiritual life. It is a conflict, and you and I are weak. The dragon is still strong, he is still the dragon, and the world is strong, the beast out of the sea and the beast from the earth and the scarlet woman, are all strong. Within you there is indwelling sin and unbelief. But the message of the Book of the Revelation in its simplicity is this:

Has He not His promise passed
That thou shalt overcome at last?

John saw the Lord the Lamb and on His head were many crowns. And when you read the Book of the Revelation, you will take your crown and you will put it on His head. Now that is the message of the Book of the Revelation. Not so much the horns and heads and tails and vials and trumpets and seals.

In one of our chapels there was a godly woman and she had a husband. He was an ungodly man, he never went to chapel, was not interested in religion, but she suddenly found that he was reading the Bible. And he loved the Bible, he spent hours reading the Bible. The poor dear woman, she was overcome and enthralled but it was all very sad. He had become interested in unfulfilled prophecy. He became interested in the Book of the Revelation and he was fascinated by it – just what these ten heads were and why one was wounded, and what these two witnesses were and how they came back to life. Yet, he lived and died an ungodly man. The point of the Book of the Revelation is not to glory in these details and to make this one fit that man and this one fit that event. But the point of the Book of the Revelation is this glorious truth, that there is a conflict. And in that conflict, the Lamb of God, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, is victorious, then and now, and not only in the world but in the church and in the hearts of all His people.

I have looked up many things this last few months on the Book of the Revelation. Only this week I thought I would see just how my 1560

Geneva Bible introduced the Book of the Revelation. And interestingly, I also had a book sent for review that Banner of Truth have just published, with all the Geneva prologues to the books of the Bible. So I close with what the old Geneva divines said as they introduced it. They called it “The Argument”, the argument of the Book of the Revelation.

The Argument

It is manifest, that the Holy Ghost would as it were gather into this most excellent book a sum of those prophecies, which were written before, but should be fulfilled after the coming of Christ, adding also such things as should be expedient, as well to forewarn us of the dangers to come, as to admonish us to beware some, and encourage us against others. Herein therefore is lively set forth the Divinity of Christ, and the testimonies of our redemption; what things the Spirit of God alloweth in the ministers, and what things he reproveth; the providence of God for his elect, and of their glory and consolation in the day of vengeance, how that the hypocrites which sting like scorpions the members of Christ, shall be destroyed, but the Lamb Christ shall defend them, which bear witness to the truth, who in despite of the beast and Satan will reign over all. The lively description of Antichrist is set forth, whose time and power notwithstanding is limited, and albeit that he is permitted to rage against the elect, yet his power stretcheth no farther than to the hurt of their bodies; and at length he shall be destroyed by the wrath of God, when as the elect shall give praise to God for the victory; nevertheless for a season God will permit this Antichrist, and strumpet under the colour of fair speech and pleasant doctrine to deceive the world; wherefore he advertiseth the godly (which are but a small portion) to avoid this harlot’s flatteries, and brags, whose ruin without mercy they shall see, and with the heavenly companies sing continual praises; for the Lamb is married; the word of God hath gotten the victory; Satan that a long time was untied, is now cast with his ministers into the pit of fire to be tormented forever, whereas contrariwise the faithful (which are the holy City of Jerusalem, and wife of the Lamb) shall enjoy perpetual glory. Read diligently; judge soberly, and call earnestly to God for the true understanding hereof.

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Extract from a Sermon Preached by the late John Green, Pastor of Gower Street Memorial Chapel, London, on Lord’s Day Morning 19th April 1959 (Continued)

“My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever” (Psa. 45. 1-2).

Now, the first thing in the second verse is this: “Thou art fairer than the children of men.” How the Psalmist esteemed that blessed Person! How he loved Him! When Christ was here on earth, the word spoken by Isaiah years before was true: “When we shall see him, *there is no beauty that we should desire him.*” How many there were who, with their bodily eyes, saw the Lord Jesus Christ, but He was nothing to them. They never felt a desire for Him; they never loved to be near Him and to receive from Him that which He had to give to poor sinners. How many there are in the days in which we live – they hear him preached, they hear Him set forth as the one thing needful, but they are never affected by the description given of this blessed Person! They never say, “Oh that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.”

The Holy Spirit favoured the apostle Paul to see such glory in the Lord Jesus, such a beauty in Him: this enabled him to preach Him wonderfully; and God owned and blessed his ministry. The more Paul was favoured to see of the Person of Christ, the more he knew of His wonderful work, the more he wanted to know. And this is how these things work, friends: when you get a glimpse of the King in his beauty, when you are drawn to Him by the cords of love, then you will want to be found

Nearer, nearer to him clinging
Let my helpless soul be found.

I am sure things are working right in that sinner’s heart who is in such a case.

Now, have you seen a glory in Him? Has that word been fulfilled in your heart that, by the eye of faith, you have seen the King in His beauty? You would describe him a little as the church described Him in Solomon’s Song. She saw Him, she loved Him, she worshipped Him, and she gave a blessed description of Him: “Thou art fairer than the children of men.” How blessed are those sinners who have had a view thus of the Lord Jesus!

I believe heaven is that happy place where God’s people eternally view Him. They are in His immediate presence; they view that same Jesus whom they viewed by faith on earth. They worship that same

glorious Person Whom they worshipped here on earth. Have you worshipped Him? Has He been fairer to you than the children of men? When He was here on earth, He was a Man of grief. Oh how many things there were that grieved His holy nature! Why, wherever He went He met sin; and being holy and pure, how terrible sin was to Him! And yet, notwithstanding all this – this Man of sorrows, this Man who came on earth to bear the sins of many, who was weighed down, who was pressed down under the burden of the sins of His people, this Man in whom thousands could see no beauty and nothing desirable – there were a few taught by the Holy Spirit and they loved Him.

There were those three in that house at Bethany – Martha, Mary and Lazarus – I believe they loved Him: they could say of Him, Thou art fairer than the children of men; they could say of Him, Thou art the altogether lovely. They knew Him. And we read of one and the other who were favoured thus to know Him.

The particular thing is this: that every sinner favoured to know the Lord Jesus Christ – whether in Old Testament times, New Testament times, at the present time – every one of them gives the same description of this blessed Person. They may be taught Him in various ways, but they all say the same things of Him. They do! You have never yet heard one sinner who by faith has viewed this blessed Person but who has spoken most highly of Him. Oh how they have longed to tell forth the worth of the Lord Jesus Christ! They have spoken most highly of Him.

“Thou art fairer than the children of men.” None amongst the children of men rightly compares with Him who was this Man of sorrows. Alas, we see some in their religious attempts to worship – they dress themselves up in surplices and other things to make themselves attractive, to make themselves seen. They are not concerned about the honour and glory of that blessed Person, the Lord Jesus Christ. They are not, indeed! But there are a few, I believe, even in our day, who find a real delight, who find a real joy in being able to set forth something of the beauty of Immanuel. Toplady, in that well-known hymn, said:

Compared with Christ, in all beside
No comeliness I see;
The one thing needful, dearest Lord,
Is to be one with Thee.

Now that good man, taught by the Spirit – he knew something of the beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ. He had viewed His lovely countenance; he had received from Him some token of His love; He had received from Him something of His mercy, and he could say, “Thou art fairer than the children of men.”

The apostle, in his ministry, did seek to exalt this blessed Person. And he said that in all things He should have the pre-eminence. He had to set up this blessed King, to speak well of Him; not to speak so much of himself. “Thou art fairer than the children of men.” One good man, sweetly favoured in these things, said:

Living tongues are dumb at best,
We must die to speak of Christ.

Now, if such a desire is sometimes found in the hearts of sinners to speak well of Christ, to set forth His glory, His beauty, His suitability, what will it be to see Him as He is; for our eyes to be set upon Him for ever and ever? The text will be blessedly true then: “Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips.”

John, speaking of this blessed Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, said of Him that He was full of grace and truth: “We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” What a wonderful testimony!

“Grace is poured into thy lips.” But not for everyone! Not for all people, but for those for whom He prayed in the 17th of John. Grace is poured into His lips for His people. Good John Owen says that God has not called all men to believe. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself says, “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

Oh what a sad thing to be one of those self-righteous ones, self-satisfied! Some of you can say, through grace, you are not one of these characters. The Lord has mercifully met you, stripped you of your self-righteousness, and laid you low before Him. Now, the gospel is for sinners, sensible sinners, who feel unfit to partake of it. What a great mercy it is to be one of those whom the dear Lord invites. “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” What an encouraging word this is for a sensible sinner, a Holy-Ghost-made sinner, a mourning sinner.

Now grace is poured into the lips of Jesus Christ for these sinners. How often when on earth, He was pleased to speak a word to a poor sinner, a word of encouragement, a word that made their very heart to

dance with joy when they heard His voice! In seeking a little meditation upon this word last evening, I thought of that word that has come from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ into the hearts of many sinners, “I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.” Wonderful words they are! And, if they should fall from His lips into your heart, poor sinner, they would form in your heart such love and such affection towards Him, that you would beg of Him to speak again and again to your soul. Once you hear the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ in the gospel, it will make you long to hear it again and again. This will give you a real affection for Christ. Your heart sometimes will long for Him. You will plead that He will not be silent unto you, but that He will come again and again into your heart and speak these words of grace and of love.

There is another word in the 11th of Matthew that has been made a good word to many poor sinners, and that is, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” What are these words to other people? What is my poor preaching to you? What are these words that fell from the lips of Jesus to you, unless the Lord is at work in your heart? They are nothing to you! They are not attractive to you. You don’t want to come to Jesus; you don’t feel your need of Jesus. But if you are a poor sinner that is taught by the Holy Ghost what a sinner you are in God’s sight, Oh! how attractive a word like this would be to you! How encouraging to your poor soul! To think, that this blessed King in Zion, the Lord Jesus Christ, invites such poor sinners to come to Him!

And the gospel does welcome sinners! Right the way through God’s Word, sensible sinners are welcomed to the Lord Jesus Christ. “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” None other can speak this to the heart of a poor sinner but this blessed King. He speaks with divine authority. And if you feel to be a poor, helpless sinner, dejected, cast down, mourning over your sins, remember the text says, “Grace is poured into thy lips” – into the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ – and He will speak pardon and release to your heart. May you be helped to venture on Him and to plead His own word.

Amen.

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CURRENT EVENTS

Equality or Persecution

We referred to the Equality Act in our Spring and Summer issues of *Perception* last year and said that the Act is “very complex and there would be uncertainty about some of the legislation until it had been tested in a court of law.” Now we are beginning to see how the judiciary are interpreting the Act.

On 18th January Judge Andrew Rutherford gave his judgement in the case of Peter and Hazelmary Bull who own a boarding house in Cornwall. They had declined to take Steven Preddy and Martyn Hall into their boarding house because it was their policy, as professing Christians, only to allow married couples to stay in double bedrooms. With the help of the taxpayer-funded Equality Commission, the Bulls were taken to Court on account of their policy, which contravened the sex orientation regulations (SORs) and the Judge awarded compensation of £3,600 to the two men, while allowing the Bulls the right to appeal. In deciding the level of damages the judge took into account the fact that the couple were “genuinely acting upon their sincere Christian beliefs about marriage.” The Equality Commission lawyers acting for the two men felt that the Christian beliefs of Mr and Mrs Bull should be disregarded when deciding on a level of compensation, and considered appealing in order to increase the compensation for their two clients. Later they decided to drop their appeal. Since then the Bulls have had numerous telephone calls and do not know how their business will stand when they reopen at Easter.

Lord Mackay of Clashfern (former Lord Chancellor) has expressed his concern over the case. He said, “To equate civil partnerships with marriage is a big step to take. For the law to force people to equate the two, and penalise those who do not, is an Orwellian step. The devout couple were merely living out their Christian principles. The right to liberty of conscience, freedom of expression and religious liberty is vital.”

In the first week in March the Equality Commission had to apologise for saying that children may be at risk from being ‘infected’ with the moral values of Christian foster parents. The extraordinary remark was published in legal paperwork prepared by Karon Monaghan QC for the Commission’s intervention in the Johns’ case. This arose from the case of Mr & Mrs Johns of Derby who had previously fostered fifteen children through Derby City Council Social Service Department in the age range five to eight. While Derby Social Service workers accepted that the Johns were caring people and suitable to foster children, since as professing Christians they regarded sex outside marriage as morally wrong, they were told by Derby City Council social workers in March 2009, that they would have difficulty in approving them in the future for fostering and so the Council’s decision was deferred. In the meantime the Johns commenced judicial review proceedings in the High Court, the hearing taking place in November 2010. When on 28th February 2011 Lord Justice Munby and Mr Justice Beatson announced their findings, they refused to grant a judicial review on the grounds that Derby City Council had not made a final decision to turn down the Johns and so there was no decision to review. In effect the judges had been asked to rule on a question of public policy rather than a specific case. The guidance they gave was that while they regarded the Johns’ religious beliefs as worthy of respect, they concluded that “the attitudes of potential foster carers to sexuality are relevant when considering an application for approval.”

FATHER of mercies, in thy word
What endless glory shines!
For ever be thy name ador'd
For these celestial lines.

Here, the fair tree of knowledge grows,
And yields a free repast,
Sublimers sweets than nature knows,
Invite the longing taste.

Here may the blind and hungry come,
And light, and food receive;
Here shall the meanest guest have room,
And taste, and see, and live.

Here springs of consolation rise,
To cheer the fainting mind;
And thirsty souls receive supplies,
And sweet refreshment find.

When guilt and terror, pain and grief,
United rend the heart,
Here sinners meet divine relief,
And cool the raging smart.

Here the Redeemer's welcome voice,
Spreads heavenly peace around;
And life, and everlasting joys
Attend the blissful sound.

O may these heavenly pages be
My ever dear delight,
And still new beauties may I see,
And still increasing light.

Divine instructor, gracious Lord,
Be thou for ever near,
Teach me to love thy sacred word,
And view my Saviour there.

Anne Steele 1760

PERCEPTION



For I know the thoughts that I think toward you,
saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of
evil, to give you an expected end.
(Jeremiah 29:11)

AUTUMN 2011

CONTENTS	Page:
Editorial	1
Current Issues	
Signs of the Times	3
<i>J. E. Kerley</i>	
God's Order in a Beehive	6
<i>J. Baker</i>	
Henry James Irwin	9
<i>J. R. Broome</i>	
Doctrine & Truth	
Extract from J. C. Philpot	14
Letters, Addresses & Sermons	
Extract from Sermon Preached by the late John Raven	14
The Life of the Apostle Peter	19
<i>G. E. Hadley</i>	
Reviews	
400th Anniversary of the King James Bible	31
<i>J. R. Broome</i>	
Current Events	
Antichrist	33

Cover Picture: The Arnhem Military Cemetery. Grave of James Irwin third from the right in front row.

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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).

The Apostle Paul, in his first letter to the church at Corinth, distinguishes between worldly wisdom and divine wisdom. Speaking of worldly wisdom he says, “Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?” (1 Cor. 1. 20). He quotes from Isaiah, “For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent” (1 Cor. 1. 19). He refers to his own preaching and says, “Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect” (1 Cor. 1. 17). He shows that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God. To give heavenly wisdom in the new birth and the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration, the Lord used what he calls “the foolishness of preaching” to save them that believe. This did not mean that the gospel was foolishness, but that God used human instruments under the power and instrumentality of the Holy Spirit, to call His people out of nature’s darkness into His marvellous light.

To the Jews in their blind ignorance, the preaching of the cross was a stumbling block and to the Greeks it was foolishness, but to those called by divine grace, whether Jews or Greeks, the preaching of the cross was “the power of God” and “the wisdom of God.” The Lord’s work in the hearts of His people was to bring them to possess the wisdom that came from above. How well the Apostle Paul knew what he was speaking about. All his learning and wisdom as a Pharisee came to be accounted by him as dung and dross. In its place, he writes of his knowledge of Christ who revealed Himself to him on the Damascus road and who was made to him wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Writing to Timothy he says, “From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto

salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3.15). Here he points to the divinely inspired, written revelation of God in Holy Scripture as, under the Holy Spirit, the source of heavenly wisdom.

In his epistle to the Ephesian Christians, written from his prison at Rome, he speaks of making mention of them in his prayers: “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints” (Eph. 1. 17-18). To the church at Colosse, he wrote in a similar vein praying that they “might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding” (Col. 1. 9). James, in his epistle, wrote “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him (Jam. 1. 5).

Job asked the question, “But where shall wisdom be found? and where *is* the place of understanding?” (Job 28. 12). He provides us with the answer: “And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that *is* wisdom; and to depart from evil *is* understanding” (Job 28. 28). David, in his prayer of confession in Psalm 51, says, “Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden *part* thou shalt make me to know wisdom” (Psa. 51. 6). Solomon tells us in his Proverbs, “For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth *cometh* knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous” (Prov. 2. 6-7). He tells us, “Happy *is* the man *that* findeth wisdom” (Prov. 3. 13) and affirms that “Wisdom *is* the principal thing.” (Prov. 4. 7). In Proverbs eight Solomon writes at length on wisdom, saying it is better than rubies or gold, and adds, “All the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it” (Prov. 8. 11). He concludes speaking of wisdom, “For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD” (Prov. 8. 35). Jeremiah, speaking of human and divine wisdom writes: “Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, let not the rich *man* glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me” (Jer. 9. 23-24). The Lord Jesus, when he was criticised for eating and drinking with publicans and sinners, said “wisdom is justified of her children” (Matt. 11. 19). His children have the wisdom to know that Jesus Christ had come into the world to seek and to save them that were lost and this included

themselves. As Solomon wrote: “The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools” (Prov. 3. 35).

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CURRENT ISSUES

Signs of the Times

By J. E. Kerley

“And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows” (Matt. 24. 6-8).

What an awesome demonstration of this word we have seen throughout the world in recent times. There have been hundreds of earthquakes; some barely noticeable, some of worldwide attention. There have been two major conflicts, besides many rumours of war. We are undoubtedly living in the last times, although there are many signs yet to be fulfilled which will make Christian living far more trying before the end of time. Although England is so far mercifully spared from any major disasters, they may yet come, for the nation well deserves them. The recent disasters demonstrate the fragility of life and raise questions in one’s mind. What if I was caught up in one of these disasters? What if it was me that was suddenly called from time into eternity? Am I ready to meet God? May the consideration of the following events raise a right concern in the mind of the reader.

Sahel region drought and flooding, August 2010

As of 10th August 2010, fifteen million people in the Sahel region of Africa were in immediate risk of starvation due to drought. By the 20th, heavy rain caused the worst floods in 80 years affecting two million people. One month later, 680,000 people were homeless, 300,000 acres of crops had been destroyed, and 81,000 livestock and over 100 people had been drowned.

Queensland flooding, December 2010 – January 2011

A series of floods hit Queensland, affecting over 200,000 people. 35 were confirmed dead and nine missing. Damage is estimated at A\$1 billion with a GDP reduction of A\$30 billion.

Cyclone Yasi, Queensland, 3 February 2011

One month later than the floods, this severe Category 5 tropical cyclone caused A\$800 million of structural damage.

Libyan civil war, 16 February 2011 – present

Unrest in Libya, which began as protests and uprisings against Colonel Gaddafi's control, has escalated into an ongoing armed conflict between anti-Gaddafi and Loyalist forces. By the middle of March, NATO forces were taking action. Estimates of total deaths on both sides, including civilians, range from 2,500–10,500.

Christchurch earthquake, 22 February 2011

At 12.51 p.m. a 6.3 magnitude earthquake struck 10 km south-east of central Christchurch at a depth of only five km. Approximately 182 people were killed, making it New Zealand's worst natural disaster in terms of loss of life since 1931.

Second Ivorian civil war, March 2011

An ongoing crisis in Ivory Coast escalated to full scale military conflict between Loyalists and supporters of the president-elect. Since November 2010 the crisis has killed 824 with 100 missing and one million people have fled since the disputed election.

Japan earthquake and tsunami, March 2011

The undersea magnitude 9.0 mega-thrust earthquake occurred on Friday 11th March with its epicentre 45 miles off the east coast of Japan. Owing mainly to the resulting tsunami, the death toll is around 18,400 deaths with 2,869 injured and 15,153 missing. The tsunami in particular demonstrates the power of God; as mankind was utterly helpless before the 23-meter-high tsunami, so we are before an almighty God. "I will work, and who shall let it?" (Isa. 43. 13). The absolutely unstoppable power, which shows no discrimination amongst man-made goods, sweeps all away. In that last day, all of man's contrivance and self-righteousness shall be to no avail, but be swept away. Man's natural resistance is futile. Only a foundation built upon the Rock can endure, as in the tsunami higher ground served as a refuge for some.

Lorca earthquake, 11 May 2011

Two earthquakes of magnitude 4.3 and then 5.3 have killed at least 10 people and damaged several buildings near the town of Lorca in southern Spain.

Rise of Terrorism

This is surely one of the most evident signs of the last times: antichrist gaining a foothold in the midst of nations. Estimates of global deaths from terrorism, including fighting, reach 1.5 million. Of all the conflicts and disasters listed here, let us be the most watchful and vigilant against the rise of antichrist.

Global statistics

- 24,000 people died yesterday from hunger, of which 16,000 were children (under 16)
- 5,000 children died yesterday due to dirty water and poor sanitation
- 16,000 children died yesterday from “easily preventable” diseases

We indisputably live in the last times, but the world may remain for many years yet and of that final day and hour knoweth no man. In the face of these tumultuous times, may we each be found “Redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Eph 5. 16) and so consider the profitability of our ways. Social networking, unsuitable clothing, following sports and worldly gossip are four ways that the devil is often found to be drawing away the hearts of many. Every second of our life that is not spent honouring God, is a sinful one. How solemn and searching this is! We are to live in the world but not be of the world. What a grievous falling away there is today, even amongst Christian professors, grasping for everything earthly, and striving to serve God and mammon, which can never truly be done. One cannot hold the world in one hand and seek after godliness with the other. If we embrace the world now, what will become of us when persecutions and afflictions arise in the future? Will the root of the matter be found in us? May we each be helped to seek after that ONE thing that is needful, for when we truly do, there is nothing on earth that we will want beside.

Prepare me gracious God,
To stand before thy face;
Thy spirit must the work perform,
For it is all of grace.

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God's Order in a Beehive

By J. Baker

The bee colony has a very similar, wonderful organization and order to that of an ant. Of the ant the Bible tells us in Proverbs 6. 6: "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise".

Anybody lifting the roof on a bee hive on a warm day in the summer cannot cease to be amazed. The complexity of the colony and the intricate organization are staggering. Scientists are regularly finding out things which were not previously known. So much is still unknown!

At the height of the season there are up to 60,000 bees all doing their various jobs. At the front door, forager bees (worker bees) are taking off and landing at an alarming rate. The bees leaving have been shown where they can find the flowers producing nectar by watching other bees doing a dance, which gives them the direction. Each bee returning may be carrying different payloads. Most of the bees will be carrying nectar in their stomachs which they have sucked from the various flowers. Once in the hive the bees will regurgitate the nectar which will be stored in a cell. The size of the bee's load is about the size of a matchstick head.

If one bee were to collect all the nectar for one jar of honey, it would need to fly twice round the world (48,000 miles). Each bee can fly up to three miles away to collect their load, but they normally only travel about half a mile, as going further burns up more of the nectar collected, and so less honey is produced. In a period of good nectar flow one colony can gather 30 or 40 pounds in a week. The average amount per season is about 70 pounds, but can be up to 200. Amazingly each bee returns to its own hive, navigating to an accuracy of within two feet. Most scientists say that navigation is carried out by using the sun as a navigational reference.

Some of the returning bees are carrying pollen on special sacks on their rear legs, the pollen having been stuck in place by small amounts of nectar. Pollen is high in protein and is required for feeding the brood. The beekeeper can establish which flowers the bees are working on by the colour of the pollen. On a warm day some of the bees will have their stomachs full of water which has been collected from some local source. This is used to keep the hive cool.

At the end of Summer the bees will be seen with propolis stuck onto their pollen sacks. Propolis is the gum which trees produce. If a branch has broken off, propolis is very sticky and is used by the bees to seal up any holes to keep out the damp in the winter. Propolis also has a very strong antibacterial property. This helps prevent diseases within the hive. Propolis can be collected from the hive and used for medical treatments such as sore throats and for treating leg ulcers.

As the bees enter the hive they are stopped by house bees which are on guard duty. Each colony has its own smell. Any unladen bee or enemy such as a wasp will be seen off. Bees will allow a laden bee in even it is not from their own colony as they are quite happy for it to unload. Any unladen bee is only there for one reason and that is to rob. Other bees will be stationed at the entrance fanning their wings to keep a good air circulation throughout the hive.

Suddenly you may see one bee moving in a straight line with lots of house bees fussing around, this is the queen with her attendants. She is slightly longer than worker bees. She will be secreting a substance from special glands on her body. This is simply called queen substance. Her attendants will devour some of this and pass the remainder round to the other bees in the colony. This substance is like a happy pill. You may see the queen laying an egg, one of 2000 she will lay that day. She can decide if she will lay an unfertilized egg, which will produce a drone (male). She will lay the fertilized eggs in the worker cells and the unfertilized in the larger drone cells. The eggs are then fed with brood food, which is a mixture of honey and pollen. After a few days the egg becomes a pupa. The bees then seal the cell. Metamorphosis takes place. You may see some of the cell caps are soggy looking, indicating that some of the young bees are just emerging. They then move around drying their wings ready to start work. At the height of the season the worker bee will work so hard that she will only live six weeks.

If queen cell are present they will be instantly noticeable, as unlike the other brood cells they are built hanging downwards. For years it was a mystery why, but research has found that by the queen developing in this position her ovaries are kept from being damaged as she develops. If the queen lays an egg in this special cell built by the workers the egg will be fertilised. But this time the workers will feed the pupa "royal jelly". This is a substance produced from glands on the house bees' bodies. Bees can be encouraged to produce royal jelly

which can be collected by the bee keeper. This is a real delicacy and valuable in price and for its qualities.

A queen is produced for various reasons: perhaps because the colony is about to swarm, or because the current queen has become old and is now laying poorly (having survived up to three years). Swarming takes place when the hive becomes cramped and when there are too many bees for the queen substance mentioned above to keep all the bees happy.

Swarming is the bees' natural way of producing a new colony. The old queen will leave the hive taking with her most of the forager bees, perhaps up to two thirds of the colony – 40,000 bees. The bees will go a short distance before settling in a tree or hedge. Scouts will then go out to find a suitable place for a home. This is the time when you may have seen a swarm in a tree etc. Once the swarm have found a new home they will work endlessly. If you look inside a new colony there will be bees hanging in rope fashion producing wax to form new combs in the familiar hexagonal pattern. This is of course a good shape as there is no wasted space, and it is also strong. If the cell was square it would only be connected to four other units!

Back in our hive, the new queen will emerge a few days after the old queen has left. She will straight away go round any other queen cells and sting the occupants to death. If the queen hatches in the Autumn she will succeed the old queen and will find her and sting her to death. As soon as it is a fine day, the virgin queen will leave the hive and fly very high. There will be a cloud of drones following her (600 in a hive), each wanting to mate. Up to six will be successful. The drones which have mated will then die. The queen will return to the hive. She never needs to mate again and will only ever leave the hive again if she swarms.

As dusk falls and the sun sets all the bees will be at home. A hum comes from the hive as the bees flap their wings to evaporate moisture from the nectar. So that the moisture content is down to the 20% required for honey to keep, they will then add various enzymes to the honey. A wax cap is placed over the cell.

After a busy day a wonderful aroma of honey can be smelt coming from the hive.

We replace the lid and ponder on Proverbs, “consider her ways” and the marvels we have seen in the order and the workings of the hive. It is staggering. Each bee is doing its job; everything is happening in order;

no one bee is in control. If any link is missing or any job not done, the colony would die out.

We think of the flowers which the bee needs to survive. We think of the flowers which need the bee to pollinate them; neither surviving on their own; each requiring the other. Therefore they must have both appeared on this earth at the same time which means there was a Designer; a Creator. To the evolutionist we would say read on to verse nine: "...O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?"

Many people if asked who is in control in a bee hive will answer "the queen". As you can establish from the information above this is not correct. Workers, foragers, drones and the queen are all interdependent on each other, carrying out the various tasks. If any link is broken, the colony will collapse. You can see the wonderful hand of our Creator in the perfect organization. God in control.

I am reminded of my old science teacher who took the assembly at school one day. He had been describing the marvellous kingfisher he had seen on his walk to school. As he finished he simply added, "Some people call it nature; I call it God".

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Henry James Irwin, Padre, 11th Bn Parachute Regiment Killed in Action at Arnhem, September 1944

By J. R. Broome

After graduating B.A. at Canterbury College, Christchurch, New Zealand, Jim Irwin left for England in January, 1939. He took his theological course at the Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society's College at Bristol (later renamed Tyndale Hall), and was ordained deacon by the Bishop of Chelmsford in 1941, being priested a year later. After serving a curacy at Dagenham, Essex, he joined up as a Chaplain to the Forces, first in the London Scottish, attached to the Black Watch, and later transferring to the 11th Battalion of the British Parachute Regiment. It was while serving in this Regiment that Jim lost his life in the heroic Arnhem battle.

The following are extracts from his last letters to his mother:

You will notice my change of address. We are just waiting the word to go, and if things remain unchanged we should soon be in the fight. I must say that I am looking forward to my part in it with relish. Not that I

want to think of my men as dying, but I certainly want to be with them when, in spite of themselves, they need me.

I feel, too, that when the lads go into battle, they will appreciate my presence. Several times recently we have been given warning that we are about to go, and have been shown what to do when we get there. Owing to circumstances the operations have been cancelled. There is a profound sense of disappointment, which I feel as much as the men, whenever word has come of cancellation. But on the last occasion one of the company commanders was given a particularly important job, and he asked me especially if I would accompany his men on it; he felt that, as some of them had not been in action before, they would appreciate my presence. So I promised to link up with his company after we had dropped, feeling that there was the greatest need, though of course I would not have been able to have stayed with them long, as I had others to think of as well. When we do go, God helping me, I intend to go just where the fighting is hardest. Not that I want to be foolhardy: fear will probably compel me to take every precaution possible against enemy fire, but there will be men there just as scared as I am and they are there by compulsion. If I can be with them voluntarily, with words of comfort from God Himself, it will, I am sure, encourage them. And if they are dying, then I must take every opportunity of standing between them and eternity.

You might just wonder what it feels like to be on the eve of a fierce battle, with the prospect of death very real. Whether my feelings are much different from those of non-Christians, I don't know. They certainly don't fear death. Our men are extremely eager for the fight; they probably don't consider the possibility of death for them personally—



Henry James Irwin

and in my talks to them I have to make them consider this possibility. In their secret heart they are doubtless apprehensive of what lies beyond, and for that reason come to my services as at no other time. I expect most of them pray at such times—and my job, I feel, is at all times to give them such teaching that when they do approach God they might know how to do so, and in what spirit, and know, too, the certainty of His answer. As for me—I have often thought of the possibility of death; at first I put the idea away and refused to consider it—but of late, when I have thought myself to be within a few hours of battle, battle in the enemy's midst, at a time when the Germans are as savage as a cornered beast, I have faced the matter and feel the better for it. I am not afraid to die. I say these words with an assurance that I could not have had a year, or even six months ago. Then I could say them glibly, thinking that the possibility was far off. I say them now, with the possibility very, very near. I know as I never knew before that my Redeemer liveth, and that in my flesh I shall see God. I know that when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, He will be with me, His rod and His staff will comfort me.

When I think of myself, weak and sinful, I know that only grace, the love of God in spite of my sin, could give me this assurance, and yet whenever any thoughts turn to Him, who, though He knew no sin, yet became sin for me, even if I do see what lies beyond the grave as through a glass darkly, nevertheless I knew that His death has not been in vain, but has purchased for me an incorruptible inheritance.

One can't help thinking and writing like this when a battle is so near. I have hesitated to say much to you in the past, for fear of giving you undue concern, but the time letters take to travel makes that unnecessary now.

In any case, I shouldn't fear to tell you all that is in my mind, because by the time you get this letter, either you will have heard that I have come through safely, or, you will have heard of my death, and will know that I died doing my duty to the fullest extent.

Editor's Note:

I first visited the Netherlands at Easter 1956 when doing National Service in the Army in Germany. Five years later in 1961 I returned and during my visit went to see the military cemetery at Arnhem where over 1500 men are buried, many only 18 or 19 years old. As I looked at the graves I wondered who among them had died in faith and would rise first on the resurrection day. I came back to this country and went, as I often did, to see the pastor of Bradford-on-Avon Old Baptist Chapel, Mr H. Salkeld. I told him of my visit to Arnhem and my

thoughts in the military cemetery. His response was, "I will tell you one," and he went and got a small pamphlet and gave it to me to read. The contents of that pamphlet are above.

He told me about a young New Zealander, James Irwin, who in 1939, after getting his degree at Christchurch University in New Zealand, had worked his passage on a tramp steamer to England and had come to Bristol to train at Tyndale Hall Church of England Ordination College for the ministry. He had come from a sad home in New Zealand. His father, James Thomas Irwin, had died before the 2nd World War. He had been an

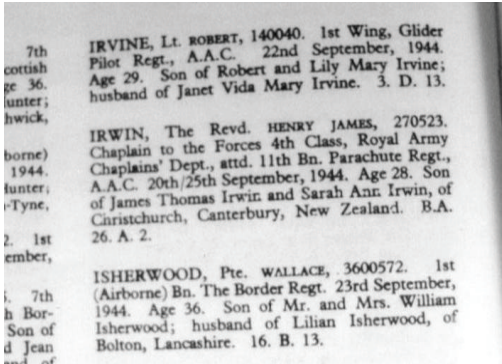


James's Gravestone

alcoholic. His brother, Keith, born in 1920 had no interest in the truth and was a bitter disappointment to his mother. Sarah Anne Irwin was a godly mother and she and James were one at heart. He was her great joy, though no information has survived as to how the Lord had begun with him. James had been born in 1916 and was twenty-three when he came to England. The principal at Tyndale Hall at the time was the Rev. Dodgson Sykes, who was also Editor of The Gospel Magazine and minister at St Mary-le-Port Church of England in Bristol. Mr Salkeld and his family were attending this church at the time because there was no Strict Baptist Chapel in Bristol and the ministry of Dodgson Sykes was very profitable. James Irwin found a home in the family of Dodgson Sykes and also often visited the Salkeld family. To Mr Salkeld, James became like another son.

After being a curate in a Church at Dagenham in Essex for a time, James felt that he should join the Army as a padre. He was eventually

appointed as a padre in the 11th Battalion of the Parachute Regiment which formed part of the 4th Parachute Brigade under the command of Brigadier J.W. Hackett, who was himself an Australian. The Brigade was dropped by parachute outside Arnhem on Sunday 17th September



Entry in the Cemetery Register

1944, forming part of a force of over 10,000 troops, whose object was to capture the bridge at Arnhem over the River Rhine, with a hope of rapidly entering Germany in the Autumn of 1944 and finishing the war. Sadly there were many more German troops and tanks in the area than had previously been thought and the troops, though they reached the bridge and held it for some time, failed to consolidate their hold. James's Battalion fought its way into the town of Arnhem on Tuesday 19th, but was overwhelmed in the battle by the German troops. Of 571 soldiers in the 11th Battalion, 407 were missing or became prisoners of war, 92 were killed, of which James was one, and 72 escaped back across the Rhine. James was not with his Battalion when it was overwhelmed by the Germans, having gone back to take the burial of a young soldier. The battle continued until 25th September as the troops retreated back to the Rhine and at what point James was killed is not clear. It would seem that after his Battalion was annihilated he moved back into to the enclave backing onto the Rhine, because he was buried firstly in a mass grave, just a hundred yards from the British Command Centre of the battle at the Hartenstein Hotel, which is now the Arnhem Military Museum. After the war all the soldiers who had died, were reburied in the Arnhem Military Cemetery. On his grave his grieving mother put the words: "I know that my Redeemer liveth." His letters to her show where his hope for eternity lay; in his Redeemer.

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DOCTRINE AND TRUTH

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

“Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you” (1 Pet. 1. 20).

BY “these last times” is meant this present dispensation, the dispensation of grace under which we live, and they are called the last times chiefly for two reasons: 1. Because Christ was manifested in the last days of the legal dispensation of the old covenant, which now, as decaying and waxing old, was ready to vanish away (Heb. 8. 13), which it did when at the destruction of Jerusalem the whole of the temple service, including the sacrifices offered there, was brought to an end. But 2. Another reason why the dispensation under which we live is called “the last days” is because it is the final revelation of God. It is “the time accepted”, “the day of salvation”, of which all the prophets have spoken (2 Cor. 6. 2; Acts 3. 24). Christ is now upon his throne of grace; the great, the glorious, the only Mediator between God and men is now at the right hand of the Father; the Intercessor who is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them, still lives to plead, as an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, as the great High Priest over the house of God. But he will leave the throne of grace to take his seat on the throne of judgment; and then “these last days” will close in all the glories of salvation to his friends, in all the horrors of destruction to his foes. — *June 2nd*

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LETTERS, ADDRESSES AND SERMONS

Extract from a sermon preached by the late John Raven, at Hope Chapel, Shaw's Corner, Redhill, on Lord's Day Evening 31 August 1947 (Part 1)

“Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people” (Psa. 89. 19).

Although this psalm has reference to David and the kingdom of David, there is that in it which leads us far beyond David. If we regard this psalm merely as having reference to David and to his

immediate successors, we shall meet with disappointment: but if we are enabled to look beyond David and beyond Solomon and beyond all those kings that followed in Jerusalem, and look forward to the coming of the Messiah, the coming of the Son of God in the flesh, we shall see a wonderful blessedness in the expressions used in this psalm.

We read here, “Thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon *one that is* mighty; I have exalted *one* chosen out of the people.” Now, it is of course true that David was chosen of God to be the king of Israel; he was taken from following the sheep and raised to the throne. Although he had to pass through much tribulation, much trial of his faith, before he was exalted to that high position; yet the counsel of God concerning him was fulfilled and David came to the throne. He was a great king and enjoyed the favour of God in a large degree, and was, as we know, the sweet Psalmist of Israel. The Spirit of the LORD spake by him, and His word was in his tongue; and many a sweet song did he sing concerning his greater Son, who is the ultimate end of all the prophesies and of all the psalms. So we may consider David as raised to that high position; but then even David himself was a sinner. He “sinned and came short of the glory of God;” and although God testified of him that he was a man after His own heart, yet when God left him for a season to himself, he revealed the dung and the dross that was in his sinful heart, just as any other man or woman does if but left of God. And then concerning his seed, how soon they went astray. Even Solomon who was gifted with such superior wisdom so that there was none like him before or after and in all his day; yet we find he who was renowned for wisdom, also became renowned for folly. It is a remarkable thing that again and again we read in the Scripture of one and another of God’s people, that their greatest virtue for which they were renowned was where their weakness lay. Moses was a meek man above all men upon earth, but his failure was due to want of meekness. He became angry, spake unadvisedly with his lips. And Job, what a man he was for patience and endurance; yet he was impatient. O what bitter speeches he poured out under the weight of his trouble. Abraham is called the “father of the faithful,” and those who are blessed with like precious faith are said to walk in the steps of that faith which Abraham had; yet he failed twice in his life through unbelief. And so we might go on and see in every one of whom we have sufficient record, some blemish, some proof of the Scripture that “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

But how good was God to David, how the mercies of the Lord compassed him about, how mercy undertook for him, how mercy subdued his enemies, and the mercy of the Lord restored him when he was fallen. O what an example we have here of the wonder and power of divine mercy; that after such a profession as David had made, having sung such blessed songs in praise of his Lord, and after speaking as he did of the coming Messiah, he should fall so foully and so deeply. Yet nevertheless this mercy was equal to the occasion; mercy restored him, mercy would not let him go. It was mercy that brought David to repentance, it was mercy that indited in his broken heart that 51st psalm, and it was mercy that enabled him to sing of the happiness of the man whose transgression is forgiven and whose sin is covered. You remember in the 51st psalm he spoke of his need of having his lips opened: "Open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise." (v. 15) His lips were silenced. Do you know what it is to have your lips silenced by your sin? silenced because of your faults, because you have gone contrary to the Lord, because you have brow-beaten your conscience, because you have done the thing that is not good? Maybe you have sinned with your eyes open, as Hart says:

That mariner's mad part I played,
That sees, yet strikes the shelf,

and have you been reduced to confusion and to silence? David knew that. "Open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise." But mercy opened his lips again. Ah it did, that sweet, that powerful mercy of God opened his lips again; so that he was restored to sing again the high praises of God, and to show forth the honour of His name. O what a miracle of restoring mercy was David!

But now here in our text we have a greater than David spoken of. We have David's greater Son. You remember how again and again the Lord Jesus was addressed by some needy folk who went to Him, who came believing in Him as the Son of David. "O Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me." But the house of David had fallen into a very low estate in those days. Who cared for the house of David? They were in deep poverty. He came as a root out of a dry ground, yet He was the Son of David; and these two blind men who cried out to Him, recognised in Him (and it must have been by the inspiration of the Spirit) the Lord, the Son of David. Now here we have the counsels of God before us, His purpose concerning Him. "Then thou spakest in

vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon *one that is mighty*;" and I may tell you in passing that many years ago this Scripture was made very great to me, "I have laid help upon *one that is mighty*; I have exalted *one* chosen out of the people." "I have laid help;" help for whom? Why, for a multitude of miserable, guilty and helpless sinners, who have no help in themselves and nothing of any worth in themselves, who come under that solemn word, "There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God." There is a multitude of such people in that helpless state, for whom help was laid upon One that is mighty. He could deliver sinful wretches out of such a state, when they could not deliver themselves. No man "can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him." Why, these people who are led captive by the devil at his will, have no desire to be delivered. They have said, some of them especially, "I want nothing to do with God, with Christ, with religion; I want nothing to do with it." "Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." I knew a godly man who told me that in his early days he made his godly mother weep by saying that he would go on all his days in his sinful ways, and was quite content to continue in that course. His poor mother wept, and she did not live to see the wonderful change that was wrought afterwards, the mighty change God accomplished. But O what that poor man had to go through when under conviction of sin.

Now, for these people, so helpless, so utterly ruined, so dead to God, as all sinners are by nature, help is laid upon one that is mighty. Sin is mighty, the law with its condemnation and its curse is mighty, the devil is mighty, hell is mighty, a fearful reality; but says the Lord, "I have laid help upon *one that is mighty*;" and this One that is mighty is Almighty. Jesus is the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and therefore He is Almighty. Who is there that can be matched with Him for power? He is higher, we read in the Psalms, than the kings of the earth. Take all earth's mighty ones and great ones and put them together, and the Lord Jesus Christ is infinitely mightier than them all. Yea, take the devils in hell, all the powers of darkness; and their might is something to tremble at, it is very terrible to think of; but the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, is infinitely mightier than them all. For after all, the devils in hell are but creatures, but the Son of God is the Creator. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." "I have laid help upon *one that is mighty*; I have exalted *one* chosen out of the people." And there is need of a

mighty One to accomplish salvation for these ruined wretches. He can overcome the devil for them. He can overcome sin for them. He can deliver them from their guilt; He can save them from the power of darkness; He can enlighten their dark benighted minds; He can melt and break their hard hearts. We read in Isaiah that He is mighty to save, mighty to accomplish salvation in all the needful branches of it.

He is able to do it. Christ “displays superior power and guardian grace.” “Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.” He comes with almighty power, He comes with all the infinite resources of Deity, to this great work of saving His people from their sins. “I,” the Father, “have laid help.” O, it is the Father who made choice of His own dear Son; it is the Father whose will it was that His own dear Son should take upon Him human nature in the womb of Mary, should be born of a woman, be a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and that He should be the Saviour of His people, the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in. It was the *Father’s* appointment. O how the wisdom of the Father, as well as the love of Christ, is to be viewed in this: that He appointed no less than His own co-equal and co-eternal and co-essential Son to this great work of salvation. It is written, “He shall send them a saviour, and a great one.”

“I have laid help upon *one that is* mighty; I have exalted *one* chosen out of the people.” The Son of God became one of the people. As we have said, He was born of a woman, made under the law, He took upon Him true and proper human nature; and there is something very wonderful and beautiful and glorious in the union of the two natures in the one person, the divine nature and the human nature, the Son of God and the Son of man, constituting one glorious Christ. There is something very beautiful in it. We can only see a little of this great mystery of godliness, but the Father looks upon His incarnate Son and He knows how to appraise His worth. Ah, He knows the excellencies of His Person, He knows the value and sufficiency of all that He has done and suffered in accomplishing salvation for His people. The Father well knows the preciousness of Christ. The Father’s choice was set upon Him; the choice of infinite wisdom, love and goodness was set upon Christ. “I have laid help upon one that is mighty, I have exalted one chosen out of the people.” I have often said that what the Father has chosen and provided must be sufficient. You know, if you feel yourself to be a ruined sinner, you want a great Saviour made known to you. It is

not any sort of Saviour, if I may so speak, or any sort of salvation, that will do for you. It must be an all-sufficient Saviour, and it must be a salvation that is glorifying to God. As well as a salvation conveying blessings and deliverances to poor sinful men, it must be glorifying to God; and the Father has raised up in the Person of Jesus Christ one that answers to all the demands of infinite wisdom and justice, righteousness and holiness. The eye of the Father can rest upon Him with infinite complacency and satisfaction.

Editor's Note:

John Raven (1880-1953) was pastor at Shaw's Corner Chapel, Redhill, and Smallfield Chapel from 1917 until 1953. He conceived the idea of the Bethesda Fund and when it was set up in 1944, was the first chairman of the Bethesda Committee.

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The Life of the Apostle Peter

By G. E. Hadley

This address was given by Mr Hadley at the 2010 Barton Conference, held on 20th November at Barton Village Hall.

About the time that John the Baptist and Jesus were born in Judaea, many miles to the north (maybe some years afterwards, we're not exactly certain), there was a man named Jonah, whose wife gave birth to a boy. He lived in Bethsaida, just to the north-east of the Sea of Galilee. Being a Jewish fisherman, he would have circumcised his boy on the eighth day and he called his name Simeon; or as the New Testament calls it, Simon. Now Jonah being a fisherman, his children also were brought up as fishermen and Simon would also have been brought up in the Jewish traditions and customs, and to attend the synagogue. Simon was not intellectual. Simon is later described in the Acts of the Apostles by those who formally studied the law and the prophets and the Psalms as an unlearned and ignorant man. So, Simon grew up as a fisherman, a simple fisherman, a simple Jew in Bethsaida.

At some time it seems that the family business moved to Capernaum and this could well have been for commercial reasons because, after Herod died following Jesus' birth, the kingdom of Palestine was divided between Herod Antipas and Philip the tetrarch who were brothers. Bethsaida became part of Philip the tetrarch's land and

Capernaum belonged to Herod Antipas. Jonah and Simon, working at Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee in the area of Herod the tetrarch, would have to go through the customs, the seat of custom, and pay taxes to get to Bethsaida. So it was perhaps for commercial reasons that, although born in Bethsaida, we read mainly of Simon living in Capernaum.

Simon had a brother Andrew. Whether he was younger or older we are not told but, as Simon seemed to be the predominant one, perhaps Andrew was the younger brother. It seems that Andrew for some time left the fishing business and became a disciple of John the Baptist, down by the river Jordan. Andrew one day heard John the Baptist look on Jesus whom he had baptised and say, "Behold the Lamb of God" (John 1. 36). He had already said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1. 29). And the day following: "Behold the Lamb of God" (John 1. 36). Andrew and another disciple of John's followed Jesus and Jesus, turning, said unto them, "What seek ye?" They replied, "Master, where dwellest thou?" And He said, "Come and see" (John 1. 39). They stayed with Him the whole of that day. The consequence of that was that Andrew was convinced that Jesus was the promised Messiah. He who they had heard of, no doubt, in the synagogue up at Bethsaida, and perhaps at Capernaum, for the Jews were hoping for the Messiah to come. We read that Andrew went and told Simon, and brought Simon to Jesus (John 1. 42). Now I think here we have our first lesson in that Simon came to Jesus by witness of his brother. The first lesson is this: *don't be fearful of giving witness to that which you believe to a dear one, to a loved one*. I am not asking you to cast your pearls before swine. You know who are your friends and relatives. Speak to them concerning what you believe and are assured of. It might not be very much; Andrew did not know very much concerning Jesus at this time. He had got to learn a lot more. But he believed Jesus was the Son of God and he told Peter. And who knows what cause the Lord Himself may have for your witness. As Simon was constrained, perhaps through inquisitiveness or a measure of doubt at what Andrew was telling him, he came down to see Jesus. As he came to Jesus, Jesus spoke first. Jesus already knew Simon. He knew his name, He knew his father's name, and said, "Thou art Simon the son of Jona" (John 1. 42) and gave him a new name. Jesus already knew Simon's character: he was bold, he was strong, he was firm. "Thou shalt be called Cephas", as we read in that same verse. "Thou art Simon

the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone” (John 1. 42). Cephas is the Chaldean word for a lump of rock, The word “stone” is the Greek word *petros* – thou shalt be called *petros*, which in English is Peter, which means a large stone. Now Peter was the person whom Jesus would use. This was the one who was firm and strong to be prepared for the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The witness of Andrew was used to bring Peter to Jesus. So, the first lesson: *who can tell what the Lord may use of your witness in speaking of your faith?*

Where the Lord begins a work in the heart (for Simon, like Andrew, became convinced that this was the Messiah) that believing knowledge has to be deepened, and many of the lessons I want to bring out are to do with the deepening of that work of grace in the heart of Simon. You notice that much of these early days of Peter are contained in the gospel of John. Some have suggested that the other disciple of John the Baptist who was with Andrew was actually John himself, because he alone speaks of these early days of Jesus’ disciples – the twelve weren’t all called at once. There was Andrew, there was Simon who became Peter, there was Philip, there was Nathanael and maybe John as well. Perhaps five of them, and as we go into chapter two, we read, “and the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee” (John 2. 1). It seems to be that it was a relative of Mary, the mother of Jesus, (which was why Jesus was called) because Mary had quite a prominent part to play. Normally if you’re a guest, you just sit and you’re served. Mary was aware that there was no wine and she had authority over the servants, which was the case in Jewish weddings where those of the family, close family, had a responsibility for the feast. As you know, she told Jesus, about whom she already knew much, that there was no wine. Jesus turned the water in the large vessels into wine, the best wine, and it was poured out. What about the disciples? “This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him” (John 2. 11). They already believed, but this was a deepening of their belief. We find in these first few chapters of John that it continues like that. They went with Jesus to Jerusalem (later in John 2) where Jesus cast out the buyers and sellers from the temple and we read in verse 17, “his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.” They saw a confirming of that prophecy, which they had obviously heard read in the synagogues, in what Jesus said and did. Prophecy was being fulfilled in this Man. So

there was a deepening of their belief. But they did not understand everything yet. Jesus spoke of his destroying the temple, and building it again in three days, as we find in that chapter. But the disciples did not understand that; not until after the resurrection. When we are brought to believe in Jesus through whatever means, perhaps the witness of another, our belief, like that of Peter and the other disciples, is deepened through our experience of what the Lord Jesus can do, and by His word. It is applied to our understanding. There follows the account of Nicodemus – the teaching of Jesus to him. We then have Jesus returning from Jerusalem through Samaria, the woman by the well and His abiding in that village of Samaria. There we have this testimony of men of the city of Samaria unto the woman, “Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard *him* ourselves, and know that this indeed is the Christ, the Saviour of the world” (John 4. 42). These disciples were witness to the power of the word of God in others and that helped to confirm them that their belief in Jesus was a true belief. So the second lesson is this: that from the beginning of a call by grace, which Peter knew, there's a confirming, for every true believer, that Jesus is the Son of God. This is through the Word of God and the observation of things in one's life and in the life of others. There's a deepening in the knowledge of Him whom you have believed. There begins to become a real assurance. So that is the second lesson: *we learn and observe by experience, to confirm in us that Jesus is the Son of God.*

After this, Jesus returned into Galilee and we read how he went about many of the cities and towns in Galilee teaching. Peter does not seem to have followed Jesus everywhere at that time, because we read in one of the other gospels (Luke 5) that Jesus returned to Capernaum and the people pressed upon Him to hear the word. Meanwhile, Peter had been all the night fishing with Andrew, and Jesus asked to get into the boat, which was Peter's. After He had finished teaching the people (Luke 5. 1-11), he asked Peter to launch out into the deep. Peter had already been fishing. He and the others were now washing and mending their nets by the side of the Sea of Galilee. It wasn't the time of the day to go fishing. Peter says, “Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net” (Luke 5. 5). “Nevertheless, at thy word”. What did Peter really mean here? Did he remember what Mary had said at Cana in Galilee, when she said unto those servants concerning Jesus: “Whatsoever he saith unto you,

do it” (John 2. 5)? Now Peter says to Jesus: “Nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.” We read he caught a multitude of fishes. Now this had a great effect on Peter. “When Simon Peter saw *it*, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord” (Luke 5. 8). Peter became convinced of his own unworthiness; his sinfulness in comparison to this great and glorious Man, this holy Man of God, who commanded all things and it was done. What a separation he felt between himself and this Man Jesus Christ. He was so unworthy, he felt he could not be in His presence. Now that is the fear of God – the knowledge of what we are; great sinners in the sight of a holy God, unfit to be in the presence of God. Now that is deepening. You could say this is the new birth, being born of the Spirit, born of God, this deep knowledge of what we are in the sight of a holy God. We don’t teach ourselves this. Also notice that when Peter spoke to Jesus concerning going out to let down the net, he said *Master*. “Master, we have toiled all the night”. Now he says, “Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, *O Lord*.” He came into that deep knowledge that Jesus indeed was God and he was an unworthy sinner. Now there is lesson number three: *for every true believer called by grace, there comes that time in his life when he is convinced of sin, knowing his unworthiness, unfit to be in the presence of God*. But it is accompanied with something else. We read in verse 11 of this fifth chapter: “they forsook all, and followed” Jesus. Peter did not want to be separated from Jesus, but he felt that he was unworthy to be in His presence. However Jesus had said to Simon: “Fear not” – “Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men” (Luke 5. 10). It is appointed Simon, to you, to be a minister of the gospel. Until now you have caught fish, but now the gospel net will be spread by you in the preaching of My Name, and you will draw men unto Me. “They forsook all and followed” Him; made obedient to the will of God. That is in the day of his power. This is a time of humility and submission to the will of God in the knowledge of our unworthiness and sin. That is the third lesson.

Now such faith, and such belief, is bound to be tried. We do not read that Peter ever went back fishing except that one time after Jesus’s resurrection. Peter now abode with and followed Jesus throughout His ministry. It was at this time that Jesus also called many other disciples to the total number of 12. So we read now in all the gospels various things concerning Peter. We come to the time of the feeding of the 5000, when Jesus said to his disciples: “Give ye them to eat” (Matt. 14.

16; Mark 6. 37; Luke 9. 13). It was Andrew who said that there was a lad there with five barley loaves and two small fishes but what were those among so many? Jesus made them all sit down on the grass, and he blessed the bread, broke it, gave to his disciples; his disciples to the people and they all were fed. After the feeding, Jesus went into a mountain to pray and he constrained his disciples to go over the sea back towards Capernaum and they toiled in rowing. Jesus was not with them, but Jesus came walking on the water, in the fourth watch of the night, and they feared. They thought it was a ghost, and they cried out, but Jesus said: "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid" (Matt. 14. 27). And Peter said, "If it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water." Jesus said, "Come", and Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water. But when he saw the elements about him he began to fear and sink, and cried out to Jesus: "Lord save me" (Matt. 14. 30). And Jesus stretched forth His hand and saved him. "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Here is the fourth lesson. *We are always plagued, through our old nature.* Even though we have been taught the truth concerning Jesus, we have our old nature and we are plagued by unbelief. We look at the natural things around us, and we see all these things which are against us, which we have no power to overcome, and we begin to doubt, fear and sink. So what is the lesson? We are always plagued by unbelief and doubts and fears. Our life depends upon the mercy of God through Jesus Christ to save us and keep us. Here is the benefit of faith! It is that great gift of God, but how little we exercise it and use it when we view things naturally around us. Jesus was ready to save Peter. He remembered that he was but dust, like He does us. Jesus's mercy was upon him. Now when we get into these circumstances, of doubt and fear; the trial of our faith, and the Lord delivers us, and overcomes our fears, and we so continue in the way we should go; then that is sanctified to the strengthening of our faith. It was so with Peter.

It was not long after that, that the people whom Jesus had fed came and found Him in Capernaum and we read in John six that they wanted to make Jesus king. Jesus said: "Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled" (John 6. 26). They sought Jesus because he supplied their bodily needs and that alone. They thought they could have this man as king. He will give us all that we need for comfort upon this earth. Jesus then said, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth but for that meat which endureth unto

everlasting life”, which is Himself, the bread of heaven – “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you” (John 6. 53). Now they who understood that in a natural way said that it was a hard saying and who could receive it? Many walked no more with Jesus. Many of that multitude that followed him went away. Jesus said to his disciples, “Will ye also go away?” (John 6. 67). Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.” Peter could not understand at that time what Jesus meant by eating his flesh and drinking his blood, but he believed that these were the ways of eternal life. Now that was great faith; believing in that which he could not naturally understand. Peter went on to say, “And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God” (John 6. 69). What a great expression of faith! Not the little faith he had when he was overcome with doubts and fears. There does come a time, and more than once, when a true believer feels assured that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the way of eternal life. It was not only once with Peter. Remember he went to Caesarea Philippi and Jesus said to his disciples, “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” (Matt. 16. 13). It was Peter who said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”. Jesus replied, “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven”. Peter was taught of God. That is how we know that we are children of God. That is the fifth lesson. *All His children shall be taught of the Lord through the assurance of faith.* Peter was assuredly taught by the Spirit of God, that Jesus was the Son of God and the way of eternal life.

Now, if we turn to Matthew 16, we read that Jesus said some further words to Peter. After Simon Peter had answered and Jesus had said, “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona”, He said, “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (v. 18). Now much error has arisen over the interpretation of this verse. “Thou art Peter” – *petros* – “and upon this rock” – *petra* – a different form of the Greek word. *Petros* meaning “a lump of rock”, *petra* meaning “a great rock”; the great rock being the truth that Jesus was the Son of God and upon this truth, that He had come down to make the way of salvation for sinners, He would build His church. But Jesus also gave a commission to Peter. He confirmed the words that he would be a fisher of men. He said, “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven” (Matt.

16. 19). What are the keys of the kingdom of heaven? Did Peter have power to unlock gates and let people in at his own will? No! The keys to the kingdom are the precious gospel of Jesus Christ and that was what he was to preach. “The keys to the kingdom of heaven” – a glorious ministry of the gospel of Christ – and “whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” Notice the word *whatsoever* – not whosoever. Whatsoever; and this I believe is a reference to the role Peter would play as a pillar in the church of Christ in those early days. He would be the ruler, the one in charge of that early church and he would set, under the influence of the Spirit of God, practical godliness; what was right and what was wrong, and he would have authority. Remember the solemn case of Ananias and Sapphira who deceitfully only brought part of the price of the land they sold. It was Peter who was given authority there. Solemnly the Lord took the lives of Ananias and Sapphira. Peter had authority in the early church through the appointment of God and that was under the teaching of the Spirit. So Peter, at the time of this expression of great faith, was confirmed in the appointed role that he would undertake, and that would be in God’s time, not in his own time. This is our sixth lesson: *God confirms to His people the specific work He has appointed them to do before the actual time comes to do it.*

But we immediately find the earthly unbelief of Peter’s reasoning mind still within him. For we read in that same chapter, “From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto His disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But He turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan” (Matt. 16. 21-23). Here is a lesson. *Satan desires to have the Lord’s people and fill them with unbelief using the reasoning of their own minds and the earthly understanding of their hearts.* This was not the way that Peter wanted His Lord and Master to go. He did not want Him to be killed. He would do everything to prevent it; and he said so. He was rebuked by the Lord Jesus. How we have to be careful of our own understanding, our reasoning mind in the things of our lives. How easily we can come to a conclusion that demands those things that are not in accordance with the Lord’s will, or not in accordance with the Word of God. At the transfiguration of Christ, Peter saw Moses and

Elijah talking with Jesus and Jesus was transfigured before them in that glorious array of white robes and His face shone as the sun. And the voice of God spoke out of the cloud: “This is my beloved Son...hear ye him” (Matt. 17. 5). And when Jesus came down from the mountain with Peter, James and John, He spoke of His death and resurrection. How they wondered; they wondered what the resurrection – the death and the resurrection – would mean. They could not understand it and they did not want it. So what do we find here? Another lesson, that *our earthly hearts, our earthly minds, which are not of faith, are yet full of sin*. We have to be so careful that we are not ruled by our own hearts and our own minds. What do the Proverbs say? “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding” (Prov. 3. 5). It brought rebuke upon Peter. So that is the seventh lesson: *our own reasoning, influenced as it is by Satan, never can approve of God’s ways*. Carnal reasoning is not of faith, therefore it is of sin, and we must be aware of it.

It brought Peter into a great fall. A child of God once said, “Oh, if I had not a myself!” Throughout Peter’s life, his own earthly self predominated time and time and time again, and it brought him into difficulties and troubles. Peter felt assured within himself of his faithfulness. When they had come again to Jerusalem before Jesus was crucified, Peter said to Jesus, “I will go with thee, even to the death”. “Shall you?” said Jesus, to Peter, “*Even* in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice” (Mark 14. 30). We also read of that in Luke’s gospel, in the 22nd chapter; this terrible act of Peter, as he followed Jesus afar off when Jesus was taken into the palace of the high priest. We have the boldness of Peter; all the other disciples forsook Him and fled but Peter, in his boldness, followed on to see what was being done, what was going on. He warmed himself by the fire, he was amongst unbelievers. They observed him and said, “You are one of them; you are one of his disciples. Your speech gives you away; you’re a Galilean.” Three times Peter lied. Three times Peter denied the truth to save his own skin, fearing that he also would come into persecution. Oh “the Spirit is willing”, says Jesus, “but the flesh is weak”. In the garden of Gethsemane, Peter and the others fell asleep while Jesus was in the agony of prayer: “could ye not watch with me one hour?” (Matt. 26. 40); oh the weakness of Peter’s flesh! We find a lesson there in Peter. How often we fall, perhaps ashamed of Jesus. We cannot watch unto prayer even for one hour when it is so needful and consider Him

who endured the cross. How often our minds and hearts are turned away in accordance with our flesh. Having denied Jesus three times, Peter comes out from that place and weeps bitterly. What made him weep? It was his great sinfulness, his felt weakness, his unfaithfulness. He had denied his Lord who had showed such mercy toward him. Denied, as it were, and set aside, that faith which had been given unto him to believe in Jesus. It all seemed to have been overcome. Jesus had said unto Peter, had He not: "Satan hath desired *to have* you, that he may sift *you* as wheat" (Luke 22. 31). Oh, the trials and tribulations of our earthly life and we are so easily overcome by our earthly spirit. It was so with Peter. Was this the end of Peter – would he be cast away as he deserved – as nothing worth, a guilty sinner? No! He came out and wept bitterly, he remembered the words of Jesus, that before the cock crow twice, he would deny him thrice, and he wept bitterly over his sin. But that was not all the Lord Jesus had said to him, was it? What did Jesus say to him at the same time? "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted" – turned about, brought back, restored – "strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22. 32). So through faith, which would not be completely taken away from Peter, he could see there was yet a hope. There would be an overcoming of his sin, which grieved him so bitterly. Now this was the distinction, I believe, between Judas Iscariot and Peter. The distinction was faith; God-given faith. Judas had no such words, had no such hope to call upon in his sin and when he was completely convicted of it, he could only see one end, and that was the taking away of his life, and to enter into hell. What a solemn case was Judas. Peter's sin in the outward form was no less than Judas's. But Peter had the word of the Lord: "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Now, here's the eighth lesson. *Every true believer in Christ is kept by the power of God through faith from falling into despair; faith that is given unto you.* What a precious gift – kept by the power of God through faith; faith in Jesus that although we sin continually and fall, the blood of Jesus Christ shall cleanse from every sin. There is a continual deepening of knowledge going on through the life of Peter of mercy and love in and through Jesus Christ.

Now Peter came to know the time of that conversion, that restoring. Whilst he was in the depth of his sin, it was Jesus who died, and He rose again and appeared unto His disciples. Peter saw Him in the upper room. But the Lord had said to His disciples that they should go into Galilee and there they would see Him; where He had called them;

where He first met them. Peter returned there and what did Peter do, whilst they waited? He did as he had done at the beginning, “I go a fishing.” And that night they caught nothing. Just like it had been at that beginning in Capernaum, at the very beginning of Luke chapter five, they had caught nothing. In the morning, there was Jesus, standing on the shore. They did not know it was Jesus at first. “Children, have ye any meat?...Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find”, and they let it down again as they had done before, and caught a great draught of fishes. John said: “It is the Lord”, and Peter jumped out of the boat – they were near to the land – and waded to the shore. He did not want that boat and fishes any more. He wanted to be with his Jesus. And Jesus called them to that breakfast. The coals, the fish on the coals, baked on the fire; and then He spoke to Peter as in verse 15 of the 21st chapter of John. “Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?” Lovest thou me more than these? More than what? – The fishes, his occupation, the fruit of it, the brethren, the friends, everything that surrounded them in that lovely area of Galilee. “Lovest thou me more than these?” Jesus said to Peter three times: “Lovest thou me?” And Peter answered the same answer three times. “Thou knowest that I love thee”. When we truly know the forgiveness of our sins, then we love the Lord Jesus more than anything else upon this earth. We have our friends, we have our families, some of you have got husbands and wives, and you love them dearly, but they cannot preserve your soul. They cannot cleanse you from your sin. They cannot give you eternal life. Only the Lord Jesus can do that. “Thou knowest that I love thee” more than all these things. And that knowledge comes through the Lord’s mercy in forgiveness of sins – your pardon sealed and peace with God. Lesson nine: *at the forgiveness of our sins and our backslidings we love and value the Lord above all other things*. It’s only through that knowledge that we shall love Him as we should. You are a sinner, yet a sinner saved by grace. At this time, the Lord Jesus again confirmed with Peter what he must do. “Feed my sheep.” “Feed my lambs.” This meaning: “preach the gospel”, “preach my name”, “preach my death”, “preach my resurrection”, that many might believe through the Word.

Jesus also gave to Peter a promise at this time. Jesus said to Peter, “When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry *thee* whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God” (John 21. 18-

19). “When thou shalt be old”. Now Peter, from that time forth, was greatly blessed, as the other disciples were, with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. They preached the gospel and the blessing of God was upon that preached word! Thousands were added unto the church even daily. But they were persecuted! “In the world ye shall have tribulation” (John 16. 33). They were put in prison by the Jews, they were beaten and they were hated. Stephen was stoned. There came a time when Herod Antipas put Peter in prison, having already killed James. We read that Peter was asleep in that prison on the night before he was to come out to be killed. The brethren were praying for him, but Peter was asleep. Was that a bodily weakness? I believe Peter was there, asleep, resting in faith. Faith upon the promise the Lord had given him. “When thou shalt be old”, he would die. Peter was not old at that time. He didn’t know how, but he believed the Lord would fulfil the promise of His word to him. In that wondrous way of sending the angel his chains fell off; the doors opened; he was released. What a lesson there is here. The Lord’s word, the Lord’s promise to you will never fail. What he has spoken and applied with power will prevail and will come to pass. The will of God does prevail. His word shall never fail. We read that God is a shield about those that trust in him. So the tenth lesson is: *in following the Lord and seeking to do His will, it is ours to trust in the Lord, in the word of God and all the precious promises that will not fail through His mercy toward us*. He is faithful that promised. That is, when so many things seem to come against us, still trust that the Lord will fulfil His promise even though it’s beyond our imagination.

Finally, Peter’s testimony; the testimony of his life. We find that in his epistle, Peter, older in years now, having gone about the preaching of the gospel, as the Lord had called him to do, particularly amongst the Jews, wrote in 1 Peter 1. 3: “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you”, that is all believers in Christ. He is gone to prepare a place for them. Not through their desert; they are sinners; but they are saved by His grace and His abundant mercy. “Who are kept” – kept in this hope – “by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” Peter was a simple Jewish fisherman. He was bound by the law yet delivered, called by the

grace of God, brought to experience mercy and the deepening of his faith in Christ. He was prepared by experience throughout his life to fully believe in Jesus. There was all his hope as he looked unto eternal life, and he glorified God.

In conclusion, let us read verses five and six in 1 Peter 5. Peter is exhorting the younger in verse five: "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder." That is in practical godliness. Verse six gives this exhortation: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you." "He careth for you." The great lesson which Peter learnt is that all our hope of eternal life is in what Christ hath done for us. Not what you do for Him. We are to serve Him; we are to live humbly, dependent upon Him; but our hope is in what God, through Christ, has done for us. That is the teaching of the lesson in the life of Peter. Then in verse eight: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Yet Peter proved that the devil could not devour him. The very last words of Peter in the second epistle are this: "Grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen" (2 Peter 3. 18). Peter was a sinner saved by grace. Ever a sinner in his flesh, but through the mercy and the grace of God, he had a sure hope of eternal life.

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BOOK REVIEWS

400th Anniversary of the King James Bible

By J. R. Broome

There has been great interest nationally this year in the 400th Anniversary of the King James version of the Bible. On one Sunday the BBC had extracts from it read on BBC Four throughout the day, and though the interest has been mainly on account of the beautiful English and its influence on the development of the English language, yet the very reading of it on such a scale could be used of the Lord to the blessing of this godless nation. The Trinitarian Bible Society has had a series of lectures countrywide on the subject and has published a commemorative issue of the Bible as well as other literature.

Dr David Allen, who is a Deputation Speaker for the TBS, has published an extensive, scholarly work on the subject entitled, *The Jewel in the King's Crown*. It includes a history of all the translations prior to 1611 and a detailed account of the proceedings of the Hampton Court Conference, chaired by King James I, at which the royal assent was given for a body of scholars from Oxford and Cambridge University to be set up to produce a new translation, based on the Bishop's Bible. Also included is an interesting account of the lives and careers of all the various translators. Dr Allen points to the majesty of the language used and says, "The translators gave the King James Version a majestic quality that raised it high above all other translations." There is also a detailed account of the Gunpowder Plot, which took place in November 1605, in an attempt to kill the King and wipe out Lords and Commons. Had it succeeded the Authorised Version might never have been finished as the impetus behind it lay with James I. The book has many excellent coloured illustrations and will provide an excellent source book on the subject for future generations, in an age which has seen a plethora of poor translations none of which will last like the King James translation.

The Gospel Standard Trust Publications have published a paperback entitled *The King James Bible – Its History and Its Excellence*. This includes a summary of a lecture given by Stephen Hyde (Chairman of the TBS 1990 – 2001) in May 2008 on the Authorised Version, a history of all the versions leading up to 1611, with comparable extracts from all the translations, by John Broome, *The Translators to the Reader* by Myles Smith (one of the principal translators), which was written as an introduction to the 1611 translation, and a reprint of the work by Alfred Levell (chairman of the TBS 1979 – 1990) entitled *The Old is Better*.

***The Jewel in the King's Crown* by Dr David Allen**

Published by Tentmaker Publications, Hardback with dust jacket, 359 pages, £19.95

***The King James Bible – Its History and Its Excellence* Edited by J. R. Broome**

Published by Gospel Standard Trust Publications, Paperback, 142 pages, £3.50.

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CURRENT EVENTS

Antichrist

As I write this in June, further cases of the spirit of antichrist are appearing in our nation. "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even so now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time" (1 John 2. 18) "He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son" (1 John 2. 22).

A Roman Catholic woman in social work, who pointed out the psychological effect that an abortion could have on a woman, was firstly moved from her job to a post for which she was not trained, and then when she demurred at this treatment, and pointed out the fact that she was not qualified for the job, was peremptorily sacked by the County Council, who then said they had not sacked her for her views on abortion, but because she had refused to take the new job offered to her.

In another case a professing Christian doctor was threatened by the General Medical Council with suspension, on the grounds that he had mentioned his faith to a patient, who had complained. This doctor had often done this discreetly to patients who came to see him, not forcing his views on them, but pointing out what a help his faith and prayer had been to him. His case is now being considered by the GMC who may strike him off the register and thus prevent him from him practising.

When I was teaching (I retired in 1986) and was a Careers Adviser in a comprehensive school of fifteen hundred pupils, I regularly interviewed pupils over what would be a major decision in their lives and as I felt led, sometimes asked them if they had prayed about their future. Sometimes I met with a sceptical response, but on other occasions found there were those who were praying about their career and examinations. Today, no doubt, such a practice would lead serious trouble for staff involved in careers work. At that time it was acceptable and did not create a problem

The National Secular Society is working at the present time to remove all religion from state schools and is attempting to get an amendment to the Education Bill now passing through the House of Lords, which would abolish the statutory requirement for schools to hold an act of worship at the beginning of every day. They point out that Britain is the only country in Europe that has such a requirement, schools in such countries as France being wholly secular.

At one time in the 1960s, I took eight consecutive morning assemblies at the High School for boys in Trowbridge, based on John 3. 16. I also had two Bible Studies in the School Library after school for pupils who wished to come and did not normally attend a church. Fifty years on this would not be allowed. Since retirement I have taken a morning assembly at Pewsey Comprehensive School on the subject of prayer. During that Assembly a member of staff walked out in rage and banged the door loudly. The invitation to take this assembly came about through a deacon, who was a governor of the school, complaining to the Head Teacher that morning assemblies were not being taken regularly.

Recently, two headmasters have refused to allow the Gideon Society to distribute Bibles to pupils in the first year of their comprehensive school, on the grounds that it is discriminatory to allow one religion access, when other religions could claim the same right. No longer are we a Christian nation, but have become a multi-cultural, multi-faith society, in which Christianity is in the minority and its members are being persecuted.

In July, Lord Sacks, the Chief Rabbi, speaking to the House of Commons public and administration select committee, warned that anti-discrimination policies had fuelled an "erosion of religious liberty" in Britain that was leading to a new "Mayflower," a reference to the flight of the Pilgrim Fathers to America in 1620 in the face of religious persecution. He said, "I share a real concern that the attempt to impose the current prevailing template of equality and discrimination on religious organisations is an erosion of religious liberty."

A Parachutist's Prayer before going into Action at Arnhem in 1944

"If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall Thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me"
(Psa. 139. 9-10)

O God, Who knowest all our ways,
From Whom no secret thing is hid,
Guard o'er us through the coming days,
Our faithless hearts from terrors rid.

When rising heavenwards, may we feel
The comfort of Thy Presence near;
When through the darkened clouds we steal,
Thy strengthening counsel let us hear.

At length, when into space we fall,
And far below the earth appears,
Thy right hand hold us throughout all,
To make us brave 'gainst hidden fears.

Then to Thy Name from day to day
Shall praise ascend from every heart,
Whose arm alone hath been our stay,
Whose Presence bade our fears depart.

Henry James Irwin

PERCEPTION



For he hath said, I will never leave
thee, nor forsake thee (Hebrews 13.5).

WINTER 2011

CONTENTS

	Page:
Editorial	1
Current Issues	
Witnessing in the Workplace	3
<i>J. R. Broome</i>	
Address given at a School Assembly	10
<i>J. R. Broome</i>	
The Temptation to Atheism	11
<i>Dr M. J. Hyde</i>	
Dress in Biblical Times	19
<i>J. R. Broome</i>	
Doctrine & Truth	
Personal Types and Shadows of Christ	23
<i>S. F. Paul</i>	
Jerusalem, My Happy Home	27
Letters, Addresses & Sermons	
Extract from Sermon Preached by the late John Green (2)	28
Current Events	
School Visits — Bible Distribution by S. A. Hyde	33

Cover Picture: Taken February 2011, from Fleetwith Pike (2125ft), looking across Buttermere and Crummock Water toward The Solway Firth. Photo by F. Ashby

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PERCEPTION

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EDITORIAL

“There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee nor forsake thee” (Josh. 1. 5).

When Moses was nearing his end, at the age of one hundred and twenty, and knew that the Lord would not allow him to lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land, he called all Israel together to tell them that Joshua would lead them and take them over the Jordan and go before them in the conflict that lay ahead. First he gave encouragement to Israel in the words, “Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee nor forsake thee” (Deut. 31. 6). To Joshua he said, “Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the Lord hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not neither be dismayed (Deut. 31. 7-8). After the death of Moses the Lord appeared personally to Joshua commanding him to, “Go over this Jordan, thou and all this people unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel” (Josh. 1. 2). With the command the Lord gave him a promise: “There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee nor forsake thee” (Josh. 1. 5).

The Apostle Paul in sending his Epistle to the Hebrews, refers to this promise in the words: “For he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee” (Heb. 13. 5), and adds, “So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me” (Heb. 13. 6). Every member of the church of Christ, in their passage through time will need such a promise. They will all have conflicts, sufferings, sorrows and be presented with mountains which they cannot move or cross alone. Their desire will be like Moses, to hear the voice of their God saying, “My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest”

(Ex. 33. 14). Their response to such a promise will be like his: "If they presence go not with me, carry us not up hence" (Ex. 33. 15). Moses had no desire to go anywhere without the Lord's presence with him. So with those born again of the Spirit of God, and taught by Him, all they long for in their trials in life, in their conflicts, is that the Lord would be with them and sanctify their losses and crosses, sufferings and sorrows to their soul's eternal welfare. Their desire is to bow before the will of God and say with the apostle Paul: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8. 28).

Because like the children of Israel, they are wanderers and rebels; because their greatest sin is unbelief; Christians have many fears that the Lord will leave them, that His presence will not go with them and they will have to walk alone and mourn His absence on account of their sins. This explains why in Scripture we hear such simple prayers as "Lord help me" and that of the dying thief, "Remember me..." David, the sweet Psalmist of Israel, in his prayer of confession and contrition in Psalm 38 ends with the words: "Forsake me not, O Lord: O my God, be not far from me. Make haste to help me, O Lord of my salvation. (Ps. 38. 21-22). Let us remember the words of the Apostle Paul: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4. 15). What a wonder, that the eternal Son of God, the Creator of this universe, should Himself take into union with His Deity, a holy body and soul, live and suffer in this world for the sins of His church and utter on the Cross those words, prophetically written by David, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Ps. 22. 1); "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? (Matt 27. 46); the reason being, as Peter explains: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree..." (1 Pet. 2. 24) and therefore His Father could not look upon Him.

Now in heaven He understands the pathway of His church, "touched with the feeling of her infirmities" and when she feel her weakness and need, He gives her such exceeding great and precious promises as, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Her prayers come before Him. She says, "Forsake me not utterly" (Ps. 119. 8); "Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not neither forsake me, O God of my salvation" (Ps. 27. 9). Brought to lie passive in His hands she can say,

“The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands” (Ps. 138. 8). To her the Lord replies, “For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but will everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer” (Isa. 54. 7-8). Then He adds a promise, “For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee” (Isa. 54. 10).

It is such communion with the Lord that the church of Christ desires. Of her He says, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me” (John 10. 27), and again, “The hour is coming and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and live (John 5. 25). To Him His church prays with Nehemiah, “Remember me, O my God, for good” (Neh. 13. 31) and with the Psalmist, “Remember me, O Lord with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation” (Ps. 106. 4). When the Lord answers those prayers then she can say, “Who remembered us in our low estate: for his mercy endureth for ever” (Ps. 136. 23).

Forget thee I will not, I cannot; thy name
Engraved on my heart does for ever remain;
The palms of my hand while I look on I see
The wounds I received when suffering for thee. (J. Grant)

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CURRENT ISSUES

Witnessing in the Workplace

By J. R. Broome

This is the second part of the lecture “Witnessing in the Workplace”, given by the Editor at the Barton Conference on Saturday 15th November 2008.

A meeting at a carpenter’s bench at Ramsgate about 1895 was the means of the call by grace of my late grandfather, John William Walley. Working beside him for three months was Robert Brooker, later pastor of our chapel at Hastings. My Grandfather was the only one of eleven brothers and sisters to be converted. He had been brought up

in a Congregational Church, but had never heard the truth. He offered Mr Brooker a Congregational magazine. Mr Brooker declined to take it and said to him, "This is more in my line," and gave him Bunyan's *Pilgrims Progress*. It was the means in the Lord's hand of opening his eyes. Some of Robert Brooker's letters to him were published in the Gospel Standard for 1970 when S. F. Paul was Editor. The witness of Robert Brooker bore fruit. Grandfather later went to work in Southampton and attended the Strict Baptist Chapel, where he was baptized and eventually became deacon for 53 years until his death in 1956. The first thing he did when he became deacon, was to invite Mr Brooker for the Anniversary Services. His co-deacon for 20 years was Caleb Sawyer, later pastor of Mayfield.

The Lord called me by grace in September 1952 in my 2nd year at university when I was deep in the world. The words in 2 Cor. 6. 17, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, touch not the unclean thing..." came with great power into my soul and separated me for ever from my worldly companions. That year I had to share a room with the university football captain. Now I knew that I had to kneel by my bedside and it was no easy task and sometimes if another student came to our room when I was in prayer I found it even harder.

In November 1952 I took exams at London university and had to go to Senate House in January 1953 to get the results. Leaving Senate House having passed the exams, the Lord blessed my soul with the words, "In blessing I will bless thee" (Gen 22. 17) and travelling away shortly afterwards from London by train, I felt constrained in a carriage full of people, to take out my Bible and find the words. But fear and embarrassment took hold of me, and my *witness* failed and the sweetness of the words left me. I feared to take out my Bible.

In June 1954 I went on a three week course in Roman Archaeology to Corbridge on Hadrian's Wall just outside Newcastle. On Sundays coach trips were arranged along the wall. But I left and went into Newcastle to our chapel there. On one of those Sundays I was greatly blessed under the ministry of Mr E. G. Rowell, but I came in for constant mocking from one of the lecturers on the course.

I went in the Army to do National Service in August 1955. I was in a billet with sixty men my own age, none of whom I knew. I was aware that if I never got down by my bed that first night, I never would. In great fear and trembling I knelt by my bed expecting that someone

would throw a boot at me. But to my utter amazement all was silence and in the two weeks that I was there six of the young soldiers came to me to confess that they had prayed secretly in their beds that night, and one approached me to ask what I believed.

In December 1955 I was posted to a Regiment in Germany and was among complete strangers. I wondered if there were any of the Lord's children in these godless surroundings. I made gentle enquiries, and one of the soldiers told me that there was a "chap in C Battery who had a big Bible by his bedside". When I found Norman Reading (a graduate of Oxford University) I found a real work of grace in his heart and we were companions for fifteen months in that Regiment. He had purposely brought a big Bible with him so that he would not be tempted to hide a small one in his pocket. It was the means of my finding him in those dark surroundings.

As a witness in the Regiment he and I felt we must attend Sunday mornings the Regimental Church even though the ministry was awful. We later escaped to take the padre's Sunday School, which included about forty children of regular soldiers in the Regiment. Later the padre (a most ungodly man) allowed us to use one of his vestries on a Friday evening where we held a prayer meeting and were joined by a godly Scripture Reader, Jim Kirk and another soldier who was eventually going to Cambridge University.

My job was in the Regimental Office, and when I was eventually in charge I made it clear to the five soldiers who worked there, that I would rather they did not swear, and swearing ceased. At weekends sometimes soldiers from other Regiment visited us and the officers expected us to entertain them in the various Regimental Messes. I knew that there would be an immense amount of drunkenness and felt I could not attend these occasions. I was called to see the RSM who ordered me to attend. I refused on grounds of conscience and told him he could strip me of my rank and put me in the guardroom, but I would never attend. He again ordered me to attend and so I appealed and asked to be taken to a commissioned officer. I knew he could not refuse this. This officer showed great restraint as he knew it was matter of conscience. He said if you will respect my wishes I would be glad if you would go. But I never went and afterwards the RSM did everything he could to make my life a misery.

In January 1959 as part of my Diploma in Education, I went to Worthing Boys High School for a ten week teaching practice. I entered

the Headmaster's study and sat down to be interviewed. I noticed that there was a Bible sitting in the centre of his very big desk. He first put his hand on the Bible and looked me in the face and said, "What is your attitude to this book?" I instantly replied, "I believe every word of it." His response was, "We shall agree then." He was Brethren. He himself took Scripture in the first forms and he took me along to watch himself teaching, using Gideon New Testaments, comparing accounts in the Synoptic Gospels. Later he left me to take these lessons myself and I had a free hand to witness among these young boys to the truths in the Gospels.

In September 1959 I commenced a teaching post at the Trowbridge Boys High School where I was to stay for twenty-seven years until I retired in 1986. A short time after my arrival, as I was going into town one day, the lines of Samuel Rutherford's Hymn, *The sands of time are sinking*, dropped into my heart with great power,

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

I was already carrying the burden of the exercise of the ministry at this time and had carried it since 1954 while at university. I was not to be sent to preach until 1969. So my thoughts very much turned on opportunities to spread the truth in the High School. My subjects were Latin and History, but the Headmaster asked me also to take Scripture. When I saw the textbooks that they were using, I told him I could not teach from them as they were liberal and erroneous. I asked him could I be allowed to cover the same ground using only the Bible, and he consented, and said, "If any parents complain, I shall be on safe ground, if you are using the Bible." So for the next ten years while he remained in the Headship I went through various books of the Bible. I look back now in wonderment how I was enabled one year to take the Prophecy of Isaiah with a class of 15 year olds, pointing to all the references to Christ in that prophecy.

After I had been there several years, one evening at a staff meeting, the Head said, "I am growing tired of searching for subjects for morning assembly and would be glad if any member of staff were brave enough to take some assemblies." I at once felt I ought to heed his request, but I felt afraid to do so. For a long time my conscience kept

telling me that I ought to venture. One morning on my knees I felt liberty in prayer and vowed that if ever the Head asked again I would agree to do it. That very evening at a staff meeting he repeated his request and that night I rang the Deputy Headmaster and agreed to do it. But it was a great mountain. The first subject laid on my mind was *Fear*. I wrote my address out in long hand and read it. I told the whole school that I had been afraid to take assembly and went on to say how fear leads to prayer for God's help. Soon I was exercised to scrap my notes and speak extempore. This was a great mountain. Now my mind was directed to John 3.16, "God so loved the world...etc". I spoke for eight assemblies on this verse, one word at a time trusting in the Lord to help me. It was quite a test in front of the whole school and staff but the Lord helped. One of the sixth form said to me after one assembly, "I have never heard anything like that before." Then one of our GS ministers heard what I was doing and said to me. "You cannot do this. Wait until you get to 'perish' and you will never be faithful." This was a challenge and I got one of the sixth formers (Nigel Stenning) to read Mark 6 where it comes in three times, "Where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." Then I spoke on hell and I left that platform that morning with a clear conscience.

Not long after I came to the High School I approached the Headmaster to see if he would allow me to take Bible Studies in the Library after school and he agreed. This commenced a Bible study every Thursday evening after school to which eight or ten pupils came of varying ages. Later when some could not come on a Thursday evening I started a second Bible Study after school on Tuesday evening. Later still I started one in my own home on a Sunday afternoon. These Bible Studies consisted of going through particular books of the Bible, the Gospel at first and later the book of Job and prophecy of Isaiah, expounding about ten verses at a time. Most of the pupils who came were from godless backgrounds and had never attended a place of worship before. In the summer holidays I took parties of boys, sometimes up to fifteen at a time, away on Christian holiday camps organised by David Fountain, pastor of Spring Road Evangelical Church and they heard the simple gospel preached by such ministers as old Mr Brehaut of the Channel Islands and Mr Teague of Goronhaven, Cornwall. I bought a collection of large TBS posters and the members of the Bible Study put them on the inside walls around the

school. I remember the ten commandments being displayed at the bottom of one of the main staircases for several weeks.

Some of the boys from the Bible studies began to come to our little chapel at the Halve, one remaining with us there for seven years. Two (Roger Mortimer & Martin Collyer) married girls from SB Chapels. Both now attends other evangelical churches but I hope there is a work of grace begun in their hearts.

When the Grammar School eventually comprehensivised I became Head of Careers Education and a large amount of my time was involved in one to one interviews. I prayerfully watched as pupils discussed their future with me and the momentous decisions they were taking, and on occasions, as I felt led, I asked if ever they had prayed about these decisions. Sometimes I received a flat no and was told that prayer was a waste of time, but on other rare occasions I received a positive answer. They had prayed about it. On occasions at interview a pupil would open up on the problems in their lives, often sad situations relating to divorce.

Sometimes former pupils would return to see me. I can never forget the morning when Michael Ridout (whom I had taught from the age of 11-18) came into my office and I realised in conversation that he was in deep soul trouble. He had never attended the Bible Studies but he must have known about me and them as the school at the time was only 350 pupils. He had come from a completely godless home. Now he began attending the chapel at The Halve in Trowbridge with us, and in the course of his college work went to Stamford, Prestwood and Canterbury where he attended our chapels. He eventually was baptised and married a cousin of my first wife. He was married in Canterbury Chapel by Mr Wood and I gave an address at the service. Little did I realise that he would eventually become a member of my father's church at Southampton, and enter the ministry among our churches. If ever I saw the answer to my desire, "If one soul from Trowbridge be found at God's right hand, My heaven will be two heavens in Immanuel's land," I saw it in him. But I believe there are several others in whose heart a real work of grace was begun (coming from godless homes though they do not now attend GS Chapels. What seed was sown only the day will reveal it.

Another surprise came one night when a student, who was my next door neighbour, knocked on my front door carrying a Bible and asked me to explain the doctrines of grace to him, as he had found them in

reading his Bible and could not understand them. I was amazed he had a Bible and that he knew what I believed. We little realise how we are watched and how much people know about us. That boy, again from a godless home, now regularly attends the Evangelical Church of England in Trowbridge with his Dutch wife, whom he met on a Christian Kibbutz in Israel when he was a student.

In school my witness had to extend to other things. There were many things I could not do which often provoked persecution. I was asked to go to a conference of teachers on a Sunday afternoon. When I declined the Senior Physics master shouted at me in the staff room, "You bigot." He was reprimanded by the Senior English teacher, (a Welshman from a Calvinistic background, but now an atheist) and apologised. I never felt able to take part in or attend school plays and operas. This provoked endless questions by the Headmaster's secretary as to why I would not go. I could never take part in raffles which no one could understand. My Bible studies sometimes came in for severe criticism from the staff. Two students in the sixth form, who attended the Bible Studies, were both taking A Level Biology, and both came to see the unscriptural nature of Evolution. In answering a question on Evolution in their mock A Level examination they voiced their doubts about it. This provoked a vicious attack on me by the Senior Biology teacher in the staff room, and he threatened to go to the Headmaster and have the Bible Studies stopped. Again I was shouted at and called a bigot. But he cooled down, did not pursue his threat, and when some days later I had to call at his home about another matter, his first remark was, "I am sorry for the way I spoke to you the other night." Scripture says that, "They that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

If students came to my home I always kept Bibles and other good books which I had ready to give them. They would notice that there was no television in my home and they would know that I kept Sunday. Many times students, especially university students, would call in. While the pupils were students at school I always exercised a measure of discretion in how far I discussed the Truth with them, (lest I might be accused by their parents of proselytizing for our chapel at the Halve) But when they left school and went to university I always felt freer to talk with them about the things that concerned their never dying souls. One poor boy, who had been adopted, had a tumour on the brain at 13 which when removed changed him from a quiet lad to one who turned to crime and he was brought to court. He called to see me one evening

and in course of conversation said, "I curse my parents for letting me be adopted. I curse my adopted parents for not letting me die in hospital, when I need a blood relative I have not got one in the world." I remember saying to him, "Michael there is one who can help you. If ever you are in despair, or near the end of your life, pray, 'Lord help me.'" That boy died at the age of 28 in his sleep of an overdose of drugs and drink and I have often wondered about his soul's salvation. Samson was saved in the last hour of his life.

But I leave you with these memories of my own experience, *witnessing* in my own workplace. I say to you, go out into life prayerfully seeking to *witness* to the fact of the Lord's mercy to your soul, in opening your heart to a knowledge of Himself; and desiring that others may be brought to the same knowledge.

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**Address given at the Trowbridge Boys High School
morning Assembly, by the Editor, about the year 1965**

I want to talk about one word mentioned in the Bible reading (Prov. 1. 1-7) - "Fear." I thought when considering what I might talk about this morning, that it was especially suitable, at least for me. I have avoided taking part in these services of a Wednesday and one of the reasons has been that I prefer the back row on the platform to the front. But it is not always wise to turn away from things we dislike.

Fear is a strange thing. It affects us in different ways. What causes one of you fear or anxiety does not have the same effect on another. To give you a few examples - a fear of heights is not common to everyone. Perhaps when you second formers took the 11+ and had to be interviewed by our Headmaster in your junior schools you feared the interview. Perhaps some of you did not mind. I know that sixth formers when they go for university interviews, do not always feel as sure of themselves as they would like, though some may enjoy the interview after being put at ease by the Professor. As you go through school it may be exams which cause some of you to fear.

But there are others things that we each individually dread and usually without exception. We all dread pain. Who likes going to a dentist or having an operation? Who does not dread war and its consequences? When the Second World War was in progress, I was living in Bournemouth and one night as I lay in an air raid shelter, a

landmine fell nearby on my junior school, and I shall never forget the fear I experience. Another occasion at university, I was taken with a high temperature and severe pain in my chest and after a few days was taken to hospital. I shall always remember waiting on a stretcher in one of the hospital corridors to be X-rayed and the fear I felt of a serious illness.

There was one other thing, I remember about that hospital corridor. I prayed there as I waited. Fear often brings us to see life so differently. We see the things that really matter. You may wonder how sincere prayer is on such occasions. Well, look at it like this. Christ came to His disciples on the Sea of Galilee when they were afraid. His words to them were, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." There was no condemnation there but rather encouragement; encouragement because here was Someone whom they could trust and rely on. When we pray, we pray to God through Christ, because he was a man he understands our fears. Because He is God, he can calm them. What did He say on another occasion in a storm on the Sea of Galilee? "Peace be still," and we read, "There was a great calm."

So in life, as you grow up, remember this. In every time of fear, pray. Do not be too independent. Some of the first answers to prayer that I can look back upon, were in important examinations in my university career. The God who tells us that even the hairs of our head are all numbered, is concerned with our daily affairs and careers, and loves to hear our voices in prayer. Listen to the Lord Jesus before His great agony, as He prayed to His Father for help in the Garden of Gethsemane, "Father if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, (the cup of suffering), nevertheless not my will but thine be done." Let us seek to do what He did - go forward in the face of our fears, trusting in God.

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The Temptation to Atheism

By Dr M. J. Hyde

One of the great sins of our present age is atheism. It need not be clearly stated as has been done by some (e.g. Professor Dawkins in his recent book, *God Delusion*), but it is plainly evident in the very thought and intent of man, from our leaders to the man on the street. The outward lack of morality and lawlessness are but symptoms of the

malady of atheism which lies beneath. However, these things are not unknown to the child of God, who may from time to time find the temptation arise; a questioning: Is there anything beyond today? Is there really One who looks down upon us and has all in His control? Perhaps this is more so today than ever before.

We live in a day of rationalism and science; we attempt to pry into regions "known only to God." Our case is often that depicted by Zophar: "Vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt" (Job 11. 12). Yet our vanity is but a shadow and all our supposed wisdom cannot reconcile these things and so leaves us to ask, "How can these things be?" (John 3. 9) and eventually to ask, "What doest thou?" (Job 9. 12). Before we scarce know it, professing ourselves to be wise, we become fools (Rom. 1. 22) and tremble when we call to mind that it is left on record twice in the Word of God that, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Ps. 14. 1 and 53. 1).

But science is not the only source of such temptations. We know that such thoughts can rise out of adversity; many ask, "if there is a God why does he allow suffering?" This question alone has proved the stumbling stone to many in the world. As sinful creatures, in themselves, the Lord's people may not escape finding it to be a rock for their shipwreck, without the Lord's restraining hand. The children of Israel questioned God when they came into trouble on their journey (Ps. 106. 14) and even his existence as manifest by their idolatry at Sinai (Ex. 32. 1-6).

The prosperity of the wicked may have the same effect, particularly when we see the Church of God so diminished and the state of the righteous so weak whilst the powers of wickedness prosper and gain hold, seemingly without effort or trouble on their part. They say of us: "Where is thy God?" (Ps. 42. 3). Such was Asaph's condition when he saw the prosperity of the wicked and had to confess, "But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped" (Psa. 73:2) when he said with the wicked, "How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?" (Ps. 73. 11) yet we are assured that Asaph was one of the Lord's people and it was his confession: "I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all his works" (Ps. 73. 28).

Sometimes we have to find there is no external cause for the temptation, but find it springs from the innate atheism of our fallen nature, that which Jeremiah so accurately describes as, "deceitful above

all things and desperately wicked” (Jer. 17. 9). We have to look no further than Exodus 9 and 10 for proof of this; ten times the Lord gave evidence that, “ye may know how that I am the LORD” (10. 2) and, “that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth” (9. 14), yet for all this Pharaoh did not believe. Paul describes the atheism of the natural man: “the carnal mind is enmity against God” (Rom. 8. 7) and again, “but the natural man receiveth not the things of God: for they are foolishness to him: neither can he know them for they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2. 14), instead within our old nature are but “imagination and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God” (2 Cor. 10. 5) - the effect of which will be death (Rom. 8. 6a), left to ourselves. Whilst temptations to atheism can arise slowly, gaining hold little by little, at other times they arise so quickly and sharply they lay us totally prostrate by their force. When the Lord hides his face (Isa. 45. 15) we may find these doubts and temptations quickly overtake us; see how quickly our first parents fell foul of the four words of doubt, “Yea, hath God said?” (Gen. 3. 1).

We cannot escape the evil of the temptation: it is in effect turning away from and against God. The Lord speaks solemnly against those found in such a position (Deut. 28. 15-68) and can we not say in line with our opening thought, concerning the increase of atheism within the world, that these very judgments are being poured upon us today?

The mercy is that there is forgiveness with the Lord, that he may be feared (Ps. 130. 4). This brings us to another point: “they have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse and crooked generation” (Deut. 32. 5). The temptation to atheism which may come upon the children of God has distinct marks that separate it from the atheism which the world may live in: “their spot [that of the world] is not the spot of his children.”

First, their spot is unto death, the spot of the Lord’s children is unto life. While the children of the devil may be allowed to die atheists, for they have been blinded and made deaf to the gospel, as a consequence of their heart becoming fat (Isa. 6. 9-10), according to the just decree of God; none of the Lord’s children can ever be lost (John 17. 12). No, however long they may lie under the temptation they will be brought to see the truth and blessed existence of our God (John 9. 25) and more than just see, they shall go onto know the Lord (Hos. 6. 3) and the High Priestly prayer will be answered concerning them (John 17. 24). This must not be made an excuse for fatalism, but rather should encourage

us to seek to be delivered from the shadow of this spot at the earliest possible time, nevertheless for our comfort the spot is not unto death.

Secondly, atheism in the children of the devil works pride; in the child of God temptation to atheism will work humility. Atheism will naturally exalt man to the very position which it attempts to throw God down from. Once there is no higher power, it will leave the creature enlarged in his own eyes, seeking to take control of his own affairs and live his own life as he will. In the child of God it will bring him see that without God, without immortality (which man can only possess all the while there is an immortal God), he is but dust and ashes. There is nothing in himself that he can admire or respect, indeed “man’s pride shall bring him low” (Prov. 29. 23) and he will prove: “I said, I will be wise; but it was far from me. That which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out?” (Ecc. 7. 23-24), therefore, “professing myself wise, I became a fool” (Rom. 1. 22).

Thirdly, even under atheistical thoughts there may be admiration of “real religion.” What I mean is this, the child of God under this temptation will see such a beauty in the doctrines of grace that they will say, “If there is a real religion, this is it!” and again, “If anybody knows the Lord, they do!” (speaking of believers). It has to be felt to be understood, but dear ‘Rabbi’ Duncan expresses it the best I have found, “When I was an atheist, I used to feel that if the Evangelical system were only true it was worth a man’s believing; but even if the moderate system [of an easy, worldly religion, in which a man required little to save him beyond a passable character] were true, it was not worth believing” (*Life of Rabbi Duncan*. by A. Moody Stuart (1991) p 11). This is something the true atheist will never know, but rather despise. Even under this temptation the Lord’s children will prove with Solomon: “I sought in my heart to lay hold on folly, yet my wisdom remained with me” (Prov. 2. 3 and 9 – paraphrased by A. Moody Stuart, *Ibid*. p.10).

Fourthly, while doubting the very existence of the God whose law convinces and convicts the soul of its sinful nature by the enlightening work of God the Spirit, the Lord’s children will find they cannot utterly escape that convicting power. The painful knowledge of themselves as sinners may wax and wane, but the Lord will never leave his children long without it. The atheist may have pangs of remorse, but he will never know the convicting power of God the Spirit. Even under these

temptations you will not be able to escape the felt sense of your sinnership.

Fifthly, under the temptation that God does not exist, there will still be recourse to him in prayer. It will not be conscious at times, but like a bubble coming up to the surface cannot be kept down, so the inward sigh of a soul bound down under this temptation must and will rise from time to time to the One who is their only hope. You say, “that’s strange, how can that be when they doubt the very existence of the God they pray to?” Well, whilst the child of God may be rationally unconscious to it (that is in his mind), his soul sees the temptation and knows there is only One who can overcome it – God himself – and so to him alone will be recourse crying, “O that I knew where I might find him!” (Job 23. 3) knowing, “to whom else shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life” (John 6. 68). Donald Macfarlane (the first minister in the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland) writes of a period of atheistical temptation which lasted for three years, his only escape was when in the pulpit, yet he testifies, “Yet, I was sure in my mind that there was, and is, a God even in the midst of the flood, and that it was a temptation of the evil one” (*Memoir and Remains* by D. Beaton (1999), p.18). Remember, the wicked will never know this experience, the psalmist declared it, “the wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts” (Ps. 10. 5).

Well, are we utterly without comfort? No! It is left on record, “there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor. 10. 13). But the Lord’s people say, “the *fool* hath said in his heart, There is no God” (Ps. 14. 1) and “he [that is God] hath no pleasure in *fools*” (Prov. 5. 4), but the Lord says, “strengthen ye the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though *fools*, shall not err therein” (Isa. 35. 3-4; 8)...“these things will I do unto them, and not forsake them” (Isa. 42. 16).

You ask, “Why are the Lords people brought into such straights?” Be careful, remember these temptations frequently arise from a “What doest thou?” (Ecc. 8. 4). Rest assured, it will one day be revealed, for “there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known” (Matt. 10. 26). To every thing there is a purpose and a time for that purpose (Ecc. 3. 1). For some that purpose may be bound up in refining (Mal. 3. 3), in others it might be to put a new song in their mouth (Ps. 40. 3) even, “I was brought low, and he helped me” (Ps. 116. 6). In some the Lord may use it to teach the frailty of man, as he did with Asaph (Ps. 73. 17-21). God may permit the temptation to atheism, over ruling it to the blessing of His people; God permitted Job to be tempted and brought low by the devil, but he overruled it for Job’s blessing. In the case of Jonah, temptation was overruled by God as a preparation; Jonah was brought into a low place – some may say a punishment - but would he have preached with the same unction to the Ninevites if he had been without that experience? Would Paul have been an able minister without becoming a fool (1 Cor. 3. 18)? – for he has chosen the foolish things, the weak things and base (1 Cor. 1. 26-28) and why? First, “that no flesh should glory” (1 Cor. 1. 29) and secondly, that they should be taught and “know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary” (Isa. 50. 4).

But what is the child of God to do under such a temptation? Particularly if the Lord does not come immediately to his aid and he feels like Jeremiah, “when I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer” (Lam. 3. 8; also Job 30. 20) and the devil only uses it to suggest further the veracity of the temptation he is under. Some may recommended we seek after good books, try to immerse ourselves in outward spirituality, but as we have to prove, “none can keep *alive* his own soul” (Ps. 22. 29), so we will have to prove no one can revive faith within our souls, but the Lord: indeed the Bible tells us such is the case: “if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Ps. 11. 3). Others may tell you to seek after some special revelation, but we have to prove the truth of the word, “They have Moses and the prophets...if they hear not [them], neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead” (Luke 16. 29 and 31). Others may come and seek to speak spiritual conversation to you, to try and convince you, but like Thomas you can only say, “Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails I will not believe” (John 20. 25) – you cannot live on other men’s religion; you need to know it for yourself, for him to “speak the

word only” (Matt. 8. 8), to say unto your soul, “I am thy salvation” (Ps. 35. 3).

All these things bring you only lower, and Satan only whispers louder that “it is true, there is no God”, till you end up like the fool, who “foldeth his hands together, and eateth his own flesh” (Ecc. 4. 5). In such a state we have need to remember the exhortation, “if sinners entice thee, consent thou not” (Prov. 1. 10) and if that is true when sinful men seek to entice us, how much more so when their lord and master, the devil himself raises his enticing words against us to increase the temptation? How are we to argue with the devil? – the secret is friend, try not to reason with him. Frequently these temptations arise through “vain thoughts” (Rom. 1. 21), because we heed not the exhortation of the Word: “Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? For thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this” (Ecc. 7. 10). We fall into temptations because we say “what doest thou?” (Dan. 4. 35) and in questioning the works of God we question His wisdom: as He is wisdom (Isa. 9. 6); in doing so we question his very existence. Arguing with the devil in these matters will only make our feet slip further: instead we are exhorted: “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you” (Jam. 4. 7-8). That is, to seek to hold Satan at a distance and communicate not with him. But you say I cannot of myself. You are not called to. For the key to it is this: “He giveth more grace” (Jam. 4. 6). What will that grace do? It will make you join Micah’s chorus, “Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me” (Mic. 7. 8).

Ah, but I cannot escape you say, he holds me tightly. Well, was not Jonah in such a place in the whale’s belly? We cannot enter into the temptations the devil must have suggested to him there, but we know he called it the “belly of hell” (a place without God) – and what did he do? “Out of the belly of hell *cried I*” (Jon. 2. 2); he would “look again toward [God’s] holy temple” (Jon. 2. 4). But you say, “I cannot pray, I cannot cry”, but do you mourn for what you once were – enlightened by the very Spirit of God whom you now doubt? Is your cry, “O that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me” (Job 29. 2)? If so, is this not a cry from the “belly of hell”? Is not this a prayer as Montgomery delineates it: “The soul’s sincere desire,/ Uttered or unexpressed;/ The motion of a hidden fire,/ That trembles in the breast... the burden of a sigh/ The falling of a tear;/ The upward

glancing of an eye,/ When none but God is near” (Gadsby’s 1002)? Is it not even at these things that “Satan trembles when he sees/ The weakest saint upon his knees” (Cowper, Gadsby’s 394)?

Well, you say, what happens if I cannot even do that. Well, we read, “wait on the Lord” (Ps. 25. 14): seek after the psalmist’s model – “patiently” (Ps. 37. 7) encouraged by this, “the LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him” (Lam. 3. 25) and what will the end be? “They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint” (Isa 40. 31). But remember this is not the waiting of the sloth, it is an urgent waiting (Ps. 130), for “the captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail” (Isa. 51. 14).

Our only hope in all these temptations is Christ, and all we can do is lay ourselves at His mercy, saying with the disciples of old, “Master, we perish” (Luke 8. 24). To this the prophet exhorts us, “who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God” (Isa. 50. 10). While we lay under it, we can only seek submission in the words of the Lord, “What I do thou knowest not now; but though shalt know hereafter” (John 13. 7), knowing that if the spot is not the spot of the wicked, then the time of deliverance is set, “for the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry” (Hab. 2. 3). May these things make us desire more earnestly our deliverance!

Well, what will the end of these things be? When the Lord appears, when the Holy Spirit arises to clear our misty sight and to teach us afresh the “things concerning Himself”, we are like those that dream (Ps. 126), we cry with Asaph: “Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee” (Ps. 73. 25) – even the very One we would have cut off and doubted the very existence of! We will shout to those that will hear: “Lo this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is our LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation” (Isa. 25. 9). Is not this the very song of those, “Which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Rev 7. 14)? What a day that will be when, “He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all

faces” (Isa. 25. 9), when we shall remember our “light affliction” no more, proving once and for all, that though “many are the afflictions of the righteous... the LORD delivereth him out of them all” (Ps. 34. 19)!

What will the effect of these things be, “while on earth our days are lengthened”? Well, I believe those that have passed through this trial will tremble for Zion. They will fear more greatly the rational wind of atheism than anything else that can be thrown at the Church of Christ. In the day in which we live may it be our chief concern that the Church may be preserved – for we read “when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18. 8). A question which will cause those who have walked through this path to cry, “O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy” (Hab. 3. 2). May these things and the experience of them, drive us to our closets, that we may be found in prayer for the preservation of faith within us, that the Lord might grant unto us, “fresh supplies of grace, that we might persevere” and then to be on our watch, for the devil goeth about – yea as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. 5. 8) – but in this temptation is he not the angel of light (2 Cor. 11. 14) and subtle above all the other beasts of the field (Gen. 3. 1)? O what a mercy it will be, to be kept! – Will it not be the greatest surprise of the child of God when he awakes in God’s presence? – “In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” (Ps. 16. 11). “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen” (Jude 24-25).

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Dress in Biblical Times

By J. R. Broome

“The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God” (Deut. 22. 5).

While the dress of men and women in Near Eastern countries had considerable similarities, there were distinct differences. The very existence of the commandment in Deuteronomy 22 makes it

clear that there were garments, and what it calls “things that pertain,” which marked out a clear distinction between the dress of men and women in Moses day. There are numerous references to clothing in the



Men in Eastern Dress

Bible and as this prohibition was given in Old Testament times, it is important to have some understanding of what type of clothes were worn by men and women then. Moses gave these commandments to Israel at the end of their forty years in the wilderness, just before they crossed the River Jordan and entered the Promised Land (Deut. 1. 1-3), where they would be in contact with idolatrous nations who did not always observe such distinctions.

When the translators of the Authorised Version of the Bible carried out their work in 1611, they had a problem in attempting to equate the Hebrew words with English words for different types of clothing, which would have meaning for Western Society, which dressed in clothes so different to men and women in the Near East. Having this task, the translators resorted to using the same English word for several different Hebrew words, thus obscuring the distinctly different garments that the Hebrews wore. So it is important to return to the Hebrew words and ascertain exactly to what garment they refer.

Both Jewish men and women wore an inner garment, an outer garment, a girdle and sandals. When Naaman gave Gehazi two changes of raiment, it included both the inner and the outer garments (2 Kings 5. 22). The inner garment was called the Cetoneth. It was made of lightweight material such as wool, linen or cotton and resembled a close fitting shirt. It is variously translated in the Authorised Version as coat (1 Sam. 2. 19), robe (Isa. 22. 21), and coat (Gen. 3 21). At first it was made without sleeves and reached only to the knees, but later it was extended to the wrists and ankles. It was usually made of two pieces of material sewn at the sides, but that worn by Jesus at the time of the crucifixion was “without seam, woven from the top throughout” (John 19. 33). A man wearing his cetoneth only was said to be naked.

(1 Sam. 19. 24; Isa. 20. 2-4). In the New Testament Peter “girt *his* fisher’s coat *unto him* (for he was naked)...” (John 21. 7) When



Girl in Eastern Dress

working, such as fishing, it was often the only garment that was worn, as the outer garment was long and cumbersome.

One outer garment was called the Miel. It is variously translated in the AV as coat (1 Sam. 2. 19), robe (1 Sam. 18. 4), or mantle (1 Sam. 15. 27). It was an upper or second tunic, the difference being that it was longer than the cetoneth. The ordinary outer garment was the Simlah. This consisted of a quadrangular piece of woollen cloth two to three metres wide. It was wrapped around the body as a protective covering with two corners of the material being at the front and was drawn close to the body with a girdle. It rather resembled a Scotch plaid, the arms being covered by

it. Jewish men were commanded to wear fringes to their Miel or Simlah with a blue ribbon. “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringed of the borders a ribband of blue: and it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them...” (Num. 15. 37-39). Jesus refers to these fringes when he said, “All their works they do to be seen of men; they make broad their phylacteries and enlarge the borders of their garments” (Matt. 23. 5).

The girdle was a band of cord, cloth or leather ten centimetres or more wide with a fastener which allowed it to be tightened or loosed. It was used both to tie around the waist of the inner or outer garment. When used with the inner garment it was often called the loincloth. The girdle prevented the long flowing robe (the miel) from interfering with work or movement. The expression “to gird up the loins,” means that a person is ready for work or about to travel (1 Pet. 1. 13; Eph. 6. 14). The expression “to loose the girdle” meant that a person was resting (Isa. 5. 27).

When Jesus called his twelve disciples and sent them forth he commanded them to be “shod with sandals” (Mark 6. 9). When Herod put Peter in prison and the Angel of the Lord came to release him, he said to him, “Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals” (Acts 12. 8). All classes of people in Israel wore sandals, rich and poor. They consisted of a sole of wood fastened to the feet with leather straps or thongs. The thong is referred to in the Bible as the shoelatchet. They were so common that they symbolized the most insignificant thing (Gen. 14. 23). They were not worn indoors (Luke 7. 38). It was a lowly task to unloose another person’s sandals. John the Baptist speaking of Christ said, “Whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose” (John 1. 27). It is clear in the parable of the prodigal that being without sandals was a sign of poverty (Luke 15. 22). At other times it was a sign of mourning (Isa. 20. 2-4).

The visible distinction between Jewish men and women lay in the differences of the Miel or Simlah. A woman’s outer garment was much longer than that of a man with enough border and fringe to cover the feet (Jer. 13. 22). As with the men, it was secured at the waist with a girdle. It was long enough for her to tuck it up at the waist over the girdle to serve as an apron. When Boaz gave Ruth six measures of barley he said to her “Bring the vail that thou hast upon thee, and hold it” (Ruth 3. 15). This was the mitpachath or apron as the AV marginal rendering gives it. Hebrew women also wore the Tsaiph as an outer garment, a light summer dress which could be thrown over the head as a veil. This is referred to at the time of Rebekah’s first meeting with Isaac (Gen. 24. 65). They also wore the Radid, a dress referred to in Canticles 5. 7, when the keepers of the wall took away the bride’s vail from her. Another type of dress was called the Pethigil and is mentioned in Isaiah 3. 24, where it is translated as “the stomacher”. In Isaiah 3. 18-24 there is given an extensive list of contemporary women’s attire which presented the AV translators with a difficult task and is not easy for present day readers to understand. There is no doubt that there was a clear distinction between the dress of men and women in



Woman in Eastern Dress

Biblical times. Further women were forbidden to wear the things that pertained to a man such as his outer garments, his staff, his signet ring or carry his weapons. Equally men were forbidden to wear the outer robe of a woman. The breaking of this divinely given rule was described as “an abomination unto the Lord thy God.”

It is noteworthy that of all the prohibitions given in Deuteronomy 22 the breaking of the rule regarding the dress of men and women in the only one called “an abomination”. The breaking of the laws against promiscuity given in Leviticus 18 are all described as “an abomination.” While there were many laws which only applied to the Jews in ancient Israel, it is clear there are others laws that have applied to the whole of humanity ever since. Such is Leviticus 18 and Deuteronomy 22. 5. The Lord does not change. What was an abomination to Him then, remains an abomination to Him now. Sin is a contravention of His revealed will.

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DOCTRINE AND TRUTH

Personal Types and Shadows of Christ

By S. F. Paul

When the Lord Jesus, after His resurrection, joined the two disciples journeying to Emmaus, He began “at Moses and all the prophets, and expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself”; and later on, when He made another appearance to all the disciples He said: “These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me” (Luke 24. 27, 44). And truly we may say that the whole of the Old Testament writings, which alone constituted “the scriptures” at that time, are full of Christ, setting Him forth constantly in promises and prophecies, types and shadows; now relative to His Person, then to the work He should accomplish; now describing His character, and again foreshadowing the offices and relationships He should sustain; so as to afford an adequate basis for the faith of those early saints whose eyes were opened to see Him as thus set forth, and who looked forward till the time should come for Him to appear and fulfil these predictions.

It is true that, under the Old Testament dispensation, He was but darkly set forth; yet every new promise given, every new utterance of prophecy, every fresh type or figure, added some further light concerning His glorious Person and character; and into these the prophets searched diligently, enquiring “what, or what manner of time” was signified (1 Pet. 1. 11) by the words which were given them to commit to writing. Thus the “path” of this “Just One,” as traced through the Scripture revelation, was as a “shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day” (Prov. 4. 18), until “He that should come” appeared, shining forth as the “sun of righteousness” (Mal. 4. 2), “the brightness of his Father’s glory, and the express image of his person” (Heb. 1. 3).

The Old Testament promises are wonderful and full of comfort and consolation to the poor and needy who are taught by the Spirit to feel their need of the fulfilment in themselves of the things promised concerning this great One; the prophecies are wonderful in foretelling the things that should happen concerning the incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and exaltation of the Messiah that should come; and the shadows contained in the ceremonial worship under the Levitical dispensation are replete with meaning in their setting forth the nature and virtue of the atoning work of this dear Saviour of all His people. So also His character and offices may be said to be prefigured in the lives of certain of the Old Testament saints recorded in Holy Writ, as they seem to adumbrate in some little measure Him whose name should be called Wonderful. But as no one man could set forth, even in type or feeble illustration, the whole of Christ, there are several such examples given, one portraying one feature, and another foreshadowing another feature, respecting the character and offices of Him who was to come.

But to show that this is no fanciful interpretation of Scripture, let us look at some inspired warrants for the fact that such personal representations are intended by some of the Old Testament characters. First, take Adam. As he was the first man ever made, so it is fitting that he should prefigure the Man Christ Jesus. And true it is, as we find recorded of him: “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is *the figure of him that was to come*” (Rom. 5. 14). Hence the Lord Jesus is called “the last Adam,” and comparison is made between the two: “The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit...The first man is of the

earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven” (1 Cor. 15. 45-47).

Then if we take Aaron, the first high priest of the Mosaic dispensation, we find him mentioned as being typical of the great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus it is said: “No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron” (Heb. 5. 4). Again it is said that “the law,” that is the ceremonial law, had “a shadow of good things to come” (Heb. 10. 1); and it may truly be said that, if the sacrifices and ordinances of the Old Testament worship were a shadow of good things to come, the high priest himself of that dispensation may especially be regarded as a shadow or figure of the great High Priest under the gospel.

So too with the other offices of the Messiah, namely those of Prophet and King, we have a divine warrant for the existence of eminent representations of these. Moses prefigured the Prophet who was promised as he says: “The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken” (Deut. 18. 15). The Apostle Peter refers to this and shows it to have been fulfilled in the coming of Christ (Acts 3. 22).

Again, the kingly office is represented by David and Solomon, the first two acceptable kings of Israel; for Saul was rejected of the Lord, whereas of David it was said, “I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him” (Psalm 89. 20). This prophecy respecting David doubtless also has reference to the Son of David, Jesus Christ, the Seed promised to be set upon his throne. Proof of this fact we have in Ezekiel, where the Lord Jesus is called by the very name of David: “And David my servant shall be king over them...and my servant David shall be their prince for ever” (Ezek. 37. 24- 25). That David himself could not have been intended is obvious, since he had long been dead, and the prophet is speaking of the time the two peoples, Israel and Judah, should again be gathered into one, and have one King or Prince over them, evidently referring to Christ.

So also with Solomon. It is evident that he was intended to prefigure Christ in the majesty, glory, and riches of his kingdom, for the testimony given by Nathan to David concerning his seed was: “He shall build a house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever” (2 Sam. 7. 13); and although this was doubtless fulfilled in measure in the person of Solomon, yet its entire fulfilment could not have taken place in Solomon alone, since he died and slept

with his fathers, whereas this throne and kingdom was to be established for ever. This could only have been fulfilled in the Messiah, who was also the Seed of David. Therefore Christ refers to Solomon as a feeble illustration of His own greatness and wisdom, for He was much greater: "Behold, a greater than Solomon is here" (Luke 11. 31).

The Saviour in that place also mentions another personal type of Himself, namely Jonah; and with this we will close this introduction, having sufficiently established that there is a divine warrant for regarding these great men as personal types or shadows of the Lord Jesus Christ. Of Jonah He says: "For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of Man be to this generation. The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold, a greater than Jonas is here" (Luke 11. 30, 32). And in Matthew it is pointed out in what particular Jonah was representative of the Lord Jesus, namely with regard to His burial and resurrection: "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. 12. 40).

We wish then, as we may be enabled, to look at some of these personal types or shadows of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose lives are recorded in the Old Testament, and to show in what way they seem to set forth the various offices and characters which He was to assume when, in the fulness of time, He appeared to fulfil all that had gone before concerning Him. This may be made a means of establishing us in the truth that this is He that should come, and that we have no need to look for another. May we rather be given that precious faith by which we may receive Him as such, and believe to the saving of our souls.

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Jerusalem, My Happy Home

This hymn was composed by a prisoner in the Tower of London, during a time of religious persecution at the end of the reign of Queen Elizabeth 1 between 1580-1600. The original manuscript, signed *F.B.P* is now in the British Museum. Various abbreviated versions of it are included in most hymnbooks. The complete copy is given below, with the original spelling. (Rev. 21.10 – 22.5)

“He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb. 11.10).

“If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy (Ps. 137. 5-6).

HIERUSALEM, my happy home!	Hierusalem! Hierusalem!
When shall I come to thee?	God grant I once may see
When shall my sorrows have an end?	Thy endless joys, and of the same
Thy joys when shall I see?	Partaker aye may be!
O happie harbour of the saints!	Thy walls are made of precious stones,
O sweete and pleasant soyle!	Thy bulwarkes diamonds square;
In thee noe sorrow may be found,	Thy gates are of bright orient pearle
Noe griefe, no care, no toyle.	Exceeding rich and rare.
In thee noe sicknesse may be seene,	Thy turrets and thy pinnacles
Noe hurt, no ache, no sore:	With carbuncles doth shine;
There is noe death, nor ugly dole,	Thy verrie streets are paved with gould
But Life for evermore.	Surpassing cleare and fine.
Noe dampish mist is seene in thee,	Thy houses are of yvorie,
Noe colde nor darksome night;	Thy windows crystal cleare;
There every soule shines as the sun,	Thy tyles are made of beated gould –
There God Himself gives light.	Oh, God that I were there!
There lust and lucre cannot dwell;	Within thy gates doth nothing come
There envy bears no sway;	That is not passing cleane;
There is noe hunger, heate nor colde,	No spider's web, noe dirt, no dust,
But pleasure everie way.	Noe filthe may there be scene.

Ah, my sweete home, Hierusalem, Would God I were in thee! Would God my woes were at an end, Thy joyes that I might see!	Thy vineyards and thy orchards are Most beautiful and faire; Full furnished with trees and fruits, Exceeding riche and rare.
Thy saints are crowned with glory great; They see God face to face; They triumph still, they still rejoyce; Most happie is their case.	There cinnamon, there sugar growe, There narde and balm abound; What tongue can telle, or heart containe, The joys that there are found?
We that are here in banishment; Continuallie doe moane; We sigh, we sobbe, we weepe and [waile, Perpetuellie we groane.	Quyt through the streets, with silver [sound, The flood of life doth flowe! Upon whose banks, on everie side The wood of life doth growe.
Our sweete is mixed with bitter gaule, Our pleasure is but paine; Our joyes scarce last the looking on, Our sorrowes still remaine.	There trees for evermore bear fruite, And evermore doe springe; There evermore the angels sit, And evermore doe sing.
But there they live in such delight, Such pleasure and such play, As that to them a thousand yeares Doth seeme as yesterday.	Hierusalem, my happy home! Would God I were in thee! Would God my woes were at an end, Thy joyes that I may see!

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LETTERS, ADDRESSES AND SERMONS

Extract from a sermon preached by the late John Raven, at Hope Chapel, Shaw's Corner, Redhill, on Lord's Day Evening 31 August 1947 (Part 1)

"Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people" (Ps. 89. 19).

“I have laid help upon one that is mighty, I have exalted one chosen out of the people.” How this speaks of the near relationship of Christ to His people. “A brother born for adversity.” He says to His church in the Song of Solomon, “My sister, my spouse.” Beautiful relationship, “My sister.” His sister because He took her

nature into union with Himself, His spouse because He has betrothed her to Himself in righteousness and in judgment and in mercies: and the day is coming when the marriage will be consummated and there will be a marriage feast in heaven, and happy they will be who sit down at that feast. "I have exalted one chosen out of the people," exalted Him to this office, this great work of a Saviour, exalted Him to be a Priest on behalf of the people. "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." The Father has exalted Him to be the Captain of salvation to His people. But what does this mean, "I have exalted one chosen out of the people?" What a strange way of exaltation it is! For this exaltation means humiliation, it means that first of all He descended before He ascended. Before He was exalted He descended into the very depths. How He descended in His life here upon earth, in His poverty, in the reproaches He bore, the temptations He suffered, the tears that He shed, the groans that issued from His lips, and in all that weight of tribulation which He as the great Captain of His people's salvation must bear, as "a brother born for adversity." And then He descended still lower, humbled Himself even to the death of the cross; it was love to sinners that made Him willing to suffer, love to sinners. O that our hearts might be affected, that we might get such a sight of the Lord Jesus Christ in that deep humiliation even to the death of the cross, that we should weep tears of sacred grief for Him. I was very much moved on Friday, I think more moved than I have been by anything that I have seen in my life, when in Edinburgh, in the churchyard of Greyfriars Church, I stood before the monument erected to 18,000 people who suffered for the truth's sake. There was the long inscription and the reproduction of an open Bible beneath, and a passage referring to those who came out of great tribulation; and as I looked upon it I bared my head. It was almost more than I could do to control my feelings, but O that one might have such a view of a suffering Redeemer, who in His sufferings went far beyond all His people put together, that one might be moved, deeply moved, to weep for Him, and to weep for one's sins. "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross;" and there never was a death like that of Christ. His death meant victory, His death meant the "death of deaths and hell's destruction," His death meant the putting away of His people's sins by that mighty sacrifice, His death was defeat for the devil. Jesus conquered death by dying, saved poor sinners from

its power. "I have laid help upon one that is mighty, I have exalted one chosen out of the people."

Then the question will sometimes arise, how can the death of one man be sufficient to atone for the sins of a multitude, how can that death have a vicarious efficacy for a multitude of sinners? Were it the death of an ordinary man, a mere man, it could not be sufficient. No man "can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him," but this Man who died upon Calvary is the God-man. Even the centurion had to say, "Truly this was the Son of God." It was the Son of God who hung there; and every pang that He suffered, the blood that He shed, bears the impress and preciousness of immortal deity: and it is because of that, that His blood, viewed by faith, the mighty sacrifice seen by the eye of faith, purges the conscience from guilt, and will melt and break the heart before the Lord. O it is wonderful, the effect of a sight of this Jesus. One says:

Sweet the moments rich in blessing
Which before the cross I spend,
Life and health and peace possessing,
From the sinner's dying Friend.

O when a sinner gets a view of that, and sees that it was for his sins that the dear Redeemer died, for his dreadful sins; and that his awful, shameful guilt was laid upon that sinless Head; how it will sink him down into the dust before the Lord. It will fill him with self-loathing, with hatred to sin; but O what love to the Saviour, and what desire to love Him, what desires to be His, and to be kept near to Him. One says:

Hold me fast and keep me near Thee,
For Thou knowest I'm but a worm.

"I have laid help upon one that is mighty, I have exalted one chosen out of the people," One who was in every respect qualified to perform the work of salvation, the work of redeeming unto God a countless number of sinners who otherwise would have been lost for ever. "Help upon one that is mighty." Well, the Holy Spirit, if He deals with us, will convince us of our own helplessness; He will make us know in some sufficient measure our sinful weakness, and we shall not be able to make our weakness an excuse. "Well, I am weak and therefore I cannot do otherwise, I do not see how I can be blamed, since it is through my weakness that I do this and do that." All such language as

that will be cut off from the lips, and all such thoughts as that will be silenced in the heart when the Holy Ghost deals with a sinner. He feels himself to be helpless; but O how guilty in his helplessness. There are three things, which, if they are made to meet in a poor sinner's heart and conscience, will bring him down, crying, "What shall I do to be saved?" and they are just these: man's responsibility, man's inexcusability, and his utter helplessness. These three inescapable things, when a realisation of them is brought into the heart and conscience, will bring a sinner in his feelings to be just a poor, ruined, helpless, worthless wretch before the Lord, with no hope of any help in himself: and his feeling will be, as I believe mine was years ago, and is still; that if my soul is saved it must be by an arm of almighty, sovereign grace reaching down from heaven to pluck me as a brand from the burning.

"I have laid help upon one that is mighty." Ah, my sins are too much for me, I am overcome again and again.

The more I strove against sin's power
I sinned and stumbled yet the more.

There is evil continually springing up within me. Bunyan speaks of "iniquity that would be continually pouring itself out within me," and the poor wretch has no power to subdue it. Day after day brings him shame, and increases his guilt. He perhaps thinks in the morning of the day, "Ah, if I could but keep from sinning today, if I could but keep my thoughts and my tongue today, if I could but keep from wrong actions today; how much better I should feel about it if I could come to the end of the day with a clean sheet." But what happens? He goes through the day as before, stumbling into one hole and one snare after another, and that day is as bad as other days. He comes to the close of it filled with shame and disappointment, more unhappy than ever. "God be merciful to me the sinner," is the word most suited to his case; he is helpless. You see, this is how he learns it. He does not learn it merely by hearing the minister talk about it, but has to learn it as a matter of more or less daily experience, a sad reality. He has to feel the terrible truth of His own guilty, sinful helplessness: but O how the realisation of this prepares him for the good news of sins forgiven, of victory over sin and death and hell, through Jesus Christ.

"I have laid help" – help for sold-under-sin wretches, for those poor things that are being so driven and scattered by the devil day by day –

“I have laid help upon one that is mighty.” These poor things feel themselves in the grip of mighty foes, but here is One who is *almighty*, He has all-sufficient power, and He is able to save unto the uttermost, able to do it, able to overcome sins, able to heal diseases, able to break and soften hearts of stone, and reveal Himself as the Saviour. Help is laid upon Him for helpless sinners, and that help is communicated. It is not in Him, if I may so speak, to be looked at there, but it is there for use. “The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee; send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion.” And He does help and strengthen poor people. He brings His gospel into their hearts as the gospel of forgiveness, peace, and reconciliation; and by that gospel there is raised up hope, a “who-can-tell” in their poor souls. Like poor Joseph of whom you have heard or read, when he heard the minister speak of these things, that the God who made all things came into the world to save sinners and the chief of them, he said, “Poor Joseph never heard that before, and if God who made all things came into the world to save sinners, then why may not poor Joseph be saved?” And the poor fellow clung to it, clung to it until his dying minute. There was his hope, his gospel hope; a hope that was fixed upon Christ, upon His doing, upon His dying, upon His power to save. And Christ said, you remember, “I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore.” O, He lives to make His salvation a blessed reality in the experience of poor people, and He comes to them in His gospel and He blesses them. He makes the gospel to be the gospel of their salvation, by which He brings forgiveness into their hearts. The Holy Spirit applies the blood of Christ, and their consciences are purged. It is a wonderful thing to have lost the burden of guilt, and to feel that there is not a sin between one’s soul and God. Forgiveness! O, the sense of a forgiveness that is righteous and just is wonderful, and how happy the soul that gets it. O it is good to think that God can and does overcome sin, and in such a way, with such a marvellous display of His justice, His grace, His wisdom and His power. “I have laid help upon one that is mighty, I have exalted one chosen out of the people.” O may this mighty One, this chosen One of God, be exalted in your heart and mine, that all our hopes may be built upon Him, and that we may be constrained so to live as to be to the praise of the glory of His grace, for His name’s sake.

Amen.

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CURRENT EVENTS

School Visits — Bible Distribution by S. A. Hyde

The church at Hope Chapel, Redhill have a Christian distribution fund which is used to supply free bibles etc. here in the UK and worldwide. As this year 2011 is the 400th anniversary of the AV/KJV version of the bible we decided as the main project for the UK in 2011 to concentrate on local secondary schools and to offer free copies of the AV/KJV bible to students who would like a copy. This was and is prayed over that it might have the Lord's blessing. Potentially it was a rather daunting task considering the present religious climate in the UK. Six schools were visited, with the offer of a talk on the history of the bible in order to promote the AV/KJV. As expected the initial reaction was somewhat guarded. However three of the schools were willing for me to give a talk, and one suggested waiting until September and the new school intake. A PowerPoint presentation was prepared. Briefly this dealt with finding out whether the students knew that there was an anniversary of the AV/KJV and if so what it was. So far out of approximately 700 students no one has known that it is the 400th anniversary. The talk has then continued by finding the number of books in the bible, then some of its writers, followed by when the bible commenced being written (with Moses), how it was written, how it was kept, the complexities of the Hebrew language (initially no word spaces or vowels) the Greek then the Latin and then the first principal English version by John Wycliffe. This is followed by describing the advent of the printing press. We then move on to Tyndale (no one has heard of him) and then to Hampton Court and the conference in 1604 and the resulting printing of the AV/KJV in 1611. We conclude by some illustrations of what life was like in 1611. Lesson lengths vary between 55mins to 1hour 15mins with one of 35mins.

By the grace of God, although every lesson has started fairly quietly, by the end of the talk the children are enthusiastic and are willingly answering questions. We then offer them a copy of the AV/KJV bible pointing out that it is almost exactly the same as the version printed in 1611. We are very thankful to the Lord that take up of the offer of a free copy of the AV/KJV bible has sometimes been 100% and not less than 95%. To God be the glory. All the teachers have been very complimentary and we have received lovely letters from some of the students telling us how they have begun to read the bible, where they have got up to, where it is placed on their bookshelves at home etc. Our prayer as a church and congregation is that the Lord will greatly bless His word to the salvation of many souls. As we write this at the end of June we still have a few lessons to take in this school year, and have been invited back by all the schools for next year. So far we have taken about 28 lessons. We have also been able to give the same type of bible to school leavers at three other local schools. This is approximately a further 330 bibles for which we are thankful and again pray these bibles may be blessed to the children and also their parents.

Editor's Note. Shaw's Corner Chapel, Redhill is not the only one of our chapels involved in distributing Bibles to Schools in 2011. The Church of Pastor Rowland Wheatley at St David's Bridge, Cranbrook, Kent has for some time been involved in Bible distribution to local schools. Recently our Chapel at Swavesey, near Cambridge was involved with the local Anglican and General Baptist Chapels in the village, in distributing AV Bibles in the local Primary and Secondary Schools. Bethel Chapel Luton, under the pastorship of Mr B.A. Ramsbottom has a Bible Distribution Fund and has distributed AV Bibles to over twenty schools in the Luton area, as well as sending to the Savannah Schools in Ghana, and to Kenya and Zambia.

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said,
You, who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?

In every condition, in sickness, in health;
In poverty's vale, or abounding in wealth;
At home and abroad, on the land, on the sea,
As thy days may demand, shall thy strength ever be.

Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,
For I am thy God and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen and help thee, and cause thee to stand
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.

When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

When through fiery trials thy pathways shall lie,
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

Even down to old age all My people shall prove
My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love;
And when hoary hairs shall their temples adorn,
Like lambs they shall still in My bosom be borne.

The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake.

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