

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

NEW YEAR ADDRESS

To the readers of the *Gospel Standard*

The swift passage of time has relentlessly moved us on to the threshold of another year in our short life here below. It is a great mercy to be able to trace out the tender mercies of the good hand of God to us as we look back over the past year, and through all the years of our lives. Many, many have been our sins and solemn backslidings. The pilgrims here below, in reflection, so often have to say with the prophet Daniel, "O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto Thee, but unto us confusion of faces" (chapter 9. 7). Yet we are bound to exclaim with the psalmist, that, "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him" (Psa. 103. 10, 11).

As we are spared and favoured to enter into another year, may the prayer of Moses, in Psalm 90. 12, reflect our own desire, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." Not one of us knows what a day may bring forth to us as we journey on. May the Lord give us much grace truly to commit our way unto Him, and also to trust in Him, that He may unfold His good will toward us in covenant love and mercy. Isaac Watts expresses a good petition:

"My God, I would not long to see
My fate with curious eyes;
What gloomy lines are writ for me,
Or what bright scenes may rise.

"In Thy fair book of life and grace,
O may I find my name
Recorded in some humble place,
Beneath my Lord the Lamb."

The Lord's people are exercised in many matters here below, but after all the pilgrim has to come to this reality in his exercises:

"Eternity, tremendous sound!
To guilty souls a dreadful wound;
But O, if Christ and heaven be mine,
How sweet the accents, how divine!"

Every one of His dear people will be led in “the footsteps of the flock.” Sometimes the way may be more hard and rugged, and sometimes the pathway more gentle. But whatever the steps that we have to take, if we are being led by His good Spirit they must be safe. And it is to one blessed end and expectation, according to the psalmist: “And He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation” (Psa. 107. 7). The great matter is that we each need to be prepared to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. The constant cry of an exercised soul is, “Prepare me, gracious God.”

Our life here below is truly cast in solemn times. We read in the Scriptures, “that in the last days perilous times shall come” (2 Tim. 3. 1). As we may read the words of the Lord Jesus in the gospels, or the writings of the Apostles Paul and Peter, we cannot but solemnly realise from the Word of God that we are now living in those evil days spoken of. In our generation there has been such an explosion of great wickedness and infidelity which has taken many by surprise. So many standards of decency and honesty are plummeting rapidly. Where is the integrity of so many today, especially in the high places of the institutions of our nation? There are very few people now in public life that can be trusted. In the last 500 years God has favoured these islands in which we live with seasons of the outpouring of His Spirit. We have been influenced by the Word of God: both by the doctrine and the law of God. For centuries our laws have been based on the revealed will of God, which tells us how we should live in this world. But now so much is falling apart. In recent years two creation ordinances have been turned upside down: the command to rest on the Sabbath day, which day God sanctified at creation to keep it holy unto the Lord, and then also the institution of marriage between one man and one woman. So many of the laws of God are being overturned and trampled on. These things will not only increase chaos and confusion, but will be the cause of the disintegration of the very fabric of our society.

We now live in a global age. There are so many international organisations and bodies being set up to control the lives of men, and to heap up riches for themselves. In spite of living in sophisticated times with so much scientific advancement and material wealth, men are just as cruel and barbaric as they always have been. The seemingly meteoric advance of electronic and nuclear science and invention, together with the engineering of the genes of mankind and the animal world and plant life, is quite stunning. These things are leading men away from Almighty God. The Psalmist speaks of this in Psalm 10. 4: “The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.” Men are believing the lie of the serpent, which he spoke to our mother, Eve, in the garden of Eden: “And ye shall be as gods” (Gen.

3. 5). The Apostle Paul in writing to the Thessalonians (see 2 Thess. 2) says of Antichrist, or the son of perdition, "that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." We read in Daniel 12. 4 that, "Even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." There are many Scriptures in the New Testament that speak of the ways and works of man in the latter days, and, no doubt, many of our readers are familiar with them. We can see that all the solemn warnings of violence, apostasy and immorality are being fulfilled in these latter days.

During our lifetime the Jews have again taken possession of their own land. Since A.D. 70 when Jerusalem was sacked by Titus (which was according to the prophecy of Immanuel in the gospels), the Jews have been dispersed among the Gentiles, and so often hunted from pillar to post. Soon after the dreadful holocaust of modern times, which took place in the middle part of the 20th century, Israel became a thriving state. This fact, together with the general apostasy, brings us to ponder the scripture in Luke 21. 24, where the Lord Jesus in warning the people of Judea says, "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." The Apostle Paul, in writing to the Romans (chapter 11. 25), also says, "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." May we not be left to pry into, or make carnal interpretations of these things, but rather stand in awe of Almighty God who will fulfil His own word in His own time and way. May we watch and pray as God unfolds these things according to His eternal thought. How many in my generation were amazed at the sudden collapse of the Soviet Union and the falling of the Berlin wall! The Scriptures seem to infer that Babylon will fall suddenly (Rev. 18). In the meantime, may we be given strength and fortitude from God as we may be called to live in times of persecution and upheaval.

Readers of Bunyan's *Holy War* will remember that when Diabolus took possession of the city of Mansoul, he strictly forbid any mention of the name of Immanuel anywhere in the city. Very solemnly we can see these things gradually and subtly unfolding in our land in these days.

In considering these things declared in the Word of God, I feel that I must commend our readers to the words of Paul to Timothy: "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them" (2 Tim. 3. 13, 14). May we each be helped and enabled truly to hold fast to those things that we have received from the Lord. May we plead the promised help and support as things wax worse and worse, both in the persecution

for Christ's sake that now gathers before us, and also in the chaos and confusion in the earthly scene as God leaves men to their own devices. Surely such defiance of Almighty God will bring down solemn judgment upon the nations, especially those nations like our own, who having been so highly favoured with the gospel, have turned away in the spirit of Antichrist.

Although we must mention these things, for they are taking place in our day and generation, may we now lay to heart the words of the Saviour, who is King in Zion, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18. 36). May we now turn our thoughts to the KING OF KINGS and to the people that He loves, who are truly denominated in the Scriptures as "the Lamb's wife."

The psalmist in Psalm 45 said that his heart was inditing a good matter as he spoke of those things touching the King. His tongue was indeed the pen of a ready writer as he prophesied of the Messiah who was yet to come. So he declares of Him, "Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God has blessed thee for ever" (verse 2). This sets forth everything that is in the Lord Jesus for poor and needy sinners. The Lord Jesus, who is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Ghost, descended into this lower world to save poor sinners. The Lord Jesus took the nature of man, without sin, prepared by God, and conceived in the womb of the virgin by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost. He came into this world to save and redeem poor sinners with an everlasting salvation. He is truly fairer than the children of men. Ethan says in Psalm 89. 6, "For who in the heaven can be compared unto the LORD? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the LORD?" No one can be compared unto the Lord, especially when viewed by faith. The Lord declares Himself in John 3. 13: "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." Such grace has been poured into His lips richly to bless His troubled and anxious people, and to drop down comforts and healing touches to them. His doctrine drops as the rain into their hearts. When His word is with sweet and saving power to His sheep, then they experience something of the exclamation of the spouse in the Canticles, "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth: for Thy love is better than wine" (Song 1. 2). We want no other blessing than that which comes from Him. Now, because God has blessed Him for ever, *His bride* is blessed for ever. "For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell" (Col. 1. 19). Therefore those poor sinners, whom the Lord loves with the fulness of His grace, are truly blessed for ever. Jesus said of those that had continued with Him in His temptations, "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me" (Luke 22. 29). The

bride of Christ is blessed with eternal life, and shall never perish. Jesus, speaking of His people as sheep, says, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." And as we read in the next verse, "My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand" (John 10. 27-29). The humble believer, and thirsty seeking soul, is safe in the hands of the dear Redeemer, according to this pure doctrine.

In considering this New Year address, two texts of Scripture have been on my mind. Firstly, Romans 8. 14: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." And secondly, part of the reply that the Lord Jesus gave to John the Baptist when his faith was very tried as he languished in prison awaiting death: "And the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matt. 11. 5). All who are led and taught by the Spirit of God are truly taught their poverty, sin and ruin. The same dear and gracious Spirit of God brings the glad tidings of consolation and forgiving love into their hearts to comfort them. In Zephaniah 3. 12 we read, "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord." Again, the Lord promises through His servant Isaiah in chapter 41. 17, "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them." The Holy Ghost continually brings home to our hearts how poor we really are! Indwelling sin and the corruptions of the flesh make the believer to groan within himself, and cry out with the Apostle Paul, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7. 24). We find that we cannot live the godly life that we long to, as Paul confesses in Romans 7. 19, "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." So the Lord's dear people prove the truth of Paul's confession in Romans 7. 14: "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin." We also prove the solemn truth that, "none can keep alive his own soul" (Psa. 22. 29). God makes us to realise that He alone, by the riches of His grace, can keep our soul alive. The dear bride of Christ is brought again and again to realise that truth in John 15. 5: "For without Me ye can do nothing." (The marginal rendering is, "severed from Me"). The believer constantly cries for life from the Good Shepherd, truly to believe in Him, and that he may bring forth much fruit. The life in our souls is derived from the true vine, which is Jesus Christ. It is His grace that taught our hearts to fear, shewed us our great need of God's mercy and forgiveness, and also taught our hearts to pray and to trust. And this teaching is not only at the beginning of our pilgrimage, but also throughout all our days of

sojourning here below. The pilgrim will know many thrusts from the enemy, and many barbs about the reality of his religion. He feels his weakness under the trials he meets with, and knows his need as he sees mountains of trouble before him. If our religion is of the Spirit of God, all our troubles will bring us to cry out for the living God, and we shall long to appear before Him and pour out our hearts unto Him.

If we are truly led by the Spirit of God, we will be led alone to the exalted Saviour, seated on the throne of grace. Almighty God has raised up His Son to His right hand so that poor, lost and wretched sinners may come to Him for all the life, help and mercy that they need. The King of glory is truly the King of grace, reigning to bless, forgive and comfort poor, guilty sinners. Jesus is exalted as the Lamb of God, God's great and merciful High Priest, and Zion's glorious and gracious King. A way has been made into the presence of God by the new and living way of Christ's death, resurrection and ascension. Therefore, poor sinners may draw near in true gospel hope of God's promised mercy, grace and help in all their times of need. Whatever their guilt and pollution, so solemnly felt, they may draw near and plead the atonement that the shedding of Jesus' precious blood has made for them. Whatever the temptations and accusations of their fierce adversary, they may plead the tender mercy of God's great High Priest, Jesus Christ. Whatever their heavy trials or griefs, they may apply unto the sinner's Friend for all the help and consolation that they so much need. In all their felt weakness, or impossible situation, they may go to gracious King Immanuel and plead for promised power and wisdom to be ministered unto them. It is as true now as it was when recorded in the Scriptures that, "This Man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them" (Luke 15. 2). Job proved the sacred truth in Genesis 18. 14: "Is any thing too hard for the LORD" when he said, "I know that thou canst do every thing" (Job 42. 2). We read in Deuteronomy 33. 26, "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in His excellency on the sky."

As we journey into this new year, may we each continually be encouraged by the gospel to pour out our hearts unto the Lord. No one else can truly compassionate our hard cases, or wash away our sins, or strengthen our weak hands but dear Immanuel, Jesus the Son of God! Who else can bring us safely through our days and satisfy us with mercy, but the Lord Jesus? In heaven's courts above there is that sinner's Friend, sitting there, full of shining glory. He receives, blesses and saves poor, stinking worms of the earth who draw near in the new and living way. William Gadsby says in hymn 514:

"In the Person of the Saviour,
All His majesty is seen!

Love and justice shine for ever;
And, without a veil between,
Worms approach Him,
And rejoice in His dear name.”

In a similar vein, Joseph Hart says, in hymn 155, on the fountain of Christ:

“This fountain, though rich, from charge is quite clear;
The poorer the wretch, the welcomer here;
Come needy, come guilty, come loathsome and bare;
You can’t come too filthy; come just as you are.”

The warrant for us, anxious, chief of sinners to draw near to Immanuel is in the counsels of God as written in Hebrews 4. 14-16: “Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. 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. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” May we each, in all our matters, continually draw near to the throne of grace. The Spirit of God will lead us to Christ for everything, and it is at the footstool of mercy where the poor will truly feed upon the gospel of the exalted Saviour. While we live in this lower world, there is no safer place than at the feet of the Lord Jesus.

One sign of the times in which we live is a solemn withdrawing of the power of the Spirit in the gospel ministry. As our dear retired Editor has often said, it is the same gospel that has been preached through many years, but there is such a withdrawing of the power. May the Holy Ghost return unto us, who are engaged in the solemn work of preaching the gospel, that the poor may truly have the gospel preached to them.

The gospel minister, anointed by the Holy Ghost, has not been sent to please men, who in their carnal ease say, “Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits” (Isa. 30. 10). In Jeremiah’s prophecy, chapter 23. 28, 29, we read, “The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath My word, let him speak My word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD. Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?” May the Lord give the unction of His Spirit in the preaching of the gospel. Where there is a faithful ministry there will essentially be a faithful warning of the true state by nature of every man. There will be the pointing out to the sons of men the awful and terrifying state of the lost soul in eternity, “Where their worm dieth not,

and the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9. 48). Isaiah cries out in chapter 33 verse 14, “Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” The faithful gospel minister will also declare the blessedness of the eternal state of those who truly repent of their sins and live by faith upon Christ, and hope in His mercy. What a glory, beyond human description, awaits those who trust in the Lord, waiting only upon Him, and walking in His paths of peace and righteousness. There is no half-way state between heaven and hell. There must also be a clear pointing to the “Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1. 29). The vital part of the gospel ministry is in the lifting up of the risen and ascended Saviour, who was dead, and is alive for evermore. See Rev. 1. 18. The gospel declares free grace pardon and blessings, “without money and without price,” through Jesus Christ alone. The work of the Holy Ghost will also be preached, to the convincing and humbling of the sinner. God’s dear sheep will experience something of the Lord’s dealings with His people as written in the Word of God. Pilgrims, here below, will find a companionship in the expressions and cries of the godly in the Scripture. The supplications, confessions and thanksgivings in the Scriptures will find an echo in the hearts of all true believers. Believers will find food for their souls as the faithful dealings and love of God to His people are set forth from the Word of God in the experimental part of the gospel ministry. Surely, the effect of faithful preaching, under the dew and power of the Holy Ghost, will bring each of the elect into the narrow way of “repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20. 21).

May the Lord grant life in the preaching of the gospel in our day, that prisoners may be loosed, that mourners may be comforted, and many turned from darkness to light. It is worthy of note that gospel invitations are made to characters who are hungry and thirsty, labouring and heavy laden, sitting in darkness and having no light, poor and needy, tempted and troubled, mourners in Zion, and those at the ends of the earth. Guilty sinners are glad to hear of free grace pardon and the promise of things to come. May the Holy Ghost so confirm these sinners under the gospel ministry that they may press on to win Christ. For the Holy Ghost alone can apply the sweet truth to the soul of man.

Well, may a precious Lord Jesus be clearly set forth by those of us who have to preach the gospel. May we be helped by the Holy Ghost to go into all the world, and declare those good tidings to every creature, as doors are opened by the good hand of God. It will not be our power in the preaching of the gospel, but rather the power of the Holy Ghost in the ministry that will make such a vital difference in the lives of the sons of men. May we not be left to despise the day of small things, but rather

wait only upon God that He may yet be pleased to revive His work upon the earth in such a dark and evil day.

It is a gracious privilege to lead our readers in paying a tribute of sincere respect and true thanks to Mr. B.A. Ramsbottom, who has edited the *Gospel Standard* for the last forty five years. We would give thanks that the Lord has upheld him in his arduous labours of love. Over the years, our dear friend has sought the glory of his exalted Saviour. He has also sought to feed the flock of God with things new and old from the blessed gospel. It has not been an easy pathway for him, although a labour of love in which he has not sought his own glory. He has had to endure calumny and reproach, yet has been favoured with true tokens and testimonies that his labours have not been in vain. The humble poor have profited. The silent majority of godly readers have benefited in their quiet way, whilst a small minority have shot their arrows. As with every previous editor, he has had to live through "evil report and good report." Nevertheless, the Lord has stood by His own servant. I write on behalf of our spiritual readers, desiring that the Lord will truly bless him and comfort him in the evening time of life, and favour him with His felt presence unto the end. May the Lord be very gracious unto him and also to Mrs. Ramsbottom.

As we are favoured to launch into another year, may the God of all grace be our daily helper and our defence. The Apostle Peter enjoins us to cast our care upon Him. "Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you" (1 Pet. 5. 7). The Lord help us to do so! May the Holy Spirit write Christ's laws upon the fleshy tables of our hearts. Jesus said, "As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue ye in My love" (John 15. 9). May we each be given much grace to walk in the love of Christ, both in the church and before the world. May we ever forgive men their trespasses, as we hope our Father in heaven may forgive us our trespasses. See Mark 11. 25, 26. How small are the sins against us compared to the immensity of our sins against the God of all mercies. May we be blessed with a forgiving spirit. Jesus said, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14. 15). May the Lord help us each to walk in all those paths of peace and righteousness written in the Word of God. The great exercise of the pilgrim is to get to heaven at last, and "to be with Christ which is far better" (Phil. 1. 23). The Lord's people know their need of the Lord's gracious presence to lead them safely through all their days and home to God. Anne Steele expresses the desire of God's people in hymn 1010:

"Let the sweet hope that Thou art mine,
My life and death attend;

Thy presence through my journey shine,
And crown my journey's end."

We think much about our afflicted friends. There are those that walk in deep affliction. The Lord in mercy uphold them, and if it may please Him, favour them with healing and restoring mercies. During the past year a number of godly friends have been taken to their eternal rest. We also think of the many widows and widowers. May each be comforted and supported in their lonely pathway. Mr. Jabez Buss, a much-loved and respected minister for over sixty years, entered into eternal glory at the beginning of 2015. Also, Mr. Raymond Woodhams, another faithful minister, passed into eternal glory three weeks before Mr. Jabez Buss. Their ministry manifested the savour of Christ. "The memory of the just is blessed" (Prov. 10. 7).

We truly feel for our young friends. As they grow up may the Lord touch their young hearts with the finger of His grace. If they follow on in the fear of the Lord, they may be called to suffer many things for Christ's sake. So much more evil than ever before is being put in front of our dear children in the schools. As anxious and praying parents yearn for the eternal welfare of their families, may they remember the words of the Lord Jesus: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10. 14). So may they be encouraged to bring them to the throne of grace.

As I begin the editorship of the *Gospel Standard*, painfully feeling so inadequate, it is my prayerful desire that in all things Christ might be glorified and exalted. It is also my desire that the spiritually minded and exercised readers may find some real profit for their souls. The early numbers of the *Gospel Standard* bore the sub-title, "Feeble Christian's Support." The Psalmist said in Psalm 38 verse 8, "I am feeble and sore broken." The apostle exhorts, "Comfort the feebleminded" (1 Thess. 5. 14). May the feeble and weak believers be much encouraged and strengthened as they read its pages. I have to venture into this great responsibility with the cry of the woman who came to Jesus, saying, "Lord, help me." May I prove, as all the saints have proved over the centuries, the truth that the psalmist expressed in Psalm 121 verse 2 as he lifted up his eyes to God for help, that, "My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth."

We send our sincere greetings to all our readers, both at home and in other lands.

"Brethren, pray for us."

Yours affectionately in gospel bonds
T.J. Rosier, Editor

Maidstone

GOD'S SURE PROMISE TO GO BEFORE HIS PEOPLE

*Sermon preached by Mr. B.A. Ramsbottom at Bethel Chapel, Luton,
on September 20th, 2015*

I requested a new year sermon from Mr. Ramsbottom. Both he and a friend have passed over the following sermon. While it was not preached at the change of a year, I feel that it is most suitable as we pass into this new year.

Text: “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. 8).

This was a time of crisis for God’s ancient people. They knew that Moses was going to be taken from them, that in a few days he was going to die. They were going to be without this eminent, godly leader. They knew what they had before them: the crossing of Jordan, the walled cities of Canaan, the enemy, the Amalekites, the fight. For Joshua personally it was a time of deep sorrow. He was going to lose his beloved friend and master who had meant so much to him. Not only that, there was the awful weight of responsibility that now was resting on his shoulders. So if it was a time of crisis and deep sorrow for God’s ancient people Israel, even more so for the Lord’s servant Joshua.

Somewhere in Westminster Abbey on one of the epitaphs these words are written: “God buries His workmen; He carries on His work.” If Moses dies, there is still a Joshua. It has ever been so with the church of God, and it ever will be so right to the end of time. When the man is needed, that man is there. And that wonderful promise that follows: “As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee” – the sweet assurance of His abiding presence of love with His beloved people and with His beloved servants. So there is the sweet assurance given to Joshua personally that the Lord will be with him, and so there is everything there that he needs.

You might say, That is Joshua. What about me? Because I am sure that many of you have come here this morning with feelings something like Joshua, something like Israel. You have things in your life, you have your problems, you have your difficulties, you have your sorrows, you have your bereavements, you have your losses, you have your crosses, and you have your tomorrows and your next week and the coming year. You have your soul’s concerns. You have the life of faith you have to live. You know there is going to be the conflict. You know there is going to be the struggle. And the Lord has an answer for it: *grace all-sufficient* – in the Lord, not in you. Whatever you have in your life now, spiritually, providentially, whatever you have before you, whatever you feel about your sins, your soul and eternity, grace all-sufficient in Christ is the answer to it.

The Lord in matchless condescension knew exactly what Joshua was thinking and He knows exactly what you are thinking this morning. This is something like the good Samaritan. He came right where he was and did everything for him. He poured in the oil and the wine, and the Lord here promises Joshua everything he needs. He has all these things against him; he has all these fears within him; but he has God for him. O the all-sufficiency of grace!

So this is a word for the Christian life. There is a life to be lived; there is a conflict; there is a fight to be fought; there is a pilgrimage to be walked out; there are daily needs; there are daily concerns. And the Word of God comes right where the Lord's people are, and it seems especially so when they are brought low, He "remembers them in their low estate: for His mercy endureth for ever." "A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench." "And the LORD, He it is that doth go before thee." Moses has gone, but the Lord has not gone. The Lord is still with His people, and He will be to the end of time.

"And the LORD, He it is that doth go before thee." Beloved friends, I have often pondered this word. It seems a conflicting word grammatically, if you are a grammarian. "The LORD, He it is." You would think it would just say, The Lord goes before you. But it does not say that; it says, "The LORD, *He it is* that doth go before thee." The point to me seems to be this: there is such a gracious emphasis here. It is *the Lord*; it is *He*; not Moses; Moses has gone. It is the Lord. "He it is that doth go before thee." It is a reminder that there is a God in heaven and He is their God in covenant, and what He has done for them in the past. The Lord, it is He who brought you out of Egypt. The Lord, it is He who has led you through the wilderness. The Lord, it is He who divided the Red Sea for you. It is the Lord, He who performed miracles.

"The LORD, He it is that doth go before thee." So it is today. The Lord, He who leads you, He it is that doth go before thee. The Lord, who "with heaven and earth at His command waits to answer prayer," He it is that doth go before thee. The Lord, who is almighty to help you and uphold you and support you and give you peace and bring you through. "The LORD, He it is that doth go before thee." And the point here is this. Well, our hymnwriter says,

"To keep our eyes on Jesus fixed,
And there our hope to stay."

We look within; we look around; we look down; we look forward. But O for that living faith to look up and see that it is Moses' Lord, and Joshua's Lord, and He is still on the throne, and He is still in control.

"And the LORD, He it is that doth go before thee." I have noticed this: that when the Lord gives the sweet assurance of His gracious

presence to His people, He often puts it in this way: not just being with them, but *going before them*. Because you have things before you, I have things before me, we all have things before us, but this is the Lord going before us, which means there is not one step, dear child of God, you have to take, but the Lord has walked it out before, and it means that when you come there, the Lord has already gone before to prepare that place for you.

"The LORD, He it is that doth go before thee." I just want to linger here. That beautiful promise: "I will go before thee" – *I will* – "and make the crooked places straight." So you are going to have crooked places. "I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron," which means to make a way for you where there is no way, and to make a way through, and to bring you through.

"The LORD, He it is that doth go before thee." I like this: "I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron." You know what follows: "And" – what? "I will give thee the treasures of darkness." Well, may you through grace possess them. "The treasures of darkness."

"The LORD, He it is that doth go before thee." Then we are reminded of the kind and loving office of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as the great Shepherd of the sheep, and how He goes before, and especially another beautiful word: "When He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him." Now He puts His sheep forth. Perhaps they would rather stop here, but He puts them forth – this one in a path they have never gone before; this one in a way of gracious exercise and concern; this one in a way of difficulty; this one in a pathway of trouble. But it is the Lord who puts them forth. But, "When He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him." "And the LORD, He it is" – as the great Shepherd of the sheep – "He it is that doth go before thee."

And then we think again of the resurrection morning, and the risen Saviour, and that word which was spoken to the godly women at the grave, and to the disciples: "Behold, He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him: lo, I have told you." Now what is the Galilee that you have before you? "Behold, He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him: lo, I have told you." It is the certainty of these things.

"And the LORD, He it is that doth go before thee; He will be with thee." Well, perhaps Satan says He will not, and perhaps your unbelieving heart agrees and says He will not. But the Word says, "He will be with thee," and surely that means everything, the sweet assurance of His gracious presence. "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." "He will be with thee." If a minister had the grace and time and ability, he could go on till midnight on this. "He will be with

thee,” to help thee. “He will be with thee,” to bless thee. “He will be with thee,” to support thee and uphold thee. “Underneath are the everlasting arms.” “He will be with thee,” to bring thee safely through. “He will be with thee,” to keep thee from falling. “He will be with thee,” to forgive thee. “He will be with thee,” to wash thee in His precious, sin-atoning blood. So we might go on, and you could open up each of these six, seven or eight or nine points hour after hour. But it is the certainty of it.

Well, “As I was with Moses,” Joshua, “so I will be with thee.” How was He with Moses? He said, “Certainly I will be with thee.” But Moses said, I have to meet Pharaoh; I have to meet all the power of Egypt. “Certainly I will be with thee.”

“And the LORD, He it is that doth go before thee; He will be with thee, He will not fail thee.” Now Joshua failed a few times, didn’t he! If you read through the Book of Joshua, Joshua failed a few times, but the Lord did not fail him. When they came to the crossing of Jordan and Jordan was in flood, the Lord did not fail him. And when they came to Jericho – the impossibility of it – the Lord did not fail him. But then you see, over the matter of Ai, Joshua failed. Do you know why he failed? Well, he thought, This is so easy, I can manage this myself. I do not need to pray; I do not need the Lord’s help. He failed, and so will you, so will I, and I think we have proved it.

Again, when those ambassadors came, the Gibeonites, pretending they had come from a far country, Joshua failed. He took everything on face value instead of committing it to the Lord and praying about it. So Joshua failed, but God did not fail him. Really, I have thought the days in the Book of Joshua were some of the best days the children of Israel ever had. They were really blessed. The Lord did not fail Joshua and He did not fail them. And the Lord will not fail you. Now we fail so often, and you sometimes feel ashamed of yourself because of your faults and your failures. It is this: we do not deserve the Lord still to be with us doing all these things, but this word stands: “He will not fail thee.”

When I was a young believer, I did not have many people to talk to, but in those days the Sovereign Grace Union used to have some really good meetings on Saturdays and some really good speakers. There was one occasion, the Saturday afternoon meeting was advertised as, “Unfailing grace,” and the evening meeting was advertised as “Unfading glory.” Well, that is it, and the one precedes the other, and the one follows the other. “The Lord will give grace and glory.” If the Lord gives you grace, then one day He will give you glory. But it is unfailing grace. What do we sing:

“Where the rich fountain of Thy grace
Stands ever open, full, and free.”

He will not fail to fulfil His promises, and He will not fail to supply your needs. He will not fail to help you. But often it is *when you come there*, not before. But dare anyone stand up and say that on any occasion the Lord has ever failed you? What about His promises? "Doth His promise fail for evermore?" What about His "everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure"? What about His love? "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." It must have been a wonderful thing when Joshua heard these words. I hope it is a wonderful thing to some of you. I hope they are not just words from the pulpit. I hope that the Holy Spirit applies them to some troubled heart here and another troubled heart there.

But you say, A lot of this is providence. "Mine's an urgent, pressing case." It is my sins and my soul and eternity. If you are found confessing your sin, seeking the Saviour, in reality, in truth, then He will not fail you. He will not fail to forgive your sin. He will not fail to receive you graciously. He will not fail to make you right for eternity. He will not fail to wash you in His precious, sin-atonement blood.

"The LORD, He it is that doth go before thee; He will be with thee, He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee." That was one reason why I read that beautiful, closing chapter in the Epistle to the Hebrews this morning, where the Lord says, "Be content with such things as ye have: *for He hath said*" – O there is the weight, there is the security of it! "*He hath said*, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my Helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

"He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Yes, this was true for Moses and Joshua – but in Hebrews 13, He applies it to the whole blood-bought church of God. He not only says it to Joshua; He says it to you if you are a sinner who belongs to Him by grace. "He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee."

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

They say that is the true meaning of the original Greek in Hebrews chapter 13, that that word was very difficult to translate into English. Our translators put it, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," but the original meaning is more like that: "I will never, no never, no never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Not only never forsake thee, but never leave thee. A loving mother would never forsake her little child, but sometimes of necessity she has to leave him. She is very careful, but she does have to leave him. The Lord says, "I will neither leave thee, nor forsake thee."

“He will be with thee, He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not.” It is on the grounds of this that the Lord says, “Fear not.” It is one of those wonderful *fear nots* of the Word of God, and there are many of them, and the Lord has spoken them because He knows His fearful people, and He knows that they do have many things to fear. What did Cowper say?

“Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.”

“Fear not.” Every *fear not* is built on the finished work of Christ. Apart from the finished work of Christ, there would not be a single *fear not* in Scripture, either in providence or in grace. But, “Fear not.” When the Lord says, “Fear not,” He means that He is going to deal with all these things that you fear. Now sometimes the world might kindly say to you, Don’t be afraid; fear not. The world says, It may not happen. Well, you know it is going to happen, but when the Lord says, “Fear not,” it is because everything is in His hands, and He has engaged, He is going to “manage all, by the way and to the end.”

You older ones who remember the last world war, when we were continually being told, “Fear not.” Winston Churchill was telling us all the time, “Fear not.” But the British nation in its heart knew there was everything to fear. We thought we were going to be invaded the next week. The whole country was filled with fear, yet the message was, “Fear not.” Mercifully the Lord answered prayer and delivered us and brought us through, but when the government kept saying, “Fear not,” there was not any foundation for it. Beloved friends, there is a solid foundation for this, and that solid foundation is in the Lord Himself, who He is, His mercy, His kindness, His ability, His power.

“Fear not, neither be dismayed.” If you look in your concordance, you will find this word *dismayed* comes a lot in the Old Testament. Strangely, it does not come at all in the New Testament. I wonder if there is a reason for it: because the glorious gospel of the grace of God is the Lord’s answer to all those things that dismay the Lord’s people, which fill their hearts with dismay. But it is a strong word – not just sad, not just fearful, but dismayed. And some of you here know what it is at various times in your life to feel dismayed.

But there is a very precious word in Isaiah, and really the substance of it is very similar to the word we have here. “Fear thou not; for I am with thee” – that great and glorious *I AM*. “I am with thee.” Now then, this is it: “Be not dismayed.” Why? “Be not dismayed; for I am thy God.” Not just, I am God; “I am *thy* God” – in covenant bonds, especially on the ground of redemption, and by calling. “Be not

dismayed; for I am thy God.” What does the Lord say He is going to do for this people who feel dismayed? “I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.” Those are three things that the Lord’s people so badly feel they need. The Lord does not come along like (perhaps even I may speak to our little children) when it is your birthday, and a kind friend sends you a present, but it is something you do not want. Now the Lord never deals with His people in their trouble like that: gives them something they do not need, something they do not want. He gives them the very things they are longing for.

What are you longing for when you are dismayed? Strength, help, to be upheld, and these are the very three things the Lord promises to those who feel dismayed. “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.” And the Lord puts a *yea* in to confirm it to you.

“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.” Well, then you say, It is true what the Lord says: He hath given us exceeding great and precious promises. And there are more than one in this verse. “Exceeding great and precious promises.”

“His every word of grace is strong
As that which built the skies;
The voice that rolls the stars along
Speaks all the promises.”

O but may He in love and mercy speak the word into your hearts this morning!

“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.”

Spiritual hungers and thirstings are satisfied only with spiritual things. “Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us” (John 14. 8). All things in the world cannot suffice us, but a sight of the Father will satisfy us.

Thomas Brooks

Three things a Christian should steadily labour to maintain: the honour of God, the honour of the gospel and the honour of his own name. If once a Christian’s good name sets in a cloud, it will be long before it rises again.

Thomas Brooks

Adversity has slain her thousands, but prosperity her tens of thousands.

Thomas Brooks

PROSPECT OF THE ETERNAL DAY

A meditation by James Tallach (1896-1960)

Pastor at Kames (1931-1952) and Stornoway (1953-1960)

“And there shall be no night there” (Rev. 22. 5).

The darkness of the night has gone never to return; the brightness of eternal day has come, a day on which the shades of evening shall never fall. How unspeakably glorious the city! How cheering the prospect! A prospect sure to all the redeemed, for the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it. Canst thou claim part in this, my soul?

The city hath no need of the sun to shine in it. In the spiritual firmament of the kingdom of God on earth the Bible reigns as the sun. Long hath it shed its triumphant rays around, dispelling the darkness of this world's error, ignorance and unbelief. Many a weary pilgrim, passing on through the wilderness, has blessed God for that sure Word of prophecy, which became a “lamp to his feet and a light to his path,” guiding him with unerring certainty to the gates of the New Jerusalem. But now, the city hath no need of the sun, for there shall be no night there. What need is there of the Word of Truth where He who is the living embodiment of all truth hath His dwelling-place? His presence fills the city with light, and there shall be no night there; for the glory of God and the Lamb shall be in it.

Neither hath the city need of the moon to shine in it. Is not the church clear as the moon? Is not her light the reflected glory of “the Sun of Righteousness”? The world has never been without the witness of the faithful remnant. At one time they wax great, as the moon does, but, alas! at another they wane and are hardly seen; at one time Pentecost with its overflowing blessings, at another Jeremiah, weeping alone; but always, even in the darkest days, a remnant according to the election of grace.

But now, their work is done; they have finished their course; they have kept the faith; they have received their crowns. The dark night of persecution, tribulation and trial has gone; the need for witness no longer arises, for there is no night there, and the city hath no need for the moon. Her light is the glory of God – unreflected, immediate and direct – and the glory of the Lamb.

There shall be no night there. Day has triumphed over night, light over darkness. Light pervades the city, and O such light! bright but not dazzling, radiant yet soft, clearly illuminating yet never blinding – light filling up every vessel, every corner, every hollow, and nowhere casting a shadow; the inner depths of every soul fully illuminated as the highest mountain-top. Such light as this indicates knowledge, joy and beauty –

perfect knowledge, fulness of joy and beauty without a shadow. Think, O my soul, how glorious the prospect! Dost thou not already possess an earnest of it, a gracious earnest through Him who is the brightness of the Father's glory "and the express image of His Person"? He it is through whom "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God" has shone upon thee. Such light reveals to thine adoring heart the beauty of Him who is chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely, infinitely fairer than the children of men. Pure, holy joy-imparting light is this. O how sweet the gracious consciousness of righteousness imputed, pardon bestowed, peace which passeth understanding and love divine, all summed up in Him in whom dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily – Jesus Christ our Lord.

O my soul, canst thou recall the days of thy first love? Canst thou remember the days of thy youth, when the light shone upon thee? How precious was the gospel, how amiable were the tabernacles of the Most High, how sweet the river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God; veritable days of heaven on earth! Yet, what was it but as the faint shining through a glass darkly? Faith darkened by unbelief, doubt and fear; by the infirmities, limitations and sins of the flesh. But there shall be no night there. The light itself will be immediate and the capacity to receive it unrestricted. The glorified soul, in all its powers of understanding, conscience, affection and will, shall be rendered capable of receiving and enjoying to the full the light of the glory of God and of the Lamb. Unspeakable blessedness on which no shadow shall ever fall!

If the occasional drops of the wilderness showers were so sweet, what must the fulness of the ocean be? If a few faint rays, piercing the darkness of a sinful state, were charged with blessing so rich, what must the blessedness be, of dwelling in the full-orbed glory of eternal day!

Even in this vale of tears what capacity for joy the gracious soul has. At the time that the Apostle Paul glorified exclusively in the cross, he was hampered and restricted by a body of sin and death, including a wretchedness well nigh intolerable. But there shall be no night there. Who can measure the capacity for joy given to that same soul when the night of its wretchedness is gone, when it has buried its body of sin in an eternal grave, when corruption has put on incorruption, mortal immortality, and death itself is swallowed up in victory? Then shall the whole soul, down to its inmost depths and to the utmost limit of all its sanctified powers, be perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.

There shall be no night there. The dark night of sin has gone; its fearsome shadows shall no more cast their gloom on the hearts of the redeemed. The thick clouds of its guilt, the powerful working of its corruption, the terror inspired by its just desert; the doubts, fears and temptations always attending its baneful presence are gone, all gone

never to return. O my soul, what hath God wrought? Exceeding abundantly above what was asked or thought!

Who can describe the dark oppression of sin's slavery, the wages of which are death?

“Of death the cords and sorrows did
About me compass round;
The pains of hell took hold on me,
I grief and trouble found” (Psa. 116. 3).

What language can express the yearning of a sin-burdened soul for a sense of the light and liberty of the gospel? Who can follow the subtle windings of the old serpent in the darkness? Who can tell the stumbling, groping, falling of the tempted as each pursues his solitary way, and such questions perplex and harrow the spirit as: Was I ever born again? Was it really the work of God or only my own fancy? If the work was God's, then how am I thus oppressed? O to be assured, to be holy, to be satisfied. Well, at last, at long, long last the day has dawned and the shadows of the night perish for ever – there is no night there. O the unutterable sighs and groans, the tears and wrestlings eternally and sweetly laid to rest in that thrice-blessed prospect, and doubt itself withers and dies in the full assurance of a Saviour's love.

There shall be no night there. Note, O my soul, the delightful contrast implied. *Here* the night of sorrow, *there* the day of everlasting joy.

The pilgrim's path to the Celestial City is by way of the Valley of the Shadow. That dark shadow is never very far removed and there are those who all their lifetime are subject to bondage through fear of death. And how often in the fulfilment of His gracious purpose their God moves in a way dark and mysterious to them. Is not His way in the sea, and His path in the mighty waters, and His footsteps hid, so that none knoweth them? Jacob groping in the darkness sorrowfully concludes, “All these things are against me”; and Jacob is but one of many who have concluded thus. Nor is Job without companions innumerable in the darkness of his sorrowful way. The pathos of his cry finds a sympathetic echo in the heart of many a tried saint. “Oh that I knew where I might find Him! that I might come even to His seat!” “Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him.”

But come, my soul, lift up thine eyes, for the time of thy redemption draweth nigh; there is no night there. Come, ye Jobs, and look upon the face of Him whom ye sought in sorrow and found not, come now with everlasting joy upon your heads and “Behold your God.” Feast your eyes upon the glorious sight, and let your beings satiate themselves in light. Come, ye Jacobs, and will ye *now* say, “All these things are against me”? Come near and behold Him who turns the shadow of death into the

brightness of the morning, by whose infinite wisdom and almighty power all things have worked together for good to them that love Him. Let God be for ever praised. The sorrows of the night have gone, fear has fled and death itself has died, and "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

RECOUNTING THE LORD'S MERCIES

Two letters by Joseph Tanner of Cirencester (1808-1867)

LETTER 1

My dearly beloved Brother Morse,

I would but cannot write, feeling feeble and sore broken in mind and judgment, and truly know not where the scene will end. I have often heard from you, but cannot expect it ever again; nor much from your dear wife, whose trial and toil must be great. I often think of you, and were the distance less, should oftener see you; but this, though a pleasure to both, would be very little, if any, real good to you. It is a mercy you have *near* friends, and *dear* friends; but a *far* greater mercy that you have the Friend of sinners, of whom the poet sweetly sings:

"A Friend there is, your voices join,
Ye saints, to praise His name,
Whose truth and kindness are divine,
Whose love's a constant flame."

Ah! my afflicted brother, it is wonderful to have this; but he adds,

"When most we need His helping hand,
This Friend is always near;
With heaven and earth at His command,
He waits to answer prayer."

O here is possession of love and power, which as far exceed the love and power of any earthly friend as the ocean's fulness is more than a single drop, or the meridian beams of the noonday sun than the glow-worm's feeble glimmer!

"Heaven and earth at His command!"

All power in both is put into His blessed hands. Herein, brother, are included all our earthly blessings and mercies, and our heavenly blessings and mercies; both the nether and the upper spring blessings of the great God. What a safe and blessed place, to possess all in Him! None can "break through and steal" this treasure from you, my brother. The poet

then adds a little as to the certainty of its continuance, and the immutability of its nature:

“His love no end or measure knows;
No change can turn its course;
Immutably the same, it flows
From one eternal source!”

Read the last three verses; it is a precious hymn (the 132nd).

I had a great desire to come and see you on Tuesday last, but found I was not able. I heard Mr. Philpot better than I ever had before, and felt a little life and power. He preached, I thought, a good and great gospel sermon; the glorious doctrines of God’s truth and grace; a living, soul-saving, Spirit-taught knowledge of them in the heart, and the effects of this as manifested in the life and conversation; while the precepts were enforced on gospel grounds.

I am, through mercy, better, but find the repeated attacks of my old malady enfeeble both body and mind; and now fully believe they will follow me till death. I am not anxious how long or how short a time it may be the Lord’s will to continue me here. Not always do I feel so, but this morning my ever-gracious, condescending, and merciful Jesus has once more turned in His favour, love and mercy, and looked upon my poor, captive soul. This always opens the prison doors, breaks the fetters, and breaks my poor heart at the same time.

Since I was at Clack,* I have had as hard a journey, for the length of time, both outwardly and inwardly, as I remember, and do not think the end is come yet. I expected this when so blessedly favoured at Hilmarton. I thought this week of the former and the latter rain, and it cast me down in my poor soul’s experience. I thought that special blessing about fifteen years ago might be *the former*, and this *the latter*, and that I should have but little more during life. But this helped me a little, that it would not alter “the covenant of grace,” nor “the bundle of life”; both remain the same. I cannot write more.

Yours &c.,

J.T.

Cirencester, July 27th, 1860

LETTER 2

My beloved Wife,

Two years ago today Mr. Tiptaft died; two years ago next Tuesday (my birthday) he was buried; and here I am still spared and trembling at Oakham.

When on my journey from Hitchin, mount Stamford was so high I could scarcely see mount Oakham; but now the one is past, the other

* Now called Bradenstoke.

appears in all its alarms.... I trust the Lord made the mountain at Stamford a plain. I was more favoured in preaching His holy Word there than I have been for some time. I don't know when I have had such liberty of feeling, or when I have preached so solemn and searching a sermon. My soul was both watered and blest, and the longer I continued speaking, the faster the spring flowed; so that when I left off, it was flowing faster than when I began, though I preached one hour and a quarter. My whole heart was in it. Afterwards I found my head painful in the night. Today I am "like a bottle in the smoke." I feel both empty and dry. But the Lord has been so good and kind to me, both in body and in soul! O that I could be more grateful to Him, who is the God of all our mercies! ...

I assure you I know not what to do, it perplexes me, for I seem of more use out than at home.... I hope the Lord will keep me faithful unto death. O it is sad and solemn to see how things appear to be sliding back in the pulpit and in the pew! The hearers I think are worst, for they love to have it so. I fear more the dearth and death in Zion than all the Bulls and power of the pope....

J.T.

Oakham, August 17th, 1866

FELT SHAME BUT WITH HOPE IN GOD

An extract from "The Sympathy of Christ"
by Octavius Winslow (1808-1878)

There is much indeed in ourselves of which we have reason truly to be ashamed and to be filled with profound self-abhorrence. We have need to be ashamed of our unbelief – of our low thoughts of the Saviour – of our little love to God – of our slow advance in the divine life – of our imperfect conformity to Christ – of the power of indwelling sin – and of our slender spiritual attainments in knowledge, personal holiness and heavenly meetness. What shamefacedness should cover us that we are so ready to compromise, to falter and to halt. How deeply humbled should we be that there still exists in us so much carnality, love of the world, and conformity to the world – so little of the crucified spirit of a cross-bearing Saviour! What cause of shame that, with all our profession, the pulse of spiritual life beats in our souls so faintly, the spirit of prayer breathes in us so feebly, that we possess so little real, vital religion, and follow Christ at so great a distance. Filled with self-abasement should we be that the fruits and graces of the Spirit are in us so sickly, drooping and bedwarfed – that we have so limited a measure

of faith, love and humility, are so defective in our patience and meekness, wisdom and gentleness – that, with all our blossom and foliage, there is so little real fruit to the glory of our Father. May we not, in view of all this, exclaim with Ezra, in his deep grief and humiliation for the sins of the people, “O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to Thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens”! O whither shall we fly, where hide our blushing face but in the blood of atonement, sprinkled afresh with which, we may lift up our heads and not be ashamed!

My dear reader, look well to your foundation, to your religion, to your hope, to your daily walk. Be this your constant prayer, mixed with a constant self-examination and faithful dealing with conscience – “Let me not be ashamed of my hope” (Psa. 119. 116). If you are justified by faith, you will know what peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ is; and then you will experience that hope that maketh not ashamed, because the love of God will be shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto you (Rom. 5. 1-5). And O may we live in the believing, hopeful expectation of *our Lord’s coming* to roll away our shame and reproach, and to exalt us to glory, honour and immortality. May we not be ashamed at His coming! But, owning and serving Him now, may we then hear Him say, “Come, ye blessed! ye who have continued with Me in My temptations, confessed My name, borne My cross, suffered for Me on earth, I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me. Enter ye into the joy of your Lord.”

“Then will He own my worthless name
Before His Father’s face,
And in the New Jerusalem
Appoint my soul a place.”

Go, dear reader, from the perusal of this writing, to the solitude of your closet, there to beseech the Lord to give you grace henceforth, Caleb-like, wholly and unreservedly to follow Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. We read of the first disciples of the Lord: “And they forsook all, and followed Him” (Luke 5. 11). The solemn confession of Christ you have made before the world pledges you to the offence, the shame, the crucifixion, and the self-denial of the cross of Jesus. You have bound that cross around your heart, you have identified yourself with its reproach and its boast, its defeats and its victories, its humiliation and its glory; onward you must bear it through flood and flame, through good and through evil report, glorying in its doctrine, despising its shame, enduring its crucifixion, until the Master bids you exchange your sword for a sceptre, your cross for a crown, which His own hands will place upon your head. Blessed, thrice blessed, ye who, when that blessed moment arrives, will be enabled calmly, exultingly to

exclaim, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing" (2 Tim. 4. 6-8).

THE FALL OF PETER

Fragment of a sermon by William Gadsby (1773-1844) preached at Manchester on August 9th, 1842

1. Let us look at the *weakness of man* and the *power of temptation*.
2. The *criminality* of Peter.
3. The *matchless display of God's grace*.
4. The *effect produced*.
5. The *lesson taught us*.

1. The *weakness of man* and the *power of temptation*.

The weakness of man is very great. Compared with the Almighty God, his Creator and Upholder, he is at his best estate altogether vanity; he is weakness itself. We are not sufficient of ourselves, so as to do anything of ourselves; we know not even what to pray to God for as we ought. May we in humility pray to Him to direct us how to pray, and what to pray for; to hold us up in His righteous ways; to keep us weak in ourselves, for when we are thus weak, then are we strong in the Lord and in the power of His might; to keep our eyes from beholding vanity, and our feet from the very shadow of evil. For some most eminent men have been left to themselves, and, alas, have proved their weakness to be great indeed! Why should we so easily forget this and think ourselves strong? We think often that we can manage things better than they. This is our weakness, and if God were to let us try, we should feel it. Righteous Lot, though miraculously preserved from the wrath of God poured upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, awfully fell afterwards.

Sarah also, being past child-bearing, could not believe God, but laughed at His promise, which was that though she was old, she should have a son. David, a man after God's own heart, being in the way of temptation, awfully fell. And indeed the principle of free will is the offspring of the bottomless pit, and has led many of God's children into awful labyrinths.

What a company of poor, incautious creatures we all are! The best of men are but helpless worms, whose life is not their own; and yet how

they trifle with God, who supports them even in nature. And if He did not keep His people, where would they be? Into what awful sins would they not fall? Abraham was remarkable for his faith, and his faith was accounted unto him for righteousness, yet he twice denied the wife of his bosom. Samson, though the strongest man that ever lived, except Christ, had not strength enough to keep himself from sinning, but was overcome by the deceitfulness of his tempter, or seducer, at last. David, though a man after God's own heart, could not keep his own heart, but was infatuated by the beauty of a woman, and awfully fell! Solomon, though the wisest of mankind, became indifferent, and departed from the path of rectitude and wisdom, and sank into the depths of folly and criminality. And the Apostle Peter, though he loved his Master, denied Him, and swore he never knew Him. And if our minds were now to be arraigned at the bar of God, and our hearts opened before Him, who could stand? For who is clean? We have all sinned; "we have turned every one to his own way" (Isa. 53. 6). There is no help in us, and if God has made it known unto us, and we have felt His life-giving power in our hearts, we have sinned even against that. Talk of creature doings! If the creature has no better salvation to depend upon than his own doings he will be condemned; he will sink for ever in black despair, to rise no more! He will then find that all he can do is insufficient.

2. The *criminality of Peter*. Peter's crime, I consider, was very outrageous, because we find that Peter held much converse with Christ his Lord. He went up into the Mount of Transfiguration, and saw the glory of Christ. Christ said unto Peter, when Peter confessed his belief in the Sonship of his Lord, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." And Peter was before cautioned that he would deny his Lord, but he said, "Though all men forsake Thee, yet will not I." And Christ said to him, "Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice." And notwithstanding all this previous caution, and even seeing Christ before him, and in his hearing, he dared to deny Him with oaths and curses. And if Peter could thus fall, what could you and I do? We are as weak and helpless as Peter. O that we may not, then, be left to trust our own hearts, or put confidence in the flesh, but pray the Lord to keep us, and preserve us in Christ Jesus, who is our only strength, and in Him alone are we safe.

3. The *matchless grace of God*, displayed in the salvation of a sinner. What should you or I have done with Peter? If someone that we esteemed as a dear friend, or if a brother whom we loved, was to deny us before others, and in our presence, what should we do? We should doubtless, considering ourselves greatly insulted, order him to depart from us, or to be taken from our presence. But not so with Christ, our Friend, our Elder Brother. The wounds which Peter made in Christ's

heart brought forth grace. He looked upon him. He looked upon him with an eye of pity, and had mercy upon him, and softened his hard heart by His grace, as though He would have said, "Ah! Ah! Peter! Hast thou forgotten the very many admonitions I have given thee, the glory which I revealed to thee, and that My enemies would thus deal with Me, and still canst thou deny Me?"

And have you, my hearers, never denied your Lord? Have you not sometimes been ashamed of owning Him in company? And have you not denied Him in your heart? And are you still here? Why has He not cut you off long ago? "Ah!" Many of you can say, "By the grace of God I am what I am." You once could only look at chance as the ruler of all your actions, but now you can attribute good to the grace of God from first to last. It is greater than the depths of your depravity and awful backslidings. Some say to the backslider, "You can make an atonement by your future good conduct." It is always with something you must do. Ah, confess and acknowledge your vileness before God, saying, "Behold, I am vile! What shall I answer Thee! I have nothing to bring before Thee, and would trust in Thy atoning sacrifice alone!"

4. And what is the *effect produced*? Some say the grace of God leads to licentiousness. But did it lead Ephraim to licentiousness, when he cried out, "Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn Thou me, and I shall be turned; for Thou art the LORD my God"? (Jer. 31. 18). And God said, "Since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore My bowels are troubled for him. I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD" (Jer. 31. 20). And in Ezekiel 16 the Lord says He will not deal with the sinner according to "thy covenant"; but I will deal with thee according to "My covenant," which humbles the backslider, who has committed whoredoms against the Lord, and it makes him to weep bitterly, and to sorrow with a godly sorrow, which worketh repentance not to be repented of. Though you may want to hide your faults from the world, you cannot hide them from God.

Did the grace of God lead Peter to sin? No, but his own deceitful heart. And see how the grace of God reigned! Was it Peter's own heart that made him weep? No, but the matchless grace of God, sent into his soul by his Saviour's look. In the garden the floodgates of hell were opened upon Christ, and I believe a sight of this was sent into Peter's soul, as though Christ by His look said, "I bore all this for *thee*; and though thou hast denied *Me*, I will not deny *thee*!" O this wonderful, matchless, sovereign, free grace of God!

Peter wanted to conceal himself; he went out of the palace and wept. No doubt he would ask himself, "Where shall I go to cover my head and to vent my feelings?" But he felt that the Lord had laid His hand upon

him, and He could not leave him; and therefore, he, as it were, in deep humility, said within himself, “Hast Thou, Lord, taken advantage of my guilt to make me know more of myself and Thee?”

Some talk of “Piety!” People make so much of it, as though piety were to save them. Their parents were pious, they were brought up pious, and they have continued pious. But even where the word does occur in the New Testament (1 Tim. 5. 4), it simply means kindness, as the margin has it – let them show kindness at home. The word has nothing to do with salvation.* True religion humbles a sinner. Angels assemble together in the court of heaven and rejoice over broken-hearted sinners. O then, to rely upon Christ, to plead His love and blood, and to lean upon Him and upon Him alone and not upon your own repentance; this is the effect of grace. It is said of some kind of stones that they will not break until they have been steeped for a certain length of time in goat’s blood. This may be so, but whether or not, it is so with your adamant hearts; nothing will break them but being steeped in blood, the blood of the Scapegoat of the wilderness.

5. What are the *lessons* taught us by these things? When you are reading your Bibles, and you find there this admonition and the other caution, do you not sometimes say, “I don’t like this and that; I do not require such cautions”? Why do you say it? Because it touches your pride. But, instead of saying so, ought you not to fall down before God, and say, “Behold, Lord, I am vile! Make me humble and wash me clean! I am estranged from Thee by lies and vanity; lead me into all truth. I am in many dangers; be Thou my Guide, even unto death. I am weak and helpless; O Lord, hold Thou me up that my footsteps slip not”? Thus the admonitions of God would be turned into a matter of prayer, and not trusting your own hearts. And if a brother sin, though you may have an utter hatred to that sin, yet you ought not to set your heart against him as a flint, but admonish him, and try to pray for him, remembering your own weakness; for if you should fall next, where then are you? O that you may pray to the Lord to search you, and try you, to make and keep you paupers, and purge you from dead works; for, “He that trusteth his own heart is a fool,” and, “Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm.” Do not even trust yourself alone, for, says the Scripture, “Two are better than one.” Do not trust yourself in improper company; for though the people of God cannot sin themselves into black despair, they may awfully fall, and bring guilt upon their consciences which will make their very breast-bones ache. May you, therefore, like Moses, say to the Lord, “If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.” It is dangerous to walk alone. O then cry to God to be always with you in

* An eminent Greek commentator says, “Piety is a general term, comprising all our relative duties, but particularly those which arise from relationship.”

your daily walks through life; and may you be enabled to put your trust in Him, for he that trusteth in the Lord shall never be confounded, shall never be put to shame. Amen.

THE NAME OF JESUS

By J.K. Popham (1847-1937)

His name is *Jesus*, and this was given to Him before His birth by the angel who announced His miraculous coming: "Thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins." And after His humiliation, His vicarious death and His resurrection, He was received up into heaven, and the name given to Him is above every name: "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth."

His name is "*Wonderful*," because of the union of His divine Person and our nature. His name is "*Wonderful*," because all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in that sacred human nature He wears. "*Wonderful*," because He is King of kings and Lord of lords; ruling in heaven, commanding willing angels to obey Him, ruling in hell, commanding unwilling devils to do His service and bidding; ruling men, though they know it not, even while they are saying, "We will not have this Man to reign over us"; men who, as men in a boat row in one direction with their faces in another, are ruled by Christ, and do all things after the pleasure of His own will. These very men are doing that which the Lord, whom they know not and whom they will not own, will have them do; they are doing His divine bidding. He is the Governor.

His name is "*Counsellor*." He counsels fools and makes them wise. "*The Mighty God*," from whose power none can hide himself or flee. "*The everlasting Father*," bringing many sons unto glory, being made perfect through suffering. The One on whose mighty shoulder is the government, and of whose government and peace there shall be no end; and this is the Person whom we, many of us, as we hope, know and worship and love and reverence, and desire to honour, even as we honour the Father; for in giving to His Son all judgment and all authority, the Father had this in view, among other things, that all men should honour the eternal Son, even as they honour His Father. One might, perhaps, without any impropriety, just cast in here a question that may be searching to some of us; namely, whether we have had grace enough given to us to acknowledge this Person, and bow before His throne?

AN APPRECIATION OF A READ SERMON

My dear Smart,

A sermon of yours from Psalm 37. 23, 24, published in the *Zoar Pulpit*, was read in our chapel some weeks ago, which I heard with much sweetness and pleasure. I believe I could travel with the sermon pretty well throughout, but in the first part in particular, where you describe the character of "a good man." As I heard it read, I felt a sweet persuasion in my soul that if you were right in your description of "a good man," I was one. I felt it in my heart to write to you the next morning, but something occurred to prevent me, and it was not done. I felt glad the sermon was printed, and so I have felt when I have heard one of Gadsby's or Tiptaft's read. I have heard many sermons preached without anything like the feeling I had under your sermon read ... I liked much what you said in your sermon about bringing forth fruit. O that I could do so! But what a poor cumber-ground do I for the most part feel! How prone to evil, how averse to good! "From Me is thy fruit found." "Without Me ye can do nothing."

"Smile me into fruit, or chide,
If no milder means will do."

I am well convinced that when favoured with access to the Lord, we desire to glorify Him, and mourn over our barren hearts and unprofitable lives. Were there more grace in the heart there would be more fruit in the life. In former times the cry was, "See how these Christians love one another." It may now be said, "See how these Calvinists hate one another!" ... Let me have the spirit and feelings of the publican, the prodigal, and the dying thief! I leave to those who desire it the spirit of the Pharisee and the elder brother. I have no hope of, or desire for, salvation, but by free, sovereign, and super-abounding grace. All my own comeliness has been long ago marred, and I can only be righteous in the righteousness of Immanuel.

I am not yet able to preach, my chest being still weak and tender; but I hope I may D.v. when the weather becomes warmer....

Yours affectionately,

J.C. Philpot

Stamford. January 1848

The sinner's heart is the devil's mansion house.

Thomas Watson

PROPHECY

By J.C. Philpot

Literal fulfilment subservient to ultimate spiritual impletion

There will be a literal coming of the literal Israel to the local and natural Zion, as there is now a coming of the spiritual Israel to the spiritual Zion. Am I departing from the oracles of God in tracing out two distinct courses of the prophetic Word? Have you never seen how two streams sometimes run for a while side by side until they unite in one and form a large and beautiful river? So it is with these two interpretations of the prophetic Word. The literal interpretation which belongs to literal Israel, as yet unfulfilled, flows side by side with the spiritual interpretation which belongs to spiritual Israel now fulfilled daily, until both streams will more fully unite in times to come, when there will be in Christ a complete fulfilment of every prophecy and every promise.

Mount Zion, representing the royal city of David, becomes a New Testament emblem of the exaltation of Christ dwelling in regal majesty at the right hand of God: "Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits .of just men made perfect" (Heb. 12. 22, 23). Observe how Mount Zion stands in connection with the heavenly Jerusalem, the innumerable company of angels, etc. Are not all these glorious accompaniments of a risen and exalted Christ?

ODE TO THE NEW YEAR

Awake, my soul, in sweet surprise,
The New Year's morn salutes thine eyes.
Another term of life is done,
Another rolling year begun.
Amazing grace, that wretch like me
Is spared another year to see!

My crimes have risen mountains high
Against the God that rules the sky;
Omission and commission too
Have marked me all my journey through.
Amazing grace, that wretch like me
Is spared another year to see!

His mighty arm has me upheld,
 But I against Him have rebelled.
 He leads and guides me day by day;
 Yet O how oft I've gone astray!
 Amazing grace, that wretch like me
 Is spared another year to see!

He saved my soul from hell and sin,
 Yet how ungrateful I have been!
 His drawing love He does impart,
 Yet O how lukewarm is my heart!
 Amazing grace, that wretch like me
 Is spared another year to see!

His Spirit's influence He bestows,
 And my proud nature does oppose;
 Yet since I have espoused His cause,
 I've often disobeyed His laws.
 Amazing grace that wretch like me
 Is spared another year to see!

He daily gives me daily food,
 He stands engaged to do me good,
 He well supplies my every need;
 Yet, like the swine, on husks I feed.
 Amazing grace, that wretch like me
 Is spared another year to see!

Why is it thus my God forgives?
 Because my Intercessor lives.
 Jesus appears at God's right hand,
 His people's pardon to demand:
 Hence flows the grace to wretch like me,
 And lo, another year I see!

Quicken my soul, O Lord, I pray,
 That while upon the earth I stay,
 My years and days and hours may be
 Employed in glorifying Thee.
 May sovereign grace be still my theme
 Till endless years close up the scene!

Joseph Irons

NOTICE OF DEATH

Raymond George Wiltshire, the faithful deacon at Zoar Chapel, Reading, passed away into his eternal rest on October 25th, 2015, aged 82 years. "Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men" (Psa. 12. 1).

THE
GOSPEL STANDARD
FEBRUARY 2016

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

GOD'S HAND UPON THE MAN OF HIS RIGHT HAND

*Sermon preached by Mr. J.K. Popham at Galeed Chapel, Brighton,
on May 6th, 1927*

Text: "Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand, upon the Son of Man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself" (Psa. 80. 17).

What would you do, sinner, if there were no Mediator between a holy God and your soul? How could you bear those everlasting burnings which are in the nature of God, and express and shoot themselves forth from His holy law which we all have broken? This beautiful word expresses what God has done, what He will do, and what He teaches His people to pray that He would do. It sets before us the Lord Jesus, and the connection is instructive. It is shaming, it is encouraging, it is instructive, telling us that a favoured church may become very degenerate, that a vine, planted wholly a noble and right vine, may become a strange plant to God. It is shaming, shaming to some of us who, as we have hoped, and still hope, God has planted wholly a right seed, that we should bring forth grapes of Sodom. It is encouraging because, in the pitiful, desolate and apparently hopeless condition into which the church of Israel was brought by sin, they still had courage put into their faith to ask Him, against whom they had done such evil things, to forgive them, to turn them again and to deal with them, not immediately – O woe to us if He were to deal so with us – but mediately, by Him, the Son of Man, whom He had appointed for this very thing.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is Almighty God. By Him God made the worlds by the Word of His power. Christ holds up the worlds which He created. He took on Him our nature. This, if salvation is to be known, is necessary. Sameness of nature in the Surety must be. The defaulter being a man, the sinner being a man, the Saviour, the Surety, must also be a man. Therefore it is written, "As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." O the wisdom of God in this, the love of God in this, that that absolutely necessary condition of salvation, that the Saviour should be of the same nature with the saved, is fulfilled in the Lord Jesus. O

behold the God-Man! O my fellow sinners, see the goodness of God in forming the human nature of the Lord Jesus.

And more, He was made under the law. That is a second condition most necessary, as the sin of man can only be imputed to a man, so the sin committed under the law must be borne in its penalty and punishment by one who was under the law. Jesus was under the law. "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law."

And yet a third condition may be mentioned, namely that it was necessary for Him, who was to be the Surety for His people and their Redeemer, that He should enter into a covenant to do this, to be this. There must be a covenant between the Persons in the Trinity in this particular. And if, O if one may say in demonstration, if these three things are found in the Lord Jesus, then faith, seeing them in Him, will find some courage to pray to God in Him. They *are* in Him. "A Man there is, a real Man," a Man who was made under the law, and a Man who was in the covenant, to whom His Father said, "I ... will ... give Thee for a covenant of the people," and who Himself said to His Father, "Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire ... burnt offering and sin offering hast Thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God." And that will, presented to the Lord Jesus in the cup of sorrow that was given to Him to drink when He was in the garden of Gethsemane, that will was that Christ should lay down His life.

Now my brethren, if I have rightly expressed this matter as to the constitution of the Person of this Man of our text, it behoves us all, as God may give us faith, very narrowly to regard and consider this Person, so constituted, so suitable to us. Consider Him. Consider Him in His Person. Consider Him in His great office. Consider Him in His solemn and smarting condition as a Surety. Consider Him as having sin imputed to Him by His Father. Consider Him in His loving willingness to be a smarting Surety. Consider Him in the vicarious nature of His Person and of all that He did and said and prayed and sweat. Consider Him in all these things. The more we are led into the mystery of Christ, the more we shall find our ignorance, and the more we shall find that a suitable prayer to us: "That which I see not teach Thou me."

The two mysteries which the saints of the Most High have to consider as long as they live here are the mystery of sin in their nature, in their lives, in their thoughts, in their affections. O the shame of this, the pain of this! The Lord knows what tears it costs our hearts if not many tears trickle down our faces, and He knows the shame of this that some of us feel. He knows the defeats we have suffered at the hand of our enemy, shameful defeats, many innumerable defeats. Who can count

his sins? They are more than the hairs of our head. Who can count them up and reckon them in order unto God?

The mystery of godliness – this is the second mystery which will out-weigh, out-do and undo and remove for ever and ever that terrible iniquity of sin from the very being of the saints.

O I am glad that sin is separable from a sinner! It makes one's heart ready to dance with joy to think that the day is coming when, not only will there be the forgiveness of all sin, but there will be no sin left in the being. A sinner and his sins are separable and they are separated. Christ separated them when He said, on the cross, "It is finished," when He finished transgression and brought in everlasting righteousness. But for the fulness of that we have to wait, and for the sweetness of that we must know something of the bitterness of sin, and for the victory of that we must know something of the defeat of sin.

If the Lord will help me just to lead you in your thoughts a little into this petition I shall be, I hope, truly thankful; and I am sure it will be a very high honour conferred on me.

The mystery and the mercy, the greatness and the glory of the Lord Jesus as in the text will be greatly enhanced in our view if we enter experimentally and shamefully into the context. It is not wise to separate Scriptures. It is good to notice contexts, and the context of this text is a very solemn one: a once flourishing vineyard, typical of a church, now reduced to ruin, desolation. Once hedged in, fenced, stones taken out, all the care that God could bestow on the vine bestowed on it, and when He looked for fruit, grapes of Sodom only could be found. He was provoked. He sent boar and beast out of the wood and the forest to trample down this degenerated vineyard, break her hedges, and all the trailing boughs that once had luxurious grapes, trampled under foot. What a sight, what a state! In his prayer at the dedication of the temple which he built, Solomon prayed for many things, supposed many conditions in the future of Israel: blasting, mildew, caterpillar, locust, palmerworm, famine and various evils, and among them this: "When Thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against Thee." Who would have thought it? And looking at Israel at that time under the prosperous reign of Solomon, who would have imagined, when that nation, that then rejoiced in obedience and brought the ordained sacrifices to God, would sacrifice to idols and provoke the Lord to raise up adversaries to them? But even Solomon was a type of what the nation would do in that particular, for outlandish women turned his heart away from God. He provoked the Lord greatly, though he was beloved of his God, and God raised up adversaries to him. Now do you know what this means? Can you transfer this to a man whom you know, a woman whom you know? Did you ever know a person planted by the

Lord in Christ, blessed with grace, with divine favour, who washed his steps in butter, on whom the candle of the Lord shined, to whom the Lord was pleased to speak gracious things and comforting things? Did you know a person of that kind who answers to that? Alas, I know one.

You say, perhaps have said, "How is it that I have got into this state?" "When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against Thee" – is that a key to your case? You may say, how is it God has permitted this hedge to be broken down and these vile beasts to come and trample under foot every tender thing? "Because they have sinned against Thee." I have done it. I should not think there is a gracious person here who could lift up his face to God and say, "Lord, I have not done it." Then, if we be guilty, if we look at our sad case, if we say, "O what a change, 'How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed!'" and, if so looking and so speaking and bemoaning our condition, it should please the Eternal Spirit to turn our eyes another way to Jesus and His blood, if we should be given to see the Mediator, O what a sight! Then I think you will say to me, "Do try to lift Him up; our hope, our ground, our way to God, the reason of our asking, the ground of our hoping for a restoration, all, all in Him."

Well, my friends, we need a great deal of faith here. As it seems to me, I need a great strength of faith. This church evidently had that strength of faith, for her condition did not keep her from praying. Does your condition shut your mouth to God? Then, so far, the working is evil. So far, sin and the enemy have prevailed and are prevailing. Take notice of it, dear friends. Watch the operation of convictions on your minds. See how you are affected by conviction of a bad condition. See again the direction of your spirit. In that case when Ephraim saw his wound he went to King Jareb. They returned, but not to the Most High. See how things work in you. In the church here they worked well. "O," they said, "we are in a bad case!" But there is a good God. He ordered the tabernacle to be made; He commanded Moses to make an ark and to put into the ark the covenant, the tables of stone. Then He said, "Cover it with a mercy seat. There will I dwell; there I will commune with you; there I will tell you about Myself and about what I will do with you." And faith, instructed in this mystery and this mercy, goes to the Lord and says, "O Thou Shepherd of Israel that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth." The glories of God's pure, eternal nature, are darkness to us. We cannot penetrate, we cannot bear that wondrous glory of the eternal God. But there is a glory we can bear, there is a shining forth of this great God we can bear, and faith, seeing this in type, and then seeing it in the anti-type, says, "O Shepherd of Israel, Thou that dwellest between the cherubims, Thou who dost ordain to show Thyself in Christ and speak through Him, shine forth on us and speak to us." This seems

to give the strength of this petition and the beauty of this petition. The badness sets out the goodness, and Christ takes the badness of His people away and gives them of His goodness.

Does it suit you? I cannot tell you how it suits me. O it does fit a bad case – a good God in Christ. People dislike the mention of the malady today, but depend on it, you will never know the remedy till you are sick. You will never know salvation till you know what ruin is, and you will never enjoy forgiveness till you have guilt, and when this, alas, comes to be repeated, I mean our sin and our guilt, then again and again we must see our condition and feel it and confess it. Then there will be this prayer. Faith is a strong grace, a prying grace, prying into the mysteries of Him who is the only hope of Israel and the Saviour thereof in the time of trouble.

Now this prayer is addressed to God the Father. Faith looks to Him, but only through the Mediator. You will never look on an absolute God. The rays of eternal Deity would smite us all into destruction, for we are sinners. Faith looks to God the Father, through God the Son incarnate. Look at that point, notice how you pray. Saying prayers seems to constitute much of the religion of people. See how you pray. To whom do you address some of your petitions? These people said, “Lord God, Thou hast a Son; Thou gavest Him; He is a Man and Thou madest Him a Man; Thou madest His human nature; Thou madest Him in the covenant and didst make Him strong in the covenant and strong in the grace that was given to Him without measure, and strong in Thy purposes, to accomplish them. Look on us in Him. Deal with us in Him.” I understand this petition – “Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand, upon the Son of Man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself” – to mean, “Lord, deal with us in Thy Son, Jesus Christ.” Is it so? Will He do so? O yes. He declared to Moses, “The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.” In no other way than that.

Well, dear brethren, what hand is it you need and pray to have on you? The hand of God in Jesus Christ. I have thought this might be said: “Let the hand of justice be on Him.” Could you bear the touch of infinite justice, sinner? Could you bear to think of being touched by the naked hand of justice? Everyone under a sense of conviction of sin, of having sinned, will say, “Lord, if Thou art strict to mark iniquity, O Lord, I could not stand; so deal in justice with Him.” And will He? Did He? Yes! Listen, sinner; O, may the Spirit make you know that it was for you God said, “Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man that is My fellow, saith the LORD of Hosts: smite the Shepherd” –

“Justice, smite the Shepherd.” Think of it, the great God, dealing in His great justice with His great Son incarnate, a flaming sword bathed in the holy soul of the Lord Jesus. Let that hand be on Jesus Christ.

Let the hand of love be on Him. It was eternally. It was when He sent Him into the world. God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son into it; gave Him. He spared not His own Son. Love was in it. “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.” Will that do? The nature of God is love; the channel in which that love flows is Jesus Christ. The objects that that love is to reach are poor, guilty people.

Let the hand of Thy divine purposes be on Him. “It is a light thing,” said the Father to His Son, “that Thou shouldest be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel” – that is, bring them all back – “I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles,” a covenant for the people. “That Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth.” Dear friends, God’s purposes are in Him. His people are chosen in Him before the foundation of the world; blessed in Him with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places; predestinated to the adoption of children unto Himself by Jesus Christ according to the good pleasure of His will. All divine purposes are there for the lifting up of His people out of the dust and off the dunghill.

Let Thy promises, Thy gracious promises be in Him. Let the hand of a promising God be on Him. And this is expressed by Isaiah where the covenant term is, “This is My covenant with them ... My Spirit that is upon thee, and My words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.”

And let Thy hand in dealing with us, let Thy hand be mediately on Him. Teach us by Him; draw us to Thyself by Him; convince us of sin by Him who sends His Spirit for that purpose. As Thou hast exalted Him “to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins,” speak so, speak thus, speak by Him, these mercies into our souls.

Now if God has given me right words and enabled me to speak of this Man as He should be spoken of – I do not mean adequately, but in substance – then what a mercy it will be for us to have faith raised up into exercise on Him. Who is worth a thought, when salvation matters are before us, but Christ and God in Him? Who is able to lift you off the dunghill of your sins and out of the dust of your shame and shameful condition, but God in Christ? Who is able to justify you and to put you in a state that you never were in in the Adam creation, but God in Christ? And who is able to put you, a poor alien and an enemy, among the

children and give you a goodly heritage, a pleasant land? Only God, in Christ. And again, who can restore you, who can restore me, from time to time from the bad states we get into, from the shameful defeats we sustain at the hands of our enemies and from the willingness that, alas, is in us, the willingness to sin? Who, I say, can restore us, but God, putting His hand of mercy and of love and of justice and of goodness on His dear Son, the Man of His right hand, the Son of Man whom He made strong for Himself?

Now I want to say one more word. Do you want, are you seeking, union with God? How can you have union with everlasting burnings? But you may have union with God in Christ. As, speaking of the love of God, Christ says that "the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them," so He speaks of union: "Thou art in Me." O I would be in Thee. Union is a close thing, intimate, and in this case, indissoluble. What a mercy to be after union with God, God in Christ. "Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand, upon the Son of Man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself."

One other word, a question. Would you be fruitful in the knowledge of God? Would you bear fruit to the praise and glory of God? An honest Christian man says, "The Lord knows I would be. I ask Him to make me fruitful." Now it can only be in one way – being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the praise and glory of God. The prophecy of Hosea concludes very beautifully. At the beginning of the last chapter the prophet says – the church speaking – "Asshur shall not save us." She has had enough of Asshur. "We will not ride upon horses"; they have only rushed madly with us into sin and trouble. What then? "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself." I feel sure that some of you must say, have again and again said, "Lord, we have done that; we have destroyed ourselves." Then a tempting accuser says the case is hopeless. "No," says a good God, "take with you words," O dumb sinner, O sinner whose guilt has shut and sealed up your lips to God, "Take with you words." Says the man, "I do not know what words to take." "Why," says the Lord, "Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: and say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, *all iniquity*." One says, "I could say it better about my sins of unregeneracy than I can think of saying it now; I have so provoked Him." Israel was in that case, but to Israel thus says God: "Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips." Does that fit you? Have you faith to go to God like that? Have you a case, and have you that faith, that strong faith, that is not overcome by unbelief and the sight and sense of your sins? Do you feel the worst person in this chapel? Do you feel as if you were not fit to be here? Do you feel it difficult to kneel and address God

because you are such a sinner? Well, says the Lord, “Take this word with you – Take away all iniquity.” God can do more than we are able to ask Him, till He teaches us how to ask Him. Christ’s blood can do more than we can imagine until we have faith to see the infinite value and efficacy of that blood. And then, because a person may say, “O, but what of the future? I cannot be trusted; I cannot trust myself” – and the Lord will not let you – but this is what He says: “I am like a green fir tree. From Me is thy fruit found.” Using another typical figure Christ said, “I am the Vine, ye are the branches.” So the Man of God’s right hand answers our needs – needs for the moment, needs for the future.

“Let Thy hand be on the Man of Thy right hand.” Now this is encouraging doctrine, beautiful doctrine. Full of glory indeed it is, as it is called the glorious gospel of Christ, the gospel of the ever-blessed God. It needs a great deal more wisdom and grace than I have to preach this gospel well, but O, my lisplings I believe do not offend the Lord, and I know they will not offend you. The little that can be said here about Him may encourage people who feel they have very little grace and very little knowledge. This is the Man, this is the Man, my friends, Jesus Christ, of whom we sometimes sing:

“What object’s this which meets my eyes,
Without Jerusalem’s gate,
Which fills my mind with such surprise,
As wonder to create?”

“Is this the Man? can this be He
The prophets have foretold
Should with transgressors numbered be,
And for their crimes be sold?”

Now if we have faith to continue that hymn and say,

“Yes, now I know ’tis He, ’tis He!
’Tis Jesus, God’s dear Son,
Wrapt in humanity, to die
For crimes that I had done!”

well, that will make us happy; that will make us happy. Then even a desolate condition that may succeed that happiness, a broken-down state that may come, will not put this faith out altogether, but it will be drawn forth again and again and we shall be able to say, in that faith, to God, “Lord, deal with us mediately; do not mark our iniquities; deal not with us after our sins; deal with us in Jesus Christ; speak to us by Him and let Thy hand be on us in Him.” Amen.



DEATH, JUDGMENT AND ETERNITY

This is the last editorial written by Donald Beaton Macleod (1929-1995) in the Free Presbyterian Magazine for February 1995. By the time the February issue dropped through the letter box, Mr. Macleod had already entered into his "desired haven," and was "with Christ; which is far better."

In our day there are three solemn realities of which men have lost sight. These are death, judgment and eternity. Each of these is a dread and awful reality, yet men seem to be wholly blinded to them, and continue to live out their lives as though these weighty realities would never meet them.

The first of these is death. It would appear impossible for men to close their eyes to something so certain as death. Though the sickle of death is removing generation after generation, yet men fail to lay it to heart. Though the messenger of death is continually visiting homes and communities, removing relatives and friends, yet each individual puts death far from himself or herself. The sudden death of a leading statesman may make a nation pause for a moment, but then things go on as before. Life is lived in the midst of death, yet no one enquires into the cause of death. Men do not look beyond the natural causes of death such as the illness or accident which brought about that death.

The Bible leaves men in no doubt of the certainty of death and the cause of death. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Men everywhere have to meet death. From this messenger there is no escape, nor can there be any delay. The time is appointed for each one, and they must answer that call. Sin is the procuring cause of death. Why is it that man is not immortal? Man is fallen and so must die. He cannot live here always. Death must inevitably and inexorably do its work. Man must go "to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets." Not only must the wicked die but the righteous also, only the righteous has hope in his death. Because of the great work which Christ has wrought out for His people, of their death it can be said: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" They obtain the victory through the Lord Jesus Christ. When death will meet with us, will it meet us in Christ or out of Christ? How much hangs upon that, for as the tree falls, so it shall lie.

The second reality to which men are blind is the great Day of Judgment. That man is accountable to God his Creator and must appear before His judgment seat is a matter which men will not lay to heart. Men live out their lives as though they were not accountable to anyone. They may live as they please and no one should interfere with them. That is the attitude of the present generation. Often the view is expressed that we must not be judgmental, applying our own standards or the

standards of the Word of God to other men. This is taken as interfering with the right of men to live out their life as they please. Even to suggest that there may be a higher Power to which man is ultimately answerable, is regarded as something belonging to a past age, from which the present age has been mercifully delivered. The teaching of God's Word is set aside. The testimony of that Word, that "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ," is given no place whatsoever by the present and the rising generation. Yet the Bible makes plain that the Day of Judgment is certain. It will come at the end of the world when Christ shall sit upon the throne of glory, and before Him shall be gathered all the nations of the earth. How solemn was the view given to the Apostle John of that day, as recorded in the Revelation: "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."

Once men mocked at the very thought of millions being gathered together at one time to the Great Assize, there to give in their account to God of the deeds done in the body, whether they were good or bad. It was impossible, in their view, that such a thing could ever be. How could millions upon millions be gathered before one judgment seat? Now it is possible, through instruments of man's invention, for millions of men to view, all at the same time, one particular event. If that is possible for men, how much more is it possible for God to arraign before His judgment seat, all the generations of men that have been, or ever shall be, on the earth!

The third reality which is hidden from men, or rather to which they have shut their eyes, is the great eternity. Men are unaware of that realm to which they are going. Time and the things of time so occupy the minds of men that they remain totally blinded to what lies before them. No doubt, if questioned about it, most have a vague idea of a heaven of some sorts to which they expect to go – an extension of this present life without the miseries which attach to life here. It is all so nebulous that it is obvious that they have never given any serious thought to the life that is to come. It is viewed as a place where those that die will be much better off than they are in this life, yet they have no real conception of what Scripture reveals it to be.

Few consider that the world to come – eternity – is of endless duration. That all do not go to the same place has never been truly considered by men generally. The solemn doctrine of a lost eternity has been cast aside as unworthy of a God of love, as though the Saviour had

never given utterance to these solemn words: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." Men have lost sight of the holiness and justice of God, and of His declaration that sin shall not go unpunished. If we reason with those who deny a lost eternity, and say, "Surely God will not deal alike with the righteous and the wicked," they will then resort to the Romish doctrine of purgatory, and assume that the wicked will be punished only for a time and then admitted to heaven. It is vain to reply that there is no scriptural warrant for such a belief. Those who hold such views do not ground their beliefs on the Word of God, but on the precepts of men. For such, only seeing is believing. How solemn it will be for those who refuse to accept the reality of a lost eternity – that place where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth – until they actually experience it, through being cast into that place of torment!

How different is the hope and will be the experience of the righteous. They shall enter into their rest and that rest shall be eternal. It will not be a rest of inactivity, but a rest of unwearied service throughout eternity. There sorrow and sighing shall flee away. The assaults of a tempting devil and of indwelling corruption shall be for ever at an end. "There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest." It will be an eternal Sabbath-keeping in the enjoyment of God. "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." "And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

A MEDITATION ON THE NINTH COMMANDMENT

By John Bradford, the Martyr (1510-1555)

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour" (Exod. 20. 16).

Now dost Thou, most gracious Lord, instruct me in this commandment, how I should use my tongue towards my neighbour, and behave myself concerning his name, forbidding me to bear false witness, in the which thou forbiddest me all kinds of slandering, lying, hypocrisy and untruth? And why? Because, as "members of one body," Thou wouldest we should "speak truth one to another," and be careful every one to cover other's infirmity, and with our tongue defend the names of others, even as we would that others should defend ours. So that in this commandment, as Thou forbiddest me all kind of evil, perilous, calumnious and untrue speaking, so dost Thou command to me all kind of goodly, honest and true report and talk.

By reason whereof I have great cause to praise Thee, in that I see Thee to be so careful over my name, that all men are by Thee commanded to defend the same. O precious God, great is Thy care over my soul, I now perceive. If this commandment were not, I see, as I should have done and do much worse with my tongue to others than is happened, so should I have felt of others towards me. Besides this, no small commodity [usefulness or benefit] is it to me, that Thou wouldest all men should use truth in all their words to me.

O how great a good thing is this unto me! If we consider the hurt that cometh by untruth, and by words wherethrough many are deceived, easily may we see a wonderful benefit and care of Thee for us in this commandment.

But, gracious Lord, like as I acknowledge my unthankfulness to be monstrous and great, and always hath been hitherto, even so yet continue I in wonderful hypocrisy in all my conversation; often lying, and speaking, as vainly, so offensively, fleshly, subtly, calumniously, and giving my ears to hear such things as be slanderously spoken; not repugning or admonishing other, as the slanderer to do as he would be done by, to tell his tale where he should tell it, neither admonishing the party slandered of that which is reported of him, thereby to take better heed; but rather I augment it. By reason whereof I have deserved eternal damnation.

But Thou, good Lord, be merciful unto me, I beseech Thee, for Christ's sake, whom Thou hast ordained to be "the end of the law to all them that do believe," as well for pardon of that which is past, as for not imputing the imperfection that remaineth. In His name therefore, good Lord, I beseech Thee to pardon me, and give me Thy Holy Spirit to open to me this law and all other of Thy precepts, so to understand them that I may heartily love them, and faithfully give myself to the obedience of them for ever. Grant me Thy good Spirit to sanctify my tongue, that it may be kept from lying, slandering, and all such vices, and that it may be continually used in Thy service, and speaking that which may be to edify to Thy glory and praise, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



Gospel grace in the right notion of it, doth not consist in abating the rigour of the law, or that for Christ's sake our sincere imperfect obedience shall be accepted unto justification instead of that which is perfect. But it lies here, viz: in exempting us from a personal performance of perfect righteousness required by the law unto our justification, and admitting Christ to answer the law for us in our stead, who accordingly fulfilled all righteousness for us, and is become the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Thomas Cole

TRACING OUT THE LORD'S STRENGTH AND MERCIES

A letter by William Huntington (1745-1813)

My invaluable friend Mr. C. brought your letter to me, which I was glad to receive, and its contents afforded an humbling cordial to my soul.

I can follow you, Sir, through all the courts, laws and pleas of corrupt nature; through all the flatteries, insinuations, fair pretences and false promises of inbred corruption; through all the courts of carnal reason, conscience, equity and judicature, and describe the various bills and witnesses found in them all against the poor, sensible sinner. The intricate windings and labyrinths of mysterious providence, and all the strange operations, changes, cutting discipline, comforts, promises, sweet thoughts and the blessed sensations of special grace have been the establishment of my faith, and the daily employment of my mind. And, after all these chases, changes, trials, disappointments, arraignments and condemnations, what has it done? Why, it has driven me from the vanities of the world, the pleasures of sin, the religion of nature, the confidence of the flesh, and from all hope of happiness in the things of the world. And the sweet advantage that God has taken of all my trials is, that He has appeared my Advocate in every trial, my fulness in disappointment, my portion in poverty, my confidence in adversity, and my refuge in every storm of persecution. His frowns have raised a godly fear in my heart; His absence has set me to self-examination, and taught me to watch His footsteps more narrowly, enquire after Him more earnestly, and to prize His presence more highly. Trials, Sir, are intended to cripple the old man of sin; the crown of pride is sure to get a blow in every fight of faith; the death of pride is the life of humility, and real honour follows upon it. I am sure that we are gainers by every trouble; more fruit to God's honour is brought forth after the branch is purged, and more peaceable fruits of righteousness are felt in the heart of those who are exercised thereby.

I have often, with a wondering heart and weeping eyes, reflected on the tender care and regard that God has shown on my behalf; how forcibly He withstands us when we are going wrong; how this little book, or that, this or that promise has been put into my hand, or dropped into my heart, to upset the arguments of erroneous men. When I have put too much confidence in an arm of flesh, my jealous God and Father has caused, for the least offence, such a prop to give way, and leave my unstable soul sinking and staggering, till I was convinced of my folly, and went back again to my immutable Friend. When any secret sin has gained ground in my affections, a private rod, or a certain text of Scripture has been forcibly applied, and some humbling thoughts and

sharp struggles have produced an abhorrence of it, and afterwards my soul has appeared as a bird let out of a cage.

When I have been indulged with private access to God in prayer, and with much freedom in the pulpit, I have often been lifted up with a vain conceit of my self-sufficiency; but then I have been left to stand in my own strength for a time or two in the pulpit, and the inattention of the hearers and my own confusion have been quite sufficient to mortify my pride, and bring that Babel building down.

When the approbation and popular applause of a number of God's children have lifted me up, a few scandalous reports and reproaches from another quarter have been sufficient to make me loathe such light food. And when I have been in the company of carnal men, about any lawful business, and while I have sat and taken notice of their shining parts, and graceless hearts, I have been brought humbly to reflect on what discriminating grace has done for me.

When some sin has been committed, and guilt and shame have risen to stop up the intercourse between God and my soul, the application of a favourable text, or a secret reflection on past mercies, have humbled and melted my soul, and both pardon and peace have been felt, before my knees have been bowed. Thus the sounding of God's bowels has sweetly dissolved my heart. When I have been going to preach with a dark mind and a barren heart, and kept in suspense till within a few minutes of preaching time, just as expectation began to fail, a text has occurred, and I have begun with a single ray, and preached till my heart was all on a blaze. Then light had been sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Thus the poor servant went up to the passover alone, and about the midst of the feast Jesus went up and taught. I have murmured at the thoughts of beginning without Him, and doubted of His company at the banquet; but the Lord must be waited on, and His time waited for, as it is written, "My time is not yet come, but your time is always ready."

Thus I have showed, my dear friend, how I go on in the world, and though my path lies between evil report and good report, yet under the management of infinite wisdom, I hope to gain by trading. A watchful eye is a necessary attendant on prayer, and a blessed handmaid to faith. The Lord favour thee with it, is the prayer and desire of one who in the bonds of love desires to subscribe himself,

Your willing servant in Christ,

W.H.

Winchester Row, February 18th, 1786

THOUGHTS ON GOD'S PATERNAL HEART

A Commentary on the Lord's Prayer

by Carl Heinrich von Bogatzky, Germany (1690-1774)

Believers, when under heavy trial or in great grief, do not find it an easy thing to say, "Thy will be done." May the Holy Spirit comfort such, to know that the Lord Jesus is working all things well for them, as they wait upon, and trust in Him alone. Ed.

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6. 10).

O how dear to us should be the will of God, as the accomplishment of it is attended with eternal blessedness and salvation; how necessary is this petition! Therefore most earnestly should we pray that only the will of the Lord may be done; for this does not stand in our strength and ability. The mark is here placed above our natural reach. As the holy angels in heaven perform God's will, and execute His orders, so likewise should we do it on earth; but for this divine strength is required. It is not a sigh, a wish, and a prayer, that will do the business.

But this petition likewise flows from the affectionate heart of the Lord Jesus, as by it He would preserve us from the worst of evils, that is from our own will, of which, from our depraved nature, we are so fond. We account our own will as our heaven; whereas it is the way to hell, and often here proves a hell, a continual torment; namely, when a person agitated by a sickly fancy, and carnal desires, is this day eager for one thing, tomorrow desires another, and thus is continually disturbed, and is still more when he cannot compass his desires. Many even lose their lives by the disappointments; or the gratification of their carnal views often proves their destruction in body and soul, and their eternal destruction. From this turbulent evil, from this pain and misery, our Saviour here would secure us. Now this is the real affection of a mother, as, in her, it is mere love when she will not allow a child to drink a sweet poison, or handle a sharp knife. This may awaken in us a child-like confidence towards our God and Saviour, as by this third petition He intends as it were to raise a wall, that we may not break loose to our perdition, by doing the will of the flesh, the world and Satan.

By this petition we are not only preserved from infamy, trouble and ruin, but led on a way bestrewed with rest, peace and felicity; for as our God is love, so His gracious will intends nothing but what is for our greatest good and happiness. His will, as we have noticed above, is His love, protection and mercy, and our eternal salvation; for truth has said, "He that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

Our Saviour says, "I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart" (Psa. 40. 8). In what then did this will of God

consist? In this, that Christ should, as our Mediator, present Himself a sacrifice to be offered up for our reconciliation with God, and retrieve us from the fall, in which will we are sanctified (or reconciled, again made acceptable to God by the offering of the body of Christ to God). Thus the will of God, relating to mankind, is all relief, and salvation acquired for us by Christ; and never are we more happy, or never do we better partake of the salvation obtained by Christ, than when God's will for us is walked out by faith. The will of God is always the best and happiest for us, that we could not choose anything better and happier for us than what the will of the Lord has proposed for us. What the Lord sends us, be it joy or suffering, our God always chooses the best for us, sends us what He has selected for our good, that we could never have chosen for our real advantage, as our heavenly Father has. Our God Himself having enjoined us to prove and examine what is best, much more will He choose out for us what is best, as we never ourselves rightly know what is best; and this He will the rather do, if we ask it of Him in this petition; if we leave it to Him to choose and provide for us, or to lead and guide us according to His counsel.

Thus may we continually expect the best things from our God, and by faith, *hope the best from Him* (whereas unbelief always fears the worst). This may well awaken us to a truly child-like confidence, and greatly endear to us the will of God, and consequently this petition; to pray it from our own heart, and according to our Saviour's meaning, "I delight to do Thy will, O my God" (Psa. 40. 8). Yea, that like Him we say, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me" (John 4. 34). Wherein consisted the will of the Father, when the Saviour said these words: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work"? It was this, that He should accomplish the great work of redemption, and make poor sinners happy by being partakers of His redemption; as He, at that time, imparted faith and blessedness to the Samaritan woman and many others; and now the will of God can and should be our food, as it intends, and is directed only to our happiness. This should root out of us all unbelief, mistrust and fear, with their consequences, however matters go, when we lay to heart that God will always help us, that it is His will that we should be brought to the knowledge of truth, and thereby be made happy; that no hungry and thirsty person so longs after meat and drink as our Saviour after our salvation. On the cross He called out, "I thirst." Certainly it was not only in a bodily sense, but He thirsted in spirit after our salvation. Will is a faculty of the soul, resident in the heart, and His soul has laboured for us (Isa. 53. 11), He has willingly from His *heart* given Himself up to obtain salvation for us. Thus our Saviour always bears us in His heart,

and His *heart* and *soul* are full of thoughts of peace towards us. The sole intent of His will is to comfort us in time, and make us happy for eternity. What an incomparable comfort!

In the distress of our soul we often think God can indeed help us, but doubts arise in us whether He will; whereas here we clearly see that His whole will, His entire heart, all the labour of His soul, tends to our happiness, and our eternal happiness; for this is annexed to His office of High Priest, to "save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7. 25). With this is He entirely taken up, being an affair recommended to Him by the Father, as He Himself says, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" Now the Father's will is this, that He should save sinners, and lose nothing of what the Father hath given Him. "This is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing."

The hope of our salvation has a strong base. It stands on a rock, for He will succour us, and save us, and all that He wills He can do. "Our God is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased" (Psa. 115. 3).

THE BRAZEN SERPENT

By William McEwan of Dundee (1735-1762)

The host of Israel had long traversed the desolate wilderness and, finding no end of their wanderings, instead of accepting this punishment of their iniquity from the hand of the Lord, again they murmur against Him and Moses, and undervalue their heavenly provision, though the food of angels. The incensed Jehovah commands the serpents to bite them. The serpents obeyed, and many of the people died. The survivors, convinced of their error, confessed their fault, and beg that Moses would intercede for them with their offended God. Moses hearkens to the people, and the Lord was entreated of him.

But observe the strange manner wherein the cure was wrought. Does he kill these poisonous and fiery flying serpents outright? No. Does he drive them to some distant region of the earth, or remote corner of the wilderness, where the Israelites would be annoyed with them no more? Nor this either. Or does he restrain these noxious creatures from stinging them, which was also possible, though they swarmed in the camp? None of all these. The serpents are suffered to live, suffered to remain in the camp, and suffered to bite as before.

But a brazen serpent is, by God's command, lifted upon a pole, that it might be conspicuous from afar, and whoever snatched a look at this

lifeless serpent needed not fear the bite of the living ones, for the wound was not mortal. "Happy art thou, O Israel ... O people saved by the LORD" (Deut. 33. 29). They were hungry, and they had miraculous bread; thirsty, and they were supplied with miraculous drink; now they are sick and wounded, and they are favoured with miraculous medicine. Here, indeed, the Scripture was fulfilled in the most literal sense: "Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death. Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and He saveth them out of their distresses. He sent His Word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions" (Psa. 107. 17-20).

Let us behold, in this eminent figure, at once our miserable state by sin, and the method of our recovery by Jesus Christ who, from this very thing, preached to Nicodemus the doctrine of His cross. "And as Moses," said He, "lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up" (John 3. 14).

The devil and his angels, these are the fiery flying serpents who, though invisible to the eye, have stung the race of Adam, and have insinuated their deadly poison through the whole mass of human nature, for which we may take up the prophet's lamentation, "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint" (Isa. 1. 5). Ever since we broke through the hedge of the divine law, these serpents have incessantly bitten us. This makes the world a terrible wilderness indeed, a land of trouble and anguish, whence come the viper and the fiery flying serpent. It is true, the wounds that are made by the scorpions of hell may seem but slight at the first, for many a time they have stricken us and we were not grieved. But as the unhappy Israelite soon perceived the deadly venom drinking up his vitals, so shall the devil's fiery darts, sooner or later, inflame the conscience and never fail to enkindle in the heart a burning fever of unsatisfied and irregular desires. It was only the death of the mortal body that threatened the stung Israelite. But the soul, the immortal soul, is endangered by the bite of the infernal serpent, unless an antidote can be found. And this antidote is the Lord Jesus Christ, of which the brazen serpent of Moses was a figure.

It may perhaps seem odd at first that so noxious and hateful a creature as the serpent should be made an emblem of the amiable and beneficent Redeemer, especially when we consider that the *serpent* is a name commonly appropriated to the grand adversary of God and man, and in the scripture-style, wicked men are called *serpents*, and a *generation of vipers*. But what is the strength of the roaring lion of hell to His strength, who is the Lion of the tribe of Judah? And what is the subtlety of the devil, the old serpent, to the wisdom of Jesus Christ, the

new? Besides, the serpent, being the first cursed creature, may, even on this account, be pitched on as a type of Him who was to become a curse for us. But, whereas the serpent of Moses was void of poison, and wore no sting, for it was only the form of a serpent, it is natural here to think how Jesus Christ only appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh, but was utterly a stranger to the venom of sin, though in all other things made like to us. The strength and lustre of the brass might be a faint shadow of the strength and glory of that wonderful Person, the God-Man.

But the lifting up of this serpent seems an evident prediction of that death which Christ should die. Here He is evidently set forth crucified before us, as we are taught by Himself, who is the end of the law for righteousness, when speaking of the death He should die, "And I," says He, "if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me" (John 12. 32). The serpent was lifted up on a pole, and Christ was lifted up on the accursed tree. The serpent was lifted up in the most conspicuous manner, amid the camp of Israel, and the crucifixion of the Son of God was transacted in the most public manner at Jerusalem, the metropolis of Judea. It was God who commanded the serpent to be lifted up in the wilderness, and it was God who commanded the Lord and Saviour to lay down His life, and adjusted [harmonised], by His determinate counsel, all the shameful and all the painful circumstances of that awful and amazing scene. If it had not been with a view to its elevation on the pole, Moses had not been ordered to make this brazen image; nor would the Son of God appeared in the likeness of a man, with an intention to expire on the cross, and give His life a ransom for many. The serpent was lifted up, that whosoever beheld it might be healed and live; and Christ was crucified, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life.

That a wounded Israelite should be saved by looking, and a perishing sinner by believing, are things that bear no small resemblance to each other. For what is believing on Him, but seeing Him who is invisible, that, like Moses, we may endure? What is it but looking on Him whom we have pierced, that we may mourn? How fitly may the glorious words in the prophet Isaiah come from the mouth of the crucified Redeemer, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else" (Isa. 45. 22). "Beside Me there is no saviour" (Isa. 43. 11). Let us more particularly observe the likeness of their remedy to ours.

It was a method of cure solely contrived and appointed of God, from whose ordinance alone it received its efficacy. Who would so much as have imagined in a dream, that to look at a dead serpent of brass would cure the bite of a living serpent? Should reason be allowed to give her verdict, she would, perhaps, be so far from pronouncing it a proper

expedient, that she would rather judge it a gross absurdity. The method of our recovery by the cross of Jesus Christ is a device that claims God Himself for its only original. The world, by wisdom, never would have arrived at the knowledge of it; nay, it is a thing they are highly offended with, for it "is to them that perish foolishness," but to them that are saved, it is the wisdom of God, and the power of God unto salvation, to every one who believeth. Though reason would not have thought, God has ordained it. To this alone must all its efficacy be ascribed; for, "This is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life" (John 6. 40).

It was a method of cure that never failed, being no less sure than strange. Not an Israelite died, as Moses assures us, who looked at the brazen serpent. Where were they ever ashamed that put their trust in Christ? Were they ever disappointed in their expectations, that believed in Him for everlasting life?

It was a method of cure that God gave to the Israelite as an infallible cure. Perhaps he might happen to receive his wound in some remote place of the camp, and though it should have affected him in such a manner that he could neither move hand nor foot, yet without stirring from the place where he was, without sending for physicians to apply their medicines, he was saved by one glance of his eye. In like manner we are saved, not by working, but by believing. The works of the law are physicians of no value to the distressed conscience, but Christ is a present help, and to find Him we need neither climb up into heaven, nor descend into the deep.

It was a remedy that might be repeated as often as there was occasion for it. So Christ is the propitiation for our sins, to whom we may warrantably have recourse as often as we are wounded by hellish temptations, and in every time of need. Yet let no abuser of this heavenly doctrine infer that, because the remedy is at hand, we may be careless and secure, and expose ourselves at random to the painful stings of the infernal serpents.

It was a remedy that proved effectual, without all doubt, to the Israelite who used it, though his visive faculty had been ever so weak. So the weakest faith, if genuine, is as saving as the strongest, because its object is the same.

It was, in short, a remedy that ascribed the whole glory to God, even as in the work of our salvation by Jesus Christ all boasting is excluded. While the believing soul treads upon the adder, and tramples the dragon under feet, and says, "O death, where is thy sting?" (1 Cor. 15. 55). O Satan, where is thy power? Let him also say, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (verse 57).

The following is a beautiful hymn on "The Brazen Serpent." It is number 876 in Gadsby's Selection.

"When the chosen tribes debated
'Gainst their God, as hardly treated,
And complained their hopes were spilt,
God, for murmuring to requite them,
Fiery serpents sent to bite them;
Lively type of deadly guilt!

"Stung by these, they soon repented;
And their God as soon relented;
Moses prayed; He answer gave:
'Serpents are the beasts that strike them;
Make of brass a serpent like them;
That's the way I choose to save.'

"Vain was bandage, oil, or plaster;
Rankling venom killed the faster;
Till the serpent Moses took,
Reared it high, that all might view it;
Bid the bitten look up to it;
Life attended every look.

"Jesus, thus for sinners smitten,
Wounded, bruised, serpent-bitten,
To His cross directs their faith.
Why should I, then, poison cherish?
Why despair of cure, and perish?
Look, my soul, though stung to death.

"Thine's alas! a lost condition;
Works cannot work thee remission,
Nor thy goodness do thee good.
Death's within thee, all about thee;
But the remedy's without thee;
See it in thy Saviour's blood.

"See the Lord of glory dying!
See Him gasping! Hear Him crying!
See His burdened bosom heave!
Look, ye sinners, ye that hung Him;
Look how deep your sins have stung Him;
Dying sinners, look and live."

Joseph Hart

He that hath slight thoughts of sin, never had great thoughts of God.

John Owen

SAFETY IN SEEKING GOD'S FACE

Extract from John Preston (1587-1628)

“If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (2 Chron. 7. 14).

Look upon Him in all His actions and carriages, and thereby you will see how worthy He is to be loved. Consider the first action that ever He did, the making of the world. He could have enjoyed happiness within Himself for ever, as much as now, yet He was willing out of His goodness to make angels and men, and to provide abundantly for them. And afterwards, when all mankind were lost, and He might have left us, as He left the angels that fell, without any possibility of salvation, out of His love to mankind He gave His Son to redeem us. And, since He brought thee home to His Son, how often hast thou been going quite away from Him? and hath He not still been as a Shepherd to thee, and fetched thee in again? Thou hast played many a slippery trick with Him [dealt deceitfully or treacherously], but He hath kept thee, and embraced thee, and established the sure mercies of David to thee.

Think also of His wonderful patience, that when He has been so often and so highly provoked, as He has been day by day, yet He passeth by all, and spares thee. Think if any man would ever have borne so much as He hath done. And add to this, the consideration of His bounty, His constancy in doing thee good, though thou art uneven in thy conduct towards Him, yet a continual current of His mercy flows in upon thee. And consider further, that if it had been but a mere act of His will, to do thus, it had been wonderful, but it hath cost Him dear to redeem thee; it cost Him His Son.

And then consider the great love of His Son, that He would give Himself, and though He was equal with His Father in glory, would yet leave all to take the same nature as thee; and that if He had not done what He hath done, thou hadst been undone for ever. And consider how often He hath stood with thee in a strait, pleaded thy case, and pacified His Father for thee. Labour to be led by all these rivers and streams of His goodness to that sea of His personal excellences in Him. The end of all these acts of His providence is that men might know Him by all these. As when you would have one man known to another, you commend him, and describe his virtues. It is good to do so of the Lord, to be often expressing His excellences to others, and meditating on them ourselves. It may perhaps win others to Him; however, it will quicken thyself, and exercise thy love towards Him. There is a double way of knowing things, as I told you: by report, and by sight. Do thou labour to know Him by experience, so as to be able to say, I know Him to be thus and thus, and therefore I will cleave to Him.

And with all this, consider His greatness, who it is hath done all these things for thee, the great God of heaven and earth. This sets a high value upon all He hath done for us. If a great king doth but cast his countenance on thee, how it is prized! But that the great God should look after such a wretch as thou art, not having anything in thee why He should respect thee so, how should it affect thee! And from hence also consider what He is able to do for thee. Men know not God in His greatness, and therefore it is that He is not sought unto. Why do we trouble ourselves so much about the creatures, fear this man and that man, and think a little credit or preferment a great matter? If we but saw God in His greatness, all these would vanish. See how the prophet describes God where he says, "The nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance" (Isa. 40. 15). If all the nations of the world were for thee or against thee, who would not think this a great matter? As what should we think if we had even but one nation against us? Yet let them be compared to the Lord, they are but as dust blown away with His breath. If our eyes were but opened to see the Lord, as those of the prophet's servant were to see the host that was about him, we should desire Him alone, and seek Him, and then a man would be ready for all varieties of changes. Put him where you will, he would be content to have God's favour whilst he lives, and heaven when he dies. And, till this be wrought, he doth not seek God with a perfect heart. Till a man can say, "I have many things in the world, but the Lord is my portion, and He is my exceeding great reward, and I can live on Him alone; it being as impossible for me to have Him without comfort, as to have the sun without light," so that, whatever becomes of him, he is able to say, "I have lost nothing; I am not driven out of my inheritance and portion; I have God's presence." That will be a direction and a protection to us in hard times, so that we may say, "The name of the LORD is a strong tower," and, though many fly to other refuges, yet thither fly the righteous, and are safe.

Thou must seek God's presence in time of peace, if thou wouldest have it for thy refuge in time of danger. Both these we may see. "The LORD will create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night" (Isa. 4. 5). That is, as the people of Israel coming out of Egypt had a pillar of fire to guide them by night, and a cloudy pillar by day, so God there promiseth to His people, "I will walk before you, and direct your way in all your actions, in difficult cases." God guides His people by an immediate enlightening of His Spirit into those ways that shall be most safe for them. It is said, "David behaved himself wisely ... and the LORD was with him" (1 Sam. 18. 14). God directed him, and was his counsellor, whereas the Lord departed from Saul, and he erred in all he

did. If the two pillars had been taken away from the Israelites, they had been lost in the wilderness. So, when the Lord departed from Saul, he was as a man bewildered in a dark night, whereas a godly man shall have a voice behind him saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it" (Isa. 30. 21).

But that is not all the benefit which the presence of God doth afford us. It gives protection also, as that place shows, "Upon all the glory shall be a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain" (Isa. 4. 5, 6). That is, what a shadow is to a poor traveller in the time of scorching heat in those hot countries, that will the Lord's presence be to all His saints, and it shall be a covert also. They shall be under it, as under a roof, like one in a house, that looks out, and sees others in a storm as, when the Egyptians were beaten with hail, and perished in it, the Israelites were safe. And again, He will be a Refuge to them. When they are persecuted by any, whether it be by their own sins which follow them, as the avenger of blood, or by evil men, or the power and malice of Satan, if they run to the Lord, He will be their asylum, their sanctuary.

See what an advantage Mordecai, who possessed this privilege, had over Haman. Both were in distress; Mordecai was persecuted, he fled to the Lord by prayer, and had Him for a refuge, but Haman had none when he was out of favour with the king. So both Peter and Judas fell into sin, but Peter had a refuge to flee to, even God, whom he had been formerly acquainted with, but Judas had none, and so the storm fell on him. So Saul, being about to fight with the Philistines, had no refuge. God had departed from him, and therefore he fled to a witch, but David, when he was in as great a strait, and the people talked of stoning him, had a refuge. He encouraged himself in his God, and therefore you find it so often repeated by him, "God is my shield, and the rock of my defence."

In fair weather men care for no such shelter, because they think they need it not; but remember a storm may come, and it is good to provide against a rainy day. When the church was fallen from her first love, Christ threatened to remove the candlestick (Rev. 2. 5), whereby He does not mean the ministry only, as appears by the last verse of the first chapter: "The seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches," and therefore a removal is thereby threatened from that city. And this is threatened, not because they had utterly forsaken, but were fallen from their first love, and some degrees of it. What cause have we then to fear! and what cause is there that we should now seek the Lord's presence! and then we shall be sure to find Him a refuge; for, go whither thou wilt, He is there. "If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I ... dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me" (Psa. 139. 8-10). And as nothing is so terrible

to the wicked as that, wherever they go, God is there, so nothing is more comfortable to the godly.

LAST LETTERS OF ROBERT WALKER

Robert Walker (1824-1883) was vicar of Wymeswold, Leicestershire. He entered into his eternal rest in the early hours of January 12th, 1883.

My dear Friend,

I am so sorry your letter has been unreplied to so long – it is really not because I did not feel interest in the subject it treated of, but because at this time of the year I am so very busy with “the stuff,” as I call it.

I am sorry to see you are a brother in affliction, and yet in another sense glad: for it creates that sympathy which is so seldom felt between two ministers – for alas, the spirit, “I am of Paul, and I of Apollos,” etc., often divides most unworthily between the servants of God. I enter most fully into your remarks, and your letter was a great comfort to me; I wish mine might be the same to you. As to your bodily weakness, I never could sympathise with anything of that sort till last year, when I fell so seriously ill in June. Ever since I have been a sort of hobble-de-gee [a person hobbling along], getting about a little, and preaching short sermons, and puffing and blowing. But my weakness has been a time for the display of God's strength, so I must not repine. As to the deadness of soul you speak of, I am sorry to say I suffer ten times more than you ever can – but I am just now favoured with a godly man as a helper, whose sermons are very profitable to me. ... He is, however, leaving me, and I am full of sorrow on that account. But why should I be? The same Lord who sent him can send another when He sees fit. All this is selfish....

I was very charmed with the account of Mary [Sukey Harley's daughter]. There is the true Sukey ring about her experience. How very gracious the Lord is! There is an old parishioner here, aged 78, the son of a godly woman who died at a great age, nearly 90, within this year, during my incapacity, brought to the feet of Jesus – a humble, tearful follower of the Lamb! Wonder of wonders! If his poor mother could have seen the change, how delighted she would have been! But though she has not seen it, the Lord has graciously sent it. This gives me hope about my own children. Many have been the prayers offered for them, and in some of them I see plain marks of tenderness of conscience, “foolish timorousness,” as Talkative calls it. Well, we can only sow the seed, and wait in faith and prayer. I have other cases here which interest me much, but you would need to know them before you could take much

interest in them. The parish seems to me quite alive with one here and one there in whom I take a paternal interest.

I can quite understand your love for dear old Mary. Such people seem to give us a sort of hold on the better world. We seem to know them still, though they have got above our cares and sorrows.

The leanness you complain of I feel in a tenfold degree, but I like Hart's words:

"But I'm cold, I'm dark, I'm dead:
Jesus will revive thee."

In hope of this reviving, which I deeply and sadly need, and for which in His name I pray for us both,

I remain, yours very affectionately,

Robert Walker

Vicarage, Wymeswold, Loughborough, January 9th, 1883

To one who traced his teaching under God to his ministry he wrote thus, on the last full day he spent on earth:—

I am very thankful to hear your account of the way you spent the coming in of the new year. We may well praise and pray, when we think how God has provided in time past, and reflect how dependent we are upon Him for the future.

We are all pretty well. I am better than I was, though I am not very strong; still the Lord has provided for me thus far, and I must trust Him for all that is yet to come. How long He will retain us in this world of sin and suffering is quite uncertain, but we are sure it will be well if only we can trust Him.

"We'll praise Him for all that is past,
And trust Him for all that's to come."

I can quite understand how you labour with sin and temptation. You must expect it. Satan is busy, and will let no opportunity slip which he wickedly hopes will prove an occasion of falling to you. But if you are tripped up, may the Lord enable you to fall on your knees as a good man expresses it. Satan will not gain any great advantage against you if his attacks lead you to watch and pray. I want to trust Jesus more, and to view His suffering and victorious wrestling with the devil on my account, more and more. When I come to die I hope I shall be able to lean only on the work of Christ. The greatest mercy will be then to see that those sufferings and conflicts were for me.

May the Lord give us more faith and love, and fit us for His will – and at last take us home.

Robert Walker

Vicarage, Wymeswold, Loughborough, January 11th, 1883

LIGHT AT EVENING TIME

A short account of Esther Weeks, by Mr. J.H. Gosden

Esther Weeks resided at Maidstone for many years. She was the daughter of Mr. Thomas Weeks of Ayleswade Farm, Biddenden. She entered her eternal rest on Lord's day morning, August 27th, 1933, aged 74 years.

Constitutionally reticent, especially in religious matters, only a little could generally be gleaned regarding the work of grace in her heart, but from first acquaintance the writer felt a hope that it was there, as she ventured to express herself as "thinking upon His name." There seemed a liveliness in the few words she then uttered, indicating her anxiety to possess a saving religion.

It was not, however, until the onset of her serious illness in 1932 that our friend related a former blessing received while residing with her parents at Biddenden. In it she so sensibly felt her burden removed, and the love of God shed abroad in her heart, that (though then young in years) she several times asked Him to come and take her to Himself. On the following Lord's day, the pastor, Mr. Kemp (Mr. John Kemp senior, of Biddenden), mentioned having enjoyed a similar experience, which much confirmed our friend, and knit her to His servant in spirit, and she often spoke of him with warmth.

The revived memory of this favour, on June 4th, 1932, when she was lying very ill, made her feel and say that she was not desirous of recovering, except if it were the Lord's will, and for the sake of her aged and widowed sister with whom she lived. Psalm 37 was a favourite with her for years, and therein she did, it is verily believed, enjoy the secret persuasion of being set apart among the righteous.

Her deportment was exemplary, and her attendance on the means of grace an example which many would do well to observe and follow. Once, speaking with a friend concerning the trifles which kept some from the services, she said, "I should go, if it killed me." And her attendance was not merely mechanical. With all her reticence, she would occasionally refer to some help received, or her great desire for such. To her, therefore, it was a matter of some concern when prevented from attending.

To the surprise of all, she recovered sufficiently to meet with us again, which she did often when carnal "prudence" would have prohibited. But the respite was short, though, through grace, used well. She often would say, "I do not know why I am spared. I felt ready to go last year; but I do not think He will deceive me," as if her confidence were being tested.

On visiting her after the recurrence of the complaint which ultimately terminated her life, she referred again to the first great blessing, and said, "Why was I made to hear Thy voice?" It was not a mere quotation, such as one often hears, but real surprise expressed in the emphasis. Then she quietly said, as if ruminating on the greatness of the hope, "If I am not deceived, and I do not think I am."

On a later visit, she was low both in mind and body, and complained that she could not get what she wanted. But on August 5th, on entering her room, she greeted me with a smile of evident satisfaction, and (so unlike her) immediately began to tell of the blessing of the Lord; that He had visited her, and now she could use every word of the hymn commencing,

"Awake, my soul, in joyful lays,
And sing thy great Redeemer's praise,"

and that Psalm 103 was her language: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name." She then expressed her love for the house of God (she could see the chapel roof from her window), and said,

"There my best friends, my kindred dwell,"

and falteringly, with emotion,

"There God my Saviour reigns."

After praying with her, she observed that, granted what was asked, she would have all her desire. Then she said, "I believe I shall get to heaven."

On August 16th, she wrote to a friend, "O what is to be compared with the love of Christ? Bless His dear name." To this confidence she was held fast, and a deacon who visited her on August 24th found her still quietly waiting and hoping for the Lord to come and take her to Himself.

The end came somewhat suddenly, though expected, at 9.15 a.m., Lord's day, August 27th, and it is believed she then was "absent from the body, present with the Lord." May the good Lord sanctify the bereavement, and cause others to fear His holy name, for of such it is written, "And they shall be Mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels" (Mal. 3. 17).

Her mortal remains were buried at Bounds Cross Chapel burying ground on Wednesday, August 30th, 1933, awaiting the glorious resurrection.



OBITUARY

Joseph Kingham, for many years a member and deacon at Hope Chapel, Barton-le-Clay, Bedfordshire, and formerly at Ebenezer, Luton, died on September 2nd, 2015, aged 87.

Mr. Kingham was born in 1927 of godly parents at Luton, where his father and mother were members at Ebenezer Chapel under the pastorate of Mr. J. Kemp (Mr. J. Kemp junior). His teenage years were beclouded by the Second World War, and especially by the loss of his only brother on active service. He grew up resentful of the religion of his parents and looked forward to the time when he would be free from restraint, but as he testified later, he had to prove, "There are many devices in a man's heart, but the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand." At the end of the Second World War he was called to national service, and for a time he served in Italy and Egypt. Here he was subject to many temptations which could have brought shame, but the words of his father: "One day you will have to look on my face," were a preservative to him.

He became friendly with a girl who attended Gower Street Memorial Chapel in London, but he found that she was exercised about her soul, and this produced a conflict. The eternity of God and the vanity of all earthly things became more and more weighty, and this increasing restlessness caused him to stay at the chapel he would once have left, though often beset with temptations to do otherwise.

The change in him was no doubt evident to others, however unsettled he himself felt. Till now he had never attended the week-evening services, but his mother asked him to come. The wife of one of the deacons at the chapel spoke to him to encourage him and this was a help. At another time when full of inward conflict and his mind full of complaints, the words distilled in his heart with gracious effect:

"Why should I complain of want or distress,
Temptation or pain? He told me no less;
The heirs of salvation, I know from His Word,
Through much tribulation must follow their Lord."

All his murmuring was gone in a moment. Some time after this he had a gracious encouragement under Mr. J. Kemp when he spoke of Hezekiah and Manasseh.

The burden grew heavier and under its crushing weight on his spirit he felt he should lose his reason, but this weight was taken away for the time on the Whit Monday services at Stotfold when the words were applied concerning the promise of the Comforter, "He shall testify of Me." The words, "He hath not dealt with us according to our sins," were a help, yet he could not get away from guilt or bondage. Then on the

August Bank Holiday Mr. J. Delves preached at Barton from, "Let my soul live," and his soul was set at happy liberty – this he felt to be a time of love.

Mr. Kingham was married in 1951 and seven children were born to him and his wife. One Sunday he felt when taking one of his sons to Sunday School, the Lord shone upon him and he had the assurance, "Thy prayer is heard." This softened his heart to think that God should look on such a poor creature as himself.

Little is known of the following years, but it is evident that the ordinance of believer's baptism exercised him not a little, especially when one and another were baptized at the chapel. Once when hymn 1075 was made very sweet to him, he felt he ought to write to Mr. Kemp, but was very fearful of presumption. It was not till 1969, after Mr. Kemp had resigned the pastorate at Ebenezer and Mr. J. Hill had taken up that office, that he was brought to the point that he dare not stay back. The words in Psalm 102, "He will regard the prayer of the destitute and not despise their prayer" were an encouragement, as were the words of the hymn,

"Ne'er would I covet man's esteem,
But part with all and follow Him."

At the time he was much tried, his work coming to an end, his health poor. He had a week off work but felt he must make this profession or the Lord would chasten him. He and his wife came together before the church at Ebenezer and were baptized on April 30th, 1969 by Mr. Hill.

For many years he had felt a union to the ministry of Mr. Ebenezer Clark, the pastor at Barton-le-Clay about seven miles away, and even before his baptism would regularly go to the Thursday evening service there. In 1978 when there was trouble at Ebenezer, he and his wife left Ebenezer, Luton and started attending regularly at Barton, under circumstances which caused a lot of heartache, even among his own family. It was not long before Mr. Ebenezer Clark was taken home (November 1978). Then Mr Rex Saunders, the deacon at Barton, was suddenly taken home when only about 54 years old in 1980, and before long Mr. Kingham was left with the responsibility for the chapel, a burden which he faithfully carried till almost the end of his life.

After some years came the sad time when one gifted minister became enthroned in his and his wife's affections to the point that finally all other godly ministers were stopped from preaching at Barton. Then the minister began to propound his errors on the Person of the Lord Jesus, expecting Mr. Kingham to "toe the line." However, if there was one point which had been made so precious to Mr. Kingham about the time of his baptism, it was this very doctrine of Christ's sacred humanity,

and in refusing to deny what he had proved by the gracious teaching of the Holy Spirit in his own soul, he had to endure a severe backlash as the minister concerned and he parted company. For some years after, all services were conducted by reading, mostly of Mr. Popham's sermons, and prayer. Many would have loved to see the gospel ministry again at Barton, but it seemed Mr. Kingham was too fearful after what had gone before. In practical matters concerning the upkeep of the chapel he was very conscientious and there were still a few who clave to him in love through all the difficulties, and who found profit despite the unusual circumstances. Naturally speaking he was not given to say much, even to his own children, and lived a very private life, having little to do with other chapels around, and no doubt many wondered how long the chapel could remain open as Mr. Kingham grew older. But the Lord had His eye upon him and the few who faithfully met week by week.

A few years ago, two of the friends applied to join the church, and were most lovingly received, but this then raised the question as to who would baptize them. Mr. Izzard was approached and eventually took the baptizing service, at which many looked on with wonder and rejoicing. This seemed to break the snare and since then the preaching of the gospel has been restored, and the blessing which attended it to Mr Kingham was evident in the few words he would sometimes say to the ministers – words which bound the hearts of the Lord's servants to him.

During the last eighteen months or so the family noticed a marked difference in their father. He became more open and would sometimes mention things he seemed unable to say much about before. It was evident that his affections were being weaned from the world and eternity was so much on his mind. Several times he quoted these two lines which were evidently descriptive of his feelings:

“O when will God my joy complete,
And make an end of sin?”

He knew the “joy of salvation,” yet it was hindered and covered so often by the burden of indwelling sin, and he was looking for that deliverance when death was to be swallowed up in victory. On August 12th, 2015 he fell outside his house and was taken to hospital where the gracious submission in his spirit and yet the longing for the Lord's presence was most marked; he never seemed concerned about coming out of hospital or getting better but was content to be in the Lord's hand. One verse he spoke of to several who visited him was this:

“He holds all nature in His hand;
That gracious hand on which I live
Does life, and time, and death command,
And has immortal joys to give.”

This seemed to express just where he was, content to rest in the Lord's gracious hand and yet patiently waiting for the time when the Lord Jesus would command death to set him free from the "body of this death" and to take him to immortal joys. We believe that he has now entered into those immortal joys.

The funeral on September 11th was taken by his friend Mr. Izzard.
J.A.K.

A POOR AND NEEDY MAN'S DESIRE

Lord, in this house may grace divine
Like the sun at noonday shine;
Unkindly words and acts begone,
To live to Christ and Christ alone.
Soon shall our life on earth be fled,
We shall be numbered with the dead;
O may we then in heaven appear
With all Thy saints in Christ so dear!
O may we now be much in prayer,
Be heavenly things our chiefest care!
Quicken our souls to run the race
That leads to Thee, to see Thy face.
O keep us in temptation's hour
When Satan would our souls devour.
Pity our needy, helpless state,
And give us bread from heaven to eat.
O may we, then, more meekness know
While in this tent of clay below;
May holy fear in us abide,
And be our rule and powerful guide;
May grace and love in us abound,
Till we're with Christ in glory crowned.

Thomas Pollington, Rotherfield, February 1917

The Lord will be a sun and shield (Psa. 84. 11). He will be a shield to keep off evil, and a sun to fill them with all comfort. I am (saith He) thy exceeding great reward. As if He should say, Abraham, whatsoever is in Me, all that I have, all My attributes are thine for thy use, My power, My wisdom, My counsel, My goodness, My riches, whatsoever is Mine in the whole world, I will give it for thy portion. I, and all that I have are thine. And might not He well say, He was an exceeding great reward? Who can understand the height and depth and breadth and length of this reward? That is, thou shalt have all kinds of comfort in me, and thou shalt have them in greatest measure.

John Preston

THE
GOSPEL STANDARD
MARCH 2016

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

“MEN OUGHT ALWAYS TO PRAY”

When the Lord Jesus was living in this lower world, we read that “He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Luke 18. 1-6). He then taught of an impossible case. There was a desolate widow, a pursuing adversary, and a harsh, ungodly judge. The gracious teaching in the parable is that poor sinners who are so often ready to faint, “ought always to pray.” The Lord Jesus encourages us to persist at the throne of grace. This is illustrated in another parable of a man who had a late visitor, and had no bread in his house to give him. The man knocked up a neighbour who was tucked up in bed with his family. He was reluctant to help. Yet because of the man’s persistence and need, he rose and gave him all that he needed (Luke 11. 5-8).

The widow had to persist because she had no other recourse for relief. She had a cruel, threatening adversary. The ungodly judge had no fear of God before his eyes. He had no sympathy or tender regard to the plight that the poor desolate widow was in. At first he ignored her pleas for help, manifesting a hard spirit. But because of her continual soliciting he was at last prevailed upon, for he was weary of her continual petition. He judged favourably for her, although he had no love or tender thoughts toward her.

The Lord Jesus immediately applies His teaching to God’s “good will toward men.” “And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily.” The Lord Jesus bears great love to repenting and seeking sinners who petition Him for mercy and for help. If an ungodly judge can be prevailed upon, how much more shall the Saviour, who is so very gracious, be prevailed upon! Although He may bear long with them, the sacred truth is that He will answer and deliver them speedily. What an encouragement we have to persist in prayer, in spite of all our sins and impossibilities.

Why did the Lord Jesus say that we ought always to pray? *Ought* is a strong word. Why did the Lord Jesus so teach? The reason is that God is so blessedly good. He can only be good. He cannot be evil, neither can He do evil in the sinful sense. (He can bring evil upon a nation, but in this He is just; He sins not.) God cannot lie! The

exceeding great and precious promises sealed by His blood stand, and stand for ever. Jesus said, "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6. 37). Therefore we ought to pray and not faint, for Immanuel has promised that the coming sinner will in no wise be cast out. Jesus is the Mediator of the new testament which testifies of the promise of His grace "without money and without price." The church's salvation is a finished salvation. The Mediator between God and fallen man lives in the court of heaven above. He is the "unspeakable gift" of God whom we sinners should pray unto. He has been exalted by God to give repentance, forgiveness and salvation. We ought to pray, for His shed blood speaks on behalf of all poor, believing comers to the throne of grace. "When I see the blood, I will pass over you" (Exod. 12. 13).

"What voice is that which speaks for me
In heaven's high court for good,
And from the curse has set me free?
'Tis Jesus' precious blood."

The name of the Lord Jesus also prevails in the court of heaven. His name is above every name. "If ye shall ask any thing in My name, I will do it" (John 14. 14). May we each pray for faith in His name, as the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." Yes, there are so many reasons why we poor and needy sinners "ought always to pray." We read in the Word of God, "For I am gracious" (Exod. 22. 27); "The LORD liveth" (Psa. 18. 46); "For God is love" (1 John 4. 8); "Because He delighteth in mercy" (Mic. 7. 18); "For with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1. 37). We ought always to pray because His name is JESUS. May His name and His Person mean so much to us in all our great need here below.

The Lord Jesus was pleased to relate this instruction; "ought always to pray" with tender counsel; "and not faint." The Lord Jesus fully understands our sorrows and griefs, and also knows our proneness to faint. There are many things that cause the saints to fall a-fainting. There are so many temptations and fiery darts from the wicked one, Satan. Heavy guilt will so often hang over them; much felt shame for all their backslidings; their impossible situations; mountains of trouble looming up before them; the Lord laying afflictions upon them; soul trouble (Jacob's trouble) and a gloating adversary with a glint of triumph in his eyes; God's chastening upon them; much felt weakness in the face of trouble. The Lord Jesus says that we "ought always to pray, and not to faint," because He has been appointed to arise for the help of pilgrims in all their afflictions and troubles. As God's great High Priest, He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," and "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Therefore He knows how to

deliver the godly out of temptation, and from all their troubles. He is appointed to arise and have mercy upon Zion and her inhabitants in all their afflictions. He fully knows and understands how His own dear people are so ready, when under trial, to swoon and sink away. He will fulfil all God’s gracious counsel, for He is the sinner’s Surety. All His needy and thirsty people must and will be saved, and they will get to heaven at last.

So we are instructed to pray and not faint. The Apostle Peter exhorts, “Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you” (1 Pet. 5. 7). Whether our troubles be providential, spiritual, family, business, sickness, church or national affairs, there is a Great One and a Saviour at the right hand of power. So may we be encouraged to “pray without ceasing,” and “cast all our care” upon the worthy Lamb “which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1. 29).

“His every word of grace is strong
As that which built the skies;
The voice that rolls the stars along
Speaks all the promises.”

“Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and He shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved” (Psa. 55. 22).

DISTINGUISHING GRACE

*Sermon preached by Mr. J.H. Gosden at “Priory Chapel,” Maidstone,
on Lord’s day evening, May 15th, 1938*

Text: “And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom” (Luke 23. 42).

This is perhaps one of the most solemn evidences in Scripture of divine sovereignty, of that difference God’s will and grace makes between man and man. Here were two malefactors crucified, one on either side of Another who, though sinless, suffered as a malefactor on the cross. By comparing the gospel narratives it appears that both these were reviling their fellow-Sufferer who was hanging between them; they cast in His teeth His claims (Matt. 27. 44). But sovereign grace was suddenly revealed in its invincible power, making an entire change in one of the two malefactors, and leaving the other in the same condition that he was in.

As light and teachableness are given to read the Scriptures with prayer and reverence, this line of sovereignty may be seen running through them from beginning to end, even as it runs through the lives and experience of all the sons of Adam. “The one shall be taken, and the

other left.” “Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth.” Man’s reply is anticipated in the Word of God: “Why doth He yet find fault? For who hath resisted His will?” If that be your reply, the Lord show you the folly and wickedness of it. “Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?” (Rom. 9. 18-20). God will not be catechised by man. He alone is free, and He exercises His freedom in holy, awful justice and in holy, merciful justice and grace. There is no more disagreement in the works of God than there is in the perfections and attributes of Deity. All is solemnly harmonious and will be seen to be so one day.

Early in the world’s history was the case of Cain and Abel and their different offerings – the one accepted, and the other rejected; and soon there was a murderer. You take the case of Jacob and Esau. Jacob was accepted of the Lord and found grace in His sight, had power to pray and to prevail over the Angel, and the Lord met with him and blessed him. Esau was left, sold his birthright, and when he was rejected sought for a place of repentance, but found it not, though he sought it carefully with tears. Take King Saul and King David. Saul prayed by the spirit of prophecy resting upon him, but he disobeyed the Lord; he presumed, and the Lord left him and answered him not. He then left off seeking God and turned to the witch of Endor, and died by his own hand, a self-murderer. David committed great sin – adultery and murder – but the Lord gave him repentance, though the sword never departed from David’s house; he never was allowed to forget the sin which he had committed. He could not forgive himself, but God forgave him and blessed him, and when he came down to the end of his life, though he had the sorrow of Absalom, and had trouble in his kingdom, yet he could say, before giving up the ghost, “Although my house be not so with God; yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although He make it not to grow.” You go along to the case of Peter and Judas. Sovereignty shines there. Peter was a follower of the Lord, and Judas was also a professed disciple, unsuspected among the twelve. He “had the bag,” was entrusted with the money, he preached the gospel with the other disciples, yet Judas maliciously, deceitfully, out of envy betrayed his Lord, and sold Him for thirty pieces of silver! Peter, warned of the Lord concerning Satan’s intentions, but over-confident of his attachment to Christ, his beloved Master, slipped and fell, and thrice denied Him with oaths. Yet the Lord restored Peter, looked upon him, melted his heart with contrition, and made him go out and weep bitterly; converted him, sent him forth to preach the gospel and to confirm his brethren, and ultimately honoured him with a martyr’s crown. Judas went out, threw

down the thirty pieces of silver, and hanged himself. He went "to his own place." How solemn is the sovereignty of God!

In the text is the language of one of two crucified malefactors. On the cross he was an unregenerate man; on the cross at the eleventh hour, the Lord, the Spirit of Christ, regenerated his soul – an instantaneous work – making an eternal difference between the one and the other. In that short, sharp, blessed work in the heart of that malefactor are manifested all the essentials of the work of sovereign grace in its freeness. For both malefactors were precisely parallel; there was no difference in them; both were brought to justice. Various standards there are of uprightness and morality amongst men; some living consistently, others not so consistently. But Scripture says with respect to God: "There is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." That takes in the whole human race, and any difference that is made by the free and invincible act of God the Holy Ghost, is made in pursuance of the divine purpose and by the determination of the will of the eternal God. That makes salvation very solemn, very great. It draws a line through the human race, and through this congregation. Salvation is an experience, it is a power, it is a life, it is a communication of God's grace to the soul, with the consequence of repentance toward God, "repentance to salvation not to be repented of."

"The other" (that is, this one that had been changed by divine grace) "answering" the malefactor who continued railing on Christ, said, "Dost not thou fear God?" He himself did not fear God until this moment; now he feared Him. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, and it is an effectual principle, sovereignly implanted in the heart. It converted him; it turned him round; it changed his heart; it made him tremble before the holy Majesty of heaven; it stopped his blaspheming lips; it inclined his heart Godward; it turned his back on the world and sin; it made him depart from evil. The fear of the Lord is to depart from evil, and it is the beginning of wisdom. This man had lived a fool in the strictest sense of the term (as all unregenerate people do), till this moment; now God made him wise. He rebuked his fellow-malefactor: "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?" There was an acknowledgment here of the justice of their civil sentence; but I think of something more – an acknowledgment of the absolute justice of God's eternal condemnation. Both brought to justice according to secular law, there was now something more in the heart of this converted man. God was before him. "Seeing thou art in the same condemnation." Here were three crucified men – in that sense each equal – but three different men. One an unregenerate man, reviling God; the other a regenerate man, rebuking his fellow-malefactor and fearing God; and between them God the Son incarnate, the suffering Surety! O what a scene it was! And

what a wonderful display of that unfrustrable [cannot be thwarted] purpose of God, that at the eleventh hour, when all possible works had been excluded, one malefactor should receive every essential to salvation!

“And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds.” Here is an acknowledgment of justice, and, as I believe, not only the justice of the sentence executed by the secular power, but the justice of condemnation in his soul, for he feared God. Then also he recognised the purity and the Deity and the suretyship of that blessed One who hung between them. “This Man hath done nothing amiss.” This was revealed to him; he saw the harmlessness and the purity, the spotlessness, the gentleness, the uprightness of that crucified Saviour. “This Man hath done nothing amiss,” though man hated Him, derided Him, mocked Him, persecuted Him, cast Him out, despised Him, rejected Him, and crucified Him. He did always those things which pleased God His Father (John 8. 29).

My friends, did you ever get a spiritual view of the purity of Christ in His holy life on earth? We read of Him that He “went about doing good,” that He “increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man,” that He was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,” and that it became Him as a Surety “to fulfil all righteousness.” To a poor sinner who, looking into himself and surveying the whole human race as ruined by sin, can see nothing but an end to all perfection, it is a wonderful sight to see Him in whom perfection shines; the perfection of humanity, the perfection of Deity, and the perfection of legal obedience in His fulfilment of all righteousness, flawless, complete, holy, unintermittent, and of eternal merit. But for this, there could be no salvation. But for the purity of Christ’s life upon earth and the merit of that life, it being the life of the Son of God incarnate, and the value of that life as it was laid down for a ransom price, there would be no salvation for any.

This poor malefactor, now a penitent sinner, saw by faith the truth of this Man’s perfection. “This Man hath done nothing amiss.” Nothing that He has done is wrong. It is said of David that “whatsoever the king did pleased all the people,” and the Lord’s people sometimes are able to say that concerning the Lord Jesus; they perceive that whatever He did was perfect, and there is a beauty in His obedience, a perfection that satisfies them. For our foundation is here, our hopes arise from this, that Christ did fulfil the law and never disobeyed. There is no hope for a sinner apart from this. And this good man – this malefactor, now a believer – looked upon, feasted the eye of his faith upon this perfect Man, now about to complete His redeeming work on the cross. And he confessed Him. Under such circumstances it is indeed striking that there

should be a confession made by a crucified man of another crucified Man to yet another crucified man, an unbeliever: "This Man hath done nothing amiss."

"Dost not thou fear God?" The fear of God is most tender in the conscience the nearer the soul comes to Calvary. The dread of hell does not make the conscience tender with respect to sin like an approach to Calvary does, with a hope in that crucified Man. Sin cannot be known and tasted in its bitterness, and seen in its heinousness and felt in its damnable nature, as it is seen and tasted and felt at the cross of Christ. "Dost not thou fear God?" As if he should say, Here is God's justice; here is His nature in hating sin. And he might have felt, though he did not express it, Here is grace in saving a sinner; here is love in not casting off a sinner, in making a way for his escape at such a cost! "Dost not thou fear God?" Hope in the mercy of God, belief in the pardoning love of God in Christ Jesus intensifies and quickens the soul in the fear of His holy name, as it is written in the 130th Psalm: "There is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared."

Notice for a moment the strength of this man's faith, the simplicity of it; it was not mixed with works. He had no time to do any works, no time in any way to repair the breaches he had made in the law, or attempt it; no power to make promises to do better, nor did he make excuses. He justified God whom he now feared, and condemned himself; then, acknowledging the Lord's innocence and purity, he cast himself upon that crucified Man, saying, "Lord, remember me." Perhaps this is one of the most striking manifestations of the faith of God's elect the Scripture contains. He just surrendered himself, a dying man, into the immortal arms of Him who, in an act of Suretyship obedience, was about to dismiss His spirit. "Lord, remember me." There is first of all in this petition an act of adoration. The Holy Spirit brought him to prostrate himself before the Lord, and to call Him "Lord." "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." It was a miracle of grace that brought this man down flat upon his face, as it were, in his soul, to adore and submit himself to, and pray to this crucified Man. "Lord." See the circumstances. Surrounded he was with some looking on with derision, and some looking on with weeping, and his fellow-malefactor deriding Him, and he prayed, "Lord" – he worshipped. I believe worship flowed out from the soul of that crucified man to his fellow-Sufferer, as he saw Him to be the Lord of life and glory. Christ got his heart; He was exalted in His kingly authority *there*. The thief was brought down to a sense of his need of mercy and to pray for that mercy: "Remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom."

He saw Him to be a King and a Saviour, the King of grace, the King of kings. Over His cross was a superscription written in three languages,

“THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.” It matters not that they cavilled at it and said, “Write not, The King of the Jews; but that He said, I am King of the Jews.” The superscription was significant and true. He *is* the King of the Jews – a spiritual King of the people of God. This man acknowledged Him as such, believed He had a kingdom into which He was going, of which He was about to take possession for His people: “Remember me, Lord; give me an interest in that kingdom.” What a prayer is this! Is there not an echo of it in your heart? Is there not an echo in that of David, “Remember me, O LORD, with the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people: O visit me with Thy salvation”? Do you find your heart going with this malefactor? Can you gladly put yourself at his side in acknowledging that Jesus has done nothing amiss? Can you call Him, “Lord,” and fall on your face, prostrate yourself as a lost sinner before Him, and pray that He will remember you? If He remembers us it will be well; if He remembers you with the favour He bears unto His people, you will have all that is needful in this life and “after death, the plenitude of heaven.” This prayer evidences a belief in this malefactor’s heart of the immortality of Christ. He saw this fellow-Sufferer dying, but he believed in His immortality and His kingdom – a great act of faith. He did not witness then the resurrection of Christ, but the Lord gave him an answer: “To day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.” Christ was dead first – the other two had their legs broken to expedite their end – but that day this redeemed malefactor was a perfect saint with the Lord in paradise.

“Remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.” Now, this case of the dying malefactor is recorded in Scripture that no poor sinner convicted of sin should despair of the mercy of God. It was an extreme case; eternity was immediately before this man. He had lived a wicked life, and the Lord at the eleventh hour met with him, even while he was suffering the due reward of his sins, blessed him with repentance, renewed his will, turned his heart toward Him with confession of his sins, gave him power to pray; and he received the blessing of salvation. Only one such case is recorded in the Scripture. Why only one? That none should presume. If there are those here “dead in sin” and not fearing the name of the Lord, living with their hearts’ affections in the world, neglecting His Word, despising His grace, and “having no hope, and without God in the world,” the Lord forbid that you should presume and say that perhaps at the eleventh hour you may have mercy; that when you can have no more of this world’s enjoyments and glittering pleasures, then you will seek salvation. Such presumption is a desperate thing and may probably end – unless grace prevent, will certainly end – in hell. Presumption is the sin for which there was under the Levitical dispensation no prescribed sacrifice, the dreadful sin against which David

prayed: "Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression."

Well, this case of the dying thief is, according to our belief, calculated to encourage us, as well as to caution us. Some of you may say, I am in an extreme case. I am tempted to fear the Lord will never show me mercy. Well, you are not in a more extreme case than this man, nor that of Jonah (which we were noticing this morning) who in "the belly of hell" remembered the Lord, and cried unto Him, and the Lord answered him out of His holy temple.

"And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." Remember me for good; remember not against me my sins, but remember me with Thy sovereign mercy; remember me as Thine; remember me as owning Thee on the cross. Not that there was any merit in his owning Christ, but the Lord owned him, and gave him a blessed answer: "To day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." *To day*. No time between, no purgatory to purify him. The atonement Christ then made was enough. He had satisfied the law, realised its end – had perfectly fulfilled its every claim, had suffered without any mitigation at all its complete penalty. He gave Himself a ransom when He died, then rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures. But that day He went to paradise, and the malefactor was there with Him. "*To day* shalt thou be with Me in paradise." I know there are many interpretations of this word *paradise*, and the church of Rome teaches – and now the well-nigh apostate church of England is teaching by re-introducing prayers for the dead – that there is a third state, an intermediate state between death and the judgment, wherein there is a transition, a fiery purgation from the soul of that which is not purged by the atonement of Christ. The Scripture knows nothing of it, and *legally* the established church of England knows nothing of it, for according to her homilies the theory of *purgatory* was entirely expunged at the Reformation. We believe it is a most dreadful error, confirming men in their sin. Purgatory! What was Paul's hope and desire? To be "absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." Not absent from the body, in purgatory reaping the benefit of his friends' mass-money in the priest's pockets. "Absent from the body ... present with the Lord." That is the teaching of Scripture. That very day, that suffering malefactor, fully sanctified through the work of grace wrought in him, went into the eternal presence of God.

The Lord only knows where we each stand before Him, but I declare this, that unless you and I are brought to see in that suffering Man, the Son of God; unless we are brought to fear His name and to repent of our sins, to plead His blood and righteousness, there is no salvation for us.

But the blackest sinner out of hell, taught to feel his need, is welcome to come before God by prayer to plead in faith the blood of Christ, and to mention at the throne of grace the offering He made for sin. Such shall never be cast out, for it is written: "When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand." There is pleasure in God; God taketh delight in showing mercy, and He delighteth in those who hope in His mercy. And to hope in the mercy of God is for a convicted sinner to look to Christ and to plead what He has done. For there is no mercy in God for the sinner apart from that suffering Man and the merit of His work. Christ divided then the spoil with the strong, and made His grave with the wicked in His death, as was written in the chapter we read (Isaiah 53). When Christ was crucified between two thieves, He was making an atonement for sin. He made His soul an offering for sin, and "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." Is it straining the Scripture for one to say that the Lord Jesus Christ looked with satisfaction upon that suffering, repentant malefactor, now worshipping Him, praying to Him? He did not love his evil deeds, but He loved him enough to suffer for them. And the Spirit of Christ came to that man in that short period of time. It is the same gospel we need; it is the same crucified Man, in virtue of His death, that alone will save us, reconcile us to God.

And the Lord Jesus Christ, as ascended on high, is accessible to men now. We cannot see Him with the eye of the flesh, but the eye of faith can see Him, Him who was once "crucified through weakness," but now lives "after the power of an endless life." Enthroned now, entered into His kingly authority, He occupies that blessed mercy seat in order that men whom the Spirit has convinced of sin may pray to Him and obtain the same mercy that this malefactor obtained. Speaking to the Hebrews, who had experienced the two-edged sword of the Word of God exposing the "thoughts and intents" of their hearts, making them know something of what they were as sinners, the apostle says, pointing to Christ, "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. 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. 14, 15). He who now occupies the throne of grace, once occupied the cross, and all the merit and virtue and validity of that precious work which He accomplished, that mighty transaction which was concluded there, remains to be communicated in the eternal salvation of all repenting sinners.

"We indeed justly." Every child of God is brought heartily to confess that, come whatever of trouble, pain, suffering, loss – God is

just, and hell afterwards would be just. It is a great thing to be brought to acknowledge this, for the Lord has said, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." This really comes into the experience of all who are taught by the Holy Spirit. Do you ever thank the Lord for the throne of grace, and thank Him that He who now occupies that throne, occupies it by virtue of having once occupied the cross as a suffering Surety? It was not until He had atoned for sin and purged sin in His own body on the tree, that the Lord Jesus took His place on that throne of grace. To believe this will make you pray and give you a boldness in praying. Turning away from this malefactor to yourself – the Lord turning you – as possessed of your sins by divine conviction, you will despair of hope in self, through a condemning sentence in your conscience. Although not in the position of the thief, you are as helpless in any wise to make amends for your iniquities or to produce one pure act to please God. But if, with all that feeling of disability and guilt and condemnation, you get the sight by faith that this malefactor had, nothing will keep you from praying, nothing will prevent you from confessing your sin, and nothing will overthrow your hope in the mercy of God. While your heart is fixed upon that suffering Man, you will have an object, a ground upon which to stand. But all this is by faith; it is above reason.

The polite Greek, with his mighty reasoning, considers it to be foolishness, beneath the dignity of his philosophic mind. Alas! for us, reason, so useful when sanctified, may well become, as depraved, what Luther calls "that beast reason"; it replies against the gospel. And to the Jew, Christ and His gospel is a stumblingblock. Why? Because the Jew, the Pharisee, goes about to establish a righteousness of his own, so that the crucified Man is a reproach to him. He wants Him not, he despises Him, rejects Him, and scorns His claims; sees no beauty in Him to desire Him. "But" says Paul, "unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." And every child of God will come to this sooner or later, that for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, he is willing to part with all, because he who possesses Christ is eternally safe, eternally holy, eternally happy, eternally rich.

"Remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." When the Lord Jesus remembers His people at last, He will claim them as His own – that will be their wonder. At the last He will say to all sinners for whom He died on Calvary's cross, each of whom His Spirit brought to repentance: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you." It will be a wonder to get that, to be owned of the Lord Jesus. It is wonderful to be owned of Him now. One owning here, one token for good, one look of His mercy producing immediately a sacred, bitter repentance, making you weep for your sin; one touch of His

love, one drop of His blood of atonement on your conscience – these things will help you to hold on. For the day is coming in which the Lord will openly remember His people. He knows for whom He died, and some of you can say (can you not?), “Thou hast known my soul in adversities.” Thou hast seen me on my knees in soul travail for my sin and after Thy salvation. Yes, He knows! No prayers, no confession of sin, no pleadings of the blood of Christ fall to the ground. The Lord remembers – He remembers Calvary. He will never lose His purchased possession, never. “I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man” – any *one*, man or devil – “pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man” – no one – “is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand. I and My Father are one.”

“Remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.” Leave me not out, Lord. Is that what you say? Is that what you wait for? Can you do with anything less than to be claimed as the Lord’s portion? Do you sometimes feel a mighty attraction in your heart, a deep desire and prayer wrought in you, to be of that company which Christ in the day that is coming will lead home, and will say to His divine Father, “Behold, I and the children which God hath given Me”? It will be an honour to appear there. You will not complain as some, who had worked all day in the heat, Lord, we have “borne the burden and heat of the day,” and these “have wrought but one hour.” There will be nothing of that in heaven. Mercy, grace, pardon, salvation and heaven are great blessings, free to sinners, but we shall need eternity to be blessing the Lord Jesus for the price He paid, even His own heart’s blood.

May the Lord pardon what I may have said amiss, and give us this repentance and this prayer of faith and this answer. Amen.

IT IS FINISHED

Hark! the voice of love and mercy
 Sounds aloud from Calvary!
 See! it rends the rocks asunder,
 Shakes the earth and veils the sky!
 “It is finished!”
 Hear the dying Saviour cry!
 “It is finished!” – O what pleasure
 Do these charming words afford!
 Heavenly blessings, without measure,
 Flow to us from Christ the Lord.
 “It is finished!”
 Saints, the dying words record.

Finished, all the types and shadows
 Of the ceremonial law;
 Finished all that God had promised;
 Death and hell no more shall awe.
 "It is finished!"
 Saints, from hence your comfort draw.

Tune your harps anew, ye seraphs;
 Join to sing the pleasing theme;
 Saints on earth, and all in heaven,
 Join to praise Immanuel's name.
 Hallelujah!
 Glory to the bleeding Lamb!

Jonathan Evans

FAITH IN THE PROMISES

An extract from Thomas Manton (1620-1677)

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. 11. 13).

If these be the actings of faith, it shows what need there is of the power of the Spirit of God in the whole business of faith, to accomplish all these things. It is the apostle's expression, "Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power" (2 Thess. 1. 11). It will never be done without power from above. We can neither see, nor be persuaded of, nor embrace these things, except the grace of God come in upon the heart mightily to enable it. We cannot see afar off; nature is short-sighted. So the apostle prays, "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).

A man cannot look into the other world without the light of the Spirit. All things must be seen with a proper light, spiritual things with a spiritual light. Now till God open our eyes we can never look through the curtain of the clouds and see the riches of the glory of our inheritance in Christ. A fond conjecture there may be of happiness to come, but no certain, steady sight. Then for persuasion; nothing is so natural to guilty creatures as doubts and jealousies. Man's heart is prone to unbelief above all things, and therefore the heart cannot be persuaded without the

Spirit: "But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2. 10, 11). It is God that must persuade the heart to believe, embrace and take hold of the covenant: "God shall persuade (margin) Japheth, and He shall dwell in the tents of Shem" (Gen. 9. 27). And then for embracing, God hath reserved this power in His own hands to bring our hearts and the promise together. Joy is a fruit of the Spirit as well as an effect of faith.

It informeth us of the difference between faith and other things, as between faith and presumption. Presumption hath no bottom to work upon, but only some general persuasion that God will be merciful and gracious; but faith hath the Word of God, though it hath nothing else. Presumption is a rash, bastard confidence; it never looketh to the grounds of it. But faith, though it may be without things promised, yet it cannot be without the promise; it must have some solid grounds to work upon, and not fallible conjectures: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day" (2 Tim. 1. 12). It proceeds from knowledge and clear grounds, and is not a trust that is taken hand over head.

Again, we learn hence the difference between faith and sense. Sense must have something in hand, but it is enough to faith to have a promise. Sense cannot see, nor be persuaded of, nor embrace things till they are present. Faith, though it receive not the blessings, yet it sees them afar off, and is contented with a ground of hope.

Again, we learn the difference hence between faith and reason. Reason looketh to outward probabilities; it observeth the clouds; but faith is contented with God's Word, how improbable soever things be. Reason sees things in their causes, but faith sees things in the promises, and rests upon the authority of God's Word. Reason sees more than sense, but faith sees much more than reason, let the case be never so desperate, and things never so far off. To sense a star is but as a spark or spangle, but reason considereth the distance, and knows them to be vast and great bodies. Faith corrects reason, and though there be no causes, no probabilities, no appearances, faith can see things to come.

Again, we see the difference between faith and conjecture. Conjecture is but a blind guess: it may be so, or it may not be so; but faith is a certain persuasion: it shall be so, as the Lord hath spoken.

Again, it shows the difference between faith and opinion, which is somewhat more than conjecture. A man verily thinks it is so, but there is *formido oppositi*, a fear of the contrary; but faith falls embracing and hugging the mercy, is persuaded of it, and rejoiceth and triumpheth as if the blessing were already enjoyed.

A SYMPATHETIC LETTER

By Mr. Caleb Sawyer

My dear Friend,

I have wondered how you are getting on at M—, and hope you are receiving much benefit by the air and treatment. It would be nice if you could stay another month, though I expect it means a lot of expense, but even this the Lord can provide. Everything in this world belongs to the Lord Jesus, not only as the Creator of all things, but by virtue of His headship of the church. Paul says, "All are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. 3. 22-23). Therefore what you need for body and soul, time and eternity, is in Christ. He has a communicable fulness. How I wish I could believe it in time of trouble and distress, yet it is true whether we believe it or not. "He abideth faithful." He cannot deny Himself, and to deny one of His poor children anything they really need would be to deny Himself. This is according to the Father's good pleasure, who "spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8. 32).

It is sweet to find Him a sanctuary, and has He not promised to be a little Sanctuary to His people? You have proved it in your deprivation from the ministry, and you have found the Holy Spirit could maintain the life of God even thus. Many years since, when quite young in the way I was sadly, and not able to go to chapel on the Lord's day. I felt very barren and destitute of all spiritual life and was tempted to believe all my religion consisted in hearing sermons, etc. I felt very rebellious and you know what that means. This was in the morning, but in the evening I felt a melting of heart and some little nearness to God. This taught me the power of Christ even apart from the preached Word. By your letter I perceive the Lord keeps alive your soul, and that you have had some sips from the streams of the river which makes glad the city of God. This is in the gospel, dropping into the heart, as you say in yours, with that hymn: "Jesus heals the broken hearted." Yes, straight from the fountain.

I can see you are going in and out to find pasture and this is an evidence of being a sheep of Christ's fold.

It is good to hear the voice of God in affliction and if we do, is it not in the things of Christ becoming more precious? Not all afflictions are chastisements for particular sins, though we often see our sins in our afflictions. Generally speaking it is the voice of the Beloved calling us near to Himself in loving intercourse.

Yours sincerely,

Caleb Sawyer

Chapel House, Mayfield, May 22nd, 1928

LONGING FOR THE FINE GOLD

A letter to Mr. Sinclair, Thurso

My dear Friend,

I am missing that I am not hearing from you. I acknowledge that it was you that wrote last, but I am slow at every commanded duty. I am frail and tender in body. He is showing me, as it is said in the blessed Rule, "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me," saith Peter. But, alas! the more I am approaching the world of spirits, the more I am hardened, and more careless and negligent, as if void of true concern for having my calling and election sure. I may be shaping many things, and have some marks, as if He had dealt with me effectually by the Holy Ghost; but, alas! I may be deceived, for to enter the world of spirits is another thing – more so than I can conceive. Some of the eminent fathers said, at the Straits of Jordan, what they were formerly taking for gold was now brass, and what they had as silver was now copper. O to have a mint of the gold tried in the fire – the gold that was tried by heaven and hell, by hypocrites, by men and devils; yet the Father's Beloved kept His blessed weight and currency!

Now, please write soon to your ever-attached friend,

John Sutherland

Badbea, June 9th, 1846

A LETTER WRITTEN IN TIME OF PERSECUTION

By John Knox (1505-1572) to his mother-in-law

Dearly beloved sister in our Saviour,

After the sight of your letter received from your husband upon Saturday, the 19th of this instant December, I partly was moved in my spirit, weighing with myself your continual trouble, which proceedeth from the infirmity and weakness of your soul, which ever thirsts for the presence of your Father's mercy, that no mortal man can have at all times. Yea, sister, the most perfect is oftentimes left without all sense and feeling thereof; and that, partly, because sin must needs be mortified day by day (and no fire so tries the gold, as that kind of cross tries our faith) till it burn and consume in us not only the vain glory of the world, but also that blind love we bear to ourselves. So that, in very deed, we hate and abhor ourselves, because we find neither constancy nor perfection in this our corrupted nature, and therefore are we compelled to sob and groan for deliverance, by Him who hath promised, and shall not deceive.

This battle knoweth not the careless of the world, and therefore they live as brute beasts only, seeking such things as may please the flesh and

appetites thereof, seldom beholding (alas, the more pity!) the end whereto man is created – not so much here to live, as it were, for a moment, in that which flesh reckons to be pleasure, as for to inherit the kingdom prepared for such as unfeignedly thirsting their salvation to stand in Christ, by the redemption which is by His blood, do suffer with Him; as it is appointed by the providence of our Father, that the members shall be correspondent and like to the Head, who in anguish of extreme dolour cried, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” O words most dolorous, and voice most lamentable, to be heard proceed from the mouth of the Son of God! Consider, dear sister, He was no debtor to sin nor death, and yet this did He suffer, not only to make satisfaction to the justice of God, which we were never able to do, but also to put us in comfort, that His suffering was not in vain, but even for our example, that in most extremity yet we shall look for deliverance, which we must needs receive, if we thirst for the same. Sister, albeit we hear not always God’s Word notably crying unto us, to put us in memory, that all that is in earth is transitory, yet have we the hand of our Father, that suffers us not to slumber and sleep in wantonness, vain-glory, and fleshly pleasure. I know well that the purpose of Satan is to slay and to destroy, but his counsels shall be confounded, as they were in purchasing leave to trouble just Job.

Upon Monday, I was with your daughter Bowes, who hath heartily commended herself unto you, and unto our sister Marjory. She forgot none of your directions, but did declare unto me both your grief and her own, which I find both to proceed from one fountain. Praise be unto God, I left her in good comfort, referring thanks unto God for all His benefits. I was not, as yet I am, in good case to have travelled, for I had lain Thursday at night, and Friday all day, sore troubled in the gravel [probably kidney stones]. I know the cause and original, but I cannot remedy; but He who willeth me to suffer, shall, at His pleasure. It will be after the twelfth day before I can be at Berwick, and almost I am determined not to come at all. You know the cause. God be more merciful unto them, than they are equitable to me in judgment. The testimony of my own conscience absolves me before His face, who looks not upon the person of man.

With troubled heart and weak body, at Newcastle, this Tuesday, December 22nd, 1553.

Your brother,

John Knox

P.S. I may not answer the places of Scripture, nor yet write the exposition of the sixth Psalm, for every day of this week must I preach, if the wicked carcase will permit.

THE GLORIOUS STATE OF THE RIGHTEOUS HEREAFTER

An Extract from Christ's Sudden and Certain Appearance

by Thomas Vincent (1634-1678)

The bodies of the righteous will be incorruptible and immortal. "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption" (1 Cor. 15. 42). "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (verse 52, 53). And verse 54: "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." Now death is unavoidable, and unto some very terrible; death has all the children of men in the chase, and shoots his arrows at the righteous as well as the wicked, and though they are delivered from the sting of death, which is sin, yet they are not delivered from the stroke of death. But however death plays the tyrant here on earth and spares none, yet he will have no footing in heaven. The bodies of the righteous, when raised up again, will be impassible [not subject to suffering] and immortal; immortality will swallow up life, and the life of the body as well as the soul will be everlasting.

The souls of the righteous will be the subjects, and the chief subjects, of the glory and happiness of heaven. If their bodies shall be glorious, their souls shall be much more glorious as being their most excellent part, and capable of more glory than their bodies will be. We read of the glory which shall be revealed in us, that is, in the soul, and the apostle tells us that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with this glory (Rom. 8. 18). The greatest sufferings and calamities in this world have not that evil and misery in the least shadow of comparison with the happiness of the glory which shall be put into the souls of the saints; indeed, the apostle compares them, and see how he makes his future glory to outbalance. "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4. 17). The afflictions are light, but the glory will be weighty; the afflictions are but for a moment, but the glory will be eternal; the weight of glory will be exceeding, more exceeding, far more exceeding.

Here the apostle lays one high expression on the back of another, and another upon that, like so many great mountains upon the back of one another; and, when he had gotten to the top of the highest of them, yet he is too low to look into the glory of heaven, and his expressions and apprehensions fall short of the glory which shall be revealed in the soul when it shall be received into the new Jerusalem, for it is yet to be revealed. And, therefore, as the Apostle John said, "It doth not yet

appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him" (1 John 3. 2). Not only the body shall be made like unto His glorious body, but also the soul will be made like unto His glorious soul, "for we shall see Him as He is." As the eye conceives the image of the object which it looks upon, so the soul, in its vision of Christ, shall receive the image of Christ and have a perfect similitude and likeness unto Him. The soul will be made most beautiful; the perfect lineaments [features or characteristics] of Christ will be drawn upon it. If grace makes the soul to shine here, how much more will glory, which is grace in the perfection of it, make the soul to shine in heaven? And, therefore, grace is called glory; it is glory begun. "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3. 18).

The veil which was over the law is now taken away and, with open face, we behold the glory of the Lord. That is, I conceive, the Lord Jesus Christ who is the glory of the Father, the brightness of the Father's glory. This glory was more dark under the law, represented by the cloud which filled the temple; but now there is a more clear revelation of Christ without the veil and cloud of types and figures, whom we now see in the glass of the Word and ordinances, and hereby we are changed into His image and receive from Him impressions of grace which is glory begun, through the operation of His Spirit in His ordinances upon us. Yet still we see Him in a glass and, therefore, there is darkness through this interposition, and the eye of our faith, which looks through this glass upon Christ, is weak and, therefore, our graces are imperfect and our similitude to Him is imperfect. But when the glass shall be removed and, instead of the sight of faith, we shall have an immediate vision, then our souls will be changed into a perfect conformity unto His image; and it will not be from glory to glory, from one degree unto another, but glory will be arrived unto its height, and the souls of the righteous will be made perfectly glorious. There, souls will then have perfection of holiness, without the least remainders of sin, which in this world the most holy persons are not wholly free from.

Their thoughts shall be holy. No blasphemous thoughts shall then arise in their minds, no filthy thoughts, no envious nor malicious thoughts. Yea, they shall not have the least vanity or impertinence in their thoughts. All their thoughts shall then be brought into perfect obedience unto Jesus Christ.

Their understandings shall be holy. There shall not be the least mist or cloud of ignorance to darken and sully them when they appear before the glorious Sun of righteousness. The brightness which will issue forth from His face will dispel all clouds, and they shall have a clear

understanding of all things which they will need to know to make them happy. God will then unlock His treasures, open His books now sealed, and open their understandings too, that they may conceive those mysteries of His Word and that manifold wisdom of God which now exceeds their comprehensions.

Their memories shall be holy. They shall be strengthened to retain and bring forth continually out of their treasures whatever things, new or old, shall tend to feed them with love and joy, and elevate their souls in the praises of God.

Their wills will be perfectly holy. There will be a sweet harmony between their will and the will of God, a perfect compliance with the sweet law which they shall be under without the least contrariety or contradiction. They shall not have any evil motion or inclination to evil in heaven.

Their hearts and affections shall be perfectly holy. The inner room of their hearts shall then be swept clean of all cobwebs; the least dust of sin shall not remain; the roots of bitterness will be plucked up then, and the stains which are now upon them will be washed off. All the disorders and distempers of their affections shall be removed; yea, some affections which now they have, and are suitable to this estate of sin and imperfection, shall be removed in their estate of glory, such as grief, anger, fear and the like. They shall have no bitterness upon their spirits, no sorrow in their hearts, no sinking and fainting of spirit, no discouragement and despondency, no terror or perplexity, no anguish or anxiety; all these shall flee away like a cloud. Yea, they shall have no hope in heaven, nor desire, as I conceive, because these affections suppose the chief good to be absent and imply imperfection; but there they shall have a perfect enjoyment and rest of soul in the chief good, which is the next thing to be spoken of, namely the object of the saints' happiness in heaven.

The object of the happiness of the righteous in heaven, or the chief good which will make them perfectly and completely happy, will be God, who is infinitely good in Himself and infinitely blessed in the enjoyment of Himself; and in Him will the happiness of the righteous consist. That which fills the ocean, surely, will fill a bucket or nutshell. God will be the happiness of the righteous for ever; it is but a thin and subordinate happiness which is here to be found in the creature. It is but an imperfect happiness which is here to be found in God because of our blindness, sin and incapacity, but in heaven, God will be a perfect happiness unto the saints. It is said in 1 Corinthians 15. 28 that then shall God be all in all. God will be the whole happiness of the righteous; God in Himself, God in His Son, God in the angels, God in other saints, God in themselves, God will be all in all, the only object of their happiness.

The happiness of the righteous in heaven will consist in the union of the subject and object together. God will be united to their minds by vision, and to their hearts by love, from whence will spring unspeakable joy.

The minds of the saints will have a perfect vision of God, which will infinitely transcend all the visions and sweetest discoveries of God which they have, or are capable of, in this world. Hereafter their capacities will be enlarged and their minds will be elevated. Here they see God darkly; there they shall see Him clearly. Here they see Him afar off; there they shall see Him nearly [closely]. Here they see Him as He is represented; there they shall see Him as He is. Here they see Him as in a glass; there they shall see Him immediately. Here they see something of God; there they shall see God. Here they see His footsteps, some impresses of God upon the creatures, especially upon His children; chiefly they see His image in Christ whom they view by faith in the glass of the gospel, as was said. Yet the uttermost they can here attain unto is to see His back parts, but in heaven they shall see His face; they shall see Him face to face; they shall see Him as He is. This will be the happiness of the righteous in heaven, to have the immediate sight, the beautiful vision of God.

(To be concluded)

THE WORD OF THE LORD

By Joseph Hatton, Redhill (1821-1884)

The Word of the Lord only comes to His people. You may know whether it is in your heart by this. "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man" to this Word. Take, for instance, those verses in Romans quoted from the Psalms: "There is none righteous, no, not one," etc. If you have seen your portrait there, and felt what a great deal of saving you need, that word is in your heart, and will never be obliterated. You have an impression you can never lose; you can never turn Arminian. It does not come just from the Word that all are sinners; but you feel what a stench and loathsome thing is sin. Forty years ago I saw something of it, and it is uglier now.

Also the Word *reflects the beauty of Jesus Christ*, so as to transform the person who looks into it into the same image. It is likened to a glass or sheet of polished metal used as a mirror. No words can tell the beauty, grace and suitability of Jesus Christ as He shines in that glass, and reflects His glory upon your soul; what He is in your eyes cannot be told, but it is so. You bless Him, adore Him, and give Him all the honour and glory; and if it were not for that, heaven would not be the same place it is.

THE POWER OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

*Sermon preached by Mr. G.D. Buss at Old Baptist Chapel,
Chippenham, on Lord's day morning, March 31st, 2013*

Text: "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God" (Psa. 62. 11).

God's servant, the Apostle Paul, gives us an insight into the power that he desired in his heart. We have it in Philippians 3. There he says: "That I may know Him," (that is Christ) "and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death." The "power" in our text that I want to dwell on this Lord's day morning is the power of Christ's resurrection.

What do we mean when we speak of Christ's resurrection? Let me illustrate it in this way. When the two disciples on the road to Emmaus hastened back to Jerusalem, after that amazing conversation and time with the dear Saviour, they arrived back in the upper room where the disciples were gathered and they heard these tidings, tidings which they themselves could confirm: "The Lord is risen *indeed*, and hath appeared to Simon." That word "indeed" is very significant. It implies a power. Something had been accomplished; something had been done, something that was to them so unexpected and so unlooked for. They should have expected it, and they should have looked for it. The prophets had foretold it, and Christ had told them of it. But they had been slow to believe what the angels had told the women at the tomb: "He is not here: but is risen."

Take that little word "indeed," and look at it in the light of something accomplished, a power! You have it illustrated in two other places in the Word of God. For example, in 1 Chronicles 4 we have a prayer of another godly man, a man who would have agreed with the Apostle Paul, "Jabez." We read very little about Jabez in the Word of God, only three or four verses at the most. But we do know what his prayer was: "Oh that Thou wouldest bless me *indeed*!" What was Jabez wanting? He wanted power, something in his heart, something living, something moving and something vital. He wanted what Paul wanted – the power of Christ's resurrection. Although he lived so many, many years before Christ came to suffer, bleed, die and rise again, Jabez was after the same thing that Paul was after: an "indeed blessing."

Again, at the end of John 1 we have the calling of a man named Nathanael. He was a man evidently already wrought upon by the Holy Ghost. The Lord Jesus Christ said that He saw him "under the fig tree." The fig tree in those days was rather like the weeping willow in our land. You could hide under it; it was a secret closet. And, in his secret closet of prayer, Nathanael had been praying for what we might call an "indeed

blessing.” But when He came, the Lord looked on him, and said, “Behold an Israelite *indeed*.” What did our Lord mean? He was an Israelite by nation. No doubt Nathanael, like the rest of the Israelites, could trace his ancestry back to Abraham *indeed*. But, that was not what made him an “Israelite *indeed*.” An “Israelite *indeed*” is one in whom by deed the Holy Ghost is at work. We may say that the power of Christ’s resurrection is operating, as Ephesians 2 tells us. “You hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.”

Now, how many Jabez, and Nathanaels, and Pauls are there here this morning who are longing for the same “indeed blessing,” and can say, Yes, we remember this wonderful event of the dear Saviour? You do not just want to remember it with your lips or with your head, but you want life in your heart. You are like Bunyan’s Pilgrim, hastening from the City of Destruction. He fled towards the wicket gate. What did he cry? “Life! Life! Eternal life!” What did the Lord Jesus Christ say? “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” This is what our text is speaking about this morning, in a prophetic way. “God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God.”

Let me remind you for the benefit of the young ones as well as those who are older just what we do remember this morning. We remember a stupendous event. Of course, it was a tremendous event when the dear Son of God left His radiant throne on high, and took a holy humanity into union with His divine Person. The wonder of the Babe in Bethlehem’s manger is indeed an amazing truth. That dear Babe grew up to be the Child Jesus, and eventually the Man Christ Jesus. He went about doing good throughout His holy life, such as none have ever done before. What a precious life it was! But on three occasions it was seen fit by God the heavenly Father to confirm the Godhead of His Son. For example, at His baptism. When He came up out of the water after having been baptized, we read, the Spirit, that is the Holy Ghost, descended upon Him like a dove and abode upon Him. And there was a voice from heaven. The voice was the voice of God the Father. He said to His dear Son: “Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” The Lord Jesus Christ did not then become the Son of God; He *was* the Son of God from all eternity. But there God the Father was openly attesting the fact that this Man, Christ Jesus, is also the Son of God, the Son of the living God, as Peter later confessed.

On the Mount of Transfiguration, we have the same truth again. Elijah and Moses appeared, talking to the dear Saviour. Peter, James and John were so taken up with the sight that Peter was ready to build three tabernacles: one for Christ, one for Moses and one for Elias. But then

again, the same voice intervenes. “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him.” The disciples lost sight of Moses and they lost sight of Elijah, because Christ was the fulfilment of all that Moses ever spoke and Elijah ever prophesied. “They saw no man, save Jesus only.” But again, the Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ was testified by the Father.

Now, if you turn with me to Romans 1, you read another verse which is very significant. We will read the first four verses. Here we have the same attestation: “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (which He had promised afore by His prophets” – that is Moses and Elijah, and others – “in the holy Scriptures,) concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;” – there is His holy humanity – “and *declared*” – not made – “*declared* to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” The empty tomb is a declaration from Almighty God the Father concerning His dear Son, that He is the Son of God. “*Declared* to be the Son of God with *power*, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” It is that power that we speak of this morning. He who hung on the cross in all the ignominy, shame and degradation of it, eventually yielded up the ghost. We may speak of that again in a moment. That holy humanity, devoid of natural life, was laid in the tomb, for He truly died. It was a true separation between body and soul. Yet on the third day He rose again. God the Father raised Him; God the Holy Ghost raised Him. But, as we will come to in a moment, He raised Himself. It was an act of Almighty God that brought forth the dear Saviour from the tomb in His resurrection.

Now, others have been raised from the dead. The woman of Zarephath’s lad was raised in answer to Elijah’s prayer. Similarly, the Shunammite’s lad was raised from the dead. Lazarus was raised from the dead. The widow of Nain’s son was, as well. But all these were raised from the dead to die again. They all had to pass through the valley of the shadow of death again. And, they did not raise themselves. It was a power put forth upon them by Almighty God in answer to prayer. Well, dear friends, here we have a difference. The Lord Jesus Christ raised Himself. In John 10, He unfolds the mystery of our text Himself. He says this concerning His life: “I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.”

“God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God.” The first power: to lay down His life, and the second power: to take it again. That is what took place on the resurrection morn. He who had power, and *did* lay down His life *in*

power, now *in* power takes it again. He comes forth from the tomb in the same body, as the same Person and as the same Jesus, ready to take His rightful place at the right hand of the Father as the Man Christ Jesus. And there He sits this morning, ever living to intercede for all who come to God by Him. "Power belongeth unto God."

Look, for a moment, at the power of His death. We even have a glimpse of it at Gethsemane when they came to take Him and arrest Him. Jesus said, "Whom seek ye? They answered Him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am He." Those three words: "I am He," had such Godhead in them, such divinity in them and such power in them that Judas, and all those with him, fell to the ground. There was power, almighty power. And the amazing thing was that He, who is the Son of God, submitted to be bound and led "as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb."

But, dear friends, when He died, what power He showed! First of all, in this respect: He laid down His life. It was not taken from Him.

"The life they could not take away,
How ready was Jesus to give!"

It is very clear how the Word of God expresses it: "He bowed His head," that is humility; then He "gave up the ghost." He laid down His life. But before He did that, what power He showed on the cross! He forgave the sins of the dying thief from his first to his last breath. He blotted them out with one glorious promise. What power! And He still has that power to forgive sins this Sabbath morning. "All power is given unto Me," He said, "in heaven and in earth."

Look at another aspect of it. Before He died, He cried, "It is finished." At the power of that word "the rocks rent," "the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom," and the way into the holiest of all was made manifest. We read that many saints arose from the dead and walked in Jerusalem under the power of that cry, "It is finished."

Now, dear friends, we see the other side of it. He comes forth from the tomb. Look at the hindrances that seemed to be in the way! A great stone had been rolled across the sepulchre. A watch guarded the sepulchre day and night. Also, we may add, if you understand me aright, there was the unbelief even of His own dear people. They did not expect to see Him rise from the dead. But all those things were no hindrance to the dear Saviour.

"Vain the stone, the watch, the seal;
Christ has burst the gates of hell."

They were no hindrance to Him when His moment came! True, the angel of heaven came and rolled away the stone, but He could have come forth

even without that. But the angel was sent to roll away the stone so that you and I might look in and see an empty tomb, a place where the Saviour *did* lay, but has now come forth. "Power belongeth unto God." He "was delivered for our offences," says Paul, "and was raised again for our justification." "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God."

So, what we remember firstly this Lord's day morning is that the Man, Christ Jesus, who was God "manifest in the flesh," truly lay in the tomb. He truly lay there in His holy humanity in the solemnities of death. But on His resurrection morn, He came forth victorious to die no more. "Death hath no more dominion over Him." Christ's resurrection is the certainty and the assurance that all of His dear people will rise again from the dead. At funeral services of believers we often read at the grave: "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." To human reason and the natural man it seems an impossibility. We know it; we stand around the graves of our loved one; we know what happens. The body is returning to corruption to the dust from whence it came.

"He from the grave my dust will raise;
I in the heavens will sing His praise;
And when in glory I appear,
He'll be my Sanctuary there."

Christ's resurrection is the assurance that His people will be raised from the dead on that glorious resurrection morn, too. "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God." This is the doctrine behind our text this morning.

(To be concluded)

The richest saint must be (and is) a humble beggar at grace's door all his days; and Christ is the Lord of the house and the Dispenser of the alms; and as the alms is too good not to be patiently waited for, so the Lord is too good and too great to be quarrelled with; and never did any believer get any good by complaining of Him. Complain to Him, and pray and ask largely, but still with faith and patience. Knock at His door, but stay and bless Him that ever He gave you any crumbs of His grace. Mix your prayers for new wanted grace with praises for old dispensed grace. Christ loves you and hath proved it, believe it, bless Him for it; and wait for His renewing His love to you, and in due time you will find that He will not only answer, but outdo your desires to Him, and all your expectations from Him.

Robert Trail

EXPERIENCE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE

A Confession of John Berridge (1716-1793)

An interesting account of the life of John Berridge appears in the Gospel Standard from January to June 2006. This was from John Gadsby's Memoirs of Hymnwriters and Compilers.

The Works of John Berridge was first published in 1838 by Richard Whittingham, Vicar of Potton. The letters of John Berridge have recently been republished by Joshua Press, and edited and annotated by Nigel Pibworth.

My desire and intention in this letter is to inform you what the Lord has lately done for my soul. In order to this, it may be needful to give a little previous information of my manner of life, from my youth up to the present time.

When I was about the age of fourteen, God was pleased to show me that I was a sinner, and that I must be born again before I could enter into His kingdom. Accordingly, I betook myself to reading, praying and watching, and was as I imagined, enabled hereby to make some progress in sanctification. In this manner I went on, though not always with the same diligence, till about a year ago. I thought myself in the right way to heaven, though as yet I was wholly out of the way, and imagining I was travelling towards Zion, though I had never yet set my face thitherwards. Indeed, God would have shown me that I was wrong, by not owning my ministry, but I paid no regard to this for a long time, imputing my want of success to the naughty hearts of my hearers, and not to my own naughty doctrine.

You may ask, perhaps, what was my doctrine? Why, dear Sir, it was the doctrine that every man will naturally hold whilst he continues in an unregenerate state, viz., that we are to be justified partly by our faith and partly by our works. This doctrine I preached for six years, at a curacy which I served from college, and thought I took some extraordinary pains, and pressed sanctification upon them very earnestly, yet they continued as unsanctified as before, and not one soul was brought to Christ. There was, indeed, a little more of the form of religion in the parish, but not a whit more of the power.

At length I removed to Everton, where I have lived ever since. Here again I pressed sanctification and regeneration as vigorously as I could; but finding no success, after two years' preaching in this manner, I began to be discouraged, and now some secret misgiving arose in my mind, that I was not right myself. (This happened about Christmas last.) Those misgivings grew stronger, and at last very painful. Being then under great doubts, I cried unto the Lord very earnestly, "Lord, if I am right,

keep me so; if I am not right, make me so. Lead me to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.”

After about ten days’ crying unto the Lord, He was pleased to return an answer to my prayers, and in the following wonderful manner. As I was sitting in my house one morning, and musing upon a text of Scripture, the following words were darted into my mind with wonderful power, and seemed indeed like a voice from heaven, viz., “Cease from thine own works.” Before I heard these words, my mind was in a very unusual calm, but as soon as I heard them, my soul was in a tempest directly, and tears flowed from my eyes like a torrent. The scales fell from my eyes immediately, and I now clearly saw the rock I had been splitting on for near thirty years. Do you ask what this rock was? Why, it was some secret reliance on my own works for salvation. I had hoped to be saved partly in my own name and partly in Christ’s name, though I am told there is salvation in no other name, except in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 4. 12). I had hoped to be saved partly through my own works, and partly through Christ’s mercies, though I am told we are saved by grace through faith, and not of works (Eph. 2. 8, 9). I had hoped to make myself acceptable to God partly through my own good works, though we are told that we are accepted through the Beloved (Eph. 1. 6). I had hoped to make my peace with God partly through my own obedience to the law, though I am told that peace is only to be had by faith (Rom. 5. 1). I had hoped to make myself a child of God by sanctification, though we are told that we are made children of God by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3. 26). I had thought that regeneration, the new birth, or new creature, consisted in sanctification, but now I know it consists in bringing us to faith in Christ (1 John 5. 1). Compare also these two passages together, Galatians 6. 15 and Galatians 5. 6, where you will find that the new creature is faith working by love. The apostle adds these words, working by love, in order to distinguish a living faith from a dead one.

When we are justified, it is done freely, that is, graciously, without any the least merit of ours, and solely by the grace of God through Jesus Christ (Rom. 3. 24-28). All that is previously needful to justification is this, that we are convinced, by the Spirit of God, of our own utter sinfulness (Isa. 64. 6), convinced that we are the children of wrath by nature, on account of our birth-sin (Eph. 2. 3), and that we are under the curse of God, on account of actual sin (Gal. 3. 10), and under these convictions come to the Lord Jesus Christ, renouncing all righteousness of our own, and relying solely on Him, who is appointed to be the Lord our righteousness (Jer. 23. 6).

Again, Christ says, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden,” (with the burden of sin) “and I will give you rest”; that is, I will take the burden away; I will release you from the guilt of sin. Where you

may observe that the only thing required of us when we come to Christ is to come burdened and sensible that none can remove this burden but Christ. Again, Christ did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. See also Luke 5. 32. Hear how He cries out in Isaiah 55. 1: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters ... come, buy wine and milk" – that is, the blessings of the gospel – "without money and without price." Where we are ordered to bring no money, that is, no merits of our own, we must not think to make a purchase of these blessings by any deserts of ours. They are given freely, that is, graciously, and must be received freely. Nothing more is required from us, but to thirst after them.

Why was the Pharisee rejected? (Luke 18. 10, etc.) Because he came pleading his own works before God. He was devout, just, chaste and abstemious [moderate], and thanked God for enabling him to be so. Very well; so far all was right. But then he had some reliance on these works, and therefore pleads the merits of them before God, which showed that he did not know what a sinner he was, and that he could only be saved by grace, through faith. He opens his mouth before God and pleads his own cause, though God declares that every mouth shall be stopped before Him, and the whole world brought in guilty before God (Rom. 3. 19). How was the publican justified? By the merits of Christ imputed. Not on account of his own works, but he became sensible of his evil ones, and accordingly came self-accused, self-condemned, and crying out only for mercy, which is found in Jesus alone.

And now, dear Sir, hear what is the rise and progress of true religion in the soul of man. When the Spirit of God has convinced any person that he is a child of wrath and under the curse of God (in which state every one continues to be till he has received Jesus Christ into his heart by faith,) then the heart of such a one becomes broken for sin; then, too, he feels what he never knew before, that he has no faith, and accordingly laments his evil heart of unbelief. In this state men continue, some a longer, some a less time, till God is pleased to work for them.

And now let me point out to you the grand delusion which had liked to have ruined my soul. I saw very early something of the unholiness of my nature, and the necessity of being born again. Accordingly I watched, prayed and fasted too, thinking to purify my heart by these means, whereas it can only be purified by faith (Acts 15. 9). Watching, praying and fasting are necessary duties but I, like many others, placed some secret reliances on them, thinking they were to do that for me, in part at least, which Christ only could. The truth is, though I saw myself to be a sinner, and a great sinner, yet I did not see myself an utter, lost sinner, and therefore I could not come to Jesus Christ alone to save me. I despised the doctrine of justification by faith alone, looking on it as a

foolish and dangerous doctrine. I was not yet stripped of all my righteousness, could not consider it as filthy rags, and therefore I went about to establish a righteousness of my own, and did not submit to the righteousness of God by faith (Rom. 10. 3). I did not seek after righteousness through faith, but as it were by the works of the law. Thus I stumbled and fell (Rom. 9. 31, 32).

In short, to use a homely similitude, I put the justice of God into one scale, and as many good works of my own as I could into the other; and when I found, as I always did, my own good works not to be a balance to the divine justice, I then threw in Christ as a makeweight. And this every one really does, who hopes for salvation partly by doing what he can for himself, and relying on Christ for the rest. But, Christ will either be a whole Saviour or none at all. And if you think you have any good service of your own to recommend you unto God, you are certainly without any interest in Christ. Be you ever so sober, serious, just and devout, you are still under the curse of God, as I was and knew it not, provided you have any allowed reliance on your own works, and think they are to do something for you, and Christ to do the rest.

Everton, Beds., July 3rd, 1758

BOOK REVIEW

A Prodigal Made A Blessing, The Life and Hymns of Joseph Hart, compiled and edited by John A. Kingham; hardback; 198 pages; price £8.50; postage £1.51; published by Gospel Standard Trust Publications and available from the bookroom at Harpenden or from agents.

Joseph Hart needs no introduction to many of our readers who use Gadsby's Hymns for worship. So many of Hart's hymns are included in Gadsby's selection. The hymns of Joseph Hart are full of the doctrines of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, yet also full of the experimental teaching of God to His people. Some of his hymns express a little of the sacred and solemn vicarious sufferings of the Lord Jesus when He laid down His life for His beloved people.

The reader will find nine interesting and profitable chapters, from the introduction to his memorial at Bunhill Fields. The various stages of Joseph Hart's life and experience are traced out from his early days, his first exercises, his self-confidence, his solemn and serious backslidings into sin and shameful infidelity, his bitter agony in repentance, and the sweet and powerful manifestation of God's great love and forgiveness, as the Lord so wonderfully restored his soul. The gracious effect of his fall and restoration is faithfully shown in the narrative, with interjections of suitable couplets or verses from his hymns illustrating his personal experience in his sacred poetry. The record continues through his pastorate at Jewin Street, London, to his death and funeral. The reader will, together with the compiler John Kingham, feel a certain disappointment that so little is really known of this most godly man. Compared

with some other gracious men, our knowledge of him is somewhat scanty. Yet we know enough to marvel at the Lord's great love and mercy toward him.

The next section is the compilation of his very beautiful and gracious hymns. It is in his hymns that we may truly glean the wondrous love and the great grace of God to him. There are also two appendices: firstly, a letter to his nephew, which appears to be the only extant letter known written from his pen; secondly, his only known recorded sermon, preached on Christmas day in 1768 at Jewin Street Chapel, on the nativity of the Lord Jesus. The text was, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" (Matt. 2. 2).

This book has been produced in an attractive way, and John Kingham has very ably brought a spiritual warmth into his production. This is missing in the book produced by Thomas Wright. What a difference it makes when a writer produces a book in which he can truly and personally enter into the experience and doctrine of the subject. The exercised reader will find much profit, both in the personal experience, which Mr. Kingham has ably drawn from Joseph Hart's own confession, and also in his hymns.

We must quote from a paragraph on page 49, which Joseph Hart wrote after his reconversion (as he expresses it). He writes, "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, is now the only thing I desire to know. In that incarnate mystery are contained all the rich treasures of divine wisdom. This is the mark towards which I am still pressing forward. This is the cup of salvation, of which I wish to drink deeper and deeper. This is the knowledge in which I long to grow; and desire at the same time a daily increase in all true grace and godliness. All duties, means, ordinances, &c. are to me then, only rich when they are enriched with the blood of the Lamb, in comparison of which all things else are but chaff and husks." Does not this express the desire of many of our readers?

As Joseph Hart would be considered by many to be a High Calvinist because of the experimental nature of his hymns, we cannot forbear to show his true gospel credentials as taught by God, in just quoting the closing lines of three of his hymns. We also quote the number in Gadsby's selection as they will be familiar to most of our readers.

No. 58 Original Selection (Gadsby's No. 287):

"Thy garden is the place,
Where pride cannot intrude;
For, should it dare to enter there,
'Twould soon be drowned in blood."

No. 27 Supplement (Gadsby's No. 130):

"Poor pilgrims shall not stray,
Who frighted flee from wrath;
A bleeding Jesus is the Way,
And blood tracks all the path.
Christians in Christ obtain
The Truth that can't deceive;
And never shall they die again,
Who in the Life believe."

No. 48 Original Selection (Gadsbys No. 352):

“His word is this, poor sinners, hear!
 ‘Believe on Me, and banish fear;
 Cease from your own works, bad or good,
 And wash your garments in My blood.’ ”

We can heartily recommend this book.

CHRIST DYING, RISING AND REIGNING

He dies! the heavenly Lover dies!
 The tidings strike a doleful sound
 On my poor heart-strings: deep He lies
 In the cold caverns of the ground.

Come, saints, and drop a tear or two,
 On the dear bosom of your God;
 He shed a thousand drops for you,
 A thousand drops of richer blood.

Here’s love and grief beyond degree,
 The Lord of Glory dies for men!
 But lo, what sudden joys I see!
 Jesus the dead revives again.

The rising God forsakes the tomb,
 Up to His Father’s court He flies;
 Cherubic legions guard Him home,
 And shout Him welcome to the skies.

Break off your tears, ye saints, and tell
 How high our Great Deliverer reigns,
 Sing how He spoiled the hosts of hell,
 And led the monster Death in chains.

Say, live for ever, wondrous King!
 Born to redeem, and strong to save!
 Then ask the monster, Where’s thy sting?
 And where’s thy victory, boasting grave?

Isaac Watts

NOTICES OF DEATH

Paul Crane, member of the church at Lakenheath and a minister of the gospel, passed away on Monday, February 8th, 2016, aged 78.

John William Walder, pastor at Galeed Chapel, Brighton, passed away on Tuesday, February 9th, 2016, aged 90.

“These all died in faith” (Heb. 11. 13).

THE
GOSPEL STANDARD
APRIL 2016

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

THE GRACIOUS EFFECT OF HEARING BY FAITH

“And a certain woman ... when she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched His garment. For she said, If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole” (Mark 5. 25-28).

We read that “faith cometh by hearing” (Rom. 10. 17). We are not informed as to how this woman, with the issue of blood, heard of the Lord Jesus. One thing is clear; she heard “by faith.” This is proved by her inward exercise, her venturing to touch, and the virtue that flowed from the Lord Jesus.

According to the law of Moses, those people with running issues were unclean and could not go into God’s sanctuary (Lev. 12 and 15). They had to be healed and cleansed, and then bring an offering unto God. God was pleased to show by this law something more solemn and significant than mere bodily issues that make the body unclean. These running issues are a type of the filth that issues from within the heart of man.

The Lord Jesus applies this solemn truth when reproving the Pharisees and Jews for complaining that His disciples did not wash their hands before eating. He told them plainly that it was not that which enters into the body that defiles, but rather those things that come out of the heart! “And He said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man” (Mark 7. 20-23).

How solemnly true it is. Are we not constantly defiled every day? “I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins” (Jer. 17. 10). The Apostle Paul wrote, “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do” (Heb. 4. 13). What danger we poor, lost sons of Adam are in. How vital is that hearing which is “by faith.”

This woman ventured “by faith” unto the Lord Jesus, believing that if she but touched she would be made whole. She had difficulty. There was such a crowd around Him. Venturing, seeking believers so often find much militating against them. Their own deep-dyed sinnership; the workings of an unbelieving heart; cruel temptations from the great

adversary; the heaviness of the sorrow in their heart bowing them down; impossible situations; and the besetting sins of their fallen constitution. "How can I come like this?" says a seeking soul, feeling so ashamed of himself. This woman was unclean and therefore so unfit to go into the sanctuary. Yet her faith prevailed, as God-wrought faith always does. She believed that with Christ there was a complete cure. Although our iniquities prevail against us, as David says, "Iniquities prevail against me": yet by faith he confessed, "As for our transgressions, Thou shalt purge them away" (Psa. 65. 3). John Cennick describes these things well in hymn 144:

"The more I strove against its (sin's) power,
I sinned and stumbled but the more;
Till late I heard my Saviour say,
'Come hither, soul, I AM THE WAY.'

"Lo! glad I come; and Thou, blest Lamb,
Shalt take me to Thee as I am;
Nothing but sin I Thee can give;
Nothing but love shall I receive."

She pressed through and touched in her quiet way. The virtue flowed. She made no outward or ostentatious show in her coming. She was unclean and in need. Much exercise before God is in the closet. She felt the blessing. Healing! God's blessings are truly felt in the soul. Healings in soul and circumstance call for songs of praise. After all these long years of trying cures from physicians of no value, she had now at last found that Great Physician with whom is infallible cure.

She could not be hid. Jesus, who felt the virtue flow (He loves to bless His people, and does it with holy delight), asked, "Who touched Me?" She fell before Him with trembling and confessed "before all the people for what cause she had touched Him, and how she was healed immediately" (Luke 8. 47). Asaph says, by inspiration, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me" (Psa. 50. 23).

May we be encouraged from the sacred narrative to press through the many crowds to the Saviour; to press through with all our sins, fiery trials and soul distresses to the Saviour of sinners all the days of our life here below.

The pilgrims travelling to the heavenly country have continually to "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3. 14). What a wondrous truth it is that was spoken by the murmuring scribes and Pharisees, "This Man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them" (Luke 15. 2). "Blessed be the name of the LORD."

"If unto Jesus thou art bound,
A crowd about Him will be found,
Attending day and night;

A worldly crowd to din thy ears,
And crowds of unbelieving fears,
To hide Him from thy sight.

“Yet all the vain and noisy crowd
Is but a thin and lowering cloud,
A mist before thy eyes;
If thou press on, the crowds will fly,
Or if thou faint, to Jesus cry,
And He will send supplies.”

THE POWER OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

*Sermon preached by Mr. G.D. Buss at Old Baptist Chapel,
Chippenham, on March 31st, 2013
(Concluded from page 90)*

Text: “God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God” (Psa. 62. 11).

Now, let us come to the experience of it, for you and I need the power of it in our hearts. It is one thing to speak about it, to read about it and to sing of it. But how many of us here this Lord's day morning know the power of it in our hearts? Can we say with David, “God hath spoken”? Has He spoken in our hearts with power, with authority and with application, so that we know there is a power in the life, and life in the word that the Saviour speaks? “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”

Let us then follow this through with one or two examples from God's holy Word. You will see what I mean, how that God's people learn that “power belongeth unto God.” First of all, we go to Ephesians 2. We remember this: the state of man by nature, spiritually, before he is called by grace, is dead. He is blind, he is deaf, he is dumb, he is unfeeling, he is unresponsive and he is cold. He does not move spiritually. He is as dead as those buried in the Chippenham Cemetery just down the road. That is man by nature, spiritually. Can he live? Can he see? Can he hear? Not without the power in our text. But there is a vast number ordained to eternal life who will be raised from that spiritual death.

“The appointed time rolls on apace,
Not to *propose* but *call* by grace;
To change the heart, renew the will,
And turn the feet to Zion's hill.”

When a sinner is born again by the Holy Spirit, nothing less than the power of Christ's resurrection enters that sinner's heart. It brings a

power that raises him from the sleep of death that he has been in, spiritually, until that moment. That power gives light to blind eyes, hearing to deaf ears, feeling to hard hearts and life in unresponsive hearts. There is a change wrought by the Holy Ghost. This is the fruit of Christ's sufferings, and it is the fruit of His resurrection. "Because I live, ye shall live also." So, dear friends, here is the first thing: this power belongs to God. It does not belong to the pastor; it does not belong to the parents or the friends of those whom we would desire to be born again. No. It belongs to God. "Born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Speaking of the gospel ministry, Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 3: "I have planted," and I think Paul was a good "planter," "Apollos watered"; and Apollos was apparently an exceptional "waterer." But both of those dear men came to a stand: "But God gave the increase." Friends, were it not so, no man would ever dare stand in a pulpit. The increase can only come from the power of Christ's resurrection. We ministers are commanded to sow the seed. God's promise is, "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days." But the *power* of it belongs to God. What a mercy it does! He can use a feeble, sinful man's ministry. "The foolishness of preaching," Paul calls it. God can use it to:

"Quicken souls, and make them cry,
'Jesus, save me, or I die.'"

This is the source of the success of the gospel ministry. "Power belongeth unto God." Bless God for it! May He put forth that power in our midst more and more!

But then, it is not just that "power belongeth unto God" in the beginning of the work of grace; it is the continuing of it. Those of you who are born again by the Holy Ghost will know that sometimes you feel so dead, so lifeless, so cold, so unfeeling and so afar off. You wonder: "Can ever God dwell here?" Has He *ever* breathed life into my soul? Was there *ever* any access, or application, or feeding? Those days when you felt it was so seem so long gone. You cannot recreate the life you once thought you enjoyed in your heart. Well, one thing is certain. If God did breathe life, it is still there. But it gets dampened down, does it not? It gets covered over, like poor Thomas's faith did. What a low place Thomas got into! "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe." Thomas, where is your faith? Where has your life gone? The poor man had to prove, in a very painful way, that "power belongeth unto God." There may be those here this morning feeling just like that. You would believe, you would repent, you would hope, you would love and you would feel, but it is beyond you. Well,

here is something to plead: "Power belongeth unto God." The power of the Word belongs to God. "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Take this word back to the God of mercy, the God of your desires, and say, Lord, put forth Thy hand of power. "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old." Breathe fresh power. "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out."

Again: "Power belongeth unto God." Think of Hannah. There is so much to learn from Hannah's case. She learnt both sides of our text, didn't she? She confessed: "He bringeth low" – that is God's power. He "lifteth up" – that is God's power. He "killeth" – that is God's power. And, He "maketh alive" – that is God's power. God's people learn both sides of our text. On the one hand: "Without Me ye can do nothing." On the other hand: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." "Power belongeth unto God." All those years of waiting were a painful path for Hannah. Peninnah's family multiplied, and the acrimony between the two grew and grew. Hannah felt so unworthy of the blessing that she so longed for and desired. "Power belongeth unto God." In the end, she was shut up to that power. Her husband could not help her, nor Eli, nor anyone else, not even herself. She was shut up to the hand of the God of Jacob. "If thou wilt ... remember me." It came right down to two words, like it did for the dying thief. "Remember me."

And the Lord heard, didn't He? Hannah went out from the temple that memorable day with resurrection power in her heart. She believed the Lord would do something for her. "Her countenance was no more sad." Where have your tears gone, Hannah? Where have your doubts gone? Where have your fears gone? Where has all that discontent gone? Resurrection power has been given. The Lord has spoken to me. I have had a word from His lips. This has raised my faith, and I have an expectation. We know the blessed outcome. In 1 Samuel 2 you can read her doxology. And, years later, Elisabeth says to Mary: "Blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord." "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God." And so it does.

Go into the prophecy of Zechariah. There we have a man at his wits' end. Who? "Zerubbabel." Zerubbabel had been given a command by God that had come to a full stop. The command was that he was to rebuild the temple; that is, he was to be the one who was to oversee and bring it to pass. But he had come to a dead halt. The enemies of the church of God had influenced the king back in Babylon, and a decree had gone forth from the law of the Medes and Persians, that could not be changed, that the building was not to be built. No more stones were to be added to it. The work was forcibly stopped. Added to that, the Lord's

people, who should have been engaged in the building work despite the opposition, were more concerned about their homes, their vineyards, their olive yards, their businesses and their daily lives. They forgot that the temple of God lay waste. Poor Zerubbabel saw, on every hand, especially his own heart, everything against what God had promised. What was he proving? He was proving that “power belongeth unto God,” and if this matter was going to be done, God must do it. When God has a work to fulfil, dear friends, He often works like that. Before He fulfils, He permits great opposition to it.

You may be in a situation like that this Sabbath morning. God has permitted great opposition to the work, to the hope you have and to the expectation you have. You have come almost to the point of despair. And that is where Zerubbabel was until the Lord showed him that wonderful vision of a candlestick: a golden candlestick, something very precious. It was a light, and there was a living flame in it. It was not supplied by man, nor aided by man, but by the oil which flowed from the two trees on either side into the candlestick keeping it alive. And the Lord said, Now, Zerubbabel, here is a word for you. “This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power,” (the margin reading is “army”) “but by My Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.” “The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it.” “He shall bring forth the headstone.” And what will he cry? Not, Well done, Zerubbabel. No! “Grace, grace unto it.” When that headstone was brought forth, Zerubbabel would have said, “That power belongeth unto God.” “This is the LORD’s doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.” There may be one here this morning like that. You need resurrection power in this respect: the promise God has given you is covered over, just like a man buried in a grave. It seems impossible that it could ever come to pass. “God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God.”

Now, look at it another way. Isaiah 40 verse 1, one of the most precious verses in the whole of Scripture. “Comfort ye, comfort ye” – that is twice; God has spoken twice. “Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD’s hand double for all her sins.” What is the meaning of that word, “double”? There are many interpretations of it. Godly scholars have interpreted it one way or another. But let me give you, in the light of our text; in the light of the power of Christ’s resurrection, the meaning of “double.” First of all, it is justification. It is the pardon of all the sins of the church: put away forever. He “was delivered for our offences,” says Paul, “and was raised again for our justification.” When the Lord Jesus Christ came forth from the tomb, it was a witness that the law was satisfied. The debt was cleared. There

was nothing more remaining against the church of God for whom Christ died.

“Justice cried, ‘I’m satisfied,
Now, henceforth, for ever.’”

This is one part of the great work of salvation. It sets a sinner free.

“‘Tis He, instead of me, is seen,
When I approach to God.”

The other part of the meaning of “double” is sanctification. You need that, as well. You are still in a body of sin and death. You still have an old corrupt nature, that, spiritually speaking, sometimes binds you down, hand and foot. You need sanctification. You need the power of Christ’s resurrection to raise you above what you feel by nature; above your rebellion, above your impatience, above your unbelief, above your worldliness, above your carnality and above those grave clothes that so often cling to you like Lazarus’s did. “Loose him, and let him go.” We need that power, do we not? This is the “double.” On the one hand: pardon for sin, on the other hand: the subduing of sin. “God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God.”

Then again, look at it like this. I know not, there may be one here this Sabbath morning who needs God’s power in some remarkable way. Perhaps a door needs to be opened, a crooked thing needs to be made straight, or a rough place needs to be made plain. O, you say, can it be done? What did the Lord Jesus Christ say before He ascended to heaven? “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.” What a mercy! It all resides in the dear Saviour. You read Matthew 28. In that chapter is another wonderful expression that the Lord uses. When He met those women as He came away from the sepulchre He said, “All hail.” In other words, it was a wonderful welcome. The risen Saviour welcoming those poor, trembling women who were so fearful! “All hail.”

Well, the One in whom all power dwells welcomes needy sinners. He welcomes the destitute, those faced with impossibilities, those who have iron bars and brazen gates before them, those who know not what to do and those who are at “wits’ end corner” this Lord’s day morning. He who rose from the dead and sits at the right hand of His heavenly Father, all that power still belongs to Him. He still speaks. He still sends forth His Word. He is still “able also to save them to the uttermost.” He is still “able to succour them that are tempted.” He is still “able even to subdue” all things unto Himself.” There is nothing that this great Jesus cannot do. You only have to read in Acts 3 of what took place with the man sitting at the gate Beautiful, seeking alms. He sees Peter and John and hopes that they would give him some silver or gold. “Silver and gold

have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.” And, through that name, power was given to the dear man. He literally began to walk as he had never done before. He leapt and praised God in the temple that day. What a confusion it brought! Yet, what honour to God! O friends, how the Lord works! What a tumult followed that amazing event! The disciples were persecuted for it. But what did Peter say? “There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” In the name of Jesus Christ there is nothing too hard for the Lord. We sometimes sing:

“All hail the power of Jesus’ name,
Let angels prostrate fall,
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all.”

There is nothing beyond the power of the name of Jesus this Sabbath morning. There is no heart He cannot break, no sin He cannot forgive to the true penitent, no temptation that He cannot subdue and no door that He cannot open, if it be but His holy mind and will so to do. It shall be done. The empty tomb tells you.

Yet, I hear one of you say, But I am a poor, unworthy sinner. I have sinned against His law. I have grieved His holy majesty. I have grieved His Spirit. This mighty God of whom you speak fills me with awe and fills me with trembling. What does the good psalmist say in the next verse, to reassure such? “Also unto Thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy.” Isn’t that a wonderful thing? Yes, we *should* tremble under the mighty power of God’s justice and authority. We should do. He is our Creator; we are His creatures and we are accountable to Him. We will stand before Him in the day of judgment. Yes, we *should* take His name on our lips with reverence. But: “Also unto Thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy.” Isn’t that a wonderful thought? Here is a door of hope for you this morning, here is an avenue of deliverance. “Also unto Thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy.” Mercy to coming sinners. There is such mercy in the empty tomb. It is the culmination of the work that Jesus came to do. Had the tomb not been empty, there would be no mercy to proclaim. But, because the tomb *is* empty, mercy may now be proclaimed through that Prince and Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ. “God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God.”

But then, look at it in this way. When the believer is called home, God speaks. He commands his soul to leave his earthly tabernacle; He commands the dust to return from whence it came. God speaks in that. “It is appointed unto men once to die.” A solemn, awesome voice awaits us all, believer and unbeliever. Is that the end of the matter? No. God will speak again. “For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with

a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." "*With the Lord.*" That is the final culmination of our text, this Sabbath morning. What a shout that will be! What a triumphant shout when Jesus descends from heaven, and with that mighty voice raises the dead: the believer to life eternal, and the unbeliever to eternal misery! What a voice it will be! What a dividing voice! What a separating voice! What a mercy if you and I are on the right side of our text! Has He spoken to you?

The Apostle Paul speaks of his call by grace when he was speaking before Felix and the gathered company there (Acts 22. 14). He told them what Ananias had been commanded to say to him: "The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know His will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of His mouth." That is what Ananias was commanded to say to Paul. "The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know His will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of His mouth." Well, dear friends, in one sense, every child of God has the same privilege. Chosen to know God's will: that is God's way of salvation. To see, by faith, that Just One, a precious Christ, and hear the voice of His mouth. If you have ever heard the voice of His mouth as Paul did, then you are on the right side of our text. It comes back to John 10: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." Amen.

"GOD BE MERCIFUL TO ME A SINNER" IN ALL MATTERS

A letter by James Bourne

February 25th, 1836

My dear Friend,

I cannot but feel for you under all your perplexities, both in providence and grace, knowing that, if they work aright, they bring us into great dismay, and we, being covered with much darkness and uncertainty under the distressing circumstances, cry to the Lord, but do not all at once get His ear, nor understand His voice. But that His voice is in these dispensations there is no doubt. Yet the flesh and human prudence pull one way, and the Lord checks and leads another way. In rightly steering our course between these contending parties, lie all our perplexing difficulties. For human reason is a special pleader, and far beyond the common run of counsel, and argues so well as often to set the

Lord at a distance. Yet not so as finally to defeat His purposes. For the Lord will come in another way, and show us something of His terrible Majesty, and the danger of leaning to our own understanding. This is a rock on which we all are ready to split. But when our wisdom, conceit, foolishness and confusion all are brought with us to the bar of God, all this comeliness is turned into corruption, and there will be nothing left but "God be merciful to me a sinner."

If human prudence asks, "Where am I to live?" the answer will be, when we are at God's bar, "God be merciful to me a sinner." "What shall I do with my children?" – "God be merciful to me a sinner." "But the time is come in which I must act." Still, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Why so? Because this is the first grand object of our being, and if we attain to this mercy, the Lord has promised to add the rest. Let not our first and most earnest cries be about the transitory things of this life, however needful, "for after these things the Gentiles," or the world at large, "seek." Make the Lord your friend by communion with Him, and you will find, like Esther, the sceptre held out to your encouragement. Remember, she first got into the presence of the king, and then laid before him her troubles. This is to show to you and me that it is our sweet privilege then to ask counsel in all our matters: "Shall I pursue?" "Shall I overtake?" "Yes, and doubtless recover all." So that it seems we have in all cases this one rule: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" in due order, *with afflictions*. But alas! there is an ear given to this and that friend's wise, fleshly counsel, and because it is fleshly God blows upon it, as in the case of Ahithophel. He is a jealous God, and will not give His glory to graven images.

The Lord says thou shalt say, from a feeling sense of the truth, "I was a Syrian ready to perish," and the Lord brought us up out of Egypt with a mighty hand, with signs and wonders, and brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, the blessed gospel. Where then are the first fruits of the land the Lord hath given us? These ought to be set before the Lord. I am ashamed while I write, feeling how deficient I am here. Yet in this very sense of shame we have reason to hope the Lord has not forgotten us, but that we are much in earnest, with many fears pleading that He would not enter into judgment, but remember mercy. How often have I found in this place a healing of all my diseases and a light upon my path discovering the way I should go, and my strength again renewed to walk in His way, and not in a way of my own devising. How happy should I be to see you steady. Nothing can give sobriety, uniformity and certainty to our movements but being daily more or less in communion with God. "In His light we see light." Unbelief puts this light out; carnal reason and carnal counsel are the extinguishers made use

of for this purpose, and are too effectual. May the Lord be pleased to pay you a visit, and comfort your anxious, troubled mind, for He alone is the rest of His people; anything else will prove a bed too short. This is the desire and prayer of your very sincere friend in the Lord,

James Bourne

THE PREPARATION OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

An Extract from an Exposition on Hebrews 10. 5

By John Owen (1616-1683)

But we must yet enquire more particularly into the nature of this preparation of the body of Christ, here ascribed unto the Father. And it may be considered two ways:

1. In the *designation and contrivance* of it. So “preparation” is sometimes used for “predestination” or the resolution for the effecting anything that is future in its proper season (Isa. 30. 33; Matt. 20. 23; Rom. 9. 23; 1 Cor. 2. 9). In this sense of the word God had prepared a body for Christ; He had in the eternal counsel of His will determined that He should have it in the appointed time. So He “was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you” (1 Pet. 1. 20).

2. In the *actual effecting*, ordering and creating of it, that it might be fitted and suited unto the work that it was ordained unto.

In the former sense the body itself is alone the object of this preparation. “A body hast Thou prepared Me,” that is, designed for Me. The latter sense compriseth the use of the body also; it is fitted for its work. This latter sense it is that is proper unto this place; only it is spoken of by the psalmist in a prophetic style, wherein things certainly future are expressed as already performed. For the word signifies such a preparation as whereby it is made actually fit and meet for the end it is designed unto. And therefore it is variously rendered, “to fit, to adapt, to perfect, to adorn, to make meet” with respect unto some especial end. Thou hast adapted a body unto My work; fitted and suited a human nature unto that I have to perform in it and by it. A body it must be, yet not every body, nay, not any body brought forth by carnal generation, according to the course of nature, could effect or was fit for the work designed unto it. But God prepared, provided such a body for Christ, as was fitted and adapted unto all that He had to do in it. And this especial manner of its preparation was an act of infinite wisdom and grace.

Some instances thereof may be mentioned; as,

i. He prepared Him such a body, such a human nature, as might be of the same nature with ours, for whom He was to accomplish His work

therein. For it was necessary that it should be cognate [akin in nature] and allied unto ours, that He might be meet to act on our behalf, and to suffer in our stead. He did not form Him a body out of the dust of the earth, as He did that of Adam, whereby He could not have been of the same race of mankind with us; nor merely out of nothing, as He created the angels, whom He was not to save. “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham.” He took our flesh and blood, proceeding from the loins of Abraham.

ii. He so prepared it *as that it should be no way subject unto that depravation and pollution* that came on our whole nature by sin. This could not have been done had His body been prepared by carnal generation, the way and means of conveying the taint of original sin which befell our nature, unto all individual persons; for this would have rendered Him every way unmeet for His whole work of mediation. See Luke 1. 35; Hebrews 7. 26.

iii. He prepared Him a body *consisting of flesh and blood, which might be offered as a real, substantial sacrifice, and wherein He might suffer for sin*, in His offering to make atonement for it. Nor could the sacrifices of old, which were real, bloody and substantial, prefigure that which should be only metaphorical and in appearance. The whole evidence of the wisdom of God in the institution of the sacrifices of the law depends on this, that Christ was to have a body consisting of flesh and blood, wherein He might answer all that was prefigured by them.

iv. It was such a body as was *animated with a living, rational soul*. Had it been only a body, it might have suffered as did the beasts under the law, from which no act of obedience was required, only they were to suffer what was done unto them. But in the sacrifice of the body of Christ, that which was principally respected, and whereon the whole efficacy of it did depend, was His obedience unto God. For He was not to be offered by others, but He was to offer Himself, in obedience unto the will of God (Heb. 9. 14; Eph. 5. 2). And the principles of all obedience lie alone in the powers and faculties of the rational soul.

v. This body and soul were *obnoxious [liable or exposed to] unto all the sorrows and sufferings which our nature is liable unto*, and we had deserved, as they were penal, tending unto death. Hence was He meet to suffer in our stead the same things which we should have done. Had they been exempted by special privilege from what our nature is liable unto, the whole work of our redemption by His blood had been frustrated.

vi. This body or human nature, thus prepared for Christ, was *exposed unto all sorts of temptations* from outward causes. But yet it was so sanctified by the perfection of grace, and fortified by the fulness of the Spirit dwelling therein, as that it was not possible it should be touched with the least taint or guilt of sin. And this also was absolutely necessary unto the work whereunto it was designed (1 Pet. 2. 22; Heb. 7. 26).

vii. This body was *liable unto death*;^{*} which being the sentence and sanction of the law with respect unto the first and all following sins (all and every one of them), was to be undergone actually by Him who was to be our Deliverer (Heb. 2. 14, 15). Had it not died, death would have borne rule over all unto eternity; but in the death thereof it was swallowed up in victory (1 Cor. 15. 55-57).

viii. As it was subject unto death, and died actually, so it was *meet to be raised again from death*. And herein consisted the great pledge and evidence that our dead bodies may be and shall be raised again unto a blessed immortality. So it became the foundation of all our faith, as unto things eternal (1 Cor. 15. 17-23).

ix. This body and soul being capable of a real separation, and being actually separated by death, though not for any long continuance, yet no less truly and really than they who have been dead a thousand years, a *demonstration was given therein of an active subsistence of the soul in a state of separation from the body*. As it was with the soul of Christ when He was dead, so shall it be with our souls in the same state. He was alive with God and unto God when His body was in the grave, and so shall our souls be.

x. This body was *visibly taken up into heaven, and there resides*; which, considering the ends thereof, is the great encouragement of faith, and the life of our hope.

These are but some of the many instances that may be given of the divine wisdom in so preparing a body for Christ as that it might be fitted and adapted unto the work which He had to do therein. And we may observe, that, not only the love and grace of God in sending His Son are continually to be admired and glorified, but the acting of this infinite wisdom in fitting and preparing His human nature so as to render it every way meet unto the work which it was designed for, ought to be the especial object of our holy contemplation.

The last thing observable in this verse is, that this preparation of the body of Christ is ascribed unto God, even the Father, unto whom He speaks these words, "A body hast Thou prepared Me." As unto the operation in the production of the substance of it, and the forming its structure, it was the peculiar and immediate work of the Holy Ghost (Luke 1. 35).

* By a voluntary act. Ed.

Wherefore it is an article of faith, that the formation of the human nature of Christ in the womb of the Virgin was the peculiar act of the Holy Ghost. The holy taking of this nature unto Himself, the assumption of it to be His own nature by a subsistence in His Person, the divine nature assuming the human in the Person of the Son, was His own act alone. Yet was the preparation of this body the work of the Father in a peculiar manner; it was so in the infinitely wise, authoritative contrivance and ordering of it, His counsel and will therein being acted by the immediate power of the Holy Ghost. The Father *prepared* it in the authoritative disposition of all things; the Holy Ghost *actually wrought* it; and He Himself *assumed* it. There was no distinction of time in these distinct actings of the holy Persons of the Trinity in this matter, but only a disposition of order in their operation. For in the same instant of time, this body was prepared by the Father, wrought by the Holy Ghost, and assumed by Himself to be His own. And the actings of the distinct Persons being all the actings of the same divine nature, understanding, love and power, they differ not fundamentally and radically, but only terminatively, with respect unto the work wrought and effected.

And we may observe that the ineffable but yet distinct operations of the Father, Son and Spirit, in, about and towards the human nature assumed by the Son, are, as an uncontrollable evidence of their distinct subsistence in the same individual, divine essence, so a guidance unto faith as unto all their distinct actings towards us in the application of the work of redemption unto our souls. For their actings towards the members in all things conform unto their actings towards the Head; and our faith is to be directed towards them according as they act their love and grace distinctly towards us.

GODLY SORROW AND JOY

Bower, Scotland,
May 4th, 1864

To Mrs. Auld, Free Church Manse, Orlrig
Dear Mrs. Auld,

I received your welcome note this morning, for which I thank you.

I am glad you have your feet on the ground. In England you know there is a Vauxhall [pleasure garden for public entertainment] from which people go up in balloons; but O how many Vauxhalls are in our own country, yea, in our own hearts! I hope you are not allowed to do what is natural to you – to lie down on a Laodicean couch and take rest.

I was thinking last night of Mary sitting at Jesus' feet, washing His feet with her tears, and wiping them with her hair, although, alas, I had

none of her feast! In her feast there was sorrow, godly sorrow, and joy unspeakable. This is a paradox, yet true. There was more joy in her sorrow than all the joy the world affords, because of an infinitely different kind. She was a pardoned sinner, and He had pardoned her who alone had a right to do so. She was given to Him of His Father, and He was about to shed His heart's blood for her.

Dear friend, there is no true sweetness in legal hope or merit; true happiness must come through the same channel whence Mary received it. Go with all your wants and doubts, and fears, and perplexities, and endeavour to pour them all out in secret; as the late Mr. Finlay Cook, Reay, used to say: "Count down your sins to Him, and He will count down His grace to you."

I dare say you have heard that the people of Bower, along with other friends, have given me a mark of their esteem. I am ashamed of myself; so utterly unworthy of it, it has quite overwhelmed me.

I remain, yours with much affection,

David Steven

SPIRITUAL LETTER BY GEORGE MOCKFORD

Ebenezer Cottage, Heathfield, East Sussex
November 11th, 1896

To Mrs. Percy Wakeley, Rainham, Kent

My very dear and esteemed Friend,

Your good letter safely arrived. I do sincerely thank you both for your great kindness and liberality. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob abundantly reward you. I was disappointed in not being able to meet you and the friends at Rainham, but as you observe, "The Lord makes no mistakes." "His ways are just, His counsels wise." His way is in the sea, and His path in the mighty waters. Yea, He "layeth the beams of His chambers in the waters," and "sitteth upon the flood; yea, the LORD sitteth King for ever." You and I, beloved, have proved His power in stilling the noise of the seas, as well as the tumult of the people, and the roaring of the lion.

O the power in the voice of King Jesus! What blessed effects even His whispers produce, do they not? An inward quietness and submission under the most trying circumstances. You can then say, "It is well." I do hope that you are favoured to run into your strong Tower, and sweetly realise your safety, and also to be by Him brought into His chambers and find "His sweet communion charms your soul," so that you know what

the poet meant when he desired to “drop into His sea outright,” and “lose myself in Jesus quite.”

I can sympathise with you in your loss, as I have just lost a very valuable friend, a man who feared God above many. I am glad to find the Lord was so good to your departed friend. All props must be removed, to teach us that there is no real support for a poor, helpless sinner but the foundation that is laid, which is Christ Jesus. I hope I can say that Jesus is more and more the “Chiefest among ten thousand,” and “the altogether lovely.” A little time back I felt that I should soon “see Him as He is,” and be for ever with Him. At times my soul is on the stretch to be where He is, and to “see Him as He is,”

“And never, never sin;
There, from the rivers of His grace,
Drink endless pleasures in.”

The Lord favour you with the renewings of His “lovingkindness and tender mercies” unto you in quickening your once-dead soul into life. How often you have felt “death within and all about thee,” but the very struggles to come forth are a proof of life. Yes, many times it has been with you, life from the dead. Yes, beloved, your life is hid with Christ in God, often hidden from your own sight, and sure I am it is so hid where neither men nor devils will ever get at it to destroy it. Every time your Jesus appears unto you, even though it be only through the lattice, life springs up, does it not? This is a proof that your spiritual life is bound up in the Lamb, and this life is as much eternal in the feeblest member of His body as it is in Himself.

The teaching of God in the soul produces these two effects. First, it makes us solemnly to know and painfully feel that in us, that is, in our flesh, dwelleth no good thing, but everything that is “earthly, sensual, devilish.” Secondly, that “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and *cometh down* from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” Not a single sigh or groan after spiritual things can we produce, nor the least breath of prayer or praise. No, I am persuaded that everything that enters heaven must first come down from heaven.

But I must leave off. My love to your beloved husband; the Lord abundantly bless him,

My dear wife joins with me in Christian love to yourself, with all in union with you.

I remain, yours sincerely in gospel bonds,

G. Mockford



THE GLORIOUS STATE OF THE RIGHTEOUS HEREAFTER

An Extract from Christ's Sudden and Certain Appearance

by Thomas Vincent (1634-1678)

(Concluded from page 85)

The hearts of the righteous shall be joined to God, who is their chief good, by love. But who can utter the love which the saints shall have unto God in heaven? It will exceed our narrow conceptions; much more will it exceed the love which those of the most intimate acquaintance with God here attain unto.

That it will be heightened beyond what now it is, we may apprehend if we consider that the righteous will have an immediate vision of God, as has been shown. Now they live in a dark world, and have a cloud upon their minds, and see but a little of God through the perspective glass of His ordinances; a little in the works of His hand and in the works of His Spirit upon the hearts of His children; and if, when they see and know Him so little, they can love Him so dearly above the whole world, how will they love Him when they behold His face, when the clouds shall be dispelled and the sun breaks forth? When they behold His beauty, and the transcendent excellencies which are in Him, beyond whatever they could here imagine, how will their hearts be ravished with love for God when they see Him in Himself, when they see Him in His Son, when the divinity of Christ shall appear in Him, and shall shine so gloriously before them, when they see the angels so full of God, and the saints so full of God, and everything in heaven represent the glorious Jehovah unto them?

The love of God will heighten their love for Him. To be loved by such an excellent Person, with such a superlative love, O how will this inflame their hearts with love for Him when they take a review of the past expressions of His love, and the love of God in many things, which they did not mind when they were in the world! And when they see a thousand-fold more love in those things which they took notice of, but with low apprehensions and dull affections, how will it raise their hearts when their apprehensions of His love shall be raised! They will admire electing love so free towards them without any provision of merit in them. They will admire His love in sending His Son to redeem, and in sending His Spirit to convert them, His love in pardoning their sins, in adopting them to be His children. Now they admire His love sometimes. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1 John 3. 1). Then they will admire it ten thousand times more. They will see God's love in all His fatherly provisions and protections, yea, in His chastisements and corrections and all His providences working for their good. But O what love will they

see in His special distinguishing mercies beyond what now they apprehend! God's past love will have a present and deep impression upon their hearts.

Further, they will see the treasures of His love opened, the heart of God opened, and the glory which, in heaven, He will confer upon them, of which they shall never be deprived. And what a demonstration of God's love will this be unto them! Moreover, then they shall have no doubtings of His love, which here dampen their affections. They shall know assuredly that He has loved them, does love them, and will love them unchangeably and eternally; and withal, they shall have a full sense of His love upon their hearts which will make such an impression as to raise their hearts to an inconceivable height of love.

The righteous will have a higher capacity for love in heaven than here they have; and they shall be filled with love unto the height of their capacity. They will be able to love a thousand times more than now they can do, and they shall love unto their utmost ability. They will see perfection of loveliness in God and all that are about Him, and they shall have perfection of love. Here their love is sincere and growing up, but it is weak and imperfect; hereafter, it will be grown up to the full height of it, and perfect love will cast out all torment. Here their love is mixed; the stream is divided; it runs and wastes itself in many small rivulets which empty themselves upon the creatures; but when the whole stream will run forth unto God undividedly, not a drop of their love shall be spilled on the ground. God will be the sole object of their love. Here their love is uneven and inconstant toward God; sometimes it ebbs and sometimes it flows. Sometimes they have a high spring tide of love for God, but at other times it is low water. Hereafter, then, love for God will be even and constant and always at the greatest height.

And O what joy will there be in their hearts through the union which the righteous shall have unto God their chief good, when their minds shall be joined to Him in immediate vision and their hearts in perfect love! O how sweet a fruition of God will this be! What delight will spring from hence! If the saints can now rejoice exceedingly in God, when they see Him so little, and their love is so imperfect, what will they do when they see and love Him perfectly and fully? If they are now exceedingly glad sometimes with the light of His countenance, though they have but a glimpse thereof, what will they be when they shall have a constant view thereof, and live eternally under the beams of that light? Their love for God is sweet now, though it is weak; but what will it be in heaven when the conjunction of their hearts to God by love will be so near and close? If the saints can now rejoice in hope of the glory of God, what will they do in possession thereof, when faith shall be changed into vision and hope turned into fruition?

O how will the saints joy and triumph when they have sailed quite through the tempestuous sea of this world and are landed safely in heaven, where there is rest and peace without any windy storm? When they have gotten the victory over the devil and sin, and are now placed out of the gunshot of temptation, and have conquered, through Christ, the grave and death, and are out of fear of his arrows; when they have escaped the terrible wrath of God and find themselves in the arms of His love; when they perceive that they are in heaven now indeed, notwithstanding all their sins, doubts and fears, and now they have the blessed vision of God which they so much desired, and the full fruition of God's love which they hoped for; when they look about them and see so much glory about them, and shall look within them and see so much glory there revealed beyond whatever they could imagine, O how will they be transported with joy! Then they will have fullness of joy in the presence of God, and their pleasure and happiness will be perfect without interruption or possibility of a conclusion. And the eternity of their happiness will be the heaven of heaven, as eternity of misery will be the hell of hell.

Thus concerning the happiness of the saints, or the eternal life of glory which they shall enter into.

Concerning the righteous entering into eternal life.

The righteous, after the pronouncing of their sentence, and their seeing the execution of the sentence of the wicked, shall pass away from them and go with Christ into eternal life. They shall go with singing to the Zion which is above, "and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away" (Isa. 51. 11). It will be a most glorious train, such as you never have seen, which will go together unto heaven. The Lord Jesus Christ will be in the head of His glory; all the holy angels will be with Him, and the whole company of the righteous will be together that ever lived in all generations. And O with what mirth and gladness will they move towards heaven together! With what shoutings and hosannas will they attend upon the glorious triumph of our Saviour into the new Jerusalem! But when they are come to the gates of heaven, and the everlasting doors shall be lifted up to them, and they look into the place prepared for their eternal abode; when the Lord Jesus shall bring them into the glorious presence of the Father, and they shall have the beautiful vision of His face, and see the smiles of His countenance, and are received into the embraces of His love; then, then they will find themselves to be happy indeed. Then their hearts will be filled with joy and their tongues with singing. Then they will sing the new song, the song of the Lamb, which now cannot be learned. Then they will sound forth the praises of God

and cry out with a loud voice, as we read in Revelation 7. 10-12: "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen." And here they shall reign and live for evermore.

THE QUEEN'S 90TH BIRTHDAY

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II will hope to reach her 90th birthday on April 21st, God willing. We are thankful that our sovereign Queen has been spared to the nation for so many years. May the Lord be very gracious to our sovereign Queen in the evening time of her life. What a wonderful thing it would be for Her Majesty to be prepared to stand before the judgment seat of Christ, who is "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS," in those robes "made white in the blood of the Lamb." "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Tim. 2. 1, 2).

OBITUARY

Raymond William Woodhams, minister of the gospel for more than fifty years and pastor of Providence Chapel, Rotherfield for thirty-seven years, passed away on December 12th, 2014 aged 81. He was born on October 30th, 1933, the fifth child of six children born to William and Emily Woodhams. The family lived in Croydon and attended Providence Chapel, West Street. He had many trials and tribulations through his life but also saw the goodness and mercy of the Lord. He used to say people would not believe all the providential experiences of the goodness of the Lord to him, but we are favoured to have his own accounts of some of these experiences, both in providence and grace, as he recorded them at various times.

Being only six years old when war broke out it had a significant effect on Father's childhood and education. For part of the war he was evacuated with a brother and a sister to live with relations at Brockham Green in Surrey. Father was first brought into concern about dying at an

early age, when about five years old. He writes, "I do not know the man's name, but he had become a prisoner in Nazi Germany in one of those awful prison camps, and we had been praying for him in the Sunday School. God heard the prayers of many people and for some unknown reason he was suddenly released. Now the Sunday School superintendent and his sister took me to Westminster Chapel, London, to hear him preach. His text was in Jonah: 'Out of the belly of hell cried I,' and that entered into my heart. I well remember waking up that night crying, for I thought I was about to be cast into hell. I am afraid the solemn persuasions soon wore off and when war broke out I saw many sad things that had no effect upon me.

"As the war was drawing to an end, the Germans sent many flying bombs into London, which caused awful destruction, and over a thousand fell in Croydon where we lived. A part of the school at the bottom of a friend's garden was used as an emergency first aid post. Sometimes I would stand on the fence and watch the dead who were brought out without coffins and stacked in a lorry to go to the undertakers. I was so hardened in sin I did not care about the sight. Many other things I also saw, and the only effect they had on me was anger and hatred to such enemies. I longed to be in a position where I could retaliate.

"When I was about nine years old, Mr. Harry Rose, the Sunday School Superintendent, took for his subject King Ahab: "And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded." The address was like an arrow to my heart and I began to tremble. He then gave out hymn 373 in the Clifton hymnbook: "Let me think if I were dying." It was a very hot August day and the door being open I ran out and all the way home. I did not say anything to anybody, for they thought I was not well. I went to chapel that night when Mr. Hayler preached from those words: "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." This brought me into deep concern. It was a long time before I went to sleep, but when I woke up in the morning I was afraid to open my eyes in case I was in hell.

"The effect of this lasted for about a year, but like the sow that was washed and returns to wallowing in the mire, I got into evil company and my state then was worse than the first. I had many an escape from death and the law. When I was about fifteen an American scientist said the end of the world would be in seven days' time. Feeling I had so sinned against light and knowledge, I was sure my case was hopeless. While cleaning the brass candlesticks on the pulpit at West Street Chapel, Croydon for my father, I felt very down in spirit and I vowed before God if ever the Lord would save my soul I would go and preach the gospel."

When he left school, father started work on a farm in Horsham where he lived, and he worked with the farmer who later would become his father-in-law, and whose godly influence kept him from outward sin. After a year circumstances changed, and he had to look for employment elsewhere. About this time he had two offers of employment. One was with a good herd of dairy cows, but in between times he would have to exercise racehorses. The other was with a Jersey herd but he would have to go to shows with them on Sundays. He felt he could not accept either of these opportunities. On the following Sunday he went to two Bible classes at Tamworth Road Chapel. The early morning one was taken by Mr. Russell, and the afternoon one taken by Mr. Miles, and at both times the subject was, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Mr. Croft had the same text morning and evening at Providence Chapel, West Street, and father certainly felt the Lord would appear for him. On the following Tuesday he received a letter from a farmer which eventually led to a job in Henfield. He was pleased because it would bring him nearer to the young lady whom he had become very fond of two years previously.

In later life he wrote, "What was so amazing, I soon grew fat and kicked. I went to the public house of an evening, I was found with evil company, and I was involved in various brawls wherein I was visited twice by the police. One Saturday evening I did not go in my usual wicked ways because I had to be up early in the morning. I was awakened at midnight by a group of drunken lads singing, 'Enjoy yourself, enjoy yourself, it is later than you think.' This brought me into a state of trembling, so much so that I broke off going to the public house, and broke from these my companions once and for ever.

"I had also told my parents I needed a motorbike to enable me to get to Horsham Chapel. Now this machine was given to breaking down unless I was going home or to chapel – it was very noticeable. I had arranged to meet a young lady in Brighton after I had finished the afternoon milking. I got as far as Henfield High Street and the engine stopped. I could not get it to go again. I spent a long time trying to start it and some of my old drinking companions came across the road to help me. I said to them, 'It is no good; if I turn it round the other way it will go.' They laughed me to scorn, but it started straight away. I got into Horsham Chapel just as the first hymn was being announced, hymn 196: 'O Lord, how vile am I.' I went into the back seat and slumped in the corner. I felt absolutely wretched. Much was mentioned in the sermon of the first hymn. I went out in the last hymn, so that was the end of my friendship with that young lady and the end of my dancing."

He had several moves in employment after these things, but nothing seemed to go right for him. It is possible this was the time that he had an

ambition to join the army. He was passed medically fit, but following a smallpox vaccination he failed his second medical, and was left with a chest problem for the rest of his life.

Eventually he was asked to go back to manage the farm where he had first started work, as at this time he was keeping company seriously with Ruth, and his future dear father-in-law was failing in health. Father and mother were married on September 17th, 1954. Life on the farm was still difficult, but he saw the good hand of his God going before him in providence. In later life father wrote, "The pathway before me brought much joy, many trials, many prayers, and wonderful answers to prayer. The Lord was faithful to His promise, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' Also, 'I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest.' My life was clad with many exercises and anxieties concerning joining the church and preaching the gospel.

One morning, I was with my father-in-law, singling mangolds (thinning them to leave one on their own). At the time my father-in-law was unable to hold a conversation; all he said was one word – election. I was completely overcome with deep conviction of sin, as I could see election now, the one cut out, and the other left. Many other helps I had by the way from Mr. Oxlade, Mr. Mulvey, Mr. Durbidge, Mr. Knight, and Mr. V. Farley. These all, in their preaching, indicated I would have to go and preach the gospel."

Father used to recall an occasion from this period when a large field had been sown with seed. The weather had been very wet and cold and the seed just did not germinate. He just did not know what he was going to do, as the farm was dependent on the sale of the corn for an income. A seed sales representative called on the farm one day and father asked if he had any seed left, but all that he had available was some winter wheat. The representative scathingly said, "That will not work," but father said, "I'll try; that will be alright." When the seed arrived the ground was still in a very poor condition, too wet to put a tractor on it, so father walked the field and scattered the seed by hand, no doubt praying as he went. The weather improved, and he watched the seed come up and grow, and remarkably the yield was one of the best the farm ever had.

He also recalled times when at the cattle market buying animals he saw the Lord's wonderful interposition and guidance during the bidding. On one occasion when it was necessary to sell some stock to aid the cash flow, he was in the auction ring and the bids went higher and higher, beyond his expectation, and he was enabled to fall on his knees in the auction ring to return thanks to the Lord for the provision made.

Father also recounted that, "In 1960 my father-in-law died, and we had to get out of the farm. By that time we had two children and

employment was not easy. The market stayed low, and I found that instead of money increasing, the money went down. Then one day in 1962 I could not go to work because of the snowy weather. I was very cast down that day because we had not got enough blankets for bedding for the children and neither had we got enough money for fuel, and I was very troubled by this, and the snow was very deep. I looked over the gate and I saw people down the road that could not get their cars out of the snow. I went down and gave them a push, and they threw money out of the window. Another came along and this went on till nightfall. I counted the money and found I had £4. 10s. As I walked home I pulled out four blankets that people had used for grip in the snow and left behind. The next day when I came home from work there was half a ton of coal in the bunker, with a bill for £9. I rang them up and said, 'You have delivered to the wrong house, and what's more I cannot pay for it.' They said, 'In which case you can take it for half price,' i.e. £4. 10s. And there you see the Lord's goodness to us in providing fuel and blankets."

During this period he was employed as a sales representative selling animal feed supplements for a time. Initially he was enabled to sell the products very successfully and his sales increased and increased. He was able to converse easily without his stutter (which he had previously been troubled with) when talking with the farmers he visited. After a while his sales began to decrease and he found the products very difficult to sell, and he was unable to converse as readily as he had done before. His sales went down and down, so eventually he had to leave the company. This whole experience he found very humiliating, but he felt that he was taught the truth of the Scripture, "Who hath made man's mouth?" (Exod. 4. 11), and that this whole experience was in preparation for the ministry.

These years of providential trial and difficulty were also times of spiritual exercise. Later on, after he had been sent out into the ministry in 1963, father wrote, "It was ten years ago when under great exercise concerning baptism and my standing before God on the day of judgement, I was blessed under the preaching of Mr. Ward, who preached from Isaiah 53 verse 1, and I felt such love to Christ for the sweet assurance that my sins were put away that I could do nothing else but be baptized. On hearing that there was a stranger to me preaching at Brockham Green, I pleaded with the Lord that if it was His work in my soul that it would be confirmed. I went with many fears but the Lord heard my cry and enabled Mr. L.R. Broome to trace out His love to me. The text was Isaiah 6, verses 5-8: 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Not only was I assured of my part with Him, but Mr Broome said, 'Pay the vow that thou owest,' and in a flash it was brought to my mind the vow I had made when 15 years of age: 'If ever my poor soul is

saved I will go and preach the gospel.' During the sermon it was made very clear that the word was for me in mentioning my occupation as a cow-keeper (referring to Amos) and my age and circumstances. I went out of Brockham Green Chapel a happy soul, willing to be baptized, yes, and even willing to pay my vow and go and preach the gospel.

"I had not gone far on the way home when the devil stirred up my old nature with such suggestions as these: 'How can you preach? You have never prayed in public yet; you are only 20 years old, and what about all your ambitions?' Alas, I fell into such a state of rebellion that I made up my mind to lay the whole matter aside. This I did for nearly ten years. What a ten years that was! The Lord laid His rod upon me both in health and in my circumstances; all seemed to have been blasted. I could not begin to tell you on paper of the Lord's dealings with me in that time, for this I know, He has made me bend to His will.

"Last February, much cast down and still exercised about baptism, I felt I must have the love and peace of God shed abroad in my heart once again before I made such a step, the devil telling me I never should because of my rebellion. I went to hear Mr. Broome again at Brockham and what a mercy, I heard the voice of the Lord from the words in Revelation chapter 5 verse 5, and felt set at liberty once again. After two months, I was constrained, after hearing Mr. C. Dawson preach from the words, 'The Lord has done great things for us; whereof we are glad,' to be baptized." (He was baptized at Hope Chapel, Horsham, by Mr. G.P. Ward in April 1963.)

"The weight of the ministry was still heavy upon me. I begged of the Lord that if it was His way that somebody might ask me to preach. Coming out of the chapel one evening, Mr. Ward put a list of dates into my hand and said, 'Can you help the little cause at Swanwick Shore with any of these dates?' and he said, 'I will not say any more because the matter is between you and your God.' How I pleaded with the Lord to give me a word to go with into the work. I never slept for two whole nights.

"I had told the Lord if He really meant me to preach I would need three calls to the ministry. To my amazement I had three calls in two days which almost drove me to despair: I had the letter from Swanwick Shore mentioned above, the next morning a letter from Claygate, and then a telephone call from Mr. D. Steere asking me to preach in the farmhouse at Rusper. I went to see Mr. Ward, who listened to me very carefully. What really troubled me was that the call from Claygate was for the next Lord's day. I had told Mr. Ward I had thought of going to hear Mr. Broome at Hurstpierpoint, and I asked him what I should do about Claygate as I had not preached before the church at Horsham. He did not answer for a long time. He then said, 'You go to Hurstpierpoint

this afternoon and then come back and tell me what the Lord has said to you by His servant.’ When I came back I went and told Mr. Ward that Mr. Broome’s text was, ‘To preach Christ’s gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord’ (2 Cor. 2. 12), and Mr. Ward said, ‘You go to Claygate next Lord’s day and be it upon my head. I know the church will approve and we will have the church meeting next week.’” Records show that he preached his first sermons from Romans 8. 6 at Claygate, and at Horsham on the following Thursday evening from John 14. 1-3.

In this new pathway the goodness of the Lord was seen in the provision of a car and in many other circumstances. One Sunday morning father was on his way to preach. There had previously been a heavy fall of snow, and the roads were clear but frosty, and he was agitated. He had no text, the car in front was going slowly and he was getting late. Eventually the car in front of him turned off, so he was able to increase his speed. Within a few minutes he hit some ice and the car spun on to the grass verge into deep snow. On pondering what he was to do the words dropped in: “Ye have need of patience....” (Heb. 10. 36). He was a softened man. He put the car in gear and drove out of the snow without any difficulty, and had a text for the day.

One Saturday, he left home to travel to Cambridgeshire, where he was preaching on the Sunday, and he had no money to buy fuel for the return journey. How he was going to get home he did not know; he certainly would not have bought petrol on a Sunday after he had been given his ministerial money. He had nearly arrived at his destination when he came across a man “thumbing a lift.” He stopped, and the man wanted to be taken to a petrol station as he had run out of fuel. Father took him to the petrol station and then back to his car. When the man got out of the car he gave father some money which more than filled the car up with fuel for his return journey home.

One Sunday evening in September 1968 when travelling back from preaching in Wiltshire, father called on some relations, only to be told that there had been heavy rain all day, and that many roads locally were flooded and were impassable. The friend, knowing the area, kindly offered to escort him, expecting that Guildford would be cut off, as the river was likely to have burst its banks. As they travelled towards the Guildford area they stopped, and could see that even the traffic lights in the town centre were submerged. With the help of this friend he managed to get round Guildford onto the Horsham road. Many roads were flooded, and often he had to travel through deep water. At one point he recalled looking out of the window and the water was well up the car door. When he was only a few miles from home, he was stopped by the police as they were concerned about the depth of water, and the stability of the bridge. Father was able to travel across it safely, and he

eventually arrived home in the early hours of the morning. He learned later that the bridge was completely washed away a short time after he went over it. When recalling this incident he spoke of how he felt the Lord's presence whilst travelling that night. The car may have faltered because of the deep water he went through, but it did not stop once.

On another Saturday, when clearing up after he had been repairing his car on the drive, a mole wrench was inadvertently left on the ground overnight. He spotted it on Sunday morning as he went off to preach, so he picked it up and threw it into the car, unfairly blaming his young son for carelessness. This proved to be a good providence. On the way home from preaching the gear lever broke off in his hand shortly before he had to go down a very steep hill. He stopped, not knowing what to do, then spotted the mole wrench. He was able to clamp this sufficiently tightly to the remaining stump of the gear lever and use it to change gear all the way home.

From incidents like these it is not surprising his ministry was of a practical and experimental nature. At his funeral, Mr. Buss said, "He did not borrow his ministry. He preached from the heart, what he had tasted, handled and felt of the Word of God." He frequently quoted from hymn number 232:

"His love in times past forbids me to think
He'll leave me at last in trouble to sink;
Each sweet Ebenezer I have in review,
Confirms His good pleasure to help me quite through."

It was in 1971 that father first preached at Rotherfield, and this proved to be, in the providence of God, the beginning of a long association with the cause at Providence Chapel, Rotherfield. Prior to this visit he had a dream in which he entered a vestry to be greeted by an old gentleman with a bowler hat on his knee who was sitting behind a round table, and said to him, "I hope you have come over into Macedonia to help us." This was exactly the case as he went into the Rotherfield vestry for the first time. There was the deacon, Mr. Sam Pollington, sitting behind the round table with his hat on his knee and he greeted him with those very words. The matter became, in the Lord's hand, a great exercise of soul, as father felt his inability to preach Christ's gospel.

Several in the church at that time were exercised about another pastor, following their sad loss of Mr. Laver in 1969. One year at Shovers Green spring bank holiday services, father and several of the Rotherfield friends were there. Mr. L.S.B. Hyde's text for the evening was, "There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes" (John 6. 9). It was felt by several of the Rotherfield church members present, and also by father, that Mr. Hyde's sermon was the appointed way to show them that Christ had undertaken to break the

bread of life to His dear people, using whoever He had appointed. Father preached at Rotherfield for the first three months in 1975, and was called to the pastorate, starting in January 1976.

Another evidence of the Lord going before him in this matter was the provision of a home. A decision had to be made regarding a house purchase. Three houses were visited one Friday evening, but none of these really suited the family's needs. After viewing them, he visited the deacon, feeling desperate, not knowing what to do. The deacon passed him the local newspaper saying, "Look in there." He looked and came across a private sale that looked a possibility. The deacon said, "Phone them up for a visit." Father replied, "It's too late to call them; it's 9.30 p.m." The deacon replied, "You phone them; that will be alright." Father did; he explained his mission and they agreed a 10 p.m. visit. As soon as father went in he felt it was the right house, and this remained their home until they went to the Bethesda Home. Father now gave up secular work and devoted his time to the ministry.

It was said to him by one of our aged and faithful ministers that with such clear leadings to his pastorate, they would surely be tried. This was indeed the case. The Rotherfield years saw both additions and losses to the church and congregation, and also the sending out of two of our present ministers. His deep love and concern for the young led him to hold young people's meetings for many years, and these were widely used.

He was described at his funeral service as "being of a strong mind and rugged character, with a heart of gold." He was direct in his speech, searching in his questions and fair in his judgment, having a great disdain for injustice.

By God's grace he was a loving defender of the faith once delivered unto the saints, without fear or favour of man, faithfully serving the cause at Rotherfield seeking only God's glory. "Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth."

Father often said concerning this time:

"Many days have passed since then;
Many changes I have seen;
Yet have been upheld till now;
Who could hold me up but Thou?"

On Friday, December 21st, 2007 Father sustained what is called an accident; he fell and broke his pelvis very badly. Afterwards he wrote the following account of the Lord's goodness to him. "In the painful days that followed, I had many solemn thoughts of what Jesus must have suffered. The following three weeks, I cannot describe. Nine days in the trauma ward, when I sank so low, they told me since, they had almost despaired of my life. I remember but very little of the first five weeks in

hospital. I had such darkness of mind, I think it was for six days, when there was no hope for me. I was such a sinner – lost for ever – terrible was my condition, until the Lord broke in with such divine light and love to me. My poor soul was overflowing with love to Him. Although still unable to read because of my condition, I could sing with joy all the way through hymn 1087. ‘Was it for sin, for mortal guilt?’” Through the goodness of God, father was enabled to return to preaching at the beginning of April 2008, and continued until he resigned the pastorate at the end of December 2012.

In January 2013 our parents entered the Brighton Bethesda Home as they needed more help. Father continued to support the cause at Rotherfield and elsewhere as enabled until mid-summer 2014. At Bethesda he again appreciated the goodness of the Lord in providing for their needs. Earlier in his life it had been a great concern to him how they would manage financially in their old age, but through the goodness of God, quite unexpectedly a matter was resolved which would enable them to manage, and which allayed these fears.

In December 2013 he received from the consultant the diagnosis of oesophageal cancer. When asked by her how he felt about that, he said, “My times are in His hands – I now have to practise what I have preached over many years.”

Father and mother were spared to see their diamond wedding anniversary. On Saturday, September 20th, 2014, although very poorly, he enjoyed a day with the family at Bethesda. At the close of the day, following hymn singing, and reading and prayer with the residents, he was able to say a few words and concluded with, “And I truly say, Come, O my Beloved, come and carry me swiftly home.”

As father’s health gradually declined he lost his ability to speak. He passed peacefully away on Friday, December 12th, 2014.

His funeral service was conducted at his request by Mr. Gerald Buss on Friday, January 2nd, 2015 at Rotherfield Chapel. He had chosen the following hymns to be sung on that occasion: 483, 247 and 1087. Hymn 412 was sung at the grave.

Gillian Hanks

Unless we can arrive unto a fixed judgment that all things here below are transitory and perishing, reaching only to the body; that the best of them hath nothing truly substantial or abiding in them; that there are other things wherein we have an assured interest that are incomparably better than they and above them, it is impossible, but that we must spend our lives in fears, sorrows and distractions.

John Owen

BOOK REVIEW

The Omnipotent Jehovah, by John Kershaw, pastor of Hope Chapel, Rochdale; paperback; 70 pages; price £3.45 plus postage; published by the Huntingtonian Press and obtainable from 72a Upper Northam Road, Hedge End, Southampton, Hampshire, SO30 4EB.

This book consists of four sermons, three of which have not been available for many years. An edited version of the first sermon in the book, "Scriptural Evidences of Being Born of God," has been reprinted as recently as 1976, but here it is in its full form. Two of the four sermons were preached in London, one at Manchester, and the other at Chester after the death of William Giles, pastor at Hamilton Place Chapel. This memorial service is the third sermon in the book, and is followed by a short account of the life of Mr. William Giles, who is not particularly well known. (As a school teacher in earlier days, Charles Dickens was one of his pupils.)

This book has been edited by Dr. Gerard Charmley, and he has written an excellent introduction in the spirit of the gospel, and in the spirit of the precious truths that John Kershaw contended for in his ministry.

In the first sermon, on the new birth, John Kershaw concludes in the closing paragraph with some observations of the experience of God's children, and makes a quotation from William Gadsby, as follows: *After the Lord had begun with me, and convicted me of my sin and sinfulness, I saw, if I were not born again, I should never get to heaven. My soul longed to hear of some of the marks and evidences of being born again. Now about that time, your late dear pastor, Mr. Gadsby, came over to Rochdale, and as the Lord would have it, he spoke upon this particular subject, and in his peculiar style, as follows: "Is there some poor soul here anxious to know whether he is born again? Now if there is, I will tell you what you are like." (I had hard work to keep from saying, "I do want to know whether I am born again or not.") We read in the prophecy by Ezekiel about a new-born babe being cast out into the open field. Oh! how helpless it is; it can do nothing for itself; it must have all done for it. "Now," he said, "poor soul, if thou art born again of God, thou seest thyself helpless as regards saving thyself, and washing thyself from thy sins, and clothing thyself in the robe of righteousness, and justifying thyself in a spiritual point of view, as that little child was." And if we are born again we are like the babe cast out, helpless and crying, bewailing our condition, knowing that no man can help us. But when the Lord passes by, He spreads His skirt over us, and feeds us and nourishes us, and gives us all that we stand in need of. Heaven-born souls can do nothing for themselves; Christ and Christ alone is all and in all. Amen.*

We must also include a quote from the last sermon titled, "The Omnipotent Jehovah": *But again, my friends, in reference to the spiritual reign of the Lord God Omnipotent in the souls of His people, it is the prerogative of the reigning monarch to proclaim peace and pardon to his guilty subjects: our Redeemer has power on earth to forgive sins: "Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and the forgiveness of sins." As I stand this moment before my Master, the view I am just taking of the determination of His heart, is a very pleasing and consoling view to every poor, afflicted, guilty conscience. The solemn determination of the heart of God, who reigns as the God of peace and salvation is declared to be thus, "I will be merciful to their*

unrighteousness,” and My good will, My sovereign pleasure, is that your sins and iniquities should be pardoned, and I will remember them no more. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; all your scarlet and crimson-coloured sins shall be washed away in My blood, and you shall stand in My garment of salvation, the robe of righteousness, and be in My presence for ever and ever.

Do you love to be under His reign? Do your souls delight in Him, and are you saying with the poor publican, “God be merciful to me a sinner?”

*“Mercy, through blood, I make my plea;
O God, be merciful to me!”*

May we not exclaim with one of old, “Who is a God like unto Him, pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin? Thou retainest not Thine anger for ever, because Thou delightest in mercy.” May we be complete in Him, and commit all our affairs to His blessed hands, remembering that the Lord God omnipotent, who reigns, is possessed of infinite wisdom.

John Kershaw needs no introduction to the readers of the *Gospel Standard*. He is a household name among us, but O how vital to have the same work of grace in our own hearts!

We close with a quotation from Dr. Gerard Charmley’s introduction, as he comments on the memorial sermon of William Giles. *“Death the Christians’ Everlasting Gain,”* addresses the solemn and sobering subject of the soul’s portion after death. Today, many professed evangelicals would condemn the matter as morbid – even funerals are increasingly seen as celebrations of life, rather than a solemn reminder that “it is appointed unto man once to die; and after that the judgment.” Although, as Kershaw makes plain in this sermon, death is gain for the Christian, it is nevertheless attended by a correct solemnity, as evidence of man’s fallen state in Adam.

In our present age one popular preacher has written a book promising supposed Christians “your best life now” – how different from John Kershaw’s prayer, “...that I may have my evil things, my afflictions, whether of body or mind, or circumstances in this life,” lest he be found like the rich man in the parable, in hell, having had his good things in his lifetime! Considering the afflictions to which man is prone, J.C. Philpot similarly concluded: “Is it not better ‘through much tribulation to enter the kingdom,’ than to enjoy all that the world calls good and great, and to find eternal perdition at the end?” Although preached as a memorial to a faithful minister of the gospel, this sermon contains so little related directly to the man at whose memorial service it was delivered, and so much of Christ, and of the glories of the life to come, that it remains of abiding value.

If Kershaw’s observation that: “There is nothing so solemn, nor of such vast importance as death and eternal blessedness, and yet how little do we think of these things,” was true in his age, how much more is this the case in our own day and age, when death – the real death which is not far from any man – is pushed into a corner?

May the Lord remember us each in our low estate and prepare us for the tremendous hour and article of death that is before us.

We can heartily recommend this book.



TRUTH INFALLIBLE

Truth is more true than we believe,
 Excelling all our thought,
 Good is more good than we conceive,
 E'en though by God we're taught.

The evil that God's Word declares
 Exceeds our darkest fear,
 The good a Father's love prepares
 Does not as yet appear.

God is more good than we can know,
 More glorious and more blest;
 Our highest thoughts are all too low,
 Our estimations guessed.

His promises are *really* sure,
 His judgment *must* prevail,
 His Word shall, like Himself, endure
 Though hell and sin assail.

Since He declares, "Thy strength shall be
 Sufficient for thy day,"
 Assuredly that word for thee
 Shall compass all thy way.

All those good things which God in Christ
 Has promised and assured,
 Are worthy of implicit trust;
 They are Jehovah's word.

So, ill, that God in Scripture saith,
 Shall surely come to pass;
 Lord, give us patience, steadfast faith,
 To overcome at last.

May we, by grace which Thou hast given,
 By faith in Jesus live,
 At last find all that good in heaven
 Which only God can give.

Elizabeth Jempson, Peasmarsh, November 1961

NOTICE OF DEATH

Gordon Philip John Paige, a faithful and humble deacon at Providence Chapel, East Peckham, for 53 years, passed away on Thursday, February 25th, 2016, aged 95 years.

"This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles" (Psa. 34. 6).

THE
GOSPEL STANDARD
MAY 2016

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

THE HEALING OF THE LORD

“For I am the LORD that healeth thee” (Exod. 15. 26).

The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob brought the children of Israel out of Egypt by His mighty hand; the hand of His love and grace to them; the hand of the everlasting covenant made with their fathers. They came out under the safe shelter of the blood of the paschal lamb – a glorious type of the blood of the everlasting covenant. “When I see the blood, I will pass over you” (Exod. 12. 13).

The Lord brought them to the Red Sea. They murmured when they saw the Egyptian host following them. They then saw the Egyptians engulfed and drowned in the Red Sea. They journeyed to Marah. The waters were bitter. They murmured again. The Lord in mercy healed the waters. The Lord gives them gracious counsel with promise, and declares, “For I am the LORD that healeth thee.” They murmured more and more in their journey, for they were a rebellious people. Their journey through the wilderness to the promised land was a record of many sad and shameful rebellions, yet strewn with so many healings and deliverances. “But He, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not” (Psa 78. 38). We read also in Psalm 106, “Nevertheless He saved them for His name’s sake,” and again, “Nevertheless He regarded their affliction, when He heard their cry: and He remembered for them His covenant, and repented according to the multitude of His mercies.” God says by Ethan in Psalm 89, “My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips.” The exodus of the children of Israel is a record of God’s love and faithfulness, in spite of all their sins.

They were brought out of Egypt by the great love of God to them, and they were brought safely into the land of Canaan by that same great love. They possessed the promised possession, and that in spite of all their many sins and rebellions. Can we not draw a parallel with our own soul’s experience, and trace out the Lord’s same gracious and merciful dealings with us in our day and generation?

Can we trace out, in our own soul’s experience, that heavenly call to the promised land? God called Abraham to go out on pilgrimage to the land He promised him. “For I called him alone, and blessed him, and

increased him.” Did not the Lord call His Son out of Egypt? See Numbers 24. 8 and Hosea 11. 1. How the Holy Ghost declares of the beloved Babe Emmanuel, “Out of Egypt have I called My Son.” Has not the Lord Jesus gone before His dear people, stooping so low, to call them out of Egyptian “darkness into His marvellous light”? They were led by “the angel of His presence,” as they followed the fiery and cloudy pillar. Satan has to give way to the invincible work of the Holy Ghost, like as the Egyptians were destroyed and powerless to prevent the departure of the children of Israel. The Apostle Paul confesses, “It pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me.”

The Lord gave them bread from heaven and water to drink. In like manner He feeds our souls day by day in all our vast need and gives us to taste a little water out of the wells of salvation. He also tenderly cares for our bodies, which must perish, but shall be raised again in His likeness. Jesus is the Bread of Life. He brings His dear people to hunger and thirst after Him, especially to hunger and thirst after His righteousness.

We look at our own ways and manners before the eyes of the Lord. Are we any better than our fathers? We are not! After so many sweet supplies from the wells of salvation and the daily dropping of manna, like them we have so often “rebelled and vexed His Holy Spirit.” How we have to pray many times, “Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for Thou art my praise.”

“For I am the LORD that healeth thee.” What an infallible cure there is in the Lord Jesus for all our sins and woes. Jesus has opened the fountain “to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.” The softening work of the Holy Spirit brings us to repentance for all our sins and backslidings. As the spirit of grace and supplications is poured upon us, it brings us to the place of “who can tell?” This is so often followed by those “fear nots.” The Lord heals His people to “renew our days as of old” and to “restore the promise of His salvation.” The Lord makes all things work for the good of His people, as we read in Romans 8. 28.

The Lord healed them and forgave them many times with one end in view: to bring them into the promised land. He did it for His great name’s sake. It was because He had chosen them as His people, therefore in love and pity He brought them in. As they were humbled to know what was in their heart, so they multiplied in number. Likewise when we are humbled by the mighty hand of God, there is a growing in grace. They worshipped by sacrifice, kept the feasts, and valued the priesthood. Likewise pilgrims today have to bring the “Lamb of God” in

their prayers and plead the precious name of the Lord. The church hungers after the sweet dainties on the gospel table. We have to draw near to God's great High Priest, even Jesus, with all our cares and woes.

"For I am the LORD that healeth thee" is experienced so many times by the pilgrim travellers. It is to bring them safely into Emmanuel's land where they shall see His lovely face and never, never sin, and crown Him Lord of all.

THE PRAYER OF JABEZ

*Sermon preached by Mr. R.J. Bradstock at Zoar Chapel, Handcross,
on Lord's day morning, September 27th, 2015*

Text: "And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that Thine hand might be with me, and that Thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested" (1 Chron. 4. 10).

At our prayer meeting this morning we read of how Solomon in a dream had a visit from the Lord. It was not unusual in those Old Testament days for the Lord's servants to have dreams, when the Lord appeared, when the Lord spoke to them. They were very real. It was a visit from the Lord God to Solomon in his day, and in that dream he heard the Lord say, "Ask what I shall give thee." Solomon was David's son, who followed on after his father in the kingdom, as king of Israel, and was a great man blessed of the Lord. He was blessed with many things, with riches in abundance, with servants and so on. You remember that the Queen of Sheba heard of him, and she paid him a visit; she journeyed a long way to come to Solomon. She had heard by report of his fame and when she came to visit him she was amazed. "Behold," she said, "the half was not told me." "It was a true report." She saw all the things that God had blessed Solomon with.

But in that prayer, and in that desire that Solomon had, it was not for riches; it was not for any material things. Do you know what he asked for? It tells us in the Word of God: he asked for *wisdom*. Hymn 692 tells us the same. We understand he was a man of great wisdom because God had given him wisdom, and James says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not." You may feel in your experience to need wisdom. I have had to pray for it many times, to be made wise, wise to be able to deal with things that you are confronted with in your life, in your religion. Why, one who is made wise, wise unto salvation, will seek to do that which is right in the sight of God; will seek to do that which is in accordance with God's holy Word and law; will seek to do that which honours his God.

And so Solomon prayed for wisdom, and shortly after that, in the account which we read, we see how he needed that wisdom, when those two women came who had had children, and one died. One woman overlaid her child and it died, and she stole the other one's child, and said it was hers. But you know, it is impossible to deceive God. You may deceive others, you may deceive men, but you will never deceive God. God knows everything.

But to return to Jabez. Jabez was more honourable than his brethren. Blessed character, more honourable than his brethren. Why surely, Jabez was one chosen before the foundation of the world to be God's, to be His possession. The time surely came with him when he should be blessed, as it comes with all the Lord's dear people. They are born in sin and shapen in iniquity; they are sinners in the earth, the same as all men by nature. But the time of love comes, when the Lord calls one out here, and one there and one in another place, with that effectual calling. It is effectual calling; it has that effect that a man is drawn away from that sinful path in which he was found. The apostle said in his letter to the Ephesians: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us" – God in His great mercy. God in His great mercy made Jabez more honourable than his brethren. Jabez was a praying man. Ah, what a favour, friend, if you are made a praying being, a praying man, a praying woman, a praying young person. To be shown this, to be taught this, to have this sealed into your heart: there is a God in heaven, there is One in heaven who hears and answers prayer.

"That were a grief I could not bear,
Didst Thou not hear and answer prayer;
But a prayer-hearing, answering God
Supports me under every load."

He does hear prayer, and He does answer prayer too.

Perhaps some of us can go back to our early days – I can go back to when I was about twelve or thirteen. I had an envelope to deliver, and I put it in my school blazer and got on my bicycle and rode to the address. When I arrived it was not there. I felt in my pocket and the pocket was empty. I got off my bicycle and I prayed every step of the way back. I walked along and I saw it lying in the gutter. I picked it up; vehicles had been running over it, so the envelope was rather grubby, but I took it to the address. I do not know what they thought about the envelope, but the contents were there, and I found out afterwards that the envelope contained three pounds, which was a lot of money in 1937. It was a man's week's wages then.

Young friend, if you are led to pray about something, and you have that faith given to you that the Lord is in heaven, that the Lord is there, that He is seated upon that eternal throne in heaven, and He hears your

poor cry, and you believe He will answer, and that He will deliver: and you get a sweet answer, is that the end, friend? Is it? No, there is a returning to the throne of grace: "Lord, Thou hast heard; Thou hast delivered; Thou hast had mercy; Thou hast blessed me. O Lord, I am so unworthy; I am unworthy of the least of Thy mercies, but Lord, do accept my gratitude, my thankfulness to Thee for all Thy goodness, for every mercy, for every favour received." The mercy of the Lord endureth for ever. His mercy is from everlasting to everlasting, and the child of God delights in this mercy because he feels so unworthy of the least of His mercies.

When the Lord spoke to King David, He gave him some sweet and precious promises. David sat before the Lord, and I am sure he was broken before the Lord. David said, "Who am I, O LORD God, and what is mine house, that Thou hast brought me hitherto?" Why me, Lord, why me? David knew he was a poor, sinful man, but David had a God in heaven, and Solomon had a God in heaven, and Jabez had a God in heaven. Have you a God in heaven? Have you a God there? You say, "Yes, I have, and I pray to Him. I beg for mercy; I beg His help; I beg His presence with me continually"; and with Jabez you say, "Yes, I beg, 'Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed.'"

What is it to have a blessing indeed, to be blessed indeed? Jabez did not ask for great things, did he, or great gifts – shall I say, material things? No, the Lord Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Put first things first. I would say to our young friends: put first things first, these all-important things, the things of your soul, the things of truth, of the gospel, and the things of the Word of God. Put God first, and God will bless you, according to His covenant, and favour you with those things that you stand in need of. He knows your need before you ask Him. He knows all about your need, but He draws you to Himself; He brings you to His footstool, and there you disclose to Him your need.

But first is the need of the soul, isn't it? The need you have of a changed heart, a renewed heart, a renewed will, a right spirit; a blessing indeed. Jabez's trouble was his sin. It tells us here: "Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that Thine hand might be with me, and that Thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me." Keep me from evil.

"And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast." There is a boundary; there is a limit, or perhaps a fence erected. You are enclosed. But Jabez wanted his coast enlarged; he wanted to expand a bit more. Was he greedy? No. You say, "Enlarge my coast, Lord; let me have a bit more. Lord, Thou hast blessed me; Thou hast been with me; Thy presence has

favoured me and I have been helped along; Lord, I want more; I want my boundary enlarged.”

“More of Thy presence, Lord, impart,
More of Thy image let me bear;
Erect Thy throne within my heart,
And reign without a rival there.”

What a desire! What a gracious, godly desire! That is what Jabez wanted, for the Lord to take possession of his heart and reign without a rival, that sin might be subdued, and grace reign, that he might be enlarged. Enlarged in love and faith and hope and grace, more love, more faith, more hope, more grace.

“Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that Thine hand might be with me.” What great things he prayed for in this one verse. What is contained here? It seems everything is there, everything. Do you ever come to the throne of grace, do you ever go to the footstool of mercy and you feel shut up and you cannot pray? I had a lady say to me some while ago now, “You know, Mr. Bradstock, I cannot pray,” and I said, “You can pray for it, can’t you? Pray for prayer.” Ah,

“Pray, if thou canst or canst not speak;
But pray with faith in Jesus’ name.”

If you draw near to the throne of grace feeling so empty and barren and poor, the Lord sees. You say, “Lord, help me to pray; Lord, help me to pray,” and prayer will be poured in surely. You see yourself as a poor sinner before a holy God, and this is just where Jabez was. O I know the Word of God tells us he was “more honourable than his brethren,” but he prayed to be blessed; he prayed for “a blessing indeed,” to be enlarged, to possess more of those things which the Lord gives.

There is a case comes to mind: there was a man named Caleb, Caleb the son of Jephunneh, a good, godly man, and he was one of the spies who were sent out into the promised land. There were twelve spies, and Caleb was one of them and Joshua was another. Those two came back with a good report. The others said, “O we can’t go and possess that land; there are giants there; it will be hopeless; we will be annihilated.” But Caleb and Joshua said, “We can go up.” But what I wanted to say was this, concerning Caleb: he had a daughter and he promised the hand of his daughter to the hand of a man who could go up and capture a certain city. Othniel did it, and Caleb gave to him his daughter’s hand in marriage, and he gave her a field. Caleb was a good, kind man, a generous man, but this field was without water, and she came back again and asked for springs, the upper spring and the nether spring, and he gave

her another field with springs of water. And I thought, "Yes, isn't that wonderful: 'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?'" You say, "This is what I want: I want the Holy Spirit. I do not want just to say prayers; I do not want to say words alone without the heart, for the Lord will never hear those words." I think it is in one of the children's hymns, in the young people's book:

"I often say my prayers,
But do I ever pray,
And do the wishes of my heart
Go with the words I say?

"I may as well kneel down
And worship gods of stone
As offer to the living God
A prayer of words alone."

No, there are a lot of people who gabble off a prayer. There is the Lord's prayer, and they gabble it off and their heart is not in it.

"Prayer" – real prayer – "is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed;
The motion of a hidden fire,
That trembles in the breast."

Real prayer! Jabez prayed real prayer. So also did Caleb's daughter. She had a desire; she wanted springs of water. Jeremiah speaks, in that well-known chapter 31: "Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the LORD, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden." I will never forget when I first read that years ago: "Their soul shall be as a watered garden." "Lord," I said, "that is just what I want. I want my soul to be as a watered garden." You know, a watered garden is a fruitful garden. A watered garden brings forth fruit, and if your soul is a watered garden, and if my soul is a watered garden of the Lord, it will bring forth fruit, fruit to righteousness, the fruits of mercy, love, grace and peace. It will bring forth the fruit of the Spirit which the Apostle Paul speaks of, those graces of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." To bring forth fruit, to be a fruitful vine. Joseph was a fruitful vine. And another thought concerning a vine: it has to be upheld, otherwise it will just trail along the ground. If you are a fruitful vine like Joseph of old, whose branches hang over the wall, you will feel this: you will need a support; you will need a support with you day by day. And where will you find that support? It is in Christ; it is in Christ!

“Every prop will, first or last,
Sink or fail, but Jesus Christ;
On this sure foundation stone
Let me build and rest alone.”

Of course, Jesus Christ had not come in the days of Jabez or in the days of Solomon, the Old Testament saints of God. But weren't they praying characters; weren't they godly characters; weren't they God-fearing characters! They were led by the Spirit, led by the Lord along in this wilderness way, and they all said the same thing; they all spoke the same language; they all said, “We are pilgrims and strangers in the earth; we are foreigners here; this is not our rest; here we have no continuing city.” Ah, “Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that Thine hand might be with me, and that Thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me!”

I do like that which we read at the end: “And God granted him that which he requested.” And it was the same thing with Solomon which we read this morning. He prayed for wisdom and he was granted that wisdom. The dear man was granted that which he requested – a sweet answer to his prayer – because it was God-honouring. If your prayer is God-honouring it will surely be answered. When people are left to themselves, I suppose they pray for all sorts of things: that they might be enriched, perhaps, or prospered, or whatever. But as I said, the things of the soul come first. They will do with a child of God: it is your soul. Now you live here; you dwell here. I think of it quite often really: a lot of people go out today seeking pleasure, and they will not return home!

“How stands the case, my soul, with thee?
For heaven are thy credentials clear?”

He was a good man, Jabez, a godly man, a praying man, a man who prayed and got answers. The Lord “granted him that which he requested.” You say, “Lord, do help me; do save me. Save me Lord. O raise up in me a good hope through Thy grace.” It will not come any other way. There is one channel, one channel along which it will come, and that is the channel of mercy. A channel which the Lord has opened; the Lord Jesus has opened a channel of mercy. You can draw near to God. The Lord Jesus Christ has opened a channel, a way along which you can journey to the mercy seat, the throne of grace.

“’Twas Jesus, my Friend, when He hung on the tree,
Who opened the channel of mercy for me.”

Jesus, the Friend of sinners. O I know there were those, the scribes and Pharisees, and they spoke in a very shameful way. They said, “This Man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.” But isn't that your mercy

and my mercy? Why, sure it is. They said, "This Man," in a very reproachful way. "This Man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." Yes, we can read through the Gospel of Mark, where you read the doings of Christ, the way He walked, and those that came to Him with a case, or He went to them. There was a meeting together: the Saviour and the sinner, the great Physician and the poor, broken man or woman. And He went forth step by step through this vain world and He received sinners unto Himself, broken-hearted sinners, repenting sinners, burdened sinners, great sinners; yes, He received them. Did He send any empty away? Did He turn them away, and say, "Come back another day"? I know he turned away a young man who came to him and was so full of what he had done, and he ventured to tell the Lord all about the good things he had done, and the Lord sent him away. He told him to do something which we gather he was not willing to do. But, "They shall be willing in the day of My power." Man is born with a will. His will is this: I will do what I want to do; I will go where I want to go; I will please myself. That is man, isn't it? You say, "Yes, that was so with me once: I can please myself; I will do what I want to do; I will not be told." No, but then when grace comes, friend, it is a turning around, and there is real repentance when the heart is softened, and when the springs of water flow. "All my springs are in Thee," said the psalmist. The hard heart is softened, the barren heart is made fruitful, fruitful in the things of God.

"And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed." How did you start this morning, friend? Did you seek the blessing of the Lord? Did you? I hope you drew near to the throne of grace. I hope you were enabled to pour out your heart before Him. I hope you were enabled to pray, "Lord, do bless me; bless me this day; bless me with those riches, those sweet riches of Thine; enlarge my coast. I pray that Thine hand might be with me, Thy hand, Thy good hand, the hand of the Lord with me." O what a mercy, what a favoured soul you are if you have got the hand of the Lord with you! You feel the Lord's presence and His hand there supporting you, His hand comforting you. Yes, that hand which provides, supplies your every need: "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." His hand supplies your need. You may be concerned about something, something you have got to deal with in the coming week, something you have got to attend to, and you want wisdom. Solomon prayed for wisdom, and the Lord before had made him wise, else he would have asked for something else, and so would you.

"Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed" – to seek the blessing of the Lord, to be blessed indeed. The Lord is good. He blesses His people; He blesses them with many things. I was thinking how blessed we are: we have somewhere to live; we have a home; we have material

things, and the Lord blesses us with food. The promise is: your water and bread shall be sure, and you have a lot more than that. Are you thankful for it? The Lord blesses with many things, but the greatest blessing of all, surely, is to be blessed with “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” And you have a sweet hope. Yet, you are often troubled because of your sin; you are troubled because of your barrenness; you want to be fruitful. Dear Hannah felt her barrenness, and she went up and she prayed, her lips moved and no sound came forth from her mouth, and even the Lord’s servant was mistaken. But she prayed to her God, and we read that God heard and God answered her prayer. God blessed her. We have cases all through the Word of God, where those that called upon the name of their God in faith, were heard. They prayed in weakness and feebleness, empty as they felt themselves to be, and yet the Lord in His mercy drew near, and the Lord answered their petition.

When the Lord answers, we are encouraged to ask for more, as Caleb’s daughter asked for more. She had a field and she wanted springs of water, and he gave them to her. Her loving father gave them to her, and you have a loving Father in heaven. God the Father is your Father in heaven: “Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.” That is scripture. I know some people use that term very flippantly, but you know, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” That is just what you want, the Spirit – the Spirit to be in your prayers, and the Holy Spirit to be in your life, that blessed Spirit to bring forth those fruits of righteousness. May the Lord add His blessing. Amen.

THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST

By Isaac Ambrose (1604-1664)

What are the properties of this intercession of Jesus Christ? I answer,

1. It is heavenly and glorious; and that appears in these particulars.
 - i. Christ doth not fall upon His knees before His Father, as in the days of His humiliation, for that is not agreeable to that glory He hath received. He only presents His pleasure to His Father, that He may thereto put His seal and consent.
 - ii. Christ doth not pray out of private charity, as the saints pray one for another in this life, but out of public office and mediation. “There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2. 5).

iii. Christ prays not out of humility, which is the proposing of requests for things unmerited, but out of authority, which is the desiring of a thing, so as withal He hath a right of bestowing it as well as desiring it.

iv. Christ prays not merely as an advocate, but as a propitiation too, and furthers the cause of our salvation with His Father in heaven. In every of these respects we may see Christ's intercession is heavenly and glorious.

2. It is ever effectual and prevailing; as He hath a power to intercede for us, so He hath a power to confer that upon us for which He intercedes: "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter (John 14. 16). "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you" (John 16. 7). If Christ prayed on earth He was ever heard; when Christ prays in heaven, we may be sure the Father ever heareth and answereth there. When Christ, as Man, prayed for Himself, He "was heard in that He feared," but now Christ as Mediator praying for us, He is ever heard in the very particular which He desireth. We sinful men many a time "ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (Jas. 4. 3). But Jesus Christ never asks amiss, nor to wrong ends, and therefore God the Father, who called Him to this office of being (as it were) the great "Master of requests in behalf of His church," He promised to hear Him in all His requests. "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou hearest Me always," saith Christ (John 11. 41, 42).

3. It is of all the other transactions of Christ till the very end of the world, the most perfect and consummate; indeed so perfective, that without it, all the other parts of Christ's mediatorship would have been to little purpose. As the sacrifices under the law had not been of such force and efficacy, had not the high priest entered into the holy place, to appear there, and to present the blood there unto the Lord, so all that ever Christ did or suffered upon earth, it had been ineffectual for us, had He not entered into heaven, "to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9. 24).

i. Surely this intercession is that which puts life into the death of Christ in the carrying on of our soul's salvation, and makes all sure. It is a witty [wise] observation that one [Thomas Goodwin] makes of these several steps of Christ's actings for us; as first, There was an all-sufficiency in His death. "Who is He that condemneth? It is Christ that died" (Rom. 8. 34).

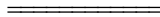
ii. A *rather* in His resurrection: "Yea rather, that is risen again."

iii. A *much rather* in His life and session at God's right hand. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of

His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Rom. 5. 10).

iv. The apostle riseth yet higher, to “a saving to the utmost,” and puts that upon His intercession. “Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7. 25). If in the former were anything wanting, this intercession of Christ supplies all: it is the *coronis* [crown] which makes all effectual; it saves to the uttermost, for itself is the uttermost and highest step. On earth Christ begins the execution of His office; in heaven He ends it. In His life and death, Christ was the meritorious cause, but by His intercession, Christ is the applying cause of our soul’s salvation. In this very intercession of Christ is the consummation and perfection of the priesthood of Christ. O then, how exquisite and necessary must this needs be?

4. It is gracious and full of bowels; Christ’s intercession, and indeed Christ’s priestly office is erected, and set up on purpose for the relief of poor, distressed sinners. There is no mixture of terror in this blessed office of Jesus Christ, and this doth distinguish it from His other offices. Christ by His kingly office rules over the churches, and over the world, but all obtain not mercy whom He thus rules over. Christ, by His prophetic office, comes to His own, but many of His own received Him not; but now wherever the priestly office of Jesus Christ is let forth upon a soul, that soul shall certainly be saved for ever. O this priestly office of Christ, is an office of mere love and tender compassion! “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities” (Heb. 4. 15). O He is “a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people” (Heb. 2. 17). He is merciful and exceeding compassionate. “In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old” (Isa. 63. 9), and in His love and pity He intercedes for us.



Morality is not grace, because it doth not change nature. If it did, many of the heathen were as near to God as the best of Christians. Whatever may be done by the strength of nature cannot alter it; for no nature can change itself. Poison may be great within the skin, like a viper’s, be we never so speckled with a reformation; freedom from gross sins argues not a friendship to God. None were ever so great enemies to Christ as the Pharisees, to whom Christ gave no better a title than that of the devil’s children, and charges them with hatred both of Himself and His Father. To turn to God in ways of righteousness is contrary to the stream of corrupt nature, and therefore it must be overpowered by a flood of almighty grace, as the stream of the river is by the tide of the sea.

Stephen Charnock

A WORD OF EXHORTATION FROM A PASTOR TO HIS PEOPLE

A letter by William Doe

South Moreton, Oxon.

January 10th, 1855

To my dear friends meeting together at Stadhampton chapel for the worship of the only true and living God, as revealed in His Word, and received into your hearts who love Him as a just God and Saviour of sinners, having of His own will laid sin on Jesus Christ, who was willing to bear it in His own body on the tree, that God might be just and yet forgive the sins of them that believe in the name of Jesus.

I had many anxious thoughts and desires for you last night as I lay on my bed, that the Lord may bless you with the rich anointing of the blessed Spirit of Truth; that your hearts may be knit together in love; that you may strive together to hold the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; that none may be desirous of vain glory; that your conversation may be to edification and profit – not vain, and about others' business; that the Lord may bless you with the light of His countenance, favour you with divine comfort, enable you to draw near to Him at a throne of grace, reveal to you a knowledge of His will concerning you under all circumstances; that you may live in the world as those who are going through it to a better country; that you may bring your troubles to the Lord, who only can help your grievances; that your souls may find the Rock beneath you, and be able to find the race set before you, looking to Jesus Christ, who is the Author and Finisher of your faith; that the Lord may sanctify every dispensation of His providence to you; that you may be able to bear with each other's infirmities, nor expect to find in others that which is not in yourselves, knowing we are all compassed with infirmity; that the ways of the Lord and the order of His house may be found pleasant and not burdensome. These, and many other longing desires, my soul had for you in the nightwatches, and I felt it my duty and desire to write to you.

But methinks you will be ready to say, If all this be so, why leave us so much? This is a matter which much exercises my mind, but I am not my own in this. If I were to think my own thoughts, I should think He would never send His Word to any good purpose by me at all. My dear friends, I hope the Lord may bless the message of him who stands up in His name among you; that God's Word by him may be as waters to the thirsty soul. I hope you may be able to come in secret to Him who seeth in secret, and ask Him to search you, being willing to suffer any cost that your souls may prosper. Do not encourage that which clogs your

conscience with guilt. If you are tortured from day to day with besetting sins, go with the worst to Him; He will find a way to hold you up, if not deliver you. I pray the merciful Lord that He will bless you, and that the day may be near when you may long for the courts of the Lord, that we may see each other's face with pleasure, and that love may flow from heart to heart.

O my friends, it is poor work for us, when we come together, if God's mercies do not rejoice our hearts, or our many departures from Him make us groan, and say, "How long shall it be thus, and darkness attend my path?" God's cause and Christ's church will flourish best with a goodly portion of joy and grief. To rejoice, hoping in God's mercy, and grieve for our own wretched sinfulness – these two things make communion of saints. Pray for it.

Thus I have given you a little of the concern I have in my heart for you. I hope, though in a feeble way, it may not all fall to the ground.

Believe me, though unworthy,
Your affectionate servant,

William Doe

THE GOSPEL UNDERSTOOD BY NEEDY SINNERS

By James Dennett (1828-1900)

Pastor, Frederick Street Chapel, Birmingham

There is an infinite distinction between the people of God and those who are dead in sins; as John says: "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness" (1 John 5. 19). Mark that word "lieth"; so they all lie in wickedness notwithstanding their profession. What a mercy if you are amongst those who do not account the language of God's people nor the language of His ministers ridiculous.

"Thou shalt not see a fierce people, a people of a deeper speech than thou canst perceive; of a stammering [margin: ridiculous] tongue, that thou canst not understand." Poor sinner, thou canst understand it. You come up to the house of God time after time, full of wounds, bruises and sores, like Lazarus who lay at the rich man's gate and no man went to dress his wounds, but the dogs licked his sores; yet, notwithstanding this, he was a blessed man; as Christ said: "The beggar died, and was carried by the angels" – where to? Not to hell. Beggar though he was, unworthy though he was, "and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom" – that is, he went where Abraham was, even into the haven of rest, into eternal glory.

The Lord's people do not account these things ridiculous. It is not a ridiculous and stammering tongue to them: "For God hath not given us

the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1. 7). I know what I preach to you from time to time is the Word of God and the experience of His people; therefore these things will stand, and you can understand when you hear these things described, and, bless God, you sometimes feel the sweetness of them. The Lord has said of His servants, "They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them" (Isa. 65. 23). The Lord will make His Word through them to flourish in the souls of His people. Are these things ridiculous to your souls, or are they things you are brought to admire?

What is it the servants of God preach? "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." His blood to cleanse their guilty souls, His righteousness to cover them, His power to uphold them, and His love and mercy at last to present them faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. These are the things the Lord's people come to hear, and their souls' desire is to have a taste of them. This is why they come to the house of God again and again, saying, "How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God" (Psa. 84. 1, 2). The Lord put you and me into, and keep us in this spirit, for His name's sake.



MAKE STRAIGHT PATHS FOR YOUR FEET

By J.C. Philpot (1802-1869)

It is but too evident that we cannot be mixed up with the profession and the professors of the day without drinking, in some measure, into their spirit and being more or less biassed by their example. In this we too much resemble the chosen people, of whom the Holy Ghost testifies: "But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them." (Psa. 106. 35, 36). We can scarcely escape the influence of those with whom we come much and frequently into contact. If these be dead, they will often benumb us with their corpse-like coldness; if light and trifling, they will often entangle us in their carnal levity; if bitter and censorious, they will breathe into us a measure of their condemning spirit; if angry and quarrelsome, they will provoke us to wrath in word or feeling; if worldly and covetous, they may afford us a shelter and an excuse for our own worldliness and covetousness. Nothing but being well weighted with trials and afflictions, and bowed down with burdens and exercises, yet finding in and by them the life of God maintained with some power and

vigour in the heart, will keep us from being corrupted by these evil communications. But as few escape their influence, let us simply state what we believe to be, if not the only, yet the safest way to obtain deliverance from a path to walk in which will surely, sooner or later, bring sorrow and grief to every living soul.

1. Now the first step out of a wrong path is to *see and feel that it is wrong*. The carnal professors of the day see nothing wrong, nothing amiss, nothing inconsistent in their conduct or spirit. They have no inward checks of conscience, no keen reproofs from the Word, no trembling fears about their state before God, no solemn apprehensions of the Majesty and presence of the heart-searching Jehovah, no believing views of the Person and sufferings of Christ, no desire to know and do the will of God from the heart. But where there is divine life, where the blessed Spirit moves upon the heart with His sacred operations and secret influences, there will be light to see and a conscience to feel what is wrong, sinful, inconsistent and unbecoming. These convictions may for a time be resisted. Sin is of a hardening nature, and we may for a while be so caught in the net, and so held down by it, that our very struggles against it may end only in fuller and further entanglement. How few, for instance, see their own covetous spirit till they find themselves so entangled in it that they fear they shall be utterly given up to its dominion, and yet cannot deliver themselves from it. How often when brother falls out with brother, or a spirit of strife and division gets into a church, every attempt at reconciliation, every effort after peace, fans the flame instead of extinguishing it. How, again, we may sink into a cold, lifeless state, neglect reading the Word, and have little relish for the throne of grace, till our very profession seems to stink in our own nostrils as well as of others.

Now where there is divine life in the soul, the Lord often sets His hand as it were a second time to revive His work upon the heart. The snare is broken either by His providence or His grace. By some affliction or trial the heart is made tender to receive the Word, even if it be a keen reproof, for “to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet,” and there is that yearning after the Lord which nothing can satisfy but the manifestations of His pardoning love.

2. If this simple sketch meet the experience of any of our spiritual readers, let them next suffer from us the word of exhortation, as couched in the words of the apostle: “*Make straight paths for your feet*, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed” (Heb. 12. 13).

We read in the word of truth of those “Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness ... whose ways are crooked, and they froward in their paths” (Prov. 2. 13, 15). And as we read their

character in the Word, so do we also read their end: "As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the LORD shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: but peace shall be upon Israel" (Psa. 125. 5). Such warnings have their place not only in the Word, but in the heart that is made tender in the fear of God; nor are they put away as if we stood so firmly and strongly in the right road that there could be no danger of our ever making a crooked path for our feet. On the contrary, surrounded as we are with a crooked generation, professing and profane, whose ways we are but too apt to learn; beset on every hand by temptations to turn aside into some crooked path, to feed our pride, indulge our lusts, or gratify our covetousness; blinded and seduced sometimes by the god of this world, hardened at others by the deceitfulness of sin; here misled by the example, and there bewitched by the flattery of some friend or companion; at one time confused and bewildered in our judgment of right and wrong, at another entangled, half resisting, half complying, in some snare of the wicked one.

What a struggle have some of us had to make straight paths for our feet, and what pain and grief that we should ever have made crooked ones. But there is one mark of a crooked path which will ever stand both as a warning and a direction to those who fear God. "They have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace" (Isa. 59. 8). It is this want of finding peace in the crooked path which alarms and terrifies those who are possessed of a living conscience, and often summons up against them a whole host of doubts and fears lest they be deceived altogether. These convictions and these fears plainly and clearly show them their sin and folly in leaving the paths of uprightness to walk in any crooked way.

As the Lord is pleased sometimes by terrible things in righteousness, sometimes by laying affliction upon their loins, sometimes by His keen reproofs under the Word preached or applied in secret, sometimes by a startling stroke in providence, to make them know and see that it is an evil thing and bitter to forsake the Lord their God, repentance is wrought in the heart, with self-loathing and self-detestation, issuing in humble and honest confession. This is the first step to return, for with this confession comes the forsaking of every evil way; and to this confession and forsaking, the promise of mercy and forgiveness is annexed (Prov. 28. 13; 1 John 1. 9). When, then, the mercy and goodness of God are thus inwardly felt and realised; when a view by faith of the suffering Son of God manifests at one and the same time the dreadful nature of sin, and the way, the only way whereby it is freely put away; when the superaboundings of grace over the aboundings of inward and outward evil make the soul at once tremble and rejoice, tremble at the floods of sin, rejoice at the overflowings of the higher tides of grace above them

all, then there is a making of straight paths for the feet, and that which was lame and so turned out of the way becomes healed.

3. Closely connected with this is the affectionate counsel that we should *exercise ourselves to maintain a good conscience* before God and man. This was Paul's exercise: "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men" (Acts 24. 16). There is no greater blessing than a conscience purged by the blood of sprinkling; and few greater miseries than a conscience loaded with guilt. As the one enables us to look up, so the latter compels us to look down before God and man. Nothing inconsistent or unbecoming may have appeared in our walk and conduct, and yet the silent monitor may make the tongue falter, the knee tremble, and the countenance be dejected. Here, then, is the main exercise, first to obtain, secondly to maintain a conscience so sprinkled by atoning blood as to be void of offence toward God; and then to walk so tenderly in the fear of God, in that sincerity and godly simplicity, in that uprightness of conduct, in that circumspectness in life which shall preserve us from giving just cause of offence to, or putting a stumbling-block in the way of our fellow-men, and thus follow out that comprehensive precept: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God" (1 Cor. 10. 31, 32).

4. Our next word of counsel shall be that which the Lord Himself gives to the virgin of Israel: "*Set thee up waymarks*, make thee high heaps: set thine heart toward the highway, even the way which thou wentest" (Jer. 31. 21). To look at the past is often a blessed encouragement for the future. If we are travellers in the way Zionward, we shall have our various waymarks. A conspicuous call, or a signal deliverance, or a gracious manifestation of Christ; a promise applied here, or a marked answer to prayer there; a special blessing under the preached Word; a soft and unexpected assurance of an interest in the blood of the Lamb; a breaking in of divine light when walking in great darkness; a sweet sip of consolation in a season of sorrow and trouble; a calming down of the winds and waves without and within by "It is I, be not afraid" – such and similar waymarks it is most blessed to be able to set up as evidences that we are in the road. And if many who really fear God cannot set up these conspicuous waymarks, yet are they not without their testimonies equally sure, if not equally satisfying. The fear of God in a tender conscience, the Spirit of grace and supplications in their breast, their cleaving to the people of God in warm affection, their love for the truth in its purity and power, their earnest desires, their budding hopes, their anxious fears, their honesty and simplicity making them jealous over themselves lest they be deceived or deluded, their separation

from the world, their humility, meekness, quietness and general consistency often putting to shame louder profession and higher pretensions – these and similar evidences mark many as children of God who cannot read their title clear to such a privilege and such a blessing. But whether the waymarks be high or low, shining in the sun or obscure in the dawn, the virgin of Israel is still bidden to “set them up,” and to “set also her heart toward the highway, even the way by which she came.”

(To be concluded)

EMMANUEL’S CLOSING COUNSEL FOR THE SAFETY AND COMFORT OF MANSOUL

Extract from The Holy War by John Bunyan (1628-1688)

When the town of Mansoul had thus far rid themselves of so many of their enemies, and the troublers of their peace, the Prince sent to them, and appointed a day wherein he would at the market-place meet the whole people, and there give them in charge concerning some further matters, that if observed, would tend to their further safety and comfort, and to the condemnation and destruction of their home-bred Diabolonians. So the day appointed was come, and the townsmen met together. Emmanuel also came down in his chariot, and all his captains in their state attending of him, on the right hand and on the left. Then was an *O yes* made for silence, and after some mutual carriages of love, the Prince began, and thus proceeded:

“You, my Mansoul, and the beloved of mine heart, many and great are the privileges that I have bestowed upon you. I have singled you out from others, and have chosen you to myself, not for your worthiness, but for mine own sake. I have also redeemed you, not only from the dread of my Father’s law, but from the hand of Diabolus. This I have done because I loved you, and because I have set my heart upon you to do you good. I have also, that all things that might hinder thy way to the pleasures of paradise might be taken out of the way, laid down for thee, for thy soul, a plenary [entire or absolute] satisfaction, and have bought thee to myself; a price, not of corruptible things, as of silver and gold, but a price of blood, mine own blood, which I have freely spilt upon the ground to make thee mine. So I have reconciled thee, O my Mansoul, to my Father, and intrusted thee in the mansion-houses that are with my Father in the royal city where things are, O my Mansoul, that eye hath not seen, nor hath entered into the heart of man to conceive.

“Besides, O my Mansoul, thou seest what I have done, and how I have taken thee out of the hands of thine enemies; unto whom thou hast

deeply revolted from my Father, and by whom thou wast content to be possessed, and also to be destroyed. I came to thee first by my law, then by my gospel, to awaken thee, and show thee my glory. And thou knowest what thou wast, what thou saidst, what thou didst, and how many times thou rebelledst against my Father and me; yet I left thee not; as thou seest this day, but came to thee, have borne thy manners, have waited upon thee, and after all accepted of thee, even of my mere grace and favour; and would not suffer thee to be lost, as thou most willingly wouldst have been. I also compassed thee about, and afflicted thee on every side, that I might make thee weary of thy ways, and bring down thy heart with molestation to a willingness to keep close to thy good and happiness. And when I had gotten a complete conquest over thee, I turned it to thy advantage.

“Thou seest also what a company of my Father’s host I have lodged within thy borders – captains and rulers, soldiers and men of war, engines and excellent devices [spiritual gifts and graces] to subdue and bring down thy foes; thou knowest my meaning, O Mansoul. And they are my servants, and thine too, Mansoul. Yea, my design of possessing of thee with them, and the natural tendency of each of them is to defend, purge, strengthen and sweeten thee for myself, O Mansoul, and to make thee meet for my Father’s presence, blessing, and glory; for thou, my Mansoul, art created to be prepared unto these.

“Thou seest, moreover, my Mansoul, how I have passed by thy backslidings, and have healed thee. Indeed I was angry with thee, but I have turned mine anger away from thee, because I loved thee still, and mine anger and mine indignation is ceased in the destruction of thine enemies, O Mansoul. Nor did thy goodness fetch me again unto thee, after that I for thy transgressions have hid my face, and withdrawn my presence from thee. The way of backsliding was thine, but the way and means of thy recovery was mine. I invented the means of thy return; it was I that made an hedge and a wall, when thou wast beginning to turn to things in which I delighted not. It was I that made thy sweet, bitter; thy day, night; thy smooth ways thorny; and that also confounded all that sought thy destruction. It was I that set Mr. Godly-fear to work in Mansoul. It was I that stirred up thy conscience and understanding, thy will and thy affections, after thy great and woeful decay. It was I that put life into thee, O Mansoul, to seek me, that thou mightest find me, and in thy finding, find thine own health, happiness and salvation. It was I that fetched the second time the Diabolonians out of Mansoul; and it was I that overcame them, and that destroyed them before thy face.

“And now, my Mansoul, I am returned to thee in peace, and thy transgressions against me are as if they had not been. Nor shall it be with

thee as in former days, but I will do better for thee than at thy beginning. For yet a little while, O my Mansoul, even after a few more times are gone over thy head, I will – but be not thou troubled at what I say – I will take down this famous town of Mansoul, stick and stone to the ground (1 Chron. 29. 30). And will carry the stones thereof, and the timber thereof, and the walls thereof, and the dust thereof, and the inhabitants thereof, into mine own country, even into the kingdom of my Father, and will there set it up in such strength and glory, as it never did see in the kingdom where now it is placed. I will even there set it up for my Father's habitation, for, for that purpose it was at first erected in the kingdom of Universe; and there will I make it a spectacle of wonder, a monument of mercy, and the admirer of its own mercy. There shall the natives of Mansoul see all that of which they have seen nothing here; there shall they be equal to those unto whom they have been inferior here. And there shalt thou, O my Mansoul, have such communion with me, with my Father, and with your Lord Secretary [the Holy Ghost], as is not possible here to be enjoyed, nor ever could be, shouldest thou live in Universe the space of a thousand years.

“And there, O my Mansoul, thou shalt be afraid of murderers no more; of Diabolonians and their threats no more. There, there shall be no more plots, nor contrivances, nor designs against thee, O my Mansoul. There thou shalt no more hear the evil tidings, or the noise of the Diabolonian drum. There thou shalt not see the Diabolonian standard-bearers, nor yet behold Diabolus his standard. No Diabolonian mount shall be cast up against thee there, nor shall there the Diabolonian standard be set up to make thee afraid. There thou shalt not need captains, engines, soldiers and men of war. There thou shalt meet with no sorrow, nor grief, nor shall it be possible that any Diabolonian should again, for ever, be able to creep into thy skirts, burrow in thy walls, or be seen again within thy borders all the days of eternity. Life shall there last longer than here you are able to desire it should, and yet it shall always be sweet and new, nor shall any impediment attend it forever.

“There, O Mansoul, thou shalt meet with many of those that have been like thee, and that have been partakers of thy sorrows, even such as I have chosen, and redeemed and set apart as thou for my Father's court and city royal. All they will be glad in thee, and thou, when thou seest them, shall be glad in thine heart.

(To be concluded)

True faith is humble, and seeth no way to escape but only in Christ.

Samuel Rutherford

THE GOD OF ALL GRACE IN SPITE OF ALL OUR SIN

6 Beaconsfield Villas,
Preston Park,
Brighton, Sussex.
1886

My dear Friend in the Lord,

I have two letters from you to answer. Both of them are written within and without, with lamentation and mourning and woe. But I will venture to say that all this is infinitely better than the laughter of fools. I am not shaken in regard to your state before God by all you say against yourself. That it is sad and grievous to be in such a state of feeling, I know. But the day is coming when God shall with infinite power rebuke this cruel enemy of His sovereignty and your peace. You cannot; He can and will.

I am not going to contradict you in the things you say about your hardness of heart, but I will try to tell you of the remedy. All that is bad is too true of us. But one thing more is also true – there is a God of all grace. Yes, that God about whom and whose goodness our wicked infidelity has so powerfully, so distressingly worked, is able and will deliver you from all iniquity, receive you graciously, love you freely. You may put this away, you may think and say I am deceived, but I shall maintain my ground against yourself on behalf of yourself. An enemy, knowing well the depravity of nature, has sown this seed and, alas, how quickly and with strength has it grown. Too well do I know this. But when once more the Lord returns with mercies, what self-loathing, confession, wonder, weeping and silence you will be filled with! You have not yet got to the end of the “many times.” Yea, many a time forgave He their iniquity and destroyed them not. Yea, many a time turned He away His anger, and did not stir up all His wrath. (See Psa. 78. 38).

Do not keep silence, but write again soon. “Speaking may relieve thee.” I feel so much for your brother in his sad loss, and pray the Lord may support him and make the affliction a great blessing.

Give my love to your dear father, to Mrs. T. and Mr. and Mrs. J.L. You all come in sometimes when I try to pray. The Lord bless you and that abundantly. Christ is the Fountain of Life, and the living streams flowing from Him into your heart will swallow up your sad death.

We are all well and unite in love to you and your household. Believe me,

Yours in the best bonds,

J.K. Popham

THE POVERTY OF CHRIST THAT WE MAY BE RICH

*Extract from a sermon preached by William Cunningham,
Edinburgh (1805-1861)*

“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich” (2 Cor. 8. 9).

Let us consider what we are here told of Christ, namely, that He was rich, and that for our sakes He became poor.

When Christ, who had formerly been “rich” – that is, glorious, and exalted, and happy, became “poor” – that is, humble, and helpless, and destitute, He displayed “grace” – that is, favour or kindness, inasmuch as He did this “for our sakes,” and in order that we “through His poverty might be rich.” There must have been an adequate cause for so wonderful a change, for such an astonishing event. Christ did it voluntarily. He was not reduced from riches to poverty by the will of another, or by events over which He had no control, as is commonly the case in those changes of outward condition which take place among men. It was His own voluntary act, and therefore, if we wish to learn the cause of it, we have just to look into His heart, and ascertain the motives by which He was actuated.

In the first place, we know, in general, it was done “for our sakes” – the change took place upon our account. When He laid aside His “riches” and became “poor,” it was from a desire, and with an intention of benefiting us; He was animated by kindness to us, and when He did become “poor,” He was conferring upon us a precious and a dear-bought favour. When, then, we are told of Christ’s original “riches,” and of His subsequent “poverty” we must view the change from the one to the other, not merely as a most wonderful and glorious object of contemplation, which should attract our attention and engross our faculties, but we must regard it as an event in which we have all the deepest, personal interest, which bears most materially upon our condition and destiny, and should therefore, in right reason, influence our motives and our actions.

When we know that He who had once been so “rich” became so “poor” for “our sakes” – that, in changing from one state to the other, He was influenced mainly by love to us – this sets before us His “grace” and kindness; and when we think of the magnitude of the change, the depth of the humiliation, we may well believe that His “grace” or kindness was exceeding great, and we might confidently expect that its manifestation would produce consequences or results exceeding glorious. And accordingly the apostle goes on to inform us, not only that He, though once “rich,” voluntarily became “poor” for “our sakes,” but more fully

and precisely, in the second place, that He did so in order that we “through His poverty might be rich.”

The great leading truth involved in this statement is this: that He voluntarily made a great change in His condition in order that thereby He might effect a great change upon us, and that these two changes, respectively, were contrasted in all their features. He came down to our condition in order that He might raise us to His; He humbled Himself that He might exalt us; He humbled Himself very low, that He might exalt us very high. He could not, indeed, sink down to our level in every particular, for He could not become, as every one of us is, a sinner, directly and properly chargeable with personal guilt; and, on the other hand, however poor He might become, He could not raise us to a participation in the infinite perfection which He Himself had ever possessed. Infinite perfection and personal guilt are incompatible extremes, which in no diversity of circumstances, and at no interval of duration, can attach to one and the same being.

He who had once possessed infinite perfection never could become a transgressor; and he who had once transgressed God’s holy law in his own person, never could possess divine perfection. But still it is substantially true that Christ, who was formerly “rich,” descended to the level of our “poverty” in order that He might raise us, substantially, to the level of His own “riches.” We were indeed “poor,” occupying the lowest place among God’s intelligent creatures, and infinitely degraded by sin and its baneful consequences. We were frail, and helpless, and miserable, exposed to many trials and afflictions, and every day that passed over us we were drawing nearer a death, which must not only terminate our connection with this world, but consign us to inevitable and endless woe.

Such was our condition, viewed apart from any reference to the effects of Christ “becoming poor for our sakes.” To all this “poverty” of ours – except only the actual guilt of personal sin – Christ descended. He became a partaker of our nature in all its helplessness, and all its sinless infirmities; He endured in no ordinary degree all the miseries of this life; He was treated and dealt with as if He had been a sinner, and at last endured the death of a malefactor. Such was the poverty to which He descended, but it was in order “that we through His poverty might be rich.”

We were guilty and exposed to God’s wrath and curse, and in danger of hell-fire; but Christ, who was the holy and the just One, stained with no crime and liable to no charge, voluntarily endured that punishment in our room, the infliction of which upon ourselves must have sunk us in eternal ruin. He who was the great Author of the Law was made under the law; He from whom it derived all its authority paid

the full penalty which it prescribed to transgressors, although He had kept all its requirements. He became “poor” by being made under the law, and bearing its curse; and the consequence is, that we who are in Him are made “rich” – rich in the pardon of our unnumbered and aggravated sins, rich in deliverance from eternal misery.

Christ had been from eternity “rich” in the favour and complacency of God; men in this respect were “poor,” being outcasts from that divine favour, and the objects of the divine displeasure. Christ became “poor” in this respect. He voluntarily placed Himself in a situation in which He knew well that God would hide His face from Him, and forsake Him, and deal with Him as an enemy, and the object of this was, that we might become “rich” in the enjoyment of God’s favour, and might abound in tokens of His kind and friendly regard. Christ could not lay aside His perfect moral excellence; He could not actually cease to be immaculate and holy, but He did submit to be stigmatised and treated as a sinner, in order that we might become “rich” in true holiness, and in conformity to His own blessed image.

Christ had been “rich” in all the glories and felicities of heaven. He left them all and laid them aside; He descended to all the poverty, and humiliation, and meanness of earth; and He did so, in order that He might rescue us from that mean and degraded condition in which He found us, and from that far more degraded and fearful state to which we were speedily and inevitably hasting, and raise us to all the glories and felicities of that heaven from which He had come forth, just in order that He might place us in a condition of more exalted glory and blessedness than even the angels who excel in strength, and that He might even make us partakers of that very glory to which He Himself, in consequence of His humiliation and obedience unto death, has been raised.

JESUS: THE SON OF GOD, THE SON OF MAN

*By Pierre du Bosc (1623-1691), a minister of the Reformed Church,
who was born at Bayeux, Normandy, in the reign of Louis XIII,
and died in the reign of Louis XIV*

Regard attentively the Person of the Lord Jesus, and you will see in Him at once God and Man, without relinquishing any part of His deity as God, without alienating any part of His humanity as Man. At His birth you will see a Man persecuted by Herod, and a God adored by the wise men of the east. At His baptism, a Man in the river Jordan, and a God proclaimed from heaven as the beloved Son of the eternal Father. In the vessel a Man who sleeps, and a God who calms the wind and the sea. At the tomb of Lazarus, a Man who weeps at the death of His

friend, and a God who raises him by a word. At the well of Sychar, a Man who thirsts, and a God who gives water springing up into eternal life. Upon the cross, a Man who dies, and a God who astonishes all nature so much that the earth trembles to the centre, and the sun itself loses its light. All these are so many indications that the Incarnate Word was truly God and Man. God eternal, and Man born in time. God omnipotent, and Man weak and infirm. God immortal, and Man subject to death.

PROVISION FOR THE POOR IN DEATH

Extract from a sermon by

Mr. John Warburton of Trowbridge (1776-1857)

The Lord of His goodness has provided for His poor and needy family in the last conflict with *death*. The dear Saviour has overcome death, and him that had the power of it, that is, the devil! He has taken its sting away from His dear church and people. Death has no sting to them; Christ has taken it away, and made a way for them to the realms of immortal bliss and blessedness. "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Blessed be His name, He has taken away the sting, so that death has no power to injure those who are sheltered in Christ: it is not an enemy to them now, but the greatest friend they can have in the world.

And yet, my friends, what trembling we sometimes feel at the thought of dying! Why, flesh and blood cannot look upon death without dismay; it trembles to think how it shall stand when grappling with the last enemy, and how it shall come through the last conflict! "O that I had such and such testimonies to my heart," says the soul, "then I think I could pass through it!" Poor, dear soul, God has not prepared dying strength for thee to put it in thy pocket, and take it out and look at it when thou wilt; no, no, He has reserved dying strength for a dying hour. When dying moments come, then dying strength will be given thee. God will stand by thee then, my friends, according to His Word, whether thou hast power to speak, or not; for, He says, "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints." What a blessed thought it is, that Jesus hath conquered death, and him that had the power of it, that is, the devil; and hast engaged to bring His people through, so that they shall triumphantly sing, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

Some of God's dear people are taken off suddenly, and are thus prevented from bearing outward testimony to the Lord's goodness and faithfulness. It is very blessed when the Lord favours the dying saint with some sweet tokens of His grace, and enables him to speak of the goodness and mercy of God. This is very blessed, my friends; but the Lord is a sovereign in these matters, as in all others. Sometimes He favours the soul with such a degree of liberty that it can tell out sweetly of the riches and glories of His grace, but at other times it is not so. But whether a child of God has this liberty or not, the Lord will give dying strength unto His people in a dying hour, and will bring them off more than conquerors through Him that hath loved them.

ETERNAL RICHES IN MUCH PROVIDENTIAL POVERTY

A visit to a London garret over eighty years ago

A few months ago I was requested to visit Mrs. —, who lived in the vicinity of Southampton Row, London. The object of my visit was to ascertain some particulars respecting an application which had been made on her behalf to the Aged Pilgrim's Friend Society for a pension. I had considerable difficulty in finding her, and as the surroundings were somewhat squalid and uninviting, I was inclined to turn back. However, I entered the door of a large dwelling-house let out in tenements, and questioning two small children, they informed me that Mrs. — lived at the top of the house in the garret [a small room in the roof or attic, usually squalid].

Ascending fifty-four stairs, I came to a door and knocked. A voice from within invited me to enter, but not being able to open it, after a few moments, Mrs. —, who was afflicted with rheumatoid arthritis, managed to open it for me. It was but a very small room overlooking the tops of the surrounding buildings, and contained all she possessed in this world. Feeling cold and lifeless in myself, I was ready to exclaim, "Surely the Lord is *not* in this place." I soon discovered I was in the presence of a person of few words, and all the information I gained was in response to direct questions. This did not tend to thaw my heart. However, it was not long before I felt a softening effect coming over me, and realised I had come to my own company, for it occasioned no little surprise to learn that through the kindness of some friends, the poor widow in this London garret had been a reader of *The Gospel Standard* for some years past. This information formed the basis for further questions, in answer to which the dear woman replied, "I could never tell you how much I have enjoyed Mr. Popham's sermons."

After obtaining other necessary particulars, I then put this question: "How long have you known the Lord?" She answered, "Over thirty years." Not being disposed to enlarge upon her reply, I then said, "If you and I have a humble hope in our hearts that we do know the Lord, and that He has ever had anything to do with us, there must have been a beginning," and immediately she said, "And He who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ." I said, "True, but could you relate some incident in your life when you experienced this new birth?" Her eyes glistened, and at once she exclaimed with emphasis, "I could never forget that," and added, "I always feel my experience is much like that of Saul of Tarsus. Many years ago I was very seriously ill with little hope of my recovery. I well remember the fervent prayers of my dear mother on my behalf. One day, during that affliction, so suddenly and unexpectedly a light shone into my heart, such as I had never seen before, and words utterly fail to describe it. O what a sinner it made me feel! I cried unto the Lord to have mercy upon me, and asked Him to spare my life, so that I might repent. I felt I should never look up again, and that a holy God could never look upon me." Then her countenance radiated with joy as she said, "But He did come, and I heard a voice, which said, 'Come, let us reason together.'"

At this moment I believe we wept and rejoiced together. What a knitting of heart to heart I felt, a blending of spirit in kindred love and fellowship. Continuing our conversation, she spoke of the Lord's faithfulness and mercy to her, and was amazed at His lovingkindness and tender compassion to such a sinner. Her Bible was her daily companion, and bore marks of constant use, for some of the leaves were fastened together by means of stamp paper. With much warmth she said, "His Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Here, in this little room lived "a pilgrim indeed," one of whom the prophet declares, "And they shall be Mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels."

After taking my leave of her, I descended the stairs with a full heart, and in spirit saying, "Be this religion mine." The savour and dew attending that visit abode with me for many days. I had a feeling that that would not be my last visit to the garret. Neither was it, for not long after, through the kindness of a friend, I had occasion to go again. This time I was accompanied by my wife, to whom the dear woman said, "I never have a thought of murmuring, the Lord is so good to me. His mercies are so great. This room is a gift from the Lord to me." She then spoke of a visit from the Lord a few days before, when He applied the words, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise." I replied, "Yes, I believe your heart is fixed,

‘On the Rock of Ages founded,
What can shake your sure repose?’”

She was full of the goodness of the Lord to her. Before leaving she said, “I have a favour to ask of you.” I replied, “What is that?” Then she went on to relate how she had once seen a hymnbook, the name of which she could not remember, and in it she saw a hymn about the Lord’s afflicted people. She then said, “I felt there was food in that book.” I answered, “You mean Gadsby’s Hymnbook,” and quoted,

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

She replied, “That’s it.” She expressed how much she would appreciate a copy, however worn and dilapidated it might be. It was with great pleasure and delight I got a new copy for my wife to present to her.

O that the Lord would now arise, and make bare His holy arm, and show the wonders of redeeming grace in the conversion of many such in these dark and evil days!

E.S. Marriott

OBITUARY

Raymond George Wiltshire, faithful deacon of Zoar Particular Baptist Chapel, Reading for 26 years, was called to his eternal rest on October 25th, 2015, aged 82.

We have no particulars of when and how the Lord began His work in the heart of our late dear friend. In March 1989 he was constrained to venture forward to give his testimony and follow the Lord in believer’s baptism, by the Lord clearly speaking to him the words, “If ye love Me, keep My commandments,” and, “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.” He told of the Lord’s mercy to him in calling him by His grace to acknowledge his youthful rebellion and sin. He spoke of gradually being brought by the Lord to feel and know his complete dependence upon Christ alone for salvation.

In October 1989 he was appointed deacon, and following the death of his pastor, Mr. Philip Hope, in March 1995, he continued alone in this office. This path was one of much discouragement and trial, as they were reduced to the point where he and his wife were the only church members and regular congregation. Grace was given to persevere, and

they seemed bound by God to the place. Often just the two of them would meet together for a reading service. He would sometimes remark how thankful he was for the Lord's words: "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18. 20).

He is remembered affectionately for his choice of hymns and his simple but feeling prayers in the vestry before the services. In his later years, more often than not he would in his prayer quote the verse of John Kent's hymn (Gadsby's 1093):

"In that dread moment, O to hide
Beneath His sheltering blood!
'Twill Jordan's icy waves divide,
And land my soul with God."

He began the services of his last day in the Lord's house with the hymn:

"Thrice comfortable hope,
That calms my stormy breast;
My Father's hand prepares the cup,
And what He wills is best."

In the early hours of the next morning he fell down the stairs in his house, and was taken to hospital. When I visited him the next day, he greeted me with the words, "He has an undisputed right to govern me and mine." In a couple of days he was found to have severe pneumonia, and was put into an induced coma for treatment under "life support." As his condition appeared to be improving, he was then gradually being brought out of the coma. As I was going into the hospital to visit him for what proved to be the last time, I felt persuaded that he would be in a condition where I would get some response to what I said. When I went to his bed he looked straight into my eyes with a look of recognition and love, without any apparent fear or distress. He answered my questions with a nod or a shake of his head. I do not feel it is right in normal circumstances to attempt to "put words into people's mouths," but as he could not speak I felt it laid on my mind to ask him: "Is the eternal God your refuge?" "Are the everlasting arms beneath?" "Is it well?" To each of these questions he nodded his head. The next day his condition rapidly deteriorated, and after again signifying to his wife that it was well with him, he passed away.

After a funeral service at Zoar Chapel, his mortal remains were laid to rest in Henley Road Cemetery, Caversham, in sure and certain hope of resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ. "A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked" (Psa. 37. 16). Amongst some papers that his widow gave me afterwards, I found the following words written in Raymond's hand on a small slip of

paper: "God never has rejected and never will reject any sensible sinner who comes to Him by Jesus Christ."

May the Lord comfort his sorrowing widow.

Timothy J. Pocock

BOOK REVIEW

A Warning to Young Men, by J.C. Ryle; paperback; 96 pages; price £3.50; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

Every man and woman, young or old, has the same fallen nature. The warnings and advice given to the young are no less needful for the aged. However, the lusts of the flesh, the pride of life, and a love for the present world present differently in the various age groups. In this short book, J.C. Ryle singles out young men for particular counsel. He tenderly but plainly points out the temptations and problems to which young men may be particularly prone and offers specific practical advice. Although dated in some respects, considering his Victorian background Ryle is surprisingly open in addressing specific sins.

As with Ryle's other writings, this book is easily readable and weighted with a solemn sense of sin and eternity. In a day when there is great need for warning sinners that "except they repent, they shall all likewise perish," works such as Ryle's are important. Examining our walk, our conduct, and our hope for eternity can be painful experiences, but blessed by the Holy Spirit it will be profitable to our souls.

Amongst many valuable points, Ryle emphasises that we should "never make an intimate friend of anyone who is not a friend of God." This warning is timely, with the drive of social media encouraging us to make friends of many people. Though these may not be intimate, nevertheless we invite the world into our lives in a manner and degree unknown before. We have to do with the world, but the apostle exhorted, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate."

However, to this reviewer this book lacks something vital. In part this lack is summed up by Mr. J.H. Gosden's comments on another of Ryle's books: "We should have appreciated a stronger emphasis on the essential work of the Holy Ghost." Without this emphasis the book leaves itself open to being taken in a legal sense. The exhortation is "do, do," as though young men can turn and reform themselves. This is contrary to the experience of the Lord's people – "My grief, my burden, long has been, because I could not cease from sin." It is only the gospel (and never the law) which can effect the vital change this book drives at. Ryle acknowledges this in passing, but the balance of the book is more on what we can do than what the Spirit must do.

We find the wide acceptance of Ryle in our circles an enigma. In part this is probably due to his easy style, and the manner in which he stood out, virtually alone, in the Church of England. But it cannot be ignored that Ryle's views of the atonement were unsound (Amyraldian – that is the belief that Christ died for all men – both in terms of sufficiency and intent – but the application of the benefits of His death is limited only to the elect).

Consequently, while the call to examine ourselves is valuable, and some of the advice given is timely, the legal emphasis of this book makes it poorly suited to the young men for whom it was written.

Matthew J. Hyde, Maidstone

THE LAMB AND HIS VIRGIN COMPANY

On Zion's glorious summit stood
A numerous host, redeemed by blood;
They hymned their King in strains divine;
I heard the song, and strove to join.

Here all who suffered sword or flame,
For truth, or Jesus' lovely name,
Shout victory now, and hail the Lamb,
And bow before the great I AM.

While everlasting ages roll,
Eternal love shall feast their soul;
And scenes of bliss, for ever new,
Rise in succession to their view.

Here Mary and Manasseh view,
The dying thief, and Abraham too;
With equal love their spirits flame,
The same their joy, their song the same.

O sweet employ to sing and trace
Th' amazing heights and depths of grace,
And spend, from sin and sorrow free,
A blissful, vast eternity!

O what a sweet exalted song,
When every tribe and every tongue,
Redeemed by blood, with Christ appear,
And join in one full chorus there!

My soul anticipates the day,
Would stretch her wings and soar away,
To aid the song, a palm to bear,
And bow, the chief of sinners, there.

John Kent (1766-1843)

NOTICE OF DEATH

David Cecil Cottingham, a gracious deacon at Ebenezer Chapel, Broad Oak, Heathfield, for 40 years, passed away on Lord's day, April 10th, 2016, aged 75 years.

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord" (Rev. 14. 13).

THE
GOSPEL STANDARD
JUNE 2016

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

**GOSPEL STANDARD SOCIETY AND
BETHESDA FUND MEETINGS**

*Report of the Annual Meetings of the
Gospel Standard Aid and Poor Relief Society and also the Bethesda
Fund, held on Friday, April 8th, 2016, at Clifton, Bedfordshire*

CHRIST EXALTED

Sermon preached by Mr. B.A. Ramsbottom at the evening service

Text: “He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high” (Isa. 52. 13).

I hope many of you have come this evening with that living, longing desire: “We would see Jesus,” because if there is anywhere where we see Jesus in the Word of God, it is here and in the chapter that follows. If there were those of you here who were feelingly singing [the hymn just sung],

“Compelled I am on Christ alone to hang,
And plead that blood by which the church is freed,”

here is the sweet, sacred realisation of it.

Now in these three verses here we have a little introduction to that wonderful chapter that follows, the account of the sin-atoning sufferings and death of the dear Lord Jesus. This is a little introduction to it. Perhaps it seems strange that if this is the introduction, it speaks of the Saviour’s exaltation; it speaks of Him being very high, as if it looks right through Isaiah 53, right beyond the cross, to the crown, the glorious victories of the Saviour, His resurrection and ascension to heaven.

“He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.” But beloved friends, in one sense there is no place where the Saviour is more exalted and more extolled and made more high than on the cross at Calvary.

“O the sweet wonders of that cross,
Where God the Saviour loved and died,”

when He made an end of sin and brought in an everlasting righteousness for His people.

So in the chapter that follows, we have the bitterness of the Saviour’s sufferings: wounded, bruised, despised, rejected, even unto death. And we have the reason for it: the sins of His people. “For *our* transgressions ... for *our* iniquities: the chastisement of *our* peace was

upon Him; and with His stripes” – O those terrible wounds – “with His stripes *we* are healed.” “Surely He hath borne *our* griefs, and carried *our* sorrows.” But what a glory there is that appears in the cross of Christ and all these wonderful truths of Isaiah 53! If you and I know anything of it personally and savingly, we shall look to the cross at Calvary and we shall see that word most gloriously fulfilled there: He was exalted and extolled, and made very high.

What a solemn word is this: “As many were astonished at Thee; His visage was so marred more than any man.” But you know what the godly Puritans used to say, that Christ is never more beautiful to His people than when His visage was more marred than that of any man for them. Now do you believe it?

“So fair a face bedewed with tears;
What beauty e’en in grief appears!”

O beloved friends, what do these things mean to you? What does the suffering of Christ mean to you? I look round this large congregation this evening. We are on sacred ground whenever we open our lips to read Isaiah 53. But to hear that voice from the cross: “Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow ... wherewith the LORD hath afflicted Me in the day of His fierce anger.” Now, “Is it nothing to you?” Aren’t there many of you here tonight who can say, “Well, it is everything to me; it was not always, but it is now”? And as it is so nice on these occasions to see so many of our young people and our children here, how we long to know that the Lord in love and mercy might be working in your souls, bringing you as needy sinners to this dear Saviour once suffering, bleeding, dying, now exalted, and to find here your only hope.

“He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.” Now who is this wonderful *He*? Who is this glorious Person here? It is made clear that this is the Son of God incarnate, but in His office as the suffering Saviour, becoming a Servant in obedience to His Father for the salvation of all His people. But in the New Testament so often the words in Isaiah 53 are quoted, and it is made clear they belong to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Well, you know what Philip did when the eunuch was reading this passage, Isaiah 53, and said, “Of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?” “Then Philip ... began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.” That is our desire in our own little way this evening. May the Holy Spirit help us.

And it seems I would like to bring these words before you simply in three ways. First of all, the fulfilment of this gracious promise in the resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus; and then secondly, its fulfilment in the preaching of the glorious gospel of the grace of God; and finally its fulfilment in the heart of every sinner saved by grace.

“He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.” Even before Isaiah 53 comes to its end, there is a little glimpse of the resurrection. “When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.” That is a living Saviour. That is an empty tomb. “Him hath God exalted ... to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” “He shall be exalted,” by His Father. He was not permitted to lie in the grave. His Father raised Him from the dead. “He shall be exalted.” He must be exalted as the reward for His finished work. He must be rewarded on the ground of all He accomplished when He cried, “It is finished.” And He must be exalted as the evidence of His people’s justification, that His sin-atoning sacrifice has been accepted.

“He shall be exalted.” And so I could not forbear bringing the New Testament passage in, those beautiful words in our reading this evening in Philippians chapter 2, the Saviour, His matchless love, His condescension, His suffering. “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him.”

“There the Redeemer sits,
High on His Father’s throne;
The Father lays His vengeance by,
And smiles upon His Son,”

and upon all those trusting in the Son of God as their only hope of salvation, their only hope of heaven.

“He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high” – that literal fulfilment in His glorious resurrection and in His ascension to heaven, and in His exaltation, in His rightful place at His Father’s right hand. Never forget this, that our Lord Jesus is exalted as a public Person. Now our young people may not understand that expression, but what the Lord Jesus did, He did not do it for Himself alone, but He did it for all His people in union with Him. So they died with Him, and they rose with Him, and they entered heaven with Him as they were in Him by vital union, which means this: as sure as He is exalted and entered heaven, so one day all His people, even the most sinful, the most helpless, the most unworthy, they must all one day be with Him where He is.

“He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.” And to pass on. This word so beautifully fulfilled in the glorious gospel of the grace of God, as it appears in Scripture and as it is preached. You beloved brethren here this evening who preach the gospel, that is your desire, isn’t it, to exalt the Saviour? He shall be exalted in the gospel of His grace. He has the pre-eminence there.

“And extolled, and be very high.” We do not use this word *extolled* so much today. It means to praise Him, but it seems to embrace more.

There is worship in it; there is reverence in it. Though we do not use it much today, it does come in one of the hymns: "Extol the stem of Jesse's rod," referring to Isaiah chapter 11. "Extol the stem of Jesse's rod, and crown Him Lord of all." Now that is extolling the Saviour: to crown Him Lord of all. I wonder if any of you come in with that prayer:

"We too, amid the sacred throng
Low at His feet would fall,
Join in the everlasting song,
And crown Him Lord of all."

"He shall be exalted." This is according to the everlasting purpose of His eternal Father in the covenant of grace. "He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high." And that is what the Lord's people long to hear. Someone would like the minister to come into their pathway. Another would like something on experience. This one would like providence. This one would like an opening up of some portion. But this unites them all together, and I trust on an occasion like this, it is the gospel that unites us together. We come from different places, different characters, different thoughts, and different positions, but where there is the life of God, there is this longing to hear of the Saviour exalted, extolled and very high. Why? Because if your religion is real, you may have many things, and there may be many things you do not have, but you will have this: you will not be able to do without Him; you must have Him; and that is why you want to hear Him exalted. So lingering here, because it is a sacred theme, this word is fulfilled in the glorious gospel of the grace of God.

"He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high." He shall be exalted as *an almighty Saviour*, and that is what you want to hear, because you are sinners and you need salvation, and so He is exalted in the gospel as an almighty Saviour, as the only Saviour, and it is on the ground of all that follows in Isaiah 53. Apart from Isaiah 53, there would not be any gospel.

O but that wonderful promise when He *is* exalted as an almighty Saviour! He says, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." It is that drawing to Christ because of your need, because He is your only hope, He is the only remedy. It is the fulfilment of the glorious antitype, the serpent in the wilderness. There were Israelites dying. There was a malady. There was poison. They were serpent-bitten. There was no hope. There was nothing they could do. Whatever they might try, it did not avail. So Moses was commanded to make a serpent of brass and exalt it, (in the word here) lift it high. And as many as looked, lived. Now it was a strange remedy. You think of it, dying people and what is Moses doing? Making this serpent of brass. It was

a strange remedy, but it was a divine remedy; it was God's remedy; and it was the only remedy, and it availed.

“Jesus, thus for sinners smitten,
Wounded, bruised, serpent-bitten,
To His cross directs their faith.”

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.” And as many as looked, lived. I take it the serpent of brass represented Christ made sin for His people. There was the appearance, but there was not the awful reality. “He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” But He shall be exalted and extolled as this almighty Saviour, and there is life in Him, and in Him alone. It is the door, the only door. It is the way to heaven. It is the only way, the way of forgiveness, the way of cleansing, the way of acceptance.

“He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.” He shall be exalted as *a great and glorious High Priest*. He stands between, the Mediator, in garments dyed in blood. He has offered the one sacrifice, and by that one sacrifice “He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” And now He for ever intercedes, and He is to be exalted as this great High Priest, ever living, ever interceding, the sinner's Advocate with God, never losing a case. What is it? “This Man” – this glorious Man – “because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

“He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.” And in this: He is *the foundation of His people's hope*, their only foundation. These glorious truths here set before us – and really across the whole of this passage in Isaiah, you might see these vital words: “And the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” And He is exalted as the sinner's foundation. We have that very solemn word in the Psalms: “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” And surely, beloved friends, if ever there was a day in which foundations were being destroyed, it is today – the foundations in our country, of law and morality and honesty. We read in another place of the foundations being out of course. And what shall the righteous do? There are many things they cannot do. They feel so helpless. But we have this: there is a foundation here that never can be destroyed, and the wonderful mercy is that all those who are built on it by precious, God-given faith, they shall never be removed. Christ exalted as the one foundation on which the church is built.

“He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.” And then exalted as *the standard*. We have it quite a lot even in this prophecy of Isaiah, the lifting up of the standard, the exalting of the standard. Now

when John Gadsby commenced the *Gospel Standard* in 1835, some wondered, “Are you trying to say your magazine is the only standard for people’s religion? Are you going to be the only standard?” And John Gadsby said, “I didn’t mean that at all. It is not that we are the standard, our magazine is not the standard. It is Christ the standard.” He said, “I was thinking of it as the standard in battle, and the standard was raised, and the people all rallied round it, and they kept close to it.” Now that is the standard to be lifted up.

They used to talk about “the blood-stained banner of the cross,” and it is the rallying point. You think of an occasion like this, year by year when we come together from the north and west and east and south. There is a standard lifted up, and what is it? It is that rallying to this standard. You say, “It is to encourage one another, and hear the Societies’ reports.” It is all these things, but it is that rallying to the standard. Because when you think of what the standard meant in battle, it meant there was a warfare. There was opposition. Well, there is today, even outwardly in the world – the dreadful opposition to any mark of Christianity. But there is still this glorious standard, and it is Christ Himself. He shall be exalted as the standard – if you will, the emblem of His people’s victory – though it does mean His people’s conflict.

But then you see personally, when you are assailed by unbelief, temptation and Satan. And there is that beautiful word: “When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.”

“He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.” He is exalted, extolled and very high *on His throne in heaven*. Isaiah saw that throne. He saw the Lord high and lifted up. He saw Him in all His glory. And it had an effect. His life was never the same afterwards. O that you and I might see it – all the evil in the world – but to have a glimpse of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He is on the throne, not Satan, not these evil men in the world, certainly not blind chance. “For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet.”

“He shall be exalted.” But what an inexhaustible subject this is, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ once crucified, but now risen and exalted and glorified, and how this is all revealed in the gospel!

I will just mention one other thing. He is “exalted and extolled, and very high” *in that wonderful fulness of grace that dwells in Him* and in all its blessed suitability to meet our deepest need. Here we are, and in our condition surely we feel the opposite of exalted, extolled, very high – our need, our helplessness, spiritually, providentially, in the church, in the world. And especially we think of our pilgrimage. We have to walk it out, and there are all the dangers and the opposition. “Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens” – that is

Jesus exalted, extolled, very high – “let us hold fast our profession.” And that is the only ground on which we can continue, and endure, and hold fast our profession. Whatever we need – there is forgiveness, and there is cleansing, and there is help, and there is strength, and there is upholding, and there are supplies, and there is deliverance, and it is all there in the Person of the risen, exalted Saviour.

“He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.” But then finally, to think of it personally. If the Lord in love and mercy deals with you and me, most certainly there will be a fulfilment of this in our hearts, as the Lord Jesus is made precious, as He is made everything, He shall be exalted in our affections, and He will be extolled by us, honoured and glorified – not just singing hymns in chapel, but seeking to walk it out tenderly in His holy fear.

And He shall “be very high,” and you know where we shall be. We shall be very low. It will be an exalted Saviour, and it will be a sinner in self-abasement at His feet. O to know this fulfilled in our churches and in our midst! On one occasion, David in the thirtieth Psalm said, “I will extol Thee.” He was walking this out. He said, “I will extol Thee.” Why? He said, “For Thou hast lifted me up.” And that is what the Lord Jesus does for His people. He lifts them up. He lifts them up out of the horrible pit. He lifts them up out of the miry clay. He sets their feet on the rock. And if He has ever lifted you up, then you will want to extol Him, and you will want to lift Him up in your heart’s affections to the praise and the honour and the glory of His name.

“He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.” Well, what a subject: Christ exalted, Christ lifted up, Christ extolled, Christ very high! O but may we long for this in our churches, and in our lives, and in our circumstances, and in our hearts.

“He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.”

MORNING PRAYER MEETING

Mr. T.J. Rosier (Pastor, Maidstone) read Hebrews 6. 11-20 and spoke as follows:

The apostle here is encouraging the holy brethren to press on. He encourages them to press on upon a sure and certain foundation of truth. “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” But the sure foundation is in Zion, and is laid there, and *He* is in heaven above. Therefore the Lord by the apostle instructs the brethren to “shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end,” and the full assurance of hope is that Christ is risen from the dead. He is ascended “far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and

every name that is named.” He reigns in glory, and therefore He instructs us in the faith of Abraham. And so he says, “Be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” Abraham has inherited the promise in a personal way in his own soul. His soul is in glory. But the instruction is to his seed, the seed of promise. They were led to the promised land in those olden days. The New Testament church today is being led, graciously directed, strengthened, encouraged and drawn to the promised land, which is not in this lower, sin-cursed world, but is that glory which is yet to appear, that heavenly Canaan.

So he reminds us of the swearings of God to Abraham. “For when God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He sware by Himself.” The two immutable promises which are declared in this Epistle are from the Psalms. “Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee.” And again, “Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.” Now these are the promises, and the blessed Son of God is that Gift of all gifts. The poet very sweetly puts it:

“Jesus, the Gift of gifts appears,
To show that God is love!”

“God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that *whosoever*” – although so vile and wretched in every part, poor, needy, helpless, sinking as it were – “that *whosoever believeth* in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” If there is a believing, there is a pressing. A Holy Ghost faith brings us into a gracious and holy activity to press and to press toward Christ. As we sang in the hymn (711), there are so many obstacles – what vile hearts we have, what natures we possess, what sorrows there are, what wanderers we are – but he that believeth has a work of grace in his heart that cannot be destroyed. The work of grace is indestructible. He that believeth presses to Christ, the sure foundation, and pleads those holy swearings and promises.

I cannot go through the various verses; I must be brief. The apostle says, “Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise” – which are the sons of Abraham who live by faith. Believers are heirs of promise of the same faith as Abraham, for he believed in the Lord, and trusted in the Lord. “God ... to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things” – and I have just mentioned those – “in which it was impossible for God to lie, *we*” – now this is very sacred, very sweet – that *we*, poor, failing pilgrims here, feeling so failing in ourselves, that “*we might have a strong consolation*” – not just a consolation; “*a strong consolation.*” O may the Holy Ghost bring the sweet truth of the words of the oath into our hearts, these exceeding great and precious promises that believers plead in all their vast need as they live here. “A strong

consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.” A strong consolation is declared to the church on earth, fleeing for refuge.

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

“Who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.” And where is the believer’s hope? *He* is in glory. He is on the right hand of God. He is on the throne of power, the throne of love, the throne of mercy, the throne of wisdom, as He rules in wisdom and righteousness and love over His little church, and His scattered flocks, and His dear people here below.

“Whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.” O may we be favoured to unite in prayer, really to wrestle with Him who lives at the right hand of power. We are poor. We know we are poor. We are miserable sinners at our best, left to ourselves, but what a mercy to be a true believer, a Holy Ghost believer!

“A bleeding Christ is all they plead,
And all that guilty sinners need.”

May His doctrine drop as the rain upon us today and His speech distil as the dew, that our souls might truly draw with some joy from the wells of salvation. It is the deep, sweet well of love.

Well, may we be helped to commit our way in a personal way as we journey on, and trust in Him. Look at the state of the nation. But the righteous are the salt of the earth, and they are not reckoned among the nations of this earth. We should pray for the nation, for our rulers – we are instructed to do so – but dear friends, we are seeking that “better country, that is, an heavenly.” We think of all who are afflicted, and there are those in serious conditions, and dying – our friend John Chapman who does not live far from here, and our friend the deacon at Heathfield, David Cottingham, in a dying condition. [See Notice of Death, *May Gospel Standard*.] We must come to that place ourselves one day, my friends, when nature sinks. May we remember them at the throne of grace, and think about ourselves, and lay up prayers against that dying day.

We think of the state of Zion. What a great falling away. What a day of blasphemy and reproach. But Jesus reigns in glory. He sits there to hear the prayers and the cries of His dear people. O may we pray for the peace and prosperity of Jerusalem. The promise is, “They shall prosper that love thee.”

May the Lord help our dear brethren in prayer. I would like to call upon as many as I can, and therefore in a tender way would ask the brethren to be as brief as is possible. Also, if I may ask one or two brethren to remember our dear, retired Editor in the evening time of life, that the Lord will be with him and support him still, for we are truly thankful for and mindful of his faithful labours over so many years. And also perhaps Bethesda in this modern age in which we live. Just recently two or three people with relatives in Bethesda have spoken to me of the value of the love and the labours in the provision of Bethesda. And an aged friend who had just had respite care spoke of the loving care. So perhaps some friends would remember Bethesda also at the throne of grace. But I must not direct you. The Lord help you to pray as enabled.

Hymns 711, 480 and 739 were sung during the prayer meeting. The following prayed: Mr. J.F. Ashby (Pastor, East Peckham), Mr. R. Cottington (Blackboys), Mr. J.J. Wiffen (Sible Hedingham), Mr. J.S. Redhouse (Chippenhams), Mr. J.A. Kingham (Bethel, Luton), Mr. E.A. Palmer (Fenstanton), Mr. A. Rayner (Ebenezer, Luton), Mr. B.P. Mercer (Pastor, Eastbourne). Mr. Rosier closed with prayer and the benediction.

BUSINESS MEETING

After the singing of hymn 1053, the Chairman of the Society, Mr. G.D. Buss, called on Mr. R.K. Wheatley (Pastor, Cranbrook) to seek the Lord's blessing on the meeting.

The Chairman then read James 1. 1-17.

CHAIRMAN: Dear friends, in that last verse we have just read, we have one or two very instructive and encouraging points that I would just briefly bring before you as we commence our Annual General Meeting. The first is this: the source of all that is good is from the Father of lights. Here we are speaking of God the Father, but of course, what God the Father does, He does in union with the dear Son and the dear Spirit. But there are so many Scriptures that remind us that the origin of salvation is first of all in the electing love of the Father from which flows the redeeming love of the Son and the quickening love of the Spirit. As we were reminded this morning, "For God so loved the world" – that is God the Father – "that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And in that well-known verse, John 3. 16, we have the Trinity so clearly set forth: the Father giving the Son. You might ask, "Where is the Holy Ghost in that verse?" Well, friends, you tell me who is it that makes a believer, who creates faith, who gives faith? It is the Spirit of Truth. "He makes the believer, and gives him his crown."

So from the Father of lights come two inexpressibly-precious gifts. One, the only-begotten, eternally-loved Son, who in the season appointed of the Father assumed that human nature, body and soul, that tabernacle, that holy tabernacle, that holy temple in which He suffered, bled, died for poor sinners, and now in that same glorified body sits at the right hand of His Father spreading His once-wounded hands which are still visible to that blessed throng above. Through those hands, through that blessed, mediatorial work, come every blessing and favour the church will ever enjoy.

And the other inexpressibly-precious gift is the Holy Spirit. We were reminded in the prayer meeting this morning by more than one of the brethren that we are exhorted to “strengthen the things which remain.” Friends, we cannot do that in our own strength. What will strengthen the things that remain? What will bring the prosperity we long for? What will bring us once more to our knees in contrition and confession and believing in a precious Christ to the saving of our soul? It is the Holy Ghost. If He is withholden, we are weak, impotent, helpless, but when He is pleased to shed abroad His sweet influence and power, then I believe many of us here this afternoon do know the difference. Though we often mourn the absence, we do know the difference, and there is nothing more precious than when there is “a sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees,” and the dear Spirit, as it were, moves among the branches of the church. In so doing He gives a sweet expectation of more to follow, more grace to be given, more prayers to be answered, more promises to be fulfilled, and yes, more preciousness of Christ to be revealed to poor sinners. This is what James is telling us in this verse this afternoon. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.” Do not look for it anywhere else, not in this dying world, not in your poor, wretched heart. The source is above.

The second thing James tells us is that there are good gifts and perfect gifts. I take that to mean the difference between providence and grace. In Genesis 1 we read that God looked on creation. He said it was good, very good. But friends, created blessings, good though they are, will not take us to heaven. You may be blessed in providence more than any other man on the face of this earth and yet sink into the bottomless abyss, unless you know the perfect gift, perfection in Christ, and the perfect work of the Holy Spirit. O do not be content with just the good gifts, though we would thank God for them. We want perfection, and where are you to find it? In a precious Christ and nowhere else.

The third thing James tells us this afternoon is this: that this precious source of all wisdom, and grace, and strength, and help, and love, and mercy changes not. There are many shadows in our life. Many changes

come, some we never looked for, never expected, but with Him there is “no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

“My soul through many changes goes;
His love no variation knows.”

Bless God for the immutable promises of which we heard this morning; God that cannot lie, no variableness. Do not look for it anywhere else, dear friends. If you look to find reliance in anything out of God, out of Christ, you will be sadly disappointed. Here we have no variableness; here we have no shadow of a turning.

“Whom once He loves He never leaves,
But loves them to the end.”

May God bless these few remarks to the honour of His name and the good of our souls.

CHAIRMAN: It is my great privilege to welcome you to this Annual General Meeting of the Gospel Standard Society. As we look back over the past year, we have seen a great change in our denomination as our dear friend Mr. Ramsbottom, after forty-five years as Editor of the *Gospel Standard*, laid down that office, and our dear friend Mr. Timothy Rosier being appointed as a successor.

I would just share with you something that took place on that remarkable morning when our friend was elected. The day before was the Lord’s day, and I sat in my vestry at Old Baptist Chapel, Chippenham, and suddenly the enormity of the decision we had to take the next day came upon me, and I felt completely overwhelmed by it, and I said, “Lord, what *shall* we do?” And the Lord spoke. He spoke in those words that He spoke to Joshua, or Joshua was commanded to speak: “To morrow the LORD will do wonders among you.” And I felt in some particular way the Lord would show us unmistakably what His will was.

Dear friends, when the election took place it was so clear. There was no shadow or variableness in that election, and I trust – and we say it humbly – we were moved of the Spirit in that choice that we made, and though it brought a very heavy burden upon our dear friend, and we pray for him earnestly, we do believe, and I believe he believes, this was “the Lord’s doing,” and we would say in all humility, “It is marvellous in our eyes” that the Lord should be so kind to raise up another successor to our worthy Editor who has now laid down his pen.

I take this opportunity as the Chairman of the Societies to commend our new Editor to your prayerful concern. He needs your prayers every day, and may the Lord make him a rich blessing through his pen and ministry.

A resolution was put to the Meeting that the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on April 10th, 2015 be approved. This was proposed by Mr. M.D. Ridout (Southampton), seconded by Mr. T.J. Parish (Bethel, Luton) and carried *nem con*.

The Secretary, Mr. D.J. Christian, then introduced the Report and Accounts of the Gospel Standard Aid and Poor Relief Society for the year ended December 31st, 2015.

MR. CHRISTIAN: Mr. Chairman, subscribers and friends, As we come to another Annual Meeting we are reminded of the swift passage of time. The Word of God speaks of our lives in several ways – a weaver’s shuttle, a tale that is told, a vapour that vanisheth away – all of them emphasising the brevity of life and the certainty that our lives here are soon over, and then eternity. How different when we think of God – eternal and unchanging, whose years have no end. Is it a concern to us where we will spend eternity? Will it be for ever with the Lord or, how solemn, with the wicked in everlasting torment? May we take heed of the words of Moses in his prayer in Psalm 90: “So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”

We acknowledge the Lord’s goodness and mercy through another year. Despite the continued low returns on our investments, we have been able to increase the amount paid out in grants, thanks to the funds held in reserve. Several more chapels have been added to the list of those helped with quarterly grants towards the payment of the ministry and one minister was helped with a grant to replace his car. The total income of the Society was £123,973, and expenditure was £191,645 of which £115,091 was the payment of grants and £35,733 was for the printing and despatch of the magazines. The excess of expenditure over income was £67,925 split as follows: Aid and Poor Relief Society, £55,278, Gadsby Memorial Christmas Fund, £10,385 and Magazine Fund, £2,262. The Committee is pleased to hear from subscribers about members of our churches and congregations who may be in need so that the appropriate enquiries can be made.

The printed report mentioned an expected legacy from the late Mr. T.E. Saxby of Irthlingborough. The amount was not known at the year end, but £38,987 was received in March.

In July, Mr. Ramsbottom notified the Committee that he wished to retire at the end of the year after forty-five years as Editor of the *Gospel Standard*. This was discussed at the July quarterly meeting and a special meeting for prayer was arranged in September. In a remarkable way the Committee was directed to Mr. Timothy Rosier, and he was unanimously elected as Editor. We owe a great debt to Mr. Ramsbottom for his service for so many years and to the Lord for sustaining him amidst many difficulties. He requested that no public presentation should be made, but the Committee felt they should mark the occasion, and at the recent Committee meeting they presented him with a leather-bound copy of the sermons he had preached at the Annual Meetings. We wish him the Lord’s blessing in his retirement, and pray that Mr. Rosier may be graciously helped as he takes up the burden. We also acknowledge the help given to Mr. Buss as Editor of the *Friendly Companion* and to Mr. Scott as Editor of *Perception* and pray that the Lord will continue to bless our magazines.

The Committee was pleased to add the name of Mr. Jonathan Buss to the list of Gospel Standard ministers during the year, and since the year end the names of Mr. Bernard Burgess and Mr. Timothy Parish have also been added. We would encourage our churches to put forward the names of ministers who are members of our churches and whose ministry is in power and with the Holy Ghost. May the Lord bless the labours of all our ministers, and it is our prayer that the Lord would return in power to the churches.

At the beginning of the year Mr. Jabez Buss passed to his eternal rest. In the providence of God, Mr. Buss moved with his family to Southill in 1962 when

the chapel seemed on the point of closing, and over the years he saw a revival in the church and congregation. Sadly, this is not always the case when a chapel nears closure, and when Mr. Raymond Wiltshire of Reading passed away, Zoar Chapel had to close. Services have also ceased at Nottingham, and it is expected that the chapel will be sold. We echo the words of the prophet Isaiah: "Oh that Thou wouldst rend the heavens, that Thou wouldst come down."

The Committee does have a concern for our congregations and the state of our churches, and in November held a prayer meeting at Clifton to which all ministers who are members of our churches were invited. A further meeting is arranged, subject to the Lord's will, to be held at Clifton on November 4th, 2016 at 11 a.m. and to be conducted by Mr. T.J. Rosier.

The Committee meets on a quarterly basis and seeks to make their decisions in the fear of the Lord and without prejudice or partiality. They do sometimes have difficult matters come before them, and for reasons of confidentiality cannot fully disclose why they have taken certain action. This can lead to misunderstandings when others do not know the full facts. They seek an interest in your prayers that they may continue to fulfil the purposes for which the Society was established.

The Annual Meeting for 2017 is arranged, if the Lord will, for Friday, April 7th. This is the week before Easter, as the school term will have started by the Friday after Easter.

The Committee does make representations to those in authority when there are issues that give rise to concern. A letter was sent to the Prime Minister after the General Election in May expressing our concerns about three areas which we understood could be affected by new legislation. These were:

Protection of free speech and freedom of conscience in the workplace.

Maintenance of protection for religious bodies not wanting to conduct same-sex marriages.

Ofsted interrogating young schoolchildren about their personal beliefs on marriage, family life and other sensitive matters.

A brief reply was received thanking us for sharing our views.

A letter was also sent to the Government about the proposal to extend Sunday trading hours and a very unsatisfactory reply was received from the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills. We were very thankful that the Government was later defeated in the House of Commons on this issue.

We express our gratitude to the friends at Clifton for the use of the building for our Annual Meeting and especially to Mr. David Lawson and his family for all the work they do to make the day go as smoothly as possible.

We would encourage those who attend our chapels and support our Articles of Faith, especially our younger friends, to become subscribers to the Society. Should any major issue arise affecting the Society, it would be the subscribers who would have the right to make a decision. Forms are available from the Secretary.

In conclusion, we acknowledge the Lord's goodness over so many years and in these troublesome times in the earth may our eyes be up unto Him.

"Brethren, pray for us."

The Chairman thanked Mr. Christian for his report and said we greatly appreciate all he does as Secretary, expressing the desire that the Lord might

bless him in this labour of love. He asked if there were any questions. There were none, and the proposal to approve and adopt the Annual Report and Accounts was put to the Meeting. This was proposed by Mr. P. Barnard (Heathfield), seconded by Mr. B.E. Izzard (Pastor, Fenstanton) and carried *nem con*.

The Secretary announced the result of the election of the five members who were retiring at this Meeting and eligible for re-election. 252 ballot papers were sent out, of which 162 were returned. All five members received at least 70% of the votes cast, and therefore Messrs. D.J. Broome, J.H. Cottington, G.W. Hyde, H. Mercer and T.H.W. Scott are elected to serve for a period of three years.

Mr. J.H. Cottington (Vice-Chairman) then expressed thanks on behalf of the re-elected members of the Committee.

The Chairman said that we would not forget our overseas chapels in Australia, and Canada and America. During the week he had received good wishes from Mr. J.K. Stehouwer (Grand Rapids), and Mr. M.T. Pickett (Choteau). He read written greetings from Mr. G. TenBroeke (Sheboygan, U.S.A.), Mr. G. Seymour (Australia) and Mr. P. Dekker (Chilliwack, Canada).

He particularly mentioned that Mr. Stehouwer is a great age now and preaches sitting down, but that the Lord is still sending unction through his ministry. The Chairman commended to the Meeting the cause at Zion, Grand Rapids, that the Lord would appear for them, because Mr. Stehouwer feels his days are nearly numbered now. He is very concerned for the future, and exercised that the Lord would raise up another Pastor to succeed him in the ministry there.

The Chairman mentioned that, if the Lord will, the Gospel Standard Trust will hold its fiftieth Annual General Meeting at Clifton on May 14th, when Mr. Ramsbottom will speak on the history of the publishing of books under the auspices of the Trust, and Mr. Stephen Hyde (Pastor, Redhill) will speak on what has been done with the buildings during that long period. He said Dr. Matthew Hyde's book, *With Mercy and With Judgment: Strict Baptists in the First World War*, is expected imminently.

He said that the report of the Gospel Standard Baptist Library is included with the Annual Report, and that we appreciate the work that is done by the Librarian.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Peter Hill for starting the singing once again, and then referred to a most interesting book produced on the 175 years of the history of Clifton Chapel. He mentioned the particular blessing that attended Mr. Sears' ministry, and noticed that at the time of Mr. Sears' ministry, only two miles away there was Mr. John Warburton at Southill and it is estimated that within those two miles at that time nearly a thousand worshippers were gathering Sabbath by Sabbath. He concluded: "O that the Lord would return with the same power. It is not numbers; that is certainly true; we must not glory in numbers. But how good it would be to see once more that desire and hunger and thirst after righteousness, filling our chapel pews with those who long to hear of a precious Christ."

Hymn 1083 was then sung.

The 9th Meeting of the Gospel Standard Bethesda Fund then followed.

GOSPEL STANDARD BETHESDA FUND
9th ANNUAL MEETING

MR. H. MERCER (Chairman, Bethesda Fund): Subscribers and friends, it is my privilege to welcome you to the ninth Annual General Meeting of the Gospel Standard Bethesda Fund and present the seventy-first Annual Report and Accounts which are for 2015. We regret the delay in sending out the information this year, which arose because of the time it took for Santander to respond to the request of our Auditors to confirm direct to them the amount of the investment held by them for the Bethesda Fund of £1,174,474 in a one year bond. The audit certificate could not be signed until this verification was received.

The audit went smoothly otherwise, although this year we have had to provide figures for accrued holiday pay and to comply with the additional requirements of the Standards of Accounting Practice.

Two booklets have been provided this year in view of the additional information required to be published, such as detailed comparative figures in the Statement of Financial Activities.

We have much to be thankful for and would acknowledge the Lord's goodness in maintaining the Homes in these trying times.

The financial result for 2015 if legacies are not taken into account is an excess of expenditure over income of £290,866 compared with £308,056 in 2014. For management purposes, legacies are regarded by us as a receipt of capital, although to comply with accounting standards they have to be treated as income. The budget for the current year indicates another substantial excess of expenditure over income, which dependent on the timing of repair expenditure and occupancy of the Homes could be in the region of £400,000.

We are approaching the time when the Homes because of their age will increasingly require substantial maintenance and refurbishment. This will impact on the financial outcome for the year when the expenditure is made and these costs will be substantial.

The burden of pension contributions adds to employee costs, and we have increased the hourly rate paid to our staff by 2% in preparation for the introduction of the National Living Wage next year. Local authorities have only increased the amount they pay for the support of residents funded by them by about 1% and so the gap between the income and expenditure gradually widens. This is funded by the designated fund for which the collection is being taken today.

We are thankful that the Bethesda Fund has adequate resources to continue to meet ongoing expenditure, but there is a serious concern to maximise the income generated by our Homes. The occupation levels of the Homes are shown on page 9 of the Annual Report, and with the exception of Brighton are somewhat disappointing. It is the Committee's desire that the Homes should be fully occupied and we are thankful that the position overall has improved.

As mentioned on previous occasions, the demand for places in the Homes is not as great as it was a few years ago, and we would encourage our elderly friends seriously to consider taking advantage of the first class facilities that Bethesda offers. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection reports are

excellent and confirm the high standard of satisfaction expressed by our residents with the service provided.

We are continually subjected to increasing regulation and statutory requirements, and it is a credit to our General Manager and our management teams that we are deemed to be wholly compliant. We are not complacent and continually strive for even higher standards.

The Committee welcomes constructive suggestions from subscribers and those with an interest in the Homes about any aspect of Bethesda, and they are very concerned over the continuing depletion of our reserves. The difficulty centres on the small size of our Homes, which in today's world cannot be viable. The alternatives have been discussed over a number of years, but are not feasible.

The financial outlook is difficult because of our very high level of fixed costs and the limitations on the levels of income. Our fees are very reasonable bearing in mind the necessary costs of staff and all related expenditure to provide accommodation and care, and we are carefully considering ways to supplement the income of the Homes. This could be by providing short holiday lets in vacant staff accommodation such as the manager's flat at Studley which is not required at the present time. A number of friends take advantage of the provision in the Homes for short stays for respite care, some using this facility several times.

We are very grateful to our many volunteers and helpers who willingly give of their time and energy for the benefit of the residents. What they do is much appreciated by the residents.

May the Lord appear for us to guide and direct in the way that we should go, and continue to supply all our need.

A resolution was then put to the Meeting that the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on April 10th, 2015, be approved, with one minor amendment. Minute 2 states that Mr. P. Barnard was from Bodle Street, but it should be Heathfield. Subject to this amendment, the resolution was proposed by Mr. D.J. Lawson (Clifton), seconded by Mr. A. Chapman (Ashwell) and carried *nem con*.

The Chairman then asked Mr. Topping to present the Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2015.

MR. TOPPING (General Manager): Mr. Chairman, subscribers and friends, It is my privilege to present to you once again the Bethesda Annual Report and Financial Statements. As usual it is not my intention to repeat what has been said in the written Report, as most of you will have already had a copy, although I will be referring to it from time to time. If you do not have a copy of the report you are invited to help yourself from the box in the entrance lobby or in the schoolroom.

In the light of all that is going on in the care industry at this time, we are thankful that we are able to maintain a high standard of care and support for our residents.

Since the end of the year, there have been a number of developments. Occupancy in the Harpenden Home has continued to improve, and now stands at seventeen permanent residents, which, over the years has been the average for this Home. Occupancy in the other two Homes has remained more or less the same. Since the end of the year, Mr. Walder, Pastor of Galeed Chapel, Brighton, who had been a resident in the Brighton Home for nine years, passed away. All

three Homes have continued to see strong use of the short stay facility, which, in Brighton for a time saw every room in the Home fully utilised.

On page 12 of our Report, we said that two of our Homes had been inspected by the CQC under the new framework during the year, and that we expected the third, Harpenden, to be inspected imminently. This expectation was fulfilled on February 23rd by the unannounced visit of two inspectors. As anticipated, the inspection went well and this Home joins the other two with an overall “good” rating.

In a CQC inspection there are four possible ratings that can be given. These are, inadequate, requires improvement, good and outstanding. Qualifying for the “outstanding” rating is very challenging, and the majority of care homes that are compliant with the regulations are given a “good” rating. Looking at the CQC website, in February there were 1,237 inspections of care homes and only twenty-two of these achieved an “outstanding” rating. We would like to think that next time we could be among that number, and to this end we have been studying the reports of homes that have achieved this. Whilst there is no single aspect which differentiates an “outstanding” home from a “good” home, what does come across from this exercise quite clearly is that homes with the “outstanding” rating are invariably new facilities with additional amenities such as a hair salon or a bar. A “good” rating is still very satisfactory, however, as can clearly be seen from reading our reports. It is certainly apparent that the quality of the care and support we give our friends living in the Homes is nothing short of excellent.

We do not, however, just rely on CQC inspections to assess the quality of the service we provide at each of the Homes. In addition to speaking to our friends in the Homes and their friends and relations, we periodically commission quality assurance surveys to ensure residents are receiving the service that they require. These are very positive, which is encouraging. Where issues are from time to time highlighted, we address these promptly and improve our service.

One such improvement has been referred to in the written Report, and that is the move towards enhanced provision for dementia care in our Homes. The aim of this is to improve Bethesda’s ability to fulfil its charitable purpose to its beneficiaries by opening up the service to people who are already living with dementia, rather than just to those who develop it after they come into the Homes. This service will take some time to implement.

Although Bethesda is adjusting its service to accommodate more complex care needs in response to the changing needs of the elderly in our group of churches, there are still clear limits to the service that we can offer, and we have set these out at the bottom of page 11 of the Report. In many respects the Care Homes are, in all but name, nursing homes, and that is because of the many people with complex care needs we already care for. However, the main reason for this is because of the excellent support provided by the NHS community care specialists. Without the support of these professionals, we would not be able to look after at least a third of our residents, who would then have to go into nursing homes. Whilst invaluable, this support does in itself place a restriction on those who can be admitted into our Homes because it takes time for the referral process to be completed and for them to formulate a plan of care. For people already living in our Homes, this does not present a problem, as conditions requiring specialist support usually develop over a period of time or can be addressed prior

to a hospital discharge back to the Home. We would not, however, be able to admit someone with complex care needs straight from their own home without specialist support having been set up in advance.

Prior to admission to a Home, there will always be a pre-admission assessment carried out by the relevant Home Manager. This is used to assess what care and support will be required, and whether Bethesda will be able to offer this. We would encourage anyone considering using our service to seek an early assessment, as this will highlight whether additional specialist support may be required, and allow an opportunity for this to be arranged prior to admission.

As was indicated in the written Report, another restraining factor on the service we can provide is that our Homes were built to now obsolete standards. We are looking at a variety of ways of addressing this. Part of this is the planned extension to the dining room at the Brighton Home, for which planning approval has now been received. We are currently in the process of obtaining building regulations approval for this before going out to tender to local building contractors.

Turning our attention to fees, at the Finance Meeting in February the Committee very carefully considered the fee structure and the amount of the increases for this year, taking into account the current level of inflation and the burden of costs in providing care. This year it has been felt necessary to increase the fee rates between 1.4% and 1.9%. The ordinary care rate will now be £571 per week, the intermediate care rate £631 per week, the higher care rate £702 per week and the advanced care rate £756 per week. The short stay care rates have increased to £361 per week for ordinary, £399 per week for intermediate and £450 per week for higher.

It should be noted that many other care providers have increased their fees by about 8% due to the increased costs imposed by the new National Living Wage alluded to by Mr. Mercer that became law this year on April 1st this year. Bethesda has been able to maintain a much lower increase on this occasion as we have been largely unaffected due to our current wage rates being above the new levels set. However, next year we too will start to feel the impact of this, and may need to consider an increase in fees by a similar percentage.

As was reported at last year's Annual General Meeting, some years ago, an Underfunded Residents Fund of £500,000 was set up by the Committee by setting aside part of the proceeds of the sale of the Tunbridge Wells Home. As the name suggests, this was specifically set up to assist residents who were unable to pay the full cost of the fees. Local authorities do not pay the normal Bethesda fee, and the difference between the fee received by us and the cost of care is made up from this Fund. In some instances, this can be up to £100 per week. In addition, where a local authority denies a resident funding, but they do require help, the Underfunded Residents Fund provides the means which enables them to come into a Bethesda Home. As Mr. Mercer has already reported, the collection this year has been kindly designated by the Societies for this Fund.

As this Fund would have been completely depleted by the end of 2015, it was announced last year that, unless directed otherwise, donations received by the General Office for Bethesda would be placed in this Fund for the ongoing support of underfunded residents. This will continue in 2016. As donations alone are not sufficient to meet the needs for financial support to underfunded residents, we would encourage those thinking of leaving a legacy to Bethesda to direct it to this Fund.

Once again, our sincere thanks go to all our staff for the hard work, dedication and care that they give to our friends living in the Homes, and also to the Home Support Groups and other volunteers who give so much to support the people living in the Homes in many different ways. It was very interesting to see that the CQC inspection this year specifically picked up on the work done by the Home Support Groups, which gives some indication of the value of the work that they do.

Finally, we are thankful for the support given to us by our subscribers and we would continue to encourage people to consider supporting us in this way.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Topping for his report and all that he does for the management of the Bethesda Homes, and asked if there were any questions. There were none, and it was then proposed by Mr. D.J. Broome (Trowbridge) and seconded by Mr. G.D. Buss (Pastor, Chippenham) that the Report and Accounts of the Gospel Standard Bethesda Fund for 2015 be approved and adopted. This was carried *nem con*.

The Chairman then asked Mr. Topping to declare the result of the secret ballot to re-elect the Committee member retiring by rotation. Mr. Topping announced that 235 ballot papers were issued to subscribers, of which 151 were returned, and as a result, Mr. Henry Mercer had been re-elected for a further three years.

MR. MERCER. Thank you very much. We much appreciate the confidence you have in the Committee, who do seek to do what is in the best interests of Bethesda and seek to be guided and directed by the Lord. These are very difficult times for us, and the Committee seeks that wisdom and direction may be given faithfully to discharge the responsibilities they carry, and that the Lord would continue to bless the provision of the Homes for the benefit of His dear, aged people. The Committee seeks a continuing interest in your prayers, and a continuance of the practical support given so generously to the Homes. This concludes the business of the Meeting.

SEEKING THE LORD'S FAVOUR

After hymn 679 was sung, Mr. J.E. Pack (Pastor, Irthlingborough) addressed the meeting from Psalm 106. 4, 5, as follows:

We have just been singing in the fourth verse of the hymn,

“Come, Lord, and grant each soul to feel
Its interest in Thy grace.”

I believe that is in substance the same as what we have in these two verses of Psalm 106. They are found in the midst of a remarkable group of Psalms. Psalm 104 is a meditation upon God's mercy in providence, perhaps summarised best by verse 24 of that Psalm: “O LORD, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches.”

In the following Psalm, Psalm 105, the psalmist goes on to speak of God's goodness toward His chosen people, His covenant people, the seed

of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, with especial reference to their being led down into Egypt in the years of famine, what they suffered in Egypt, and how the Lord brought them out of Egypt and guided them through the wilderness.

Then in this Psalm, Psalm 106, we find the psalmist continuing to meditate upon the goodness of God and the ill manners of the people in the wilderness journey, and how the Lord was pleased, in spite of all their sin, to have compassion upon them. Yes, when He saw it necessary to use His rod in the hand of their enemies, still He delivered them; He heard their prayers. "He remembered for them His covenant, and repented according to the multitude of His mercies" – God's goodness toward His chosen people.

But here the two verses we have read stand out as quite distinct from the remainder of these three Psalms. They are personal, very personal indeed. "Remember *me*, O LORD, with the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people: O visit *me* with Thy salvation; that *I* may see the good of Thy chosen, that *I* may rejoice in the gladness of Thy nation, that *I* may glory with Thine inheritance." It was not sufficient for the psalmist to be able to meditate upon God's goodness to His people. He earnestly desired to experience those blessings for himself.

So as we gather here this afternoon, we think of God's goodness to our little group of churches over so many years, and we would be thankful for it, and that He has continued, in spite of all that causes us such grief, to regard us, and we hope His Spirit still remains amongst us. We think also of the experiences of so many of the Lord's people that we have known and loved or of whom we have read. How good He has been to them, but what exercise does this cause in our own hearts? Is it the exercise that we have here before us? "Remember me, O LORD, with the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people," that we may personally partake of those blessings which the Lord bestows upon His chosen people.

"Remember me." In one place we find the Lord exhorting His people to put Him in remembrance (Isa. 43. 26). We find another of the Lord's dear servants praying in a similar way: "Remember me, and visit me." That was Jeremiah's prayer, and I believe it will be the prayer of all of the Lord's people in substance, if not in the very words that we have before us.

"Remember me, O LORD, with the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people." One of the first things that the Lord will show to anyone whom He is quickening into life will be this: that the Lord has a people, that they are a favoured people, a people chosen from everlasting, loved from everlasting, given by the Father to the Son to redeem. O indeed a favoured people! A favoured people too as they consider what He has laid up in store for them – the blessings of eternal glory, deliverance from

the bottomless pit and the worm that never shall die, the fire that never shall be quenched. O what a favoured people! And all these blessings flowing through the Person and work of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

As the Lord is pleased to reveal these truths to the heart of a quickened soul, this in substance will be their prayer: "Remember me, O LORD, with the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people." Indeed we shall feel like Ruth the Moabitess when she said, "I be not like unto one of Thine handmaidens," feeling unworthy of a place amongst them, feeling ourselves to be such great sinners. But the Word of God contains so many encouraging examples of those to whom the Lord was pleased to show His favour. My thoughts go especially to the dying thief. There we find a man suffering the due reward of his sins, brought to confess it, yet his eyes were opened to see in the One crucified beside him, the King of kings and Lord of lords, and he prayed, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." O what a favoured man he was! "To day shalt thou be with Me in paradise."

"Remember me, O LORD, with the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people." We mentioned Ruth the Moabitess. Indeed, as we have already said, she felt to be unlike the Lord's handmaids, but what a desire she had to be found amongst them. When Naomi said that she should return after her sister-in-law to her gods, Ruth said, "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me." A very early memory I have of the days when I trust the Lord was graciously working in my heart in my youthful times, was hearing one of the Lord's servants quoting that couplet,

"With them numbered may I be,
Now, and through eternity."

"Remember me, O LORD, with the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people." Many indeed are the favours, but amongst those favours surely this is the greatest of the favours: the forgiveness of all their sins, the blotting out of all their transgressions. O His forgiving favour! We referred a little while ago to the verses toward the end of this Psalm when Israel sinned again and again against the Lord. "*Nevertheless* He regarded their affliction." He had mercy upon them. He did not deal with them as their sins deserved, nor reward them according to their iniquities. O what an unspeakable favour for sin to be pardoned, iniquity blotted out!

"Remember me, O LORD, with the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people."

“Speak Thy pardoning grace to me;
Set the burdened sinner free;
Lead me to the Lamb of God;
Wash me in His precious blood.”

Many other favours we could mention. Not only do the Lord's people desire that their sins may be pardoned, but they desire that they may be kept from sin, kept from evil, that it may not grieve them, and may not grieve the Holy Spirit. O is not God's keeping grace a great favour which He bestows upon His people! There may be those times when like the psalmist we say, “My feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.” But, “The LORD upholdeth all that fall.” He preserves them; He keeps them. They are “kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

But one favour which the Lord bestows upon His people is that He corrects them for their sin. “Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.” What a favour it is, painful as it is, yet what a favour it is to be the subject of the Lord's corrections. Solemn is that word we read in Hosea where the Lord speaks concerning Ephraim, “Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.” It is a mercy if the Lord does not leave us alone. It is a favour to be the subject of His gracious work in correcting us, showing us where we are wrong and putting us right, blessing us with heartfelt repentance, godly sorrow for sin, bringing us again to the throne of grace in confession of sin, pleading for mercy.

“Remember me, O LORD with the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people.” Upholding mercies. O what enemies the child of God will have to face from the world and the flesh and the devil. The Lord in His merciful favour towards His people has provided them with the whole armour of God that they may “withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” “Remember me.” O to know these things personally, to have them applied with divine power to our hearts and consciences.

“Remember me, O LORD, with the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people: O visit me with Thy salvation.” We see the wonderful work of salvation set before us in the holy Scriptures, the eternal purpose of God in giving His people to His dearly-beloved Son to redeem, and how in the fulness of time, “God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law” – the holy, spotless life of the Lord Jesus in which He fulfilled all righteousness, providing that garment in which His people will be clothed at the marriage supper of the Lamb. “Obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” The agonies of the garden, the cruel mocking and scourging, the spitting in the judgment hall, the pathway out to Calvary, bearing the

cross, and then all the agonies of the crucifixion, the cry of the Lord Jesus, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" This is the great salvation which God has provided, wrought out, by the Son of God in His life and death and resurrection, and now the Saviour has ascended to intercede for His people before His Father's throne in heaven. The psalmist prays, "O visit me with Thy salvation." Bring it home to me.

"Assure my conscience of her part
In the Redeemer's blood;
And bear Thy witness with my heart,
That I am born of God."

"Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation." I felt somewhat confirmed in my thoughts when the opening hymn was announced this morning and our dear friend the Editor read the last verse as well as the first.

"Lord Jesus, shine, and then I can
Feel sweetness in salvation's plan;
And as a sinner, plead for grace,
Through Christ, the sinner's Hiding-place."

"O visit me with Thy salvation." This is a prayer for the Holy Spirit to come and reveal and apply what Christ has accomplished to our souls. We sometimes sing in one of the hymns to the Holy Spirit:

"And heal, with balm from Jesus' wounds,
The festering sores of sin."

"O visit me with Thy salvation." And then the psalmist goes on to speak of that which it will accomplish in him if the Lord is pleased to visit him with His salvation. "That I may see the good of Thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of Thy nation, that I may glory with Thine inheritance."

"That I may *see* the good of Thy chosen." But this is not just to see it with the eye. We have a most solemn example in the holy Scriptures of a man who saw much of the good of God's chosen, and yet he was not a partaker of it. It was Balaam, a man whose eyes were opened. He could utter such words concerning the good of God's chosen. "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!" Yes, he saw the good of God's chosen and spake of it again and again. "Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel?" And then he expressed a desire, but a desire which was never fulfilled: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" Why? Because he had no desire to live their life. His heart was not right with God. He was an enemy of Israel. We find him teaching Balak to cast a snare before Israel and at last he died fighting against them. No, it is not to see with our eyes that the psalmist here speaks of when he

says, "That I may see the good of Thy chosen." He wanted to partake of those blessings. To see good food and wine is not to partake of the same. He wanted to eat of those gospel blessings, drink of them, that they might be the food of his soul, that he might grow thereby, that he might be sustained thereby.

"That I may see the good of Thy chosen." O how clearly the psalmist believed that God had a chosen people, a favoured people. We know how Satan will torment the people of God concerning this doctrine of God's eternal choice, and remember how the Lord Jesus put it: "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." What evidence did the Lord give of those who are His elect, His chosen people? They "cry day and night unto Him." Many of their cries will be similar to the words we have before us, desiring to know our part and interest in God's salvation.

"That I may see the good of Thy chosen." The Lord says, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." And how the psalmist here found his mouth enlarged to ask for greater and greater blessings. "That I may see the good of Thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of Thy nation." The Lord's people are often a mourning people, and they have much to mourn over. We do not have to go outside our own hearts to find so much to cause us to mourn, but we would not be unmindful of the things around us too – in our circumstances, and in our families, and in the churches of God, and in the nation, so much to cause mourning and grief in the hearts of the Lord's people. But it is their desire that they may know those times and seasons when the Lord is pleased to bring them up out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay, and put their feet upon the rock, and put a new song into their mouths, even praise unto the Lord.

"That I may rejoice in the gladness of Thy nation." O how painful it is at times when the Lord's people hear of others being blessed and brought into liberty, and yet they feel themselves still in the prison house. The psalmist did when he prayed, "Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Thy name."

"The gladness of Thy nation." We find David in the fourth Psalm telling us what would make him glad. He tells us there that "There be many that say, Who will shew us any good?" Such is the world around us, ever looking for good where it can never be found. But then the psalmist utters these words: "LORD, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us." He had known it in the past. He said, "Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased." O to see the prosperity of Zion, and not only to see it, but to partake of it, to know the Lord's blessing in our own soul. It is what Jabez prayed for: "Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed, and

enlarge my coast, and that Thine hand might be with me, and that Thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me!"

"That I may see the good of Thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of Thy nation, that I may glory with Thine inheritance." Well, the dear man's heart was enlarged as he asked for greater and greater blessings. "That I may glory with Thine inheritance." How would he glory? Not in himself; not in man. "Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me." It is to glory in the Lord, in what He has done for Zion, and what we hope and trust at times, as the Lord is pleased to shine upon it, that He has done for our own souls.

"That I may glory." Yes, giving all the glory to Him, the wonder that ever He should look upon such sinners, that ever He could bear with *our* ill manners in the wilderness, that He has not dealt with us as our sins deserve, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. O indeed, this is what the child of God will glory in when he considers himself, but if he is given a faith's view of Christ and what He has wrought out, what it cost Him to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, that is what the people of God will glory in for ever and ever.

We find a blessed answer to this prayer in another place in the Psalms: "The LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." You may say, "That cuts me off. My walk is far from upright." O but do you mourn over it, pray to the Lord to enable you to walk uprightly and look to Him to forgive all your failings, all your shortcomings?

"That I may glory with Thine inheritance." Inheritance. Whenever we come across this word, it may lead our thoughts in this direction. *Inheritance*. When do we inherit something? It is when one near and dear to us by nature's ties has passed away. It is through another's death that we inherit something. All the blessings that the psalmist was here praying for, they all flow through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Every grace and every favour
Comes to us through Jesus' blood."

"Remember me, O LORD, with the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people: O visit me with Thy salvation; that I may see the good of Thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of Thy nation, that I may glory with Thine inheritance." I will leave these few thoughts there. May the Lord pardon anything we have said amiss. Amen.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Pack for his address, and desired that we may be likewise granted the psalmist's desires."

Hymn 500 was sung, and the Chairman closed the Meeting with prayer and the benediction.

MAKE STRAIGHT PATHS FOR YOUR FEET

By J.C. Philpot (1802-1869)

(Concluded from page 147)

5. This, then, shall be another word of counsel, that we should be ever *setting our heart toward the highway* (Jer. 31. 21). Christ is the Way; there is no other. "I am the Way," stands written in letters of beaming light at the head, in the middle, at the end of the path, to guide the child, to nerve the man, to sustain the father. The first ray of light which beams on the soul to guide it heavenward shines from the Person and work of Jesus. Should it wander, by this it is brought back; should it faint and stagger, by this it is held up and held on, the eye still turning, the feet still moving, the heart still yearning towards the way, the only way out of darkness into light, out of death into life, out of confusion into clearness, out of restlessness into quietness, out of bondage into liberty, out of sorrow into joy, out of trouble into peace – in a word, out of hell into heaven. Blessed be God, not only that Jesus should be the Way, but that the dear Redeemer said Himself, in the days of His flesh, "I am the Way," for as these His own blessed words drop with power into the heart, they raise up such a faith in Him (John 6. 47), such a looking unto Him, even at times from the very ends of the earth (Isa. 45. 22); such a coming out of all the rags and ruins of self to take hold of and hide ourselves in Him (Isa. 27. 5; Psal. 17. 8; 143. 9); such a cleaving to Him with purpose of heart (Acts 11. 23); such a hanging upon Him (Isa. 22. 24), that, by the gentle attractions of His Spirit and grace (Song 1. 4; Jer. 31. 3; John 6. 44) He is received and walked in at every step heavenward (Col. 2. 6).

And now our limits as well as the fear of wearying our readers warn us to draw to a close. Yet would we still press a few more thoughts on their notice, seeking to condense them as much as we can; and if our words of counsel assume a preceptive form, those to whom they are addressed will kindly bear in mind that we do not mean thereby to imply any power in us or them but that of grace to put them into practical execution.

6. *Keep yourselves separate* from the shallow, light, loose profession of the day. Beware of resting on those shallow evidences whereby so many are built up, from both pulpit and press, on an insecure if not unsound foundation. Rest on nothing short of God's own testimony in your conscience, and the witness of His Spirit to your spirit that you are His child. Hate that spirit of levity, whether in the pulpit or in the pew, which is not only death to every gracious, godly feeling in the soul, but which would turn the most solemn truths of our most holy faith, the very sufferings of Christ Himself, into an entertainment for the carnal mind. Abhor that loose profession, that ready compliance with

everything which feeds the pride, worldliness, covetousness and lusts of our depraved nature, which so stamps the present day with some of its most perilous and awful characters.

7. *Choose for your companions*, and let them be few in number, the humble, sober-minded, exercised, tender-hearted, spiritual children of God; those whose company and conversation you find to do you good and to leave a sweet savour on your spirit; whose life and conduct approve themselves to you as becoming the gospel; whose walk in the church and before the world is evidently under the influence of grace; and with whom you feel you can live and die in the close and firm union of brotherly affection and love.

8. *Learn to bear and forbear* patiently and meekly with the infirmities of Christian brethren. There is a time in our Christian life when we want to set everybody right and make everything square. But we begin to find after a while that we cannot set our own selves right, nor make our own spirit and conduct square with the Word of truth. This conviction, forced increasingly upon us, makes us less keen to see the mote and more willing to take out the beam; less desirous to condemn others, more willing to condemn ourselves; less sure of the sins of our friends, more certain of our own. Besides which we sooner or later learn that it is one thing to wink at our brethren's sins, another to bear with our brethren's infirmities. We see that we naturally differ from one another, and that though grace changes the heart, the natural disposition is rather subdued by it than altered. Thus our natural tempers, stations and occupations, education and bringing up, modes of thought and feeling, views of men and things, family and business connections, prejudices and prepossessions, besetments and infirmities, our very knowledge and experience of the truth of God, our various stages in the divine life, our afflictions, trials and temptations, and many other circumstances which we cannot now enumerate, all so widely differ that you can scarcely find two Christians alike, each having his own peculiar infirmities. As, then, we expect others to bear with our infirmities, let us learn to bear with theirs, loving them for the grace that we see in them, and thus "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbear one another in love" (Eph. 4. 2).

8. *Expect a path of increasing rather than diminishing tribulation.* Lay your account with a daily cross within or without, with bodily afflictions, sharp trials and painful conflicts. Anticipate no easy road in providence or in grace, in the church or in the world, in the family or in the business, in your dealings with sinners or in your dealings with saints. God means to make us thoroughly sick of this world and of everything in it, that, wearied and worn out with trials, temptations and conflicts, we may find all our rest in Himself, and thus, as through much tribulation we

enter into His kingdom of grace, so through much tribulation we may enter into His kingdom of glory.

10. And yet, amidst all your tribulations, seek ever to *hang upon the faithfulness of God to His promises*. With all your exercises, doubts, misgivings and fears, you cannot deny that He has been a good God to you, both in providence and grace. You have for many years watched His hand in both, and can bear testimony that He has never failed you in the hour of need, and that though He has deeply tried you, yet He has hitherto proved faithful to every promise He has spoken upon your heart, or enabled you to believe and plead. Are not these so many pledges that He will never leave you nor forsake you even to the end?

“Trust Him; He will not deceive us,
Though we hardly of Him deem;
He will never, never leave us,
Nor will let us quite leave Him.”

EMMANUEL’S CLOSING COUNSEL FOR THE SAFETY AND COMFORT OF MANSOUL

Extract from The Holy War by John Bunyan (1628-1688)
(Concluded from page 149)

“There are things, O Mansoul, even things of thy Father’s providing and mine, that never were seen since the beginning of the world, and they are laid up with my Father, and sealed up among his treasures for thee, till thou shalt come thither to enjoy them. I told you before that I would remove my Mansoul, and set it up elsewhere; and where I will set it, there are those that love thee, and those that rejoice in thee now, but how much more when they shall see thee exalted to honour. My Father will then send them for you to fetch you; and their bosoms are chariots to put you in. And you, O my Mansoul, shall ride upon the wings of the wind. They will come to convey, conduct and bring you to that; when your eyes see more, that will be your desired haven (Psa. 68. 17).

“And thus, O my Mansoul, I have showed unto thee what shall be done to thee hereafter, if thou canst hear, if thou canst understand; and now I will tell thee what at present must be thy works and practice, until I shall come and fetch thee to myself, according as is related in the Scriptures of truth.

“First, I charge thee that thou dost hereafter keep more white and clean the liveries which I gave thee before my last withdrawing from thee. Do it, I say, for this will be thy wisdom. They are in themselves fine linen, but thou must keep them white and clean. This will be your wisdom, your honour, and will be greatly for my glory. When your

garments are white, the world will count you mine. Also when your garments are white, then I am delighted in your ways; for then your goings to and fro will be like a flash of lightning, that those that are present must take notice of, also their eyes will be made to dazzle thereat. Deck thyself therefore according to my bidding, and make to thyself by my law straight steps for thy feet, so shall thy King greatly desire thy beauty, for He is thy Lord, and worship thou Him.

“Now that thou mayest keep them as I bid thee, I have, as I before did tell thee, provided for thee an open fountain to wash thy garments in. Look therefore that thou wash often in my fountain, and go not in defiled garments; for as it is to my dishonour and my disgrace, so it will be to thy discomfort, when you shall walk in filthy garments (Zech. 3. 3, 4). Let not therefore my garments, your garments, the garments that I gave thee, be defiled or spotted by the flesh (Jude 23). Keep thy garments always white, and let thy head lack no ointment.

“My Mansoul, I have oftentimes delivered thee from the designs, plots, attempts and conspiracies of Diabolus, and for all this I ask thee nothing, but that thou render not to me evil for my good, but that thou bear in mind my love, and the continuation of my kindness to my beloved Mansoul, so as to provoke thee to walk, in thy measure, according to the benefit bestowed on thee. Of old the sacrifices were bound with cords to the horns of the golden altar. Consider what is said to thee, O my blessed Mansoul.

“O my Mansoul, I have lived, I have died; I live, and will die no more for thee. I live that thou mayest not die. Because I live thou shalt live also. I reconciled thee to my Father by the blood of my cross, and being reconciled thou shalt live through me. I will pray for thee; I will fight for thee; I will yet do thee good.

“Nothing can hurt thee but sin; nothing can grieve me but sin; nothing can make thee base before thy foes but sin. Take heed of sin, my Mansoul.

“And dost thou know why I at first, and do still suffer Diabolonians to dwell in thy walls, O Mansoul? It is to keep thee wakening, to try thy love, to make thee watchful, and to cause thee yet to prize my noble captains, their soldiers, and my mercy.

“It is also that yet thou mayest be made to remember what a deplorable condition thou once wast in. I mean when, not some, but all did dwell, not in thy walls, but in thy castle and in thy stronghold, O Mansoul!

“O my Mansoul, should I slay all them within, many there be without that would bring thee into bondage; for were all those within cut off, those without would find thee sleeping, and then as in a moment they would swallow up my Mansoul. I therefore left them in thee, not to do thee hurt, the which they yet will, if thou hearken to them and serve them,

but to do thee good, the which they must, if thou watch and fight against them. Know, therefore, that whatever they shall tempt thee to, my design is that they should drive thee, not further off, but nearer to my Father, to learn thee war, to make petitioning desirable to thee, and to make thee little in thine own eyes. Hearken diligently to this, my Mansoul.

“Show me then thy love, my Mansoul, and let not those that are within thy walls take thy affections off from him that hath redeemed thy soul. Yea, let the sight of a Diabolonian heighten thy love to me. I came once, and twice, and thrice to save thee from the poison of those arrows that would have wrought thy death; stand for me, thy friend, my Mansoul, against the Diabolonians, and I will stand for thee before my Father and all his court. Love me against temptation, and I will love thee notwithstanding thine infirmities.

“O my Mansoul, remember what my captains, my soldiers, and mine engines have done for thee. They have fought for thee, they have suffered by thee, they have borne much at thy hands to do thee good, O Mansoul. Hadst thou not had them to help thee, Diabolus had certainly made a hand of thee. Nourish them, therefore, my Mansoul. When thou dost well, they will be well; when thou dost ill, they will be ill, and sick, and weak. Make not my captains sick, O Mansoul, for if they be sick, thou canst not be well; if they be weak thou canst not be strong; if they be faint, thou canst not be stout and valiant for thy King, O Mansoul. Nor must thou think always to live by sense; thou must live upon my Word. Thou must believe, O my Mansoul, when I am from thee, that yet I love thee, and bear thee upon mine heart for ever.

“Remember, therefore, O my Mansoul, that thou art beloved of me; as I have therefore taught thee to watch, to fight, to pray, and to make war against my foes, so now I command thee to believe that my love is constant to thee. O my Mansoul, how have I set my heart, my love upon thee. Watch! Behold, I lay none other burden upon thee than what thou hast already; hold fast till I come.”

REPROOF AND CONSOLATION

Extract from Henry Fowler (1779-1838)

Every sight of the heart in its true colours produces a painful sensation and a heavy sigh, on account of its deplorable vileness. This lesson, however, is taught by the Holy Spirit: “He will reprove the world of sin.” A person may be sensible that he has *committed sin*, without any special light from the Holy Spirit; but a person cannot know the *root* of the evil, nor the *nature* of the evil, nor truly abhor the evil of his *nature*, without the light and might of the Holy Spirit. And where He thus works

effectually, self-aborrence will be the natural consequence. "Behold, I am vile – unclean! unclean! – carnal, sold under sin."

Nor does the most enlarged acquaintance with Christ in this life destroy an abiding sense of his utter depravity before God, considered in himself. The sacred teachings of the Spirit are designed to throw down and keep low the haughtiness and pride of the human heart; and the most severe discipline taught by Him answers the best of purposes; fiery as the trial is, and strange as it may appear, "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness."

Poor, tried soul, remember this: He that sits as a refiner's fire, designs to take away thy dross and tin; but nothing more than dross and tin shall the ordained furnace ever consume. Thy Husband has "chosen thee in the furnace of affliction," and He possesses the greatest love, and exercises the sweetest sympathy towards thee amidst the whole. "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). And, "He is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. 2. 18).

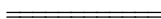
OUR NEED OF EYESALVE

Extract from a sermon preached by Donald Macfarlane (1834-1926) at Dingwall, from Revelation 3. 18. Donald Macfarlane was one of the founding fathers of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

"Eyesalve." This is the third blessing, and we need it as much as the other two (gold tried in the fire, and white raiment), for we are, as Christ says, "blind," as well as poor and naked. Here is an antidote for our blindness – the only one that can restore our spiritual vision. Then how important and desirable to have it! Without it we must continue in our blindness for ever! There is no other remedy for us. And what is it? It is the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the glorious Trinity (1 John 2. 20). It is the Spirit that applies Christ's salvation to sinners, and in doing so, He first opens their eyes to see, on the one hand, their own ruined condition and, on the other, the gracious provision which God made in Christ for them. It was for want of this blessed "eyesalve" that the Laodicean church was so very blind that she imagined herself to be in such a good and independent state as she said she was, while in truth she was in the sad condition which Christ described, and it is for want thereof that many in her condition think equally well of themselves.

Now it is not enough that we hear about this eyesalve which Christ commends to us. We must, in order to receive our spiritual sight, anoint

our eyes therewith. This is what He commands us to do: "Anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." In a secondary sense it may mean also the Word of God – contained in the blessed Bible – in connection with which the Spirit opens the eyes of the spiritually blind. The Spirit uses the Word of the law to open our eyes to behold our lost condition, to see our sinfulness. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." But the Spirit uses the Word of the gospel to reveal Christ to us, to unite us to Him by faith. The Word as means, through the work of the Spirit, may thus be meant, and we have Scripture authority for it: "The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes" (Psa. 19. 8). The word of itself cannot, it is true, effect this great work. It cannot of itself open the eyes of the spiritually blind. This requires the almighty power of Jehovah. The Spirit is equal with the Father and with the Son in nature, power and glory and He it is that has been appointed, and that has undertaken from all eternity to perform this work – to open the eyes of sinners to see their lost condition, to enlighten their minds in a saving knowledge of Christ, and to apply to them His redemption. O our great need of this all-essential "eyesalve" – our need of the Holy Spirit, without whom we cannot be saved!



HEART BELIEF AND MOUTH CONFESSION

Extract from a sermon preached by John Raven at Hope Chapel, Redhill, on Lord's day evening, August 14th, 1949, from Romans 10. 9, 10.

"With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." When the fire burns, then you will have to speak. "While I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue." I think Mr. Popham used to quote a saying like this: "If you put a bushel over it, it would burn its way through the bushel." Where there is this living faith in the heart, there will be the confession of it. "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Where the reality is known and felt in the soul, the tongue must bear witness to it, and the fruit of it must appear in the life of the person; it must be made manifest. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

"With the mouth confession is made," and there is a very sweet and very blessed way in which confession is made, according to the will of God, and that is when a poor sinner, blessed with a humble hope in Christ, a humble hope in the mercy of God through a precious Redeemer, is constrained to say to the people of God, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul." Very sweet are the lisplings of these babes in grace, very sweet. I have heard it said

at church meetings at which the stammerings of poor people have been heard, "It is the best of all our services, the best and the sweetest." When some poor sinner comes in a humble, it may be a trembling way, to speak of what he or she hopes the Lord has done for their soul, this is well pleasing in the Lord's sight, and it does mightily encourage His people. "They that fear Thee will be glad when they see me; because I have hoped in Thy Word."

"With the mouth confession is made unto salvation," and is He not worthy of it? O poor soul, is not the Lord who has done such things for thee, worthy to be confessed? Is He not worthy to be owned as your Lord?

"Ashamed of Jesus! that dear Friend,
On whom my hopes of heaven depend!
No; when I blush, be this my shame,
That I no more revere His name."

May the Lord enable us to confess Him believingly. Some of us who have been before the church and have given our testimony, have found a sweetness in telling out to others what the Lord has done for our souls, and in following Him in the waters of baptism. I believe that when things are healthy with the church of Christ, healthy with the souls of His people, it will be as we read in Malachi, "Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the LORD, and that *thought* upon His name." If you are led to think upon His name, His name will make sweet music in your heart and will shed a rich fragrance there that you will not be able to hide; for as you meet with others who fear God and love His name, you will have to speak of it.

And are they not sweet seasons when those who fear the Lord meet together and Jesus is the theme? Like those godly women at Bedford who sat in the sun at the cottage door, speaking of the things of God. Bunyan gives a very gracious description of their discourse which he, a young fellow destitute at the time of grace, listened to, and he thought they seemed to be like people in another world. It was something so altogether different from anything that he had known, and he never forgot it. Well, they spoke of the things of God, and after all, what more profitable theme can engage our thoughts or lips than the things of God, the things He has done for our souls, the things we need Him to do, the sin we need Him to pardon, the pollution we need Him to save us from, the conflict that goes on within in which we need His mighty help and deliverance, the temptations we bear, and then the sweetness of being delivered?

"He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He hath

put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God.” To be enabled to speak to the praise of the glory of His grace, to speak of what He has done and to sink into the dust for a while; for I believe that the more His people know of His gracious dealings, His intercession on their behalf, the more they will sink down into the dust, and they will lift up the name of Jesus Christ and exalt His glory. The feeling of the heart will be to renounce all their own reputation, and let their name lie in the dust, that the name of Jesus only may be exalted.

“With the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” Confession is made before God sometimes in secret; confession is made before men and especially before His people. The Lord grant that His Spirit may so mightily work in us as that we shall be among those who thus believe, and who thus confess His name.

EUROPEAN UNION REFERENDUM

The great question should be, what is the revealed will of Almighty God as to how the nations should dwell upon the face of the earth? Clearly, according to the law of God we are under commandment to love our neighbour as ourselves. Since the fall of man, the nations and families of the earth have not done this, but have warred, conquered, plundered and murdered. This then begs the question, should we all unite together as one united nation of peoples? The answer to this is also in the Scriptures. God dispersed the people at Babel for their pride, and from that dispersion the different tribes and tongues appeared, and so the earth is now filled with diverse tribes, cultures and tongues. Our duty according to the law of God, is to live peaceably side by side as neighbours. The building of Babels is not only contrary to the revealed will of God in the Scriptures, but is done in a spirit of rebellion and pride, to make ourselves as God.

There is such a correlation between the “Babel” or “Babylon” of the Old Testament, and “MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” of the New Testament (Rev. 17. 5). This cannot be ignored. The expanding “European Union” is plainly part of the New Testament “Babylon,” which first appeared as the Roman Empire, followed by the Papacy, whose strength and fortune has waxed and waned over the centuries. There are many faces to Antichrist. There is only one blessed face of God, and that is EMMANUEL.

Whilst each individual United Kingdom reader must vote according to their conscience, we feel that we must counsel that the E.U. is the

project of the powers of darkness, and the spirit of the modern age has emanated from the bottomless pit. The believer's prime consideration should be: is this project from the spirit of the true light, or is it from the prince of darkness? These pages are not for debating economic or political issues, but we feel that from the light of the truth of the Word of God, a humble believer can only vote against our membership of such a sinister earthly system.

May the Lord help us to pray over this momentous and far-reaching event in the history of our nation, and be pleased to hear the prayers of the praying remnant in this land, to overthrow the evil, and to spare this guilty realm, and also to preserve our Protestant liberties.

"Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered: let them also that hate Him flee before Him" (Psa. 68. 1).

OBITUARY

Christopher John Luckens, a member of the congregation at Jireh Chapel, Tenterden, and formerly at Southampton, passed away on January 9th, 2016, aged 71.

Christopher was the only son of Ernest Luckens, the late deacon at Scaynes Hill. He was brought up at Scaynes Hill in the fear of the Lord, but little is known when the work of grace was begun in Christopher's heart. He trained in medicine at Glasgow, attending amongst the Free Presbyterians, and he spoke appreciatively of their ministry. It would seem that a work of grace had begun by this point. He married, whilst still in training, a girl called Carola, and they were blessed with three sons. He returned south and did his registration year at Ashford Hospital, Kent, attending the Gospel Standard chapel there. During this time he visited Jireh Chapel, Tenterden, during the pastorate of Mr. J.J. Farley. Qualifying as a G.P. and setting up in general practice in Southampton, he regularly attended at Bethesda Chapel, Southampton. On occasion he was asked to engage in public prayer, and those remembering his prayers at that time speak of them as being particularly savoury.

However, sadly, there came a time when, while not actively turning his back on religion, Christopher drifted from chapel attendance, and went to the local village church where he lived. He was not forgotten in the prayers of the Lord's people at Southampton. Although now no longer attending regularly at chapel, from time to time he did return for a service. On one of these occasions, Christopher came to hear Mr. Peter Simmonds (then Pastor of Scaynes Hill), recommended to do so by his gracious mother. In the course of the sermon, Mr. Simmonds said, "You

may be put on a hospital bed to bring you back,” referring to one who had strayed. One of the Southampton congregation who was exercised about Christopher felt this referred to him, and so this proved to be the case.

Christopher continued living in the village of Durley, Hampshire, until his wife died of cancer, after which he moved to Broad Oak, Brede, East Sussex. He spent these retirement years pursuing his interests, especially natural history, and particularly butterflies. After, in his own words, “the Lord confronted him with a deep sense of his sins and backslidings,” he felt that he had pursued these things to the neglect of his soul’s good. This was not long before going on a trip to Estonia in June 2015. Whilst in Estonia, Christopher collapsed. On returning to England he had a scan which suggested he had suffered a stroke.

Under his deep sense of conviction, Christopher visited a cousin, with whom he had been in contact at various points of his life, especially when his wife was dying of cancer. Speaking of his backsliding state to her, she considered that he needed assurance, and tried to comfort him by pointing him to some words which had been made a blessing in the past, 2 Corinthians 12. 9, which had been a comfort to his wife when in her last illness, and some words in the Gospel according to John (the exact words are unknown), which had been blessed to Christopher at the same time. She asked him: “Were they real blessings?” To which Christopher could only reply in the affirmative. His cousin suggested that he return to attending chapel, and directed him to an Evangelical Baptist chapel in his area. He took his cousin’s advice, but despite attending for a short time, did not find what he wanted for his soul. The minister there was very good to him, and visited him during his last illness, but the minister felt Christopher needed assurance, when he, in the state of a convicted backslider, needed repentance and the sense of forgiveness first, before obtaining assurance.

Remembering his year in Ashford, when he visited Jireh Chapel, Tenterden, and seeking to address his soul needs, he felt he would see if the chapel was still open, and ventured to attend there on Lord’s day, August 23rd. I, the Pastor, preached from Hosea 6. 1-3: “Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up. After two days will He revive us: in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.” My discourse regarded backsliding. I knew nothing about the stranger in the congregation, and had felt a backwardness to take the verses as my text. On leaving the morning service, Christopher remarked that his backsliding had been dire and that

the sermon had been helpful to him. Here his case had been touched, and a backslider was encouraged to return unto the Lord.

Christopher was back in his seat that Lord's day afternoon, and continued to attend regularly at Jireh, as health permitted. The friends at Jireh became fond of Christopher and discerned that he was a good and attentive hearer. He appeared to enjoy the ministry, and spoke warmly of it, although in conversation it was evident that the Lord's "two day" work of convincing the backslider of his sin was still ongoing, and the time for reviving was still awaited. He had a long telephone call with me in which he expressed his fears of having sinned beyond hope, and mentioning how he had been so taken up with his earthly pursuits, even though lawful. He read a sermon by the late Rev. Donald MacLean, Glasgow (whose ministry he had sat under as a medical student), on the parable of the five wise and five foolish virgins, and spoke of how searching and solemn a sermon it was; he feared he was one of the foolish virgins.

In the months following his stroke, further neurological symptoms became apparent and Christopher's health began to deteriorate visibly, with his walking becoming increasingly unsteady. The last time he attended the Lord's house was on November 8th, when I preached from 2 Thessalonians 2. 16, 17: "Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work." This seemed wonderfully fulfilled in Christopher's case. In the following week, his doctor organised for him to have a further scan which revealed that he had an inoperable brain tumour. Christopher entered into hospital on the Wednesday, and declined rapidly to a bedridden state.

On my first visit to him in the hospital, he was able to tell me that in reading his Bible, those words were powerfully applied to him by the Holy Spirit: "For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (1 Pet. 2. 25). He spoke about them often afterwards with much feeling. He lived in the comfort of them until his end.

Those visiting him in the hospice remarked at the wonderful peace with which he was blessed. A visiting friend read to him Isaiah 35. Christopher gripped his hand tightly, and the tears freely flowed as he heard the words: "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." He spoke to me about entering into the twenty-third Psalm and how he found the Psalms and many of the hymns in the Gadsby's Selection such a help and

comfort. The last but one occasion of visiting him, my wife shook his hand to say good bye and quoted the hymn,

“Yes, I shall soon be landed,
On yonder shores of bliss;
There, with my powers expanded,
Shall dwell where Jesus is.”

He gripped her hand tightly for some minutes as if he believed it would be so.

Naturally he had everything that life could give, but now he was a backslider returned, a vessel of mercy fitted for glory, and he wanted nothing of this world's things. Not a murmur of regret was heard to pass his lips. Christopher passed peacefully away on Saturday, January 9th, 2016. We believe he was one of the ransomed of the Lord, brought back by the free and sovereign grace of God, and that he has now entered into that place of eternal rest.

Since Christopher's return from his backsliding state we have learned that there were those who knew him in his earlier days that had not ceased to pray for him and those prayers were blessedly answered. One person had it laid on her mind to pray for him only a few days before she heard that he had returned to Jireh Chapel, Tenterden.

May this account be an encouragement to all in Zion who yet have to pray over prodigals and backsliding souls. The Lord is yet merciful; He is yet working in Zion: may Zion trust in Him.

Gilbert W. Hyde

A POEM BASED ON PSALM 84

How lovely are Thy dwellings fair!
O Lord of Hosts, how dear
The pleasant tabernacles are,
Where Thou dost dwell so near!

My soul doth long and almost die
Thy courts, O Lord, to see;
My heart and flesh aloud do cry,
O living God, for Thee.

There ev'n the sparrow freed from wrong*
Hath found a house of rest;
The swallow there, to lay her young
Hath built her brooding nest.

* Harm or danger

Ev'n by Thy altars, Lord of Hosts,
They find their safe abode,
And home they fly from round the coasts
Toward Thee, my King, my God.

Happy, who in Thy house reside,
Where Thee they ever praise,
Happy, whose strength in Thee doth bide,
And in their hearts Thy ways.

They pass through Baca's thirsty vale,
That dry and barren ground,
As through a fruitful, watery dale
Where springs and showers abound.

They journey on from strength to strength
With joy and gladsome cheer,
Till all before our God at length
In Zion do appear.

Lord God of Hosts, hear now my prayer,
O Jacob's God, give ear,
Thou God our shield, look on the face
Of Thy anointed dear.

For one day in Thy courts to be
Is better, and more blest,
Than in the joys of vanity
A thousand days at best.

I in the temple of my God
Had rather keep a door,
Than dwell in tents, and rich abode,
With sin for evermore.

For God the Lord, both sun and shield,
Gives grace and glory bright,
No good from them shall be withheld
Whose ways are just and right.

Lord God of Hosts that reign'st on high,
That man is truly blest,
Who only on Thee doth rely,
And in Thee only rest.

John Milton (1608-1674)

Grace and glory differ very little. The one is the seed, the other is the flower; grace is glory militant, glory is grace triumphant.

Thomas Brooks

THE
GOSPEL STANDARD
JULY 2016

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

THE BRUISED REED AND THE SMOKING FLAX

*Sermon preached by Frank Luther Gosden at Galeed Chapel,
Brighton, on Wednesday evening, June 19th, 1946*

Text: “A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench: He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for His law” (Isa. 42. 3, 4).

It is an infinite condescension in the great God to reveal Himself to men. That revelation we have in the Word of God, which makes the doctrine of the inspiration of the Scriptures to be not only a precious doctrine, but an all-important one. For what would be the value of such a declaration as is in the text and in the opening verses of this chapter* were it not the very word of the living God? God is pleased, by His blessed Spirit speaking through His Word, to make known that there is a kingdom which is not of this world; that there are eternal realities which are unseen, different from anything material; and those things are viewed by faith as being essential to salvation.

My friends, we need something different from anything we can see, for our immortal souls. Whatever our natural eyes can look upon, whatever our hands can handle of a material kind, good as they are in that they show forth the glory of the Creator, yet we must know something, possess something, which we cannot see with our natural eye or hear with our natural ear. Have you ever been thankful that there is revealed in the infallible Word of God a kingdom, an inheritance, blessings which are conveyed to the new man of grace and received by faith, which constitute the kingdom of God?

And it is God the Father who speaks at the beginning of this chapter concerning His beloved Son: “Behold My Servant” (verse 1). O what grace is here! He invites poor, ruined, unworthy, perishing sinners to behold His Servant! The Lord Jesus could not be a Servant of the Father except as He became incarnate; and as you view by faith, at times, the Father’s Servant carrying out the work which His Father gave Him to do, view Him doing that work as the Servant, not only of the Father, but of

* “Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth; I have put My Spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street” (Isa. 42. 1, 2).

the church, it will humble you. The Lord Himself said, “I am among you as He that serveth” (Luke 22. 27) – He who “thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a Servant” (Phil. 2. 6), to serve for His dear people, to finish the work that His Father gave Him to do. That work was for His bride, His church.

“Behold My Servant, whom I uphold” (verse 1). This expresses the reality of His human nature. There is something very blessed in the reality of the human nature of Christ. It was never anything more than human; it was sinless humanity.* John said of Him, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” His human nature was never anything *more* than human nature without sin; had it been so, He would not have constituted a perfect Substitute. Therefore He needed, in His human nature, to be beheld. “Behold My Servant.” It is said of Him in the spirit of prophecy, “He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall He lift up the head” (Psa. 110. 7). With strong cries and tears He prayed unto His Father; His human nature was tormented under the terrible ordeal which constituted our redemption when He said, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (Matt. 27. 46).

Behold Him. His Father delighted in Him, yet it is a mystery that we should read in this prophecy, “It pleased the LORD to bruise Him” (Isa. 53. 10). It pleased the Father to bruise His beloved Son. “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3. 17). My friends, all these blessed declarations of the Father concerning His Son belong to everyone who, in the covenant of grace, has union with Christ. All that the Father says of the Son, He says concerning His own people: “Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth: I have put My Spirit upon Him” (verse 1). In His human nature, as the Father’s Servant, He condescended to receive the Spirit; He was anointed to preach the gospel. The Holy Spirit makes this over to a poor sinner, so that he understands a little of what the hymnwriter says:

“But what can poor lost sinners say,
When once they get a view;
And hear the blessed Spirit say,
‘All this was done for you?’”

“Behold My Servant.” Now this is the Person spoken of in the text: “A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench.” This describes a condition of His people – a bruised reed, not a barked oak tree. You may cut a gash in the trunk of a mighty oak, and it will make little difference to it.

But here is a reed, and in itself a useless thing, which only has to be squeezed, to be bruised to make it hang down. Let us try to consider this

* Remember, He ever was, and ever is Almighty God, the Son. Editor.

experience which is expressed in this word. There is nothing which will bruise as does guilt upon the conscience. I say this because I believe I have felt it. Many troubles come to us, and while we recognise that all trouble is procured by sin, yet you will understand me when I say there are some troubles in which we are involved which have not a sense of guilt in them; it does not come from ourselves. I felt the other day that I could bear anything that had not guilt in it, the weight, the blackness of guilt. Have you known what it is to feel sin to be your only trouble, your only enemy, your only burden? It may be in looking back over your past life in the light of God's goodness, that past offences pain your eyes. You feel bruised; but it is a mercy to be bruised.

This bruising is spoken of elsewhere in this prophecy: "Bread corn is bruised" (Isa. 28. 28) – dealt with in a very different way from the other grain mentioned there. Anything that is bruised is tender, and the bruising of guilt is in the conscience. It is a very solemn thing to have a seared conscience, a conscience that will no longer register actions, sins; a terrible thing to be given up to hardness of heart! But where the conscience is tender, there is, one might say, a divine official recorder which registers in the conscience every action, every thought. There will be times when the conscience bleeds before God. There is no bruising like the bruising of conviction of sin, and it is very blessed to meet with such a "bruised reed."

This will purge the heart and the conscience; it will purge our pride; it is the way to that experience described by the psalmist: "LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me ... my soul is even as a weaned child" (Psa. 131. 1, 2). There is mourning in this bruising; the heart is broken, contrite, not divided; it is filled with repentance. In this bruising, love is squeezed out. O what vehement desire, what revenge is felt, and, like Ephraim, what smiting upon the thigh!

Sometimes the Lord will bruise His people in His dealings with them in a way of chastening. But though He may bruise you in your circumstances, may wither some healthy plant, may dry up some created stream; though He may reduce a healthy body to affliction and weakness, it will have an effect in your heart and conscience. That is where the bruising is, and you will be like David. He made no complaint with respect to any temporal losses or with respect to his body; it is a question of his soul all the way through the Psalms. It was so, too, with Job. The whole of the exercises of poor, bruised, broken, afflicted Job, under the sanctifying influence of Christ, brought him to this: "Oh that I knew where I might find *Him!*" (Job 23. 3). O the tender language that comes out of a broken, squeezed heart. I believe I know what this is: when under sanctifying influence your fallow ground is broken up, you will

say, "Before I was afflicted I went astray" (Psa. 119. 67); but when some affliction, in the all-wise hand of God in His mercy, comes, and He commands the north wind to awake, sends some adversity which bruises you, O then what a difference there is in the condition of your soul! You may perhaps have been left to become entangled with something in this world; some advantage has been set before your covetous heart by which you might gain; your eyes have been turned from the things of the Spirit to the things of the flesh; you may have been unconscious of it until you find your soul overgrown with weeds and briars; your religion has become weak and formal, your prayers covered with mildew; you find the cankerworm and the palmerworm have eaten every green thing.* It is good of the Lord to discover in us every bad state; and a view of them and of our backslidings will bruise.

I believe dear Asaph was a bruised reed. When God took him into the sanctuary, he saw how hardened he had been before; his eyes and heart were in the wrong direction, away from God; he was looking at the dust and ashes and dung, the things of this world; his "feet were almost gone;" he "was envious at the foolish" (Psa. 73. 2, 3). Why did not God let him go? Because of the covenant: "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him" (Isa. 3. 10). It must be well with him; we should never be restored but for the covenant of grace, the covenant of mercy and love. The Lord brought Asaph into the sanctuary, and he came out bruised, broken, ashamed, and yet rejoicing. He rejoiced and was ashamed. Both of these sensations are in the heart of a bruised reed. "I was as a beast before Thee." How amazing that *nevertheless*, and notwithstanding what I was, my envying and my coveting, notwithstanding that "I was as a beast before Thee," yet "*nevertheless* I am continually with Thee: Thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory" (Psa. 73. 22-24).

"A bruised reed shall He not break." You may be bruised by reproach; what a mercy to have the life of faith in the soul which lives and labours under load. You may know something of what David experienced when Shimei cursed him: "Let him curse," said his broken heart. David's conscience was tender, and he said, "Let him curse; for the LORD hath bidden him" (2 Sam. 16. 11), as though he would say, remembering his sins, "I deserve a worse curse than Shimei's; I deserve the curse of God." Have you ever borne reproach that you did not deserve, and yet felt in your heart a sense of unworthiness?

"All hail reproach, and welcome shame!
If Thou remember me."

* "That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten" (Joel 1. 4).

“A bruised reed shall He not break.” He bruised Jacob in order that Jacob’s own strength should be reduced to nothing; He put his thigh out of joint. Jacob was in trouble; his conscience was alive; he remembered his sin against his brother and the despicable lie with which he had deceived his old father, and he was bruised. He had been called by grace since then, and his heart made tender: “I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me,” he said (Gen. 32. 26). This bruising had a good effect, my friends. You will lie down upon your bed sometimes with a bruised, broken heart; and your affections will be drawn out to God so that you will say, “There is no beauty in anything but Him.”

“And the smoking flax shall He not quench.” I have felt lately that I wish I could aspire to the experience of “smoking flax,” and have wished I had enough life in me to cause even smoke. Perhaps some of you have known what it is to feel in your experience to be more destitute in your soul, and in a weaker state, than smoking flax; for there must be fire there to cause smoke, if only a spark. What will make smoking flax? Why, when the enemy comes in “like a flood” (Isa. 59. 19) and threatens to quench the sacred flame of faith in the heart. The hymnwriter knew this experience when he prayed,

“Preserve the power of faith alive
In those who love Thy name;
For sin and Satan daily strive
To quench the sacred flame.”

It will never go out; the Lord will not quench the smoking flax, weak faith, little faith, feeble faith. It is *mighty* faith; even though it is only as a grain of mustard seed, it will remove mountains. A grain of faith will take us to heaven. A grain of faith will be permitted to overcome omnipotence. A grain of faith will overcome the world.

“The smoking flax shall He not quench.” There is a word in Solomon’s Song like this: “Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke?” (Song 3. 6). Whatever may be said of this smoking flax, smoke comes from fire; but there is so much soot of things that come up from the fire – things that have been consumed. So with the poor, repenting sinner – O how he mourns before the Lord, his unworthiness, his doubts, his fears; how he sighs and cries for the abominations done in the land. I believe these confessions of sin under the sanctifying influence of grace, giving one really to feel the defilement of this world and everything around to be death – these confessions and complaints ascending up to the Lord – are from the life of God in the soul. But it is like smoking flax: little else but complaints, mourning and sighing because of what you are and where you are in the wilderness.

But, my friends, have you never discerned that there is a kind of “coming up from the wilderness” condition even in your humble

complaints to the Lord – complaints of what you feel in yourself and round about you? Isaiah speaks in the sixth chapter, “Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips” (Isa. 6. 5). It was the smoke coming from the fire of life in his soul. And see the smoke going up from Job: “Behold, I am vile” (Job 40. 4). Sanctifying grace does not make a man to be unconscious of sin, either in himself or in the world. I remember last year going toward Irthlingborough, and a chimney at one of the factories was emitting a dense, black column of smoke; and this word came (and I felt it expressed my case): “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions” (Isa. 44. 22); and I felt that if there was a chimney from the soul of man whose sins the Lord had blotted out, if their sins could be seen to be emitted, mine would be the blackest column of smoke from any chimney.

Just another figure about this smoking flax: we have it in Psalm 68: “Though ye have lien among the pots” – where they had their dirty little stick fires (and you may feel at times to be among the soot and dirt of your own nature and like the church describes, “I am black” (Song 1. 5), and you feel to be little else), yet “though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold” (Psa. 68. 13).

“The smoking flax shall He not quench.” It is His own life in the soul. Life will assert itself, and mysteriously enough, life is discovered in a lamentation of felt death. “A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench; He shall bring forth judgment unto truth.” Notice in the first four verses of this chapter that the word judgment is used three times. In the first verse, “He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles”; in the third verse, “He shall bring forth judgment unto truth”; and in the fourth verse, “till He have set judgment in the earth,” or as it is in Matthew, “till He send forth judgment unto victory” (Matt. 12. 20). To my mind this word “judgment” expresses the gospel. The gospel is a law, and judgment comes forth from a law: “Out of Zion shall go forth the law” (Isa. 2. 3).

“He shall bring forth judgment unto truth.” This sets forth the work of Christ as the Mediator, the Substitute for His people. He said in His intercessory prayer to His Father, “I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do” (John 17. 4). This was the judgment; the law entered into the whole of the work of Christ; it scrutinised Him. If the holy, just law of God, which was an expression of His divine character, His glory, His holiness, could have discovered in the work of Christ one fault, one “spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing” (Eph. 5. 27), then judgment would not have been brought forth unto truth, and for His dear people, judgment would not have been sent forth unto victory. Does that mean anything

to us? How good of the Lord to give such a revelation of the work of His dear Servant, for poor, unworthy, bruised reeds and smoking flax!

"He shall bring forth judgment unto truth" – bring it forth. This is a prophecy concerning Christ, the perfection of His work. It is connected with the victorious thanksgiving of the church in the Corinthians: "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15. 57). What victory? Why, the victory of His birth, the victory of His sufficiency, the adequacy of His sufferings. His sufferings were such that He was made perfect through suffering. This is the judgment; I have thought of it and expressed it at home sometimes, that the work of Christ was a specific work; it was commensurate with the need of the salvation of the church. The Lord Jesus was made perfect as the Substitute for His people in His sufferings, in that He suffered to the extent that was commensurate with the punishment they deserved. Had He suffered one iota less, He would not have been perfect; and judgment would not have been brought forth unto truth. There would have been no victory. "Behold My Servant," the suffering Servant. I wish I could express it; I wish the Holy Ghost would convey it to our hearts; that is where He will bring it forth, and at the last He will bring it forth in heaven, when He will say, "Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given Me" (Isa. 8. 18). There shall not a hoof be left behind: there is a fulness of grace sufficient to save.

This judgment concerns the unsearchable riches of Christ which paid the debts of bankrupts, and this will be brought forth at the judgment; they will be cleared. This will be the language, the challenge: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died" (Rom. 8. 33, 34). Blessed challenge! "He shall bring forth judgment unto truth." O that the Holy Ghost would bring it forth into some poor, trembling sinner's heart!

"A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench." Instead, He shall bring forth a completed gospel. O how judgment was brought forth unto truth when, upon the cross, the Saviour cried, "It is finished!" What would it be in one word if the Lord were to bring it into our experience? "Ye are complete in Him" (Col. 2. 10).

"He shall not fail nor be discouraged." Salvation is not a naked act of omnipotence. Omnipotence is in all that Christ did; but He does not save His people by an arbitrary act of omnipotence. Had it been so, there would have been no need for the incarnation of the Son of God, no need of His sufferings, no need of a Mediator, no need of a High Priest, no need of a Surety. But there *was* a need for those offices and relationships which the Lord Jesus condescended to assume, because of the holy character of God and the ruined state by sin in which the church was.

“He shall not fail nor be discouraged.” This expresses the immutability of the love of God. I think (if indeed I belong to the Lord) that if ever there was anything that could discourage Him or cause Him to fail, I have no need to look outside myself. But how beautifully it is expressed in Ezekiel, where the church in her fallen, filthy state is described under the type of a wretched infant cast out in its blood.* He did not fail, and He was not discouraged. The apostle felt it; he said, “I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8. 38, 39). I think that of all the different things enumerated by the apostle, the case of the angels has been so remarkable to me: *angels* shall not be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ. I think the apostle had the thought in his mind that such was the love of God that when He saw the ruined state of fallen rebellious people, He did not say, “I will have nothing more to do with them; I will cast off the whole of the human race and will be satisfied with angels; I will have angels to dwell with Me in eternity.” No: “I am persuaded,” says the apostle, that angels shall not separate us. “He shall not fail.”

And, “He shall not fail” for this reason also, that “in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2. 9). There is a fulness of grace, of power, of divine mercy, a fulness of infinite wisdom, of sanctification. Therefore, “He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgment in the earth.” I believe, although at present there is not much sign of it, that this prophecy has yet to be fulfilled, that “the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea” (Hab. 2. 14). There is an amazing prophecy in Zechariah. It is made to the church, of a gracious reviving which appeared impossible of fulfilment; but, says the Lord, “If it be marvellous in the eyes of ... this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in Mine eyes?” (Zech. 8. 6).

“The isles shall wait for His law.” The “isles” here perhaps primarily intended the Gentiles, but I believe the gospel will be extended, and the kingdom of God will be extended, to cover every part of the earth, every nation, every country, and every tongue. There is to be no exclusion with God with respect to salvation; there is to be “neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all” (Col. 3. 11).

* “None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the lothing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born. And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live” (Ezek. 16. 5, 6).

“The isles shall wait for His law.” I think I am warranted to say this, that an island is a desolate place surrounded by water, cut off from the mainland as John was when he was in the isle of Patmos for the Word of God. So it may be in your experience. You may be, as it were, cut off from the mainland, surrounded by the waters of affliction, feeling your hope cut off for the most part. You may be in an experience where you feel to be not like unto one of the Lord’s handmaids;* but these feelingly desolate ones shall wait for His law and “they shall not be ashamed that wait for Me” (Isa. 49. 23).

May the Holy Spirit show unto us this blessed Servant, and bring the things of Christ into our hearts, so that we may live upon Him.

SUPERABOUNDING GRACE

A letter by Samuel Turner of Sunderland (1788-1854)

Dear Brother in the Lord,

The horseleach has two daughters, crying, Give, give; but I have many sons and daughters, crying, Preach, preach; write, write; and they often suck me dry. I am to give, though a beggar myself; and expected both to preach and write, though ever so empty, barren, poor and needy. Well, it causes me to apply to that inexhaustible fulness of Christ: “For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell,” and to which I have a right to go at all times, it being made over to me for my use and benefit. I can, in measure, say with the apostle, “As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.” For the apostle saith again, “All are yours; and ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.”

You, my brother, have been the means of my obtaining precious supplies, that out of an earthen vessel, the heavenly treasure might be poured forth to you; that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. Exceedingly sinful sinners require superabundantly rich grace, and this superabounding grace has been richly displayed towards us. “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” How exactly these words express the feelings and desires of our hearts! O no! we would not continue in sin, but sin dwells in us; and, at times, prevails against us, bringing us very low, and causes the bitter complaint, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

But so rich, free, immutable and powerful is divine grace, that it triumphs over our awfully sinful nature, and causes us to triumph in

* “I be not like unto one of Thine handmaidens” (Ruth 2. 13).

Christ, and to glory in the Lord alone. The great power of sin, and of the devil, requires great deliverances; and the Lord, who is rich in mercy and great in power, works them out. Many times hath He delivered us, and we have sung His praise, but have soon forgot His works, and the next trial has set us to murmuring.

And why have we not been destroyed, as other murmurers have been? Because God being determined to bless and save us, and being of one mind, hath multiplied pardons and restored us into the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." May the Almighty favour us with more humility, that we may be ashamed of ourselves; and bless us with more of that precious faith, which worketh by love, that we may more firmly believe in Him to whom belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against Him; and that we may most dearly love Him, and rejoice in Him, as a sin-forgiving and sinner-saving God. Sin condemned in the flesh of Christ, and pardoned in ours! O the manifold wisdom! O the exceeding kindness and rich grace of our God! May the Holy Spirit direct our hearts into the love of God, that we may love Him more and more, whose love to us passeth all understanding.

"This is the grace that lives and sings,
When faith and hope shall cease;
'Tis this shall strike our joyful strings
In the sweet realms of bliss."

Samuel Turner

THE EXCELLENCY OF PRAYER

By William Huntington (1745-1813)

PRAYER is the blessed means which God has appointed to bring every grace from Christ to the believer. The believer is to let his requests be made known unto God, and for his encouragement God says that the prayer of the upright is His delight, yea, He says that He loves to hear it. "Let Me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely" (Song 2. 14).

PRAYER is the casting of our cares and burdens on the Lord. It is the pouring out of the soul before Him, the showing forth of our trouble to Him. Prayer is communing and corresponding with Christ and receiving grace from His fulness to help in every time of need. It is keeping open the intercourse between the Lord and His people. It is their way of paying morning and evening visits to the King of kings and Lord of lords. It is their going to court and showing their respect and loyalty

there. It is their means of keeping their debt book clear, of cultivating and keeping up perfect friendship with a Friend who loves at all times, and therefore it should never be neglected.

PRAYER is pouring out the soul unto God and showing before Him our troubles (Psa. 142. 2). It is casting our cares upon Him who careth for us (1 Pet. 5. 7), and our burdens upon Him in whom we are to say, "We have righteousness and strength." It is opening the heart, the mind, and the mouth to Him who hath said, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me" (Psa. 50. 15). It is opening to Him who is the well-beloved of His people, and who said, "Let Me see thy countenance, let Me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." It is besieging the everlasting kingdom, moving the throne of grace and knocking importunately at the door of mercy – encouraged by the promise, "Knock, and it *shall* be opened unto you" (Matt. 7. 7).

In prayer we must take no denial. If we have but a feeling sense of our wants, a Scripture warrant to go upon, or one promise to plead, we must sue, argue, reason, plead, supplicate, intercede, confess, acknowledge, thank, bless, praise, adore, repeat, importune, observe, take hold of, and turn to advantage whatsoever may be of use to the soul. Sinners, sensible of their lost estate by nature, who feel their need and poverty, have many invitations, encouragements, precedents and promises. They have, under the teachings of the Holy Spirit, to plead and rely upon the covenant of Jehovah, the oath of God, the merits of Christ, and all His covenant engagements, undertakings and performances; the covenant characters He sustains, His incarnation and near relationship to them, together with all the glorious train of divine perfections found in the proclamation of the name of God to Moses (Exod. 34. 6, 7) – for these all sweetly harmonise and brightly shine in Christ crucified, who has never once yet disappointed the hope of a penitent sinner, but has graciously said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11. 28). His promises, like Himself, are unchangeable, and this is one of them: "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).

PRIVATE PRAYER is the Christian's court-visit to his God, the life and breath of his soul; it is the ascent of the heart to the Almighty, and its returns are the descent of Christ to the soul's help.

PRAYER is the assuagement of grief, the easement of a burdened heart, and the vent of a joyful one. It is the rich savour of mystical incense, the overflowing of a living fountain, an all-prevailing sacrifice, and the delight of the Almighty. Moreover it is the greatest, best, most

blessed and most glorious privilege, with which perishing sinners ever were favoured.

PRAYER is a defence against the spirit of this world; a bar to the inroads of vanity; a maul upon the head of the old man; and a lash of scorpions for the devil. It is a bridle in the jaws of a persecutor; a spell to a voracious enemy; a dagger at the heart of a heretic; a key to a parable and dark sayings; and a battering-ram on the walls of salvation; for, “the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force” (Matt. 11. 12).

PRAYER from the lips of a blind beggar compelled the Sun of Righteousness to stand still, and gave light to one who till then had been in darkness (Luke 18. 35-43). It brought the Ancient of Days to dwell in a bush (Exod. 3. 4); yea, Omnipotence itself, held by its fervent power, has been constrained to say, “Let me go, for the day breaketh,” but dust and ashes replied, “I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me”; and God blessed him there, and allowed that Himself had been conquered, and honoured His antagonist by styling him a prevailer with God (Gen. 32. 24-29). Thus was Juda’s Lion overcome and the lame man gained the victory.

PRAYER uncloses the bountiful hand of God, opens the door of mercy, retains Christ on the throne of the affections, and covers every rival and usurper with shame and confusion of face. It is the believer’s Royal Exchange, where he may take his cares, burdens, snares and troubles, his vexations, temptations, doubts and fears, his misgivings of heart, sorrows of mind, hardness of heart and ingratitude, together with his faintness, unbelief, spiritual jealousy and rebellion; also all his disorders – the leprosy of sin, the evil within, the plague of his heart, or the plague of his head; with deaf ears, blind eyes, feeble knees, languid hands, halting feet and a stiff neck. He may there take all his oppositions, persecutions, false charges, slanderous accusations, vile reproaches, and there get rid of and leave them all.

Our Saviour compared His followers to “exchangers” (Matt. 25. 27); and such they are, for in return for these troubles they receive from their heavenly Banker, numberless deliverances, blessings and mercies; many refreshings, renewings, revivals and restorations; large returns of comfort, peace, love and joy; together with fresh discoveries, love tokens, wholesome truths, profound mysteries, glorious glimpses, bright prospects, terrestrial views, undoubted evidences, infallible proofs, heavenly lessons, confirming visits, conspicuous deliverances, earnest, pledges and foretastes – reviving cordials, valuable banknotes in “exceeding great and precious promises,” payable this *very day*, and every day through life, and even to millions of ages after date, signed,

sealed, and delivered by Jehovah Himself, the “God that cannot lie” (Tit. 1. 2).

PRAYER has often scattered the confederate enemies of the soul, marred the schemes of opponents (Neh. 6. 14); frustrated the token of liars, and made diviners mad. It counteracts the designs of Satan and his emissaries; it has made the minister of truth to be an enemy to the world, the successful rival of impostors in the pulpit, the envy of hypocrites, an eye-sore to the devil, the admiration of perishing sinners, a spectacle to the world and a wonder to himself. He prays to his Father in secret, and his Father who seeth in secret has engaged to reward him openly (Matt. 6. 6). By prayer the poor come up from the dust, and the beggar from the dunghill, to sit among the princes of God’s people, and inherit the throne of glory.

PRAYER in faith has brought in countless providential mercies, as well as spiritual blessings. God could have granted them all without asking, but condescended to honour this exercise by saying, “I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them” (Ezek. 36. 37).

PRAYER has brought the souls of some when departed, back into their bodies again (1 Kings 17. 17-24; 2 Kings 4. 32-37). It engages the Almighty on the side of the suppliant and establishes an alliance with God. It has stopped the bottles of heaven for three years and six months, and opened them again at the expiration of that term (Jas. 5. 17, 18). Yea, it has brought a miraculous plenty into the house of a poor widow, while destruction and famine were reigning all around in universal triumph (1 Kings 17. 8-16). “All things are possible to him that believeth” (Mark 9. 23). And, “All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive” (Matt. 21. 22). Prayer has brought health to the sick, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, eyes to the blind, life to the dead, salvation to the lost, and has even driven the devil himself from the hearts of many, and brought the God of heaven to dwell in his room.

PRAYER is God’s appointment, the Spirit’s gift, the saints’ privilege and the scourge of Satan, therefore *prize it and use it*.



He who prays as he ought, will endeavour to live as he prays. He that can live in sin and abide in the ordinary duties of prayer, never prays as he ought. A truly gracious, praying frame is utterly inconsistent with the love of, or reserve for any sin.

John Owen

OBSERVATIONS ON FAITH

By Thomas Watson (1620-1686)

The Spirit applies to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us.

Christ is the glory, and faith in Christ the comfort, of the gospel.

What kinds of faith are there?

Fourfold:

1. An historical or dogmatic [doctrinal] faith, which is believing the truths revealed in the Word, because of divine authority.

2. There is a temporary faith, which lasts for a time, and then vanishes. "Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while" (Matt. 13. 21). A temporary faith is like Jonah's gourd, which came up in a night and withered (Jonah 4. 10).

3. A miraculous faith, which was granted to the apostles, to work miracles for the confirmation of the gospel. This Judas had; he cast out devils, yet was cast out to the devil.

4. A true, justifying faith, which is called "The faith of the operation of God" (Col. 2. 12), and is a jewel hung only upon the elect.

What is justifying faith?

I shall show,

1. *What it is not.* It is not a bare acknowledgment that Christ is a Saviour. There must be an acknowledgment, but that is not sufficient to justify. The devils acknowledged Christ's Godhead. "Jesus, Thou Son of God" (Matt. 8. 29). There may be an assent to divine truth, and yet no work of grace on the heart. Many assent in their judgments that sin is an evil thing, but they go on in sin, whose corruptions are stronger than their convictions; and that Christ is excellent; they cheapen the pearl, but do not buy.

2. *What justifying faith is.* True justifying faith consists in three things:

i. Self-renunciation. Faith is going out of one's self, being taken off from our own merits, and seeing we have no righteousness of our own. "Not having mine own righteousness" (Phil. 3. 9). Self-righteousness is a broken reed, which the soul dares not lean on. Repentance and faith are both humbling graces; by repentance a man abhors himself; by faith he goes out of himself. As Israel in their wilderness march, behind them saw Pharaoh and his chariots pursuing, before them the Red Sea ready to devour, so the sinner behind sees God's justice pursuing him for sin, before, hell ready to devour him; and in this forlorn condition, he sees nothing in himself to help, but he must perish unless he can find help in another.

ii. *Reliance.* The soul casts itself upon Jesus Christ; faith rests on Christ's Person. Faith believes the promise, but that which faith rests upon in the promise is the Person of Christ. Therefore the spouse is said to lean upon her Beloved (Song 8. 5). Faith is described to be believing on the name of the Son of God (1 John 3. 23), viz., on His Person. The promise is but the cabinet; Christ is the jewel in it which faith embraces. The promise is but the dish; Christ is the food in it which faith feeds on. Faith rests on Christ's Person, as He was crucified. It glories in the cross of Christ (Gal. 6. 14). To consider Christ crowned with all manner of excellencies, stirs up admiration and wonder; but Christ looked upon as bleeding and dying is the proper Object of our faith; it is called therefore "faith in His blood" (Rom. 3. 25).

iii. *Appropriation and application.* A medicine, though it be ever so sovereign, if not applied, will do no good. Though the plaster be made of Christ's own blood, it will not heal, unless applied by faith. The blood of God, without faith in God, will not save. This applying of Christ is called receiving Him (John 1. 12). The hand receiving gold, enriches; so the hand of faith, receiving Christ's golden merits with salvation, enriches us.

How is faith wrought?

By the blessed Spirit, who is called the "Spirit of grace," because He is the spring of all grace (Zech. 12. 10). Faith is the chief work which the Spirit of God works in a man's heart. In making the world, God did but speak a word, but in working faith He puts forth His arm (Luke 1. 51). The Spirit's working faith is called, "The exceeding greatness of His power" (Eph. 1. 19). What a power was put forth in raising Christ from the grave when such a tombstone lay upon Him as "the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2. 2)! Yet He was raised up by the Spirit. The same power is put forth by the Spirit of God in working faith. The Spirit irradiates the mind and subdues the will. The will is like a garrison, which holds out against God. The Spirit with sweet violence conquers, or rather changes it, making the sinner willing to have Christ upon gospel terms; to be ruled by Him as well as saved by Him.

Wherein lies the preciousness of faith?

1. In its being the chief gospel-grace, the mother of the graces. As gold among the metals, so is faith among the graces. Clement of Alexandria calls the other graces the daughters of faith. In heaven, love will be the chief grace, but while we are here, love must give place to faith. Love takes possession of glory, but faith gives a title to it. Love is the crowning grace in heaven, but faith is the conquering grace upon earth. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5. 4).

2. In its having influence upon all the graces, and setting them to work: not a grace stirs till faith set it to work. As the clothier sets the poor to work, sets their wheel going, so faith sets hope to work. The heir must believe his title to an estate in reversion before he can hope for it; faith believes its title to glory, and then hope waits for it. If faith did not feed the lamp of hope with oil, it would soon die. Faith sets love to work. "Faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5. 6). Believing the mercy and merit of Christ causes a flame of love to ascend. Faith sets patience to work. "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises" (Heb. 6. 12). Faith believes the glorious rewards given to suffering. This makes the soul patient in suffering. Thus faith is the master-wheel; it sets all the other graces running.

3. In its being the grace which God honours to justify and save. Thus indeed it is "precious faith," as the apostle calls it (2 Pet. 1. 1). The other graces sanctify, but it is faith that justifies. "Being justified by faith" (Rom. 5. 1). Repentance or love do not justify, but precious faith does.

THE ANCHOR WITHIN THE VEIL

An extract from Joseph Charles Philpot (1802-1869)

Unbelief is always looking for something visible. Reason always questions how this thing can be consistent with that? And thus all the reasonings and argumentations of our fallen nature will be bringing up strong artillery against living faith. But the apostle says, "Hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" (Rom. 8. 24). If we could see Jesus as plainly with our bodily eye as we can see the texts of scripture in which He is spoken of, there would be no need of the special act of God the Spirit upon our heart to give us faith.* If we could reason upon truth and receive it into our souls, as we reason upon and receive matters of science and human learning, there would be no need of the special operations of God the Spirit.

Therefore, just in proportion as our hope enters within the veil, and anchors in this glorious Immanuel, will be the opposition made to it by nature, sense and reason. And nature, sense and reason, with the unbelief and infidelity of our hearts, will sometimes work so powerfully, that the anchor seems almost giving way. Nay, we scarcely at times seem to have any anchor at all. The ship is so beaten about by the waves, that there appears no firm hold of, no real anchoring in, the Person, blood and work of Jesus. And yet it holds. The ship is not beaten from her

* When living here, many saw Him plainly, yet believed not. They knew not the operation of God in their heart. Philpot is dealing with unbelief opposing faith. Editor

anchorage; it does not fall upon the rocks, is not cast away and lost. Still, by some invisible cable it holds, in spite of nature, sense and reason.

Therefore, the apostle says, it is “sure and stedfast.” It is firm and stayed. It may be out of sight, and seem giving way; the waves and billows may rise so high as even to hide the cable from our eyes; and as the cable dips beneath the waves, it may seem sunk and lost; and yet all the while there is a secret, firm, invisible hold.

Have not a thousand temptations blown across us to drift us from Jesus? I am sure they have blown upon my soul. Have they not blown across yours? Have not a thousand waves of unbelief almost tossed us upon the rocks? Have we not sometimes been tempted by lust, and sometimes been driven almost by despair, to give up our anchorage? Have we not sometimes doubted and feared whether our hope was not after all a delusion, and whether we ever really by an act of living faith cast anchor within the veil? Yet it will not, it does not altogether give way. There is still some coming unto the Lord, still some going up of tender affection, some actings of faith in His blood and righteousness, some pantings of heart after Him, some love to Him, some embracings of Him as our only hope and help. Then it has not failed yet; nay, the more it is tried, does it not prove the anchor to be all the stronger? Does it not prove the anchorage to be all the firmer?

What can fail? Can the anchorage fail? That cannot fail – it is the Person of Jesus. Can the anchor itself fail? That cannot fail – it is the work of the Spirit to create it in the soul. Can the cable fail – the mysterious connection there is in the heart between the soul and Jesus – can that break? No; that is twined by an eternal hand – that was woven by the fingers of God Himself – that cannot, cannot break. Then what can fail? Shall the ship fail? If it be a ransomed soul – if the Lord of life and glory be the Pilot, He knows all the shoals, and can steer it into the haven of eternal felicity. If that infallible Pilot who never yet missed the harbour has purchased her, chartered her, and is guiding her upon her homeward destination, how can the bark itself, “The Good Adventure,” be ever cast away?

Then, if none of these things can fail, what strong consolation there is to those that have “fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us” in the gospel! How this noble anchorage, this safe roadstead,* opens its capacious arms to receive every living child of God!

Surely you must know whether this has taken place in your conscience; if once you were in a lying refuge, and then a storm came,

* Roadstead – stretch of water near shore in which ships can shelter and ride at anchor. Philpot would have been familiar with a stretch of water such as this, known as “The Downs” just off the Kent coast at Deal, between the shore and the notorious “Goodwin Sands.” He spent his boyhood days about two miles from Deal. Whitefield also mentions anchoring off Deal in his voyages to North America. Editor.

and beat you out of it, then you must know whether there were any goings forth, any lookings, any longings, any stretchings forth, any reachings forward to lay hold of a precious Saviour. You must know if these things ever had a place in your soul; if you have had these feelings you must know whether Jesus ever had a place in your heart, whether you ever viewed Him by the eyes of enlightened understanding; then you must know whether faith ever flowed towards Him, hope anchored in Him, and love embraced Him.

These things cannot take place in a man's bosom, without his knowing he has had such things working in his soul with power. He may have many doubts, fears and apprehensions as to the reality and genuineness of the work. His faith may be sorely tried. But he must know whether he has felt these things or not – whether these things have had a certain, definite effect upon him that has brought him out of lying refuges to lay hold of the hope set before him in the gospel.

Now, if God the Spirit has wrought these things in your heart in a measure, though a feeble measure, you are an heir of promise; and if you are an heir of promise, you have a title to strong consolation; for your soul rests upon the immutability of God's counsel, and the immutability of God's oath. Is it not a mercy it should be so?

Suppose it was thus – that I had made myself a holy man; that I had, by a long course of penance, endeavoured to atone for my sins; that I had, by rigorous acts of obedience, worked out a measure of self-righteousness; should I not be always at uncertainty? and would not the issue be final despair? But when it comes to this – fleeing for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us in the gospel – when it stands thus, that *this* is the mark God has stamped upon the heirs of promise, and put His finger upon this experience – if you have this, you have everything. If this has been wrought in your heart by divine power, you are a child of God – your soul will be saved as sure as there is a God in heaven, a counsel of God in eternity, and an oath of God in time. If these immutable things that cannot fail are on your side, how it holds out an escape for every poor, sin-convinced sinner, everyone that knows the plague of his own heart, everyone in whose soul the blessed Spirit has begun and is carrying on a work of grace!

The Lord enable us to see it more plainly! The Lord enable us to feel it more powerfully! The Lord enable us day by day to be manifested as heirs of promise, to be continually fleeing for refuge to lay hold upon the blessed hope set before us – so that when eternity shall come, and time have passed away, and be no longer – then we shall see face to face in heaven what we have seen by the eye of faith upon earth, and enjoy in full that which in this life we have only realised by feeble and distant anticipation.

ENCOURAGEMENT TO CONTINUE

6 Beaconsfield Villas,
Preston Park,
Brighton, Sussex.
1892

Poor dear Friend,

Is the gospel for good, whole and altogether believing people? Or is it not rather, yea, much more, for bad, sick, plagued, unbelieving, dead, polluted souls? Have you not some such case as is set forth in the words dead, leprous, lost, weak, enemies, unclean? You must go to chapel for Christ's sake, for your own sake. He will take it more amiss if you stay away because His and your enemies tell you to, than anything you may do in the way of venturing in the darkness of your unbelief and confusion. Would you like Him to tell you to stay away? If not, if such a word would grieve you even now, how will He take it at your hands if you agree with your own heart against Him? GO.

Your sympathising friend,

J.K. Popham

THE LORD ADDING TO THE CHURCH

*A sermon preached by Jonathan Ranken Anderson (1803-1859)
at Glasgow, on Lord's day, December 5th, 1858*

Text: "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2. 47).

The Lord Jesus Christ has charge, by commission from His Father, of a great and arduous work. In the prosecution thereof, He appeared for a season in a lowly estate, and submitted to the ignominious death of the cross, and is now seated at the right hand of power, in order that He may follow up the design He had in His death, and carry forward His work to its appointed end.

In our text, we are presented with a view of His operations at the opening of the Christian dispensation, when we are told that He "added to the church daily such as should be saved."

In these words there are two things to which, with the divine blessing, we may profitably turn our attention.

1. The formation, and
2. The increase of the church.

1. In the first place, let us attend briefly to the formation of the church. And what shall we say it is? We reply: Where two or three are gathered together in the name of the Lord Jesus, according to His own

Word; and He is there, there is a church. In the simplest view that can be taken of it, it is a company or assembly of persons of a certain sort, joined together on certain principles, and for specific ends. There can be no church without Christ: "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." As well talk of an edifice without a foundation, as of a church without Christ.

There can be no church without those that are Christ's. If you must have a foundation stone, you must have lively stones to be built upon the foundation. If we rightly apprehend Christ, we shall at once perceive that there must be Christians; and, on the other hand, a child might discover that there can be no Christians without Christ. And if we are to have a church, there must be a close and stable union between Christ and Christians. You have not a building merely by having a foundation stone and materials to place upon it; they must be joined and cemented together according to a plan, and in a compact and symmetrical form. And even so, if you are to have such a spiritual edifice as deserves the name of a church, then Christ the foundation, and Christians that compose the edifice, must be closely compacted together.

And, my friends, is not this a work of God, as much so as the structure of the heavens and the earth? Who spread out that firmament over our heads, and garnished it with the stars that twinkle in the night, and lighted up the sun that blazes at noon-day? And who formed the endless variety of objects that meet our view on every side? Did not His hand make all these things? And who, then, is able to build that which surpasses in glory the heavens and the earth, the church of Christ? "Every house is builded by some man; but He that built all things is God." The church of God is His building.

You, men and women, in the formation of your bodies, and the constitution of your souls, bear evident marks of a divine hand. You that profess the Christian name, have you about you any traces of a divine religion? Is the knowledge that lights up your understanding drawn from the Fountain of light? Is the love that warms your hearts shed abroad by the Holy Ghost given to you? Is the truth, the uprightness, the consistency of your conduct, the product of saving grace? Is the life that you lead a life of faithfulness, of fair dealing, promise-keeping, sobriety, usefulness in society? Is all that the workmanship of God? A divine religion has well-nigh disappeared from Scotland; hardly is such a thing to be met with. The religion that commonly prevails is trashy and abominable, bringing a scandal upon the venerable name of religion. What is yours? Is it like the religion of the multitude, or is it essentially different from it?

In the view of these things, you may see what a church is, and learn how rare churches are in the day in which we live. Never, since Scotland was heard of, was there a time when churches were so numerous.

Seldom, if ever, has there been a time since the Reformation when the church was so low. Let this be the gauge: let the breath of the Holy Ghost be caught, and let that only be owned as the church where it is. Where is it? O where is it? Ye are "the temple of the Holy Ghost." That is what we read in the writings of the apostles, teaching us that where there is no such temple, there is no church. Let that be the gauge. Will we be able to make it out, my friends, that we have a church at all? God has cut us, as a congregation, very short, and He is cutting us shorter still. It may be that before all is done our feeble lamp may expire, and we shall be obliged to make the humiliating confession, "Our lamps are gone out."

So much for the formation of the church. Let us pass on, to attend briefly:

2. To its increase. "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." And here we remark,

i. Whose work it is to increase the church. It is His, who forms it. It was the Lord that added to it. It was not the apostles; it was not the members; it was not the circumstances in which they were placed. You know who it is that forms the body in the womb; the same almighty hand causes it to grow. You know who forms the seedling that is cast into the soil; the same hand makes it germinate into a plant. Well, He that forms the church is alone competent to make additions to it. If men form churches, it is not to be wondered at that men can add to the churches that they have formed; but the additions will be like the original productions; it will be man's clumsy work from beginning to end.

It is the Lord alone that *has the right* to add to the church. It appertains to Him; it is His property. Who then should interfere with Him? And He alone *can* make additions to His church. It is a vast work to add one stone to that building. Recollect, that every member of His church is a member of His body, and do you not see that it requires infinite skill to make additions so as to maintain the life, establish the harmony, and promote the growth of the whole. You would make a monster, not a symmetrical body, unless additions were made by One who has in His eye the plan given to Him, and adheres to the instructions of His Father: "See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount."

ii. Advert, secondly, to the quarter from which the additions are taken. "Such as should be saved." "The Lord knoweth them that are His." He does not make additions without reason, or independently of a plan, or irrespective of a purpose. It would be an impeachment of His wisdom to say so. Why? The humblest builder must have his plan before him ere he will put his hand to the work; and will the great Architect of all, in the noblest work that He performs, proceed without plan? It cannot be.

Where does He find those that He is to add to the church? He finds them under this designation: "Such as should be saved." The Lord did not add to the church such as should be lost. In a sense, taking the name *church* loosely, there may be added to the church, in a loose sense, many of the lost. But you will observe that the language of our text is simple and precise, and in order to preserve its simplicity and precision, we must be proportionably definite in our understanding of its terms, and say that when the Lord added to the church, it is meant the church properly, not loosely. And when the Lord added to the church, it means He added really, and thus you are shut up to the definition of those from whom the additions were taken, "Such as should be saved."

Some say there are added to the church all who will, all who have common grace, all who have a fair profession, all who have a good moral character, all who are free from scandalous offences, all who are sprung from professedly Christian parents. Endless are the descriptions given, according to some, of those who may be added to the church. But, O my friends, observe Christ's mind. "The Lord added to the church daily *such as should be saved*." "Of them which Thou gavest me have I lost none." He has not omitted one; they are all added to the church. "Such as should be saved."

But how does the Lord find such as should be saved, that they may be added to the church? If we could seize upon all those in our congregation that are amongst the saved, if there should be any such (O, what if we should all be lost! Do not let us presume. "Happy is the man that feareth alway."), and ask them, one by one, How wert thou found, thou that art amongst the saved, to be added to the church? Didst thou find thyself? O no! "I have gone astray like a lost sheep." I never would have found my way back to the fold. Did any of thy fellows find thee? Someone may have been instrumental, but nothing more. Each one would be constrained to say, It is the Good Shepherd only, who gave His life for the sheep, and who goes in quest of those that are astray, that could bring any back from their wanderings. "Seek Thy servant," and find him.

Nor are those who have been recovered by the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls allowed to forget this, for they are continually going astray; they still have in them the silliness of the sheep; they are still exposed to inducements to take them out of the way; and they are still made to know that they have no wisdom nor strength to return when they go astray. So that over, and over, and over again, they are taught that it is the Lord that finds them, being of those that are to be saved, and adds them to the church.

And what is the nature of the work that He effects upon those that are to be saved, when He adds them to the church? What does a skilful gardener do when he means to remove a branch from a tree where it

thrives not, and connect it with one where it may thrive? Is he not under the necessity of making excision of the branch from its parent stock, and grafting it into that from which it is to derive its new life? Even so, where the Lord adds any to His church, He cuts them off from old Adam, and covenant connection with him, and grafts them into Himself, the true Vine.

Now, my friends, have you been added to the church? and have you been added to the church in the way in which those that are amongst the saved are added? Is there in your souls a breaking up of the old spirit of legality? Have you found the sentence of death in yourselves, and learned not to trust in yourselves, but in the living God, who quickeneth the dead, that you may be saved? "I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." We may say that all who are added to the church, by the Lord, of such as should be saved, are in deaths oft, because they are to have an increase of life, and every augmentation to their life is preceded by another death blow. They die to the law, and live to Christ; they die to sin, and live to God; they die to self, and live to His praise; they die daily unto sin, and live unto righteousness. Now, is this double process going on in your souls? If not, how can you make it out that the Lord has added you to His church?

No additions are made by the Lord to His church, but from amongst those that are lost. The saved are taken from the lost. If you are not lost men and women, you will never be saved. If you never were slain by the law, you have never been made alive unto God. If you have not been broken off from Adam the first, you are not joined to Adam the second. If you never do business in the deep waters of hell, you will never taste the sweetness of heaven.

iii. Notice farther, what progress the additions made. "Daily." The Lord added to His church *daily* such as should be saved. It was a most auspicious opening of the Christian economy, to which reference is here made. Spiritual vegetation started into life, and displayed a most luxurious growth. The apostles had weighty work on their hands, and it thrived exceedingly. The holy fire that was kindled in Jerusalem was spreading and enwrapping this one, and that one, and the other one – at one time three thousand souls in one day, in its blessed influences. He girded His sword upon His thigh, with His glory and with His majesty, and let His glory appear; He mounted the white horse of the glorious gospel, and with His bow in His hand rode forth conquering and to conquer. And what a conquest, a conquest of mercy, of grace, of power, of life, of salvation! The Lord added to the church: taking from the heap of the ruined, and adding to the mass of the saved; thinning the ranks of darkness, and increasing the hosts of light. He took the prey from the mighty, and delivered the lawful captive; He caused Satan to fall as lightning from heaven, and gathered from his kingdom ever growing

trophies to the praise of His name. "The LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear." "Stir up Thy strength," O Lord, "and come and save us."

APPLICATION

1. Learn, first, in conclusion, what a church is. Very few in our day know it. The word is in everybody's mouth, but in nobody's heart. Anything is good enough for a church nowadays, and any church is good enough for most. We get set down as full of conceit, of spiritual pride, if we show anything like nicety regarding the character of a church. He is thought most charitable whose notions of a church are the meanest and the lowest. And he is considered as unreasonable who ventures to exercise anything like discrimination in the matter, and will not receive into his embraces all and sundry that take the name of a church I suppose, down to the old harlot Rome herself. Men do not consider that they blaspheme the name of the Holy One, by ascribing to Him a work altogether unworthy of Him. Only take that definition of it, the church is Jehovah's masterpiece. Do not call everything, then, by this name. You would not call a coarse picture upon a piece of canvas the heavens and the earth. No. Unworthy of an ordinary artist; much more of Him who built all things. Why, then, will you attribute to Him as its author, a thing at which you yourselves perhaps shudder. O no! Let us unite together that we shall not allow, either for ourselves or for others, that there is a church but where the Person of the Son of God is; where the work of the Holy Ghost is; where some are by that work effectually called; where, in Jesus Christ the righteous, they are freely justified; and where they are in course of being sanctified, and prepared for shining amongst the stars in the kingdom of their Father for ever and ever. And then, taking that definition along with you, come round and ask, Have we a church? Or now, in the eleventh hour of this ministry, when the shades of evening are falling thick around it, are we to begin to form a church? "Who, then, is on the Lord's side?"

Be it that the church is formed, we learn,

2. Secondly, how additions are to be made to it. Suppose, my friends, that we have not more than two or three. What do you mean by two or three? Two or three people of prayer; two or three walking humbly with God; two or three people whose word may be depended upon as firmly as their oath; who speak the truth; who deal honestly, who keep their promises; do wrong to no man; guide their affairs with discretion; and seek to adorn the doctrine of God the Saviour in all things, by a life and conversation becoming the gospel. Let us have two or three of that sort, and the Lord may add, and may add daily to this little church. Of whom? Of such as shall be saved. This is something worth the seeking. For this, we may preach, and people may pray. The Lord grant that there may be, in this place, a church to which additions

can be made. And the Lord grant that additions may be made thereunto daily of such as shall be saved. And what do you say? "O that I may be added!"

THE STORY OF A STONE "BROKEN TO SHIVERS"

Wymeswold Vicarage,
Loughborough,
May 27th, 1878

My dear Brother,

It seems very long since we had any correspondence on any subject, but a thing has just occurred which I feel you must hear of, and in which I feel sure you cannot fail to take great interest. How it has been so long concealed from my own knowledge, I know not; I never heard of it till last week.

Do you remember going with me in the summer of 1860 to the Wolds to see some farmer sort of people, where there was a very old, deaf man sitting in the corner, and we both had a conversation with him by turns, but we were both exhausted, and he told us to "hold our tongues, as he had known all we could tell him before we were born"? His name was John Morris, then 84 years of age. His two daughters have married, and are very respectable people, but the old, deaf man was a regular public-house goer, and used to come toddling down to the village (two-and-a-half miles) to spend the day occasionally at the "Rose and Crown," hob-nobbing with old Joe Brampton, the landlord, a very troublesome fellow, whom I had brought before the Bench at Loughborough, and got him bound over to "keep the peace" towards me. That was when I was fond of ringing. I never heard any more of old John Morris that I can remember, until in 1871 I buried him at the age of ninety-five.

I regarded him as a poor old reprobate, at last sealed up in darkness against all the means of grace, and never again destined to have one more thought of heaven or hell! But in this I was more brutish than any man, and had not the understanding of a man, for God's thoughts were not my thoughts, nor had I the smallest idea of His grand purpose of eternal love towards that old deaf man's soul.

I had this account from his daughter, Mrs. Hitherly, now herself an old woman. She came here from Grantham (where they were living) for a few days last week. I called to see her, and she told me as follows.

For about six years after our call he would sometimes say in a sort of pensive manner, "Be born again; didn't Mr. Walker say, I must pray

to have my heart broken to shivers?” Do you remember I said that to him as a parting word before we left the house? She said she was surprised to hear him refer to it in this enquiring way, for she was afraid at the time you were there, he would have broken out and ordered us out of the house, so she was astonished at his remembering our very words.

The next thing was, her boy – then about ten years of age – said to her, “Mother, I’m sure grandfather will go to heaven, for he prays all night.” Still she thought it must be a mistake, until she heard him saying, “Born again, why, I must be born again. It is as the gentleman said, ‘Except a man be born again, he cannot *see*’ – laying great stress on the word “see” – ‘the kingdom of God.’”

Then many scriptures used to come to his mind, which is the more remarkable as he never could read, and he used to turn them into prayer and praise. His favourite passage was, “Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for *all nations* shall come and worship before Thee.” He used to lay great stress on “all nations,” and would say sometimes, “I wish I were a young man. I would go to all nations, and tell them what the Lord has done for me.” Then he would at times break out and say, “I have found out now that for the biggest sinner there is a big Saviour. I am a great sinner; I have been a great sinner all my life; I am the biggest sinner; yet I have a bigger Saviour.”

He was very diligent on Saturdays to pray for ministers. He would mention both of us by name and say, “All those who preach Christ,” and on Sunday mornings he would pray for all preachers and hearers, then for those who could not go, and for those who *would* not go, and sometimes he would say, “I was one of those who *would* not go.”

There was a public house, the “Durham Ox,” in the Forty acres at Six hills, where in his days of darkness he had spent many an evening and night; now he never went there. Still his daughter had doubts of his conversion, and feared he had picked up religious expressions from somebody or other when he could hear, and now that he was old they came to his memory. She could not believe that so great a miracle had been wrought, as that his hard, dark, wicked old heart had been changed. But one fine day they drove over from Grimstone to spend the day at the “Durham Ox” with Mrs. Bidder, who was the landlady and a friend of theirs. Now she saw the reality of the change. Instead of taking his accustomed seat on the ale bench, and drinking as long as they would treat him, he smiled when they offered him any drink, and said, “Thank you, I will have a cup of tea presently.” Then he would say, “God bless you; I hope He will bless you as He has blessed me.” To his daughter he said, “Betsy, don’t leave me in the tap-room, I will go into the parlour and have tea with you,” and then in a very low voice (so as not to hurt

Mrs. Bidder's feelings) he added, "I can't bear to see that seat where I used to sit; I hate the very sight of it. Don't let me see it."

He lived about four years after this, and his constant ejaculation was, "I want to go home!" Then he added, very humbly, "Lord, I know I must wait Thy time; I am sure that will be the best time." Thus he lived, a *new man* for about five years, being truly born again when he was old – actually ninety years of age.

I must mention that there are several saints in that family. Three of his daughters, old Sally, Mrs. Blackwell, and Mrs. Hitherly, are dead, and all seemed partakers of grace. His two surviving daughters, Mrs. Harris and Mrs. W. Hitherly, are certainly godly women, and a grandson, young Hitherly at Ovenden, is a most godly youth, an enlightened saint, quite a Huntingtonian in experience. Grace seems given to so many in that family, yet to none so marked as John Morris, born again at ninety. His death was as might have been expected. He was quite blind for the last two years; he called his daughter to ask what time it was, and being told about 9 a.m., he said, "I sha'n't be long now. I have had such a vision, unspeakable, I cannot tell you, but they will soon be here again for me." Then he dozed until three o'clock, when he said, "Betsy, they have come again for me; I am going home." He then sighed, smiled gently, and never moved again.

Thus ended, in hope of eternal life, a man, who until the age of ninety was as hardened a sinner as any on the Wold. Surely we must say, "Grace, grace unto it!" I find that when he was a young man, some sixty years ago, he had made a profession among the Methodists, and had lapsed again into utter darkness, but this may account for his knowing so many scripture texts, if indeed we need to account for it, in any natural way.

I have omitted one thing I ought to have told you, that about a month before his death, he had a heavy attack from Satan, and was much afraid, and cast down for days. At last he said to his daughter, "Betsy, he will be too hard for me at last; I shall be conquered now." But after a few days he said, "He's gone, and the Lord is come. I see Him, and He tells me I am His."

I mention this because we commonly say, "Untried faith is uncertain faith," but his was deeply tried, and stood the test. I thought you ought to know this as you were, humanly speaking, the instrument used, and though all seemed lost for six years, yet at the last he was brought forth as a newborn son of Zion desiring the sincere milk of the Word.

Fancy never once letting me know! I would have walked barefooted to Grimstone (seven miles) to have seen him.

I have many encouragements here among my people, some very blessed marks of the Lord's goodness to me. My chief cause of

complaint is the worldliness of my own mind. I long for a ray of joy and gladness, a glimpse of eternal love. Nothing else does me any good; I am sick of "rounds of dead service," forms with men so much esteemed. I desire the first-ripe fruit. I am glad when I can hear the voice of a sinner. "A sinner is a sacred thing."

I think our old friend Mrs. Banner, now in her ninety-fifth year, is drawing near her end. She wept much in church the other evening. She said she woke up in the morning with these words, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," and curiously enough, I preached from them; this quite broke my heart, for she longed to have them explained, and she said I preached them to her.

With love to all,

Yours most affectionately,

Robert Walker

BOOK REVIEW

Light from Old Times, by J.C. Ryle; cloth bound hardback; illustrated; 432 pages; price £15; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

It should not escape our notice that the majority of the Bible is a record of the history of the nation of Israel. This historical account records the continuous revelation of the scheme of redemption culminating in the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ. It also teaches several vital lessons for us today.

Firstly, it provides evidence that God is the sovereign Lord over all creation, and works all things according to His good pleasure, for His honour and glory and to the eternal good of His people. Secondly, it supplies proof of the nature of the fall; that man is continually bent on evil and that the carnal mind is enmity against God. Fallen man will only seek to be free from God, and the end of this propensity is sin, chaos, death and destruction. Thirdly, it shows that God, willing to show the abundant nature of His mercy, longsuffering and goodness (in essence to demonstrate to man what He, the I AM THAT I AM, is through the medium of His communicable attributes), has mercy on whom He will have mercy and in the midst of the devastation caused by sin condescends to provide salvation for sinners. Fourthly, it demonstrates that the work of God's grace can never be thwarted, but that once begun must be completed, and preserved until the day of Jesus Christ.

The faithful record of the history of the New Testament church, even though not an inspired record, serves to teach the same vital lessons. Church history should therefore commend itself to us. Indeed, many today are weak in faith and suffering from the killing effect of ignorance, of which the prophet Hosea spoke: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hos. 4. 6). Ignorance of doctrine, church history and apologetics is not a healthy state.

J.C. Ryle understood this. Ryle witnessed the undoing of the Reformation in the Oxford (Tractarian) Movement, when men such as John H. Newman and Edward B. Pusey began introducing things which tended to Romanism within the

Church of England. One of the reasons the ground was so fertile for such moves was a sad lack of knowledge of church history. People had forgotten the dangers of Rome, in much the same way as the Israelites continually forgot the dangers of idolatry (witness them going after Baal, when only a few generations before they had suffered at Sinai on account of the golden calf).

In an attempt to counteract this, Ryle wrote a number of historical tracts for distribution amongst his congregation and gave lectures on church history. These were collected together in an appropriately named volume: *Light from Old Times*. The writings fall into two groups: those dealing with the Reformation, and those dealing with the Puritan era. Some of the former are moving accounts of the heroes of the English Reformation, including Latimer, Ridley, Bradford and Wycliffe. Perhaps the most famous of Ryle's historical tracts is, "Why were our Reformers burned?" This should be required reading for everybody amongst our churches, for its clear enunciation of the truths for which the English Reformers gave their lives. The section on the Puritan era is smaller, but Ryle writes some interesting biographical sketches on men such as William Gurnall, the author of *The Christian in Complete Armour*, and Richard Baxter, a leader amongst the English Presbyterians, who himself wrote a monumental record of the history of his times. Ryle is not guilty of hagiography [presenting saints as faultless] and is not afraid to point out the imperfections, particularly doctrinal, of a man like Baxter, although not going as far as we would like. Another valuable piece is that on Archbishop Laud, in which Ryle shows the corrupting tendencies of a religion which "sits on the fence" [has no firm opinion] and is lukewarm. Despite having some reservations about Ryle, this is one work by Ryle which I would recommend as a book worth reading.

If there is any shortcoming to the book, it is that it is written unashamedly from the point of view of a convinced Anglican. While this may occasionally jar against Strict Baptist sensitivities, yet the overall message of this book is clear on core Scriptural truths. We could wish there were more people today as convinced of what they believe and hold to as being according to Scripture, as Ryle was in his times.

Matthew J. Hyde, Maidstone

OBITUARY

Gordon Philip John Paige, a deacon at Providence Chapel, East Peckham for over fifty years, died on February 25th, 2016, aged 95 years.

Gordon was born on June 9th, 1920, and being of a nervous temperament was a man of few words, preferring to listen to others rather than talk himself. However, his walk and prayers spoke for him and it is apparent that he spoke much to his God from an early age as the following incidents show.

At the age of six or seven, his family being very poor, he had no means of getting any food for his two rabbits, so he prayed to God that

when he went to feed them in the morning he would find two dead rabbits in the hutch. When he went to the hutch in the morning he found that God had answered his prayer, but not in the way that he expected. One of the rabbits had given birth to two babies which were dead and he still had his adult ones to look after. This lesson that the Lord sometimes does not answer prayer in the way that we look for, or expect, remained with him all his life.

When conscripted into the army in the Second World War, he said at one time to a sergeant, "I hope I never have to kill a man." The sergeant replied, "Then they will kill you." This created in him the exercise of prayer that he would never be put in the position of having to kill anyone. This prayer God answered, and all through the war he never saw anyone killed despite serving in Palestine, Cyprus and Egypt. The nearest he came to seeing death was seeing an aeroplane shot down some distance away.

Just before the war he was blessed under a sermon by the words, "Be still, and know that I am God." This carried him through the five years of active service. He was also blessed at this time under a sermon by Mr. Ernest Roe at Matfield from Ephesians chapter 2 verse 1: "And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." He spent part of the time of the war in the Holy Land, and was able to say that he had walked where Jesus walked. Spiritually he walked much with Jesus. His public prayers are remembered by many who heard them, often beginning with the sixth verse of hymn 1002:

"O Thou by whom we come to God,
The Life, the Truth, the Way!
The path of prayer Thyself hast trod;
Lord, teach us how to pray.

The words, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms," must have been blessed to him at some time as he often quoted them in public prayer.

After the war, while working for his father, he was making a delivery of furniture and had forgotten to pack the glass. In returning for it he was so troubled expecting the wrath of his father, but the Lord spoke to his spirit: "My grace is sufficient for thee," which took away the distress he was in, and was a support to him for the rest of his life.

His family attended Matfield chapel in his early days and later attended East Peckham, where he was baptized on February 28th, 1956 when Mr. T. Farley was pastor, and appointed a deacon on October 14th, 1964.

He and his wife experienced the sorrow of losing their only daughter Jane Elisabeth, who died shortly before what would have been her third birthday. She died in the Lord and he was able to say at the time, "The

LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.”

They suffered a providential calamity when their furniture business premises in Tonbridge were flooded in the Medway Valley floods of September 1968, and his business was ruined, which caused him to have a nervous breakdown. The Lord maintained him so that he was able to continue in his office as deacon at the chapel.

His love to the house of God and the things of God were manifest in his prayers and in a practical way, conducting reading services when there was no minister and sometimes paying the minister out of his own pocket when there was no money in the chapel funds.

In 2005 being ill, he was admitted to hospital. When I visited him there I was told that at his funeral I was not to talk about Gordon Paige, but about the precious blood of Jesus.

During 2015, as his health and strength began to fail it was noticeable how he persevered to get to the house of God though it was a great effort.

He was admitted into hospital on January 22nd, 2016. When I visited him in the accident and emergency department, he was lying in much bodily distress though being lovingly attended to by one of his nieces. We heard him in a weak voice say the fifth verse of hymn 320:

“His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.”

And then, “Precious blood.”

He suffered much bodily distress during his last illness, but at times was heard giving thanks to the Lord, quoting Scripture and hymns and asking the Lord to take him home.

At the end he was peacefully lying, holding his dear wife’s hand when the pressure of his hand in hers suddenly ceased, and his desire to be with his Lord was granted.

The funeral service was held at the chapel on March 9th, and the interment was at Hildenborough cemetery, not far away from where their daughter’s body lies waiting for the glorious resurrection day.

We pray that the Lord will sanctify this loss to the wide family circle and friends at Providence Chapel, East Peckham, and especially that He will comfort and sustain the dear widow after over sixty-six years of married life and communion with each other and their God.

John F. Ashby

Our late dear friend would often say to the Lord in prayer that “We are not born for time, but for eternity.” He always seemed to pray as a

poor beggar, yet there was such a savour of life in his petitions. We can truly say that his profession was not religious talking, but humble walking. We firmly believe that he is now “with Christ; which is far better.” May the Lord console and support his dear widow. Editor.

“A FRIEND OF PUBLICANS AND SINNERS”

Matthew 11. 19

We need not be ashamed to own
That He, on whom our hopes depend,
Though now He fills the highest throne,
Was styled on earth “the sinner’s Friend.”

The title came from those who sought
To bring dishonour on His name;
But Jesus then refused it not.
Nor sought to vindicate His fame.

And now, though yonder throne is His,
He bears the gracious title still;
Jesus, “the Friend of sinners” is,
He owns the charge, and ever will.

The title that was meant in scorn,
He takes and binds upon His brow;
And thus the guilty and forlorn
Are taught His character to know.

And while His name is set at nought,
By those who on their worth depend,
The wretched and the vile are taught,
To bless Him as “the sinner’s Friend.”

Thomas Kelly (1769-1855)

2017 MINISTERS’ ENGAGEMENTS

We have been asked to draw chapel correspondents’ attention to the fact that next year there are **53** Lord’s days. Thus we assume there is *no* corresponding date for *the last Lord’s day* in the year, December 31st. We have thought it wise to draw attention to this without trying to give any direction. Often over the years, there has been some confusion, but this has been overruled to the glory of God.

May the Lord guide each of our ministers and correspondents to consider prayerfully His mind and will as to what they should do. May it be an exercise with us that the Lord’s blessing might rest upon the arrangements made.

THE
GOSPEL STANDARD
AUGUST 2016

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

AN ANSWER TO PRAYER

We believe that most of our United Kingdom readers will be thankful for the outcome of the referendum. Praying brethren will view the result with glad satisfaction. The Lord does hear prayer for national events, and has been pleased to answer the petitions of believers according to His good will.

However, we still have much to pray over. The forces of the modern libertine elite that have so much influence in high places will only increase their evil activity, whether we are in or outside the European Union. Our great concern is for the welfare of our younger friends in these times of increasing evil. The erosion of our Christian and civil liberties are subtly moving on apace.

Yet in spite of our many concerns, may we ever remember, and “by faith” lay to heart more, that the “Lord God omnipotent reigneth” (Rev. 19. 6). The Lord Jesus taught that “the very hairs of your head are all numbered” (Matt. 10. 30). Therefore all the events in this lower world, together with the running to and fro of the mighty men of the earth, are still under the control of “the Almighty God” (Gen. 17. 1). The Lord is overruling that all things shall redound to His glory, and for the final triumph of His redeemed church from among all nations. Proud, strutting, and seemingly powerful men are but specks of dust or blades of grass in the sight of the great God of heaven. Yet, in the day-to-day lives of humble believers, there are many worries and fiery trials to meet with. We feel particularly for believers in other lands, who are openly and cruelly persecuted. No doubt, many in these islands have anxiety as to how matters will develop in the future. The future years are in the hands of Immanuel, and will unfold according to His gracious purposes for His bride, “I will see you again” (John 16. 22).

Even by the answer to prayer that the Lord has mercifully granted, may we be truly encouraged to wrestle on in seeking that the Holy Spirit might yet be poured out in these islands, that many may be brought to “repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20. 21).

Only the success of the blessed gospel can turn back the tide of infidelity that is so rife in our society. May we still pray for all in authority, that the Lord will control the affairs of state, and bind the

tumultuous threatenings of evil from completely overwhelming us. Also that He may raise up some good principled men of integrity and fortitude to govern the affairs of state in the fear of God, that we may live quiet and peaceable lives.

“I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting” (1 Tim. 2. 8).

DIVINE APPOINTMENT

Sermon preached by Mr. Raymond William Woodhams (see obituary, Gospel Standard, April) at Providence Chapel, West Street, Croydon, on Lord's day evening, August 31st, 1986

Text: “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Heb. 9. 27, 28).

“It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” These verses that we have read for a text are the conclusion of where the Apostle Paul has been setting forth the inferiority of the old covenant and the necessity for the old covenant, and the figure of the way to heaven as it is set forth by way of type. But he then goes on to set forth how perfect and how flawless is the sacrifice for sin and the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for that sole and exclusive purpose, really to redeem and really save poor sinners from their sin; and really reconcile poor souls to God. He therefore shows how that all things were purged with blood.

We find the law working in our hearts in all that we do and all that we say. There is such imperfection, there is such evidence of our own sin and shame, and therefore, we need the Lord Jesus Christ to cleanse all sin through His precious blood. We have not a thread of righteousness to call our own. In other words, not a thread of our own to glory in or to depend upon. I believe I quoted in prayer, “Marks of grace I cannot show.” How true that is, that all is nothing but pollution that we find within our own hearts.

The Apostle Paul closes this chapter with, “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered.” We see that it was by that appointment, “as it is appointed unto men once to die,” “so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”

Now if the Lord helps me, let me speak just a little concerning this 27th verse first. There is such a depth of truth in it that fallen man continually needs to be reminded of it, and undoubtedly the church in the

apostle's day needed that same reminding. Yes, "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment." Here are set before us two most solemn appointments.

My friends, the first appointment may well be different days and different times for us each, but the second appointment will be on that same day, that great judgment day. What a day that will be!

I have heard people laugh and cavil at this and say, "Well how can all humanity from the days of Adam and Eve to the end of time be judged on one day?" Friends, that will be when this world is no more; it will be when months, and days, and years have ceased, and we need to remember constantly "that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Pet. 3. 8). However men may view it, it will be a day or a time that is appointed of God, set by Him, in which He will judge the whole world – and He will not need a second more nor a second less, so accurate and so divine is God in all His appointments; He never errs, He never makes a mistake. So let us once for all, ever remove the thought of cavilling with regard to that day that is appointed.

Now let us come to the first point which is this: "As it is appointed unto men once to die." We do believe and are sure of this, that the time of our birth was appointed of God, as mysterious as it may appear to some, yet indeed God knew, God appointed, God planned. So the divine certainty of God is seen in the birth of all mankind, irrespective of what men may think and say, to try and defer or prevent. My friends, we will never overcome the sovereignty of God, and here we stand as individuals today; we are living witnesses to this.

"As it is appointed unto men once to die." There may be some of us here who have thought this: I would to God that I was never born, such indeed has the second appointment been a reality to us, such indeed has been the conviction and condemnation we have known within that in our foolishness we have said, I would to God that I had never been born. There may be one here tonight who has that feeling in their soul, feeling themselves to be a hopeless sink of misery, feeling themselves to be condemned under God's most holy Word, with a sense of that realisation that they cannot flee from the presence of the Lord. My friends, what a mercy it is to be kept and made aware of this, and not to be left like Cain in his misery who went out from the presence of God and dwelt in the land of Nod. There are many today I fear who have done just this: they prefer to live where the voice, the witness of God does not exist. I say, though we may be sunk very low, O be thankful for this, to be kept under the sound of the gospel, for that is the only door of hope for poor and needy sinners.

"As it is appointed unto men once to die." How many of the Lord's people know what temptations are concerning their death. O that divine

appointment that none shall escape! But looking back over life's journey, have you not indeed passed through many a solemn vale, have you not been called to pass through deep waters, have you not been called to pass through fiery trials? My point is this: that in those dispensations you are living witnesses to this, that the Lord gave you that all-needed grace, His divine favour in those hours of deep grief and sorrow. He made His goodness known to you there; He made you know that it was His divine appointment that He should show you this, that He was God and that we are poor, fallen man, that we might know in the furnace of affliction and trial that He had a favour, a purpose towards us.

"It is appointed unto men once to die." If, then, in those divine appointments He was all-sufficient for your every need, will He not be all-sufficient in that time appointed for death? Did the Lord show us a favour prior to those trials, did we know His love, did we know His strength ministered before we met those great obstacles, before we came to those insurmountable mountains? No, my friends, but it was given in that day. Even as Israel was brought to compass Jericho round about, the inhabitants could not go in or out, neither could Israel enter in, nor could they scale the insurmountable walls. It was in that hour that Jericho was to be taken that the Lord Jehovah appeared and showed the arm of His might. His divine appointment. He showed there in a mysterious way what He would do prior to this, and it came to pass even as He had promised.

Now my point is this. Are we looking, are we cleaving unto Jesus Christ? Are we thinking in our hearts tonight that that time, that hour may be far distant? Who am I to suggest it and who are you to believe it? My friends, Jesus Christ has made it abundantly clear that as a thief cometh in the night, so He will come. He says, "Be ye also ready."

"It is appointed unto men once to die," and the great thing is to be ready, to be found in Him, not having our own righteousness, but that righteousness which is of faith in Christ Jesus.

Poor sinner, where are you looking tonight? Is it to the future? Are you looking to the fulfilment of your ambitions, of your high hopes? Indeed we cannot dismiss ambition entirely in young people, but do not let ambition over-ride the vital urgency of the state of your never-dying souls. Do not let the ambitions of life overtake the one thing that is needful, and that is to be prepared to die. Do not let us settle down and think that we can live in a slothful way and that the things of life do not need to be attended to. We need that grace to work, not as if we shall live for ever, but to live as if we shall die tomorrow. I hope you see what I mean in saying that, that our attitude may be right to the responsibilities of life and yet by the grace of God to remember, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."

There is one thing that is very clear, that even the biggest heretic on earth can never deny. That is, that death will come. Though indeed he does not believe in God, one thing he cannot avoid, although he would, and that is the day of his death.

My friends, should it not be so when the church of God is in decline and indeed knows much sorrow and concern, that they may be comforted by this: "It is appointed unto men once to die"? I believe it is so with every child of God and every servant of the Lord that they are immortal until their work is done.

"It is appointed unto men once to die." It is not indeed suggested, it is not negotiable in any way, it cannot be meddled with because of the stresses and strains of this life. We know through natural causes this may appear so, but those words were much with me in coming up tonight, with regard to the blessing of Asher: "And as thy days, so shall thy strength be." Friends, Asher was to be blessed with children. There may be those here tonight saying, I would to God that we were blessed with children; I would to God that we were blessed with children in this house of prayer. I believe that is the desire of every living church of God, but, my friends, one thing is clear: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." So we realise this, that our days are numbered and that all divine appointments are in His hand.

Let me go back quickly to that point with regard to death and all-needed grace and strength. Is it not true that He will give strength to die and grace to die, not before, but at that time? O, "It is appointed." What a mercy that God's time is always ready, and, as I sometimes say at home, His clock is never wrong; it is never slow and it is never, never fast. He never comes too early; He never comes too late. O the wonders of such a God as this! His divine appointments. My friends, it is *once* to die: this great appointment that many think they can defy; but they never, never will.

The judgment day. Many think they can have their bodies destroyed to escape judgment, perhaps more so in years past than it is today, although cremation is widely used. My friends, in all creation but man, God spake and it was created; with man He took the dust and made man and He breathed into him a living soul. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die," so he returns to dust: dust, my friends.

I would not be so categoric as to say that when our bodies have fallen into dust, that that dust will be the exact dust raised; that is with God. It is possible, but my point is this: that God will raise every body to stand before Him at that judgment day and whether their ashes have been scattered upon the oceans of the world, or whether their bodies have been consumed by animals, it will make no difference whatsoever. God's divine appointment: God will summon all mankind to be there and

there is no-one who will be able to defy that summons, because his body will be raised again, and thus he will stand before the judgment bar of God. None will avoid that divine appointment.

My friends, let us not put these things from us as if to say, if we think nothing of them they will go away. We may be successful in putting these matters from us, but they will not go away, for the whole situation will overtake us as a thief cometh and overtaketh us in the night.

Let us now come to the last verse. "So Christ was once offered." My friends, as those appointments of death and the judgment day are sure, so Christ was once offered. It was appointed for Him to be offered. O the wonder of it. "So Christ was once offered" a living sacrifice for sin. The law demanded death, and there could be no remission of sin without the shedding of blood, and so Christ was once offered. O that wondrous appointment! Does this not soften the poor sinner's heart, that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son"? Is there not some cheering hope, some ray of comfort in these words, "So Christ was once offered"?

My friends, have you not tried to raise up something in yourself, and looked for something, and waited for something to develop in you that you might offer? But to your sad amazement you have found there is nothing to be offered; all is totally unacceptable before the heart-searching eyes of God; all is stained and contaminated by sin. But now, to look by the grace of God to the sinner's only hope, to the sinner's only Friend.

"So Christ was once offered." O my friends, this only is acceptable and this is true. It is unacceptable to the dead professor, those who lay stress upon their own abilities and what they can do.

"So Christ was once offered." This divine appointment. And I would say this: the same appointment was fixed when you at first looked by humble faith to the Lord Jesus Christ. Why, dear Toplady clasped it when he said,

"Nothing in my hand I bring;
Simply to Thy cross I cling."

"So Christ was once offered." My friends, would God in His infinite mercy and wisdom have appointed the sacrifice of His own dear Son upon Calvary in vain? Could this sacrifice be profitable, could it be beneficial to the righteous? Indeed not. If they were righteous, that day of judgment would have no fear or terror for them; if they were without spot or blemish, if they came from a sin-free, holy stock, then there would be no terror in death and the day of judgment. But our mercy is this: that Jesus said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mark 2. 17). And it will be with repentance, when in that appointed day, we behold with wonder the divine appointment of God,

that Jesus, His own dear Son, should bear the sin of many and we are effectually turned.

I have often thought upon that word "many." O how different if it said, "a few," if it said a set number. But it does not; it is "many." It is a number that no man can number because God has not revealed such a number to man, but it is known unto God alone.

"As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." The wonder of this truth: "to bear the sins of many." Have you thought upon this, what it would be to bear the consequence of our own sins after the day of judgment? This is what it would be: it would be to be cast out of His sight, not for a million years, but for eternity. It is indeed to bear suffering and pain, to exist with the fiends in hell and the misery that accompanies it. Nobody can fully understand or describe what hell will be, but we realise this, that when we come to that judgment day it will be decisive; it will be the point of no return.

It was appointed that "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many," that they may return, that they may be reconciled to God, that they may be cleansed from their sin and unrighteousness, that they may obtain pardon and forgiveness through blood, and a righteousness that will stand complete for ever.

"To bear the sins of many." How vast and how extreme must the sufferings of Christ have been, and how we get a glimpse of this as the anguish strikes Him in the Garden of Gethsemane. He sweat as it were great drops of blood even in anticipation of facing the great sacrifice He should be, "to bear the sins of many," when He called out in such a real way, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt" (Matt. 26. 39). Here He is entering into that appointment. The Lord Jesus Christ knew that time and place when He should die. He gave a clear preview to His disciples, and what were their reactions? Some of sorrow, but also some of disbelief. My friends, we have not a stone to throw at them. What prompted dear Peter, and the other disciples also, to say, "This shall not be unto Thee"? But the appointment *was* unto Him. His disciples said with Peter that they would suffer and die for Him, they would defend Him, but, no, they forsook Him and fled. That divine appointment was kept that He bore the sins of many. O the wonders of the sufferings of Christ "to bear the sins of many."

My friends, the Lord Jesus Christ suffered for every sin of every one of His children. That divine appointment was kept to the full; there was nothing left undone that should have been done, and when Jesus Christ said, "It is finished," it was finished, that is, that divine appointment where He should bear the sins of many. This does not mean that the

work of Christ was finished, but the church's salvation is complete. For we know that He is appointed a great "High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" (Heb. 6. 20). His work is carried on as the great Intercessor and Daysman of His people. But O that appointment! What it meant to Him. What power with that great High Priest. Why, here is a sacrifice for sin that would be effective, a sacrifice that would be acceptable in the eyes of Almighty God, so that He would rise again from the dead, and that His people should be "more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Rom. 8. 37).

"As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." Now I want to come to another point and it is this. There may be those who believe and know they have tasted a Saviour's love, the power in melting down their hard hearts in times past, but the Lord seems to have deepened the work of conviction, and you fear it has outridden and outshone the work of His love in your soul, and there is this temptation that arises – can there still be mercy, can there still be pardon for such a sinner as me? Can there be hope for one like me? My friend, that divine appointment for sin, that sacrifice for sin was for *all* the sins of His people. As I tried to stress, the Lord does nothing by halves; He does not leave anything undone. He is completely aware of the total sum of His people's sins, and He would not begin that work in your soul and then ask you to make up the balance. Indeed not.

That appointment is this: that He shows us, the vileness of our hearts, He teaches us more of ourselves that we might know more of Him and that wondrous appointment of Jesus Christ in fulfilling that role of Mediator for us, in giving "His life a ransom for many." The wonders of it! The Lord has not forsaken our soul because He shows us more of the evils of our heart, but O! we want a greater revelation in proportion to our felt need. "For the sins of many."

"And unto them that look for Him." Do you bear that mark? "To them that look for Him." If we look for Him as poor and needy sinners, as those who totally depend on Him, then He will "appear the second time without sin unto salvation." He will not come in that capacity as a Saviour to suffer for sin, but to take home to glory those He has already redeemed from death and the curse of the law. The wonders of it! My friends, that appointment! He will not make a mistake; He will not err. We read that, "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end" (John 13. 1). Though we may see so many hindrances to the way of salvation in our own lives, and in our own company, yet we can rest assured that that work is to be carried on.

The Lord Jesus Christ said when speaking of the strait and narrow way, "Few there be that find it." Yet we read in the Revelation of John

chapter 7, of that great number shown to John, a great host that were arrayed in white, and one of the elders said, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" He further said, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Why, it was the Lord Jesus Christ speaking to John, and there was that great number that no man could number. When He said, "*They* have washed," why, the Lord Jesus Christ gives that grace, He shows that mercy, He gives that faith and ascribes it to the soul to whom He gives it. So He says, "*They* have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." As He draws His people by His irresistible grace, they are called to believe on Him, to call upon Him, to believe and trust Him even where they cannot trace Him. So salvation is given to them and that figure holds good, "They have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" – the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ that cleanseth us from *all* sin. O that appointment! Here is a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. All sin.

You may be troubled on this point and have this in your heart – well there is a sin for which the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ will not cleanse. My friends, if you had committed that unpardonable sin you would have no care, you would have no concern about the matter. In the total denial of the Holy Spirit the soul is dead, and therefore these are temptations, they are burdens, they are thorns and snares that the adversary will lay in the way of the Lord's people to divert their attention. The truth is that "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1. 7) – the sin of the living, those who are quickened by the Holy Spirit to put their humble and complete trust in Him. Just as the good hymnwriter says:

"If ever my poor soul be saved
'Tis Christ must be the way."

That "if" of the hymnwriter is not an "if" of unbelief; it is not an "if" of doubt, but showing this, that there is no other way as far as he was concerned; this is his only hope. So it is, as by God's appointment that Jesus Christ must "bear the sins of many." Amen.

It is a vain and foolish thing to seek for the justification of a sinner without satisfaction to the justice of God, which he can never give but by the righteousness of Christ imputed to him; while justice remains unsatisfied, it will overthrow all other grounds of hope for justification which we may take up from our own works and doings. The justice of God strikes an unjustified sinner under the curse, and so leaves him in a condemned state.

Thomas Cole

HAPPINESS IN REPENTANCE

A letter by James Bourne to his wife

August 19th, 1824

My dear Wife,

I was exceedingly happy on Sunday morning in reading and meditation. I do not know when I found so much meekness and humility before God, and such godly sorrow and real grief of heart on account of sin. I was first much struck in reading Elisha Coles, where he says, "Moses for once speaking unadvisedly was shut out of Canaan, though he would fain have gone into that good land, and solicited the Lord much about it as if he would have no denial. Yet the Lord would not hear him – 'Speak no more unto Me of this matter.'" I felt great fear and trembling here, and could bring many things to mind, if God had been pleased to enter into judgment; but I was led to confess my folly, acknowledge my sin and its deserts, and found the Lord heard my prayer and broke my heart with His goodness.

As I went on with Elisha Coles I read, "It shall be no grief of heart to thee to remember thy mortal sufferings when thou seest such peaceable fruits of righteousness brought forth thereby." O no! But I cannot paint my feeling in what follows: "He will never repent who sows in tears, when he brings home his sheaves with joy, to eternal life." What sweet and powerful words! Can so poor and wretched a creature as I be brought to receive such an inexpressible feeling in his heart? Yes, by the mighty power of God. What purity and love it works! How sweet and undefiled! Dare *I* say so? Yes, I must say so, but it is all in Christ Jesus, and what He works in us. How odious it makes sin, and how ashamed we are when we bow before Him in adoration! Nothing can describe my humiliation at such a time, nor the grief I feel for my sinful nature, and the more because of His pardoning love. It is wonderful to say it, but it seems almost too much. But O what a sweet union exists between Christ and the soul under such influences! I give a very lame account of it, very short of what I wish to describe.

I afterwards found much sweetness and encouragement in reading 2 Peter 1. 10, 11: "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." O do seek for this! Slack not, nor tarry in all the plain. I also saw much in Micah 4. 6-12 – not to take heed to any that may be watching for our halting, but rather to watch what the Lord will do for us, and see that we obtain a *full reward*. I hope the Lord will appear for you, and do you good, and make you much in earnest.

Yours &c.,

CHRIST ENCOURAGING HIS SPOUSE TO DRAW NEAR AND TO PRAY

From an Exposition of the Song of Solomon by James Durham (1622-1658). James Durham was one of the Scottish Covenanters.

Chapter 2, verse 14. “O My dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let Me see thy countenance, let Me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.”

This fourteenth verse contains the second part of Christ’s sweet and comfortable sermon, wherein, besides the title which He gives His bride, there are three things:

I. Her case.

II. The directions which He propones [puts forward] as the cure of her case.

III. The motive pressing it.

The title is, “My dove.” This hath a sweet insinuation and motive in it. Believers are styled so,

1. For like doves they are harmless and simple (Matt. 10. 16).

2. For their tenderness, and trembling at the word of the Lord (Hos. 11. 11). Hezekiah mourned as a dove (Isa. 38. 14).

3. For their beauty and purity (Psa. 68. 13).

4. For their chaste adhering to their own mate (husband), as Hezekiah mourned after his Lord (Isa. 38. 14).

This shows what a believer should be, and who deserves this name.

I. *Her case.* The condition of this dove is, that she is “in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs.” It is ordinary for doves to hide themselves in the rocks, or holes in walls of houses, and this similitude is used sometimes in a good sense, as Isaiah 60. 8: “Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?”; sometimes in an ill sense, as pointing out infirmity, and too much fear and silliness: “Ephraim also is like a silly dove without heart: they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria” (Hos. 7. 11). The bride is here compared to a dove hiding itself, in the last sense, out of unbelief and anxiety, taking her to poor shifts for ease [unstable changes and evasion], and slighting Christ, as frightened doves that mistake their own windows, and fly to other hiding-places; the scope being to comfort and encourage her, and the directions calling her to holy boldness and prayer to Him (implying that these had been neglected formerly) doth confirm this. Then says the Lord, My poor, heartless dove, why art thou discouraged, taking thee to holes (as it were) to hide thee, fostering misbelief and fainting? That is not the right way.

II. *The directions which He propones as the cure of her case.* What then should she do (might it be said) seeing she is so unmeet to

converse with Him, or look out to the view of any that looks on? He gives two directions, holding forth what was more proper, and fit for her case:

1. "Let Me see thy countenance." Like one that is ashamed, thou hidest thyself as if thou durst not appear before Me, but come, saith He, "let me see thy countenance." This expression, "Let Me see thy face," imports friendliness, familiarity and boldness in her coming before Him: so this phrase of seeing one's face is taken (Gen. 43. 3, 5, and 2 Sam. 14. 32) as the not showing of the countenance supposeth discontent or fear; so then the Lord calls by this to holy familiarity with Him, and confidence in it in opposition to her former fainting and misbelief.

2. The second direction is, "Let Me hear thy voice." To make Him hear the voice is to pray (Psa. 5. 3), and under it generally all the exercises of religion are often comprehended. It is like, discouragement scared the heartless bride from prayer, and she durst not come before Him; do not (saith He) but call confidently upon Me in the day of trouble, and time of need.

Observe:

i. Prayer never angers Christ (be the believer's case what it will), but forbearing of it will.

ii. Discouragement, when it seizes on the child of God, is not soon shaken off; and therefore He not only gives one direction upon another, but also adds encouragements and motives suitable to these directions.

III. *The motive pressing it.* And so we come to the motives He makes use of to press His directions, which are two: 1. "Sweet is thy voice." 2. "Thy countenance is comely." What is my voice and countenance, might she say (for proud unbelief is exceeding humble, and subtle when it is opposing and quarrelling with Christ's call)?

1. Yea (saith He), thy voice is sweet; there is no music in the world so pleasant to Me as the prayer of a poor believer. Now this doth not so much commend our prayers, as it shows His acceptance of them, and the excellency of His golden censer that makes them with His odours so savoury before God (Rev. 8. 3).

2. And (saith He) thy countenance, though there be spots on it, yet to Me it is comely; therefore, "Let Me see thy countenance, let Me hear Thy voice." Christ had rather converse with a poor believer than with the most gallant, stately person in all the world. Besides, *observe:*

i. Fainting may overmaster even a poor believer, and misbelief may mire him.

ii. There are often foolish, feckless shifts made use of by believers for defending misbelief and discouragement, when they are under temptation.

iii. Faithless fears and discouragement may come to that height as to scare believers from Christ's company, and mar them in prayer to Him.

iv. Misbelief bears out still this to a tempted soul, that Christ cares not for it; yea, that He disdains such a person and his company.

v. Christ is tender of fainting believers, and of their consolation, even when they suspect Him most, and when their suspicions are most unreasonable and uncharitable to Him (Isa. 49. 14, 15).

vi. Christ allows poor believers a familiar and confident walk with Him; they might all be courtiers, for the access that is allowed them. Yet they often turn aside from this favour, and sinfully raise obstructions to the promised access.

vii. Christ loves to be much employed by His people, and there is nothing more pleasing to Him than frequently to hear their voice.

viii. He is a sweet and gentle constructor of them and their service; and is not rigid, even when often they have many misconstructions of Him.

ix. The more discouragement seizeth upon the soul, there should be the more prayer and thronging in upon Christ; for there is no outgate to be expected but in that way.

x. None need to fear to put Christ on their secrets; or they need not so to fear (if they be sincere) that they spill their prayers, as thereby to be kept from prayer, or made heartless in it; for it is Christ that hears them, whose censer (Rev. 8. 3) makes them savoury before God.

"Let Me hear thy voice," is no little encouragement in coming; and the right consideration of it would help to much boldness in prayer, and especially considering that the God, who is the hearer of prayer, is our Beloved.

CHRIST OUR PRIEST AND INTERCESSOR

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

I. *Christ our Priest*

The meaning of the word priest and the nature of the office are to be determined, first, by the express declarations of the Scriptures; secondly, by general usage and consent; and, thirdly, by the nature of the functions peculiar to the office. From these sources it can be shown that a priest is,

1. Appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. His function is to reconcile men to God; to make expiation for their sins; and to present their persons, acknowledgements and offerings to God.

2. A man duly appointed to act for other men in things pertaining to God. The idea which lies at the foundation of the office is, that men,

being sinners, have not liberty of access to God. Therefore, one, either having that right in himself, or to whom it is conceded, must be appointed to draw near to God in their behalf. A priest, consequently, from the nature of his office, is a mediator.

3. He makes intercession for the people. Not merely as one man may pray for another, but as urging the efficacy of his sacrifice and the authority of his office, as grounds on which his prayers should be answered.

II. *Christ our Intercessor*

Under the old dispensation, the high priest, after having offered sacrifices for sin in the outer court, was directed, on the day of atonement, to take the blood of the victims and a censer with burning incense, and to enter within the veil, and there present the blood before God, sprinkling it upon the mercy seat. In like manner, as we are taught by the apostle, Christ, having offered Himself on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, has passed through the heavens, there to appear before God in our behalf. He is, therefore, said to be the Minister of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man. His priestly office is now exercised in heaven, where He ever lives to intercede for us.

This work of Christ is expressed in Scripture:

1. By saying that He appears before God for us (Heb. 9. 24). Christ presents Himself before God as our Representative. His perfect Manhood, His official character, and His finished work, plead for us before the throne of God. All that the Son of God as incarnate is, and all that He did on earth, He is, and did for us; so that God can regard us with all the favour which is due to Him. His presence, therefore, is a perpetual and prevailing intercession with God in behalf of His people, and secures for them all the benefits of His redemption.

2. His intercession is expressed by saying that He draws near to God on our behalf. The word used in the original is *to meet with, to talk with*. To meet, or approach one *for* another, is to intercede in his behalf (Rom. 8. 34; Heb. 7. 25). According to the Scriptures, and speaking after the manner of men, Christ speaks to God in our behalf; or, as it is expressed in John 17. 9, He prays for us.

3. Christ is called our Paraclete. This word is translated *Advocate* in 1 John 2. 1, and *Comforter* in John 14. 16; 15. 26; 16. 7. Neither translation expresses its full meaning. It signifies *invoked*, called upon for help. The Paraclete is, therefore, in the comprehensive sense of the word, a helper, whatever may be the specific nature of the aid afforded. As, however, the guilty, the ignorant, the friendless, when arraigned before a tribunal of justice, need above all things an advocate, one who will undertake their cause, present a plea in their behalf, and use all his

influence to secure their acquittal, it is in this sense especially that Christ is set forth as our Paraclete. He is our Advocate. He appears at the bar of God for us. He pleads our cause. He presents His work of obedience and suffering as the ground of our justification. He exerts His influence, the influence of His character as the Son of God in whom the Father is ever well pleased, and whom He heareth always, as well as the influence due to Him in virtue of the covenant of redemption, and the perfect fulfilment of its conditions, to secure for His people all the good they need. It is, therefore, especially in passages which speak of justification, and of judicial process, that Christ's intercession is brought into view. (See Rom. 8. 34; 1 John 2. 1).

BRINGING THE UNMANAGEABLE TO THE LORD JESUS

A letter by Grey Hazlerigg (1818-1912)

Liverpool
September 23rd, 1859

My dearest Mother

It gave me pleasure, upon my return from Blackburn on Thursday, to find your letter and my sister's awaiting me, and to hear that through mercy you continue well. I really had no time to write at the beginning of the week, having so many engagements.

I believe it is right for me to say that the Lord has been with me since writing last, so far as the ministry goes especially. So that my acknowledgment must be that He has not dealt with me after my sins, nor rewarded me according to my iniquities.

"O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace, Lord, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee."

I feel somewhat tired with the trip, notwithstanding the Lord's help, so do not feel in much spirits for writing. The chapel at Bacup on Tuesday, in spite of the rain coming on about an hour-and-a-half before the meeting, was crowdedly full, and the Lord helped, and I trust the word was blessed and useful. I think the people I stayed with during my sojourn there the most primitive I have been with. The sitting-room serving for parlour and kitchen and hall; the damsels wearing wooden-soled shoes, and shawls over their heads pinned beneath their chins; and the dialect being broad Lancashire.

At Blackburn the accommodation was more stylish, but the chapel, the night again being very wet, not so well filled, though a fair attendance. I think the Lord gave me even more power there than at Bacup.

I spoke last night here to a very fair attendance from a text you have heard of, though I do not know that you have heard me from it, Matthew 17, part of verse 17: "Bring him hither to Me." The Lord gave me plenty to say, and was with me in saying it. The tenor of the remarks was of course to counsel God's people to bring all their unmanageable matters to the Lord Jesus. Unmanageable men, whether saints or sinners, friends or foes. Instead of fretting and fuming, with the eye towards the injuring creature, and our own arm at the work, the wisdom is to bring men to Jesus. Unmanageable devils also, and unmanageable hearts, unmanageable pride and worldliness, unmanageable thoughts and imaginations, unmanageable circumstances, unmanageable doubts as to interest in Christ, calling, election and so on; unmanageable fears as to falling away, as to death and eternity. For all these unmanageable things, Christ is the appointed and anointed burden-bearer of His people (Psa. 89. 19; Isa. 61. 1). Wise, powerful, gracious, unchanging, and always present, close at hand, nigh unto His poor and needy and afflicted people in all they call upon Him for.

Moreover, He not only warrants, but commands them to bring their matters hither to Him, to His throne of grace. And if it is wrong to disobey Him in one thing, it is in another. He that says, "Love not the world," says also, in order that we may not love it, bring thy heart hither to Me; give Me thine heart. Bring thy ignorance to Me to teach thee, thy guilt to Me to pardon it, thy corruption and indwelling sin that I may subdue it (Mic. 7. 19), thy wants that I may supply them, thy burdens that I may bear them – bring all to Me. What nature despairs of, what creatures fail to help in, old disorders, desperate, outrageous maladies, bring them all hither to Me. And this shall not be in vain. When said Christ to the house of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain? (Isa 45. 19). Whoever trusted in Him and was confounded? His office, His word of promise, innumerable examples, prove that it is a safe course to bring all hither to Jesus. In His own time and way, read the account in Matthew 17, He will perform a cure; and if in the process the malady displays itself more, the devil roars and rages and casts down, and nature faints and fails, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9. 24). Still the issue is sure, and all this is merely designed to make the cure conspicuous, and display the arm that effects it, that we may know in the long run that the arm that saves us is the Lord's.

Till I see you again, God willing, may the Lord give you practically to feel the power and consolation of these words: "Bring him, any him,

anything, hither, to a throne of grace, to Me," to the appointed, anointed, unchangingly-gracious burden-bearer of Israel.

I hope Miss Wilkinson is better. I am thankful the Lord sustains her, and felt pleased with her few lines. I am glad you liked Mr. Brown.

Your attached and anxious son,

Grey

COMFORTS IN CONFLICT

Closing part of a letter to Joseph Chamberlain by John Keyt

November 8th, 1828

Little did I once think that my path in this last stage of my life would be what it is. I have met with many trials before, yet they were not so heavy, nor the waters so deep, as they now appear to be. At the same time I must testify that the consolations of God with me are more abundant than ever they were before, insomuch that, were everything left to my own choice, I would refer all back to the government of Him who is "wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working" (Isa. 28. 29).

While many who profess and call themselves Christians are immersed in the pursuit of perishable riches, may I learn to be content with such things as the Lord shall be pleased to bestow upon me, whether little or much, in this world, since He hath blessed me with a measure of faith to believe that His ever-blessed Self is the portion of my soul.

I have had a long experience of the Lord's paternal goodness and mercy, and feel to this hour that I am utterly unworthy of the least favour from His bountiful hand; yet in the midst of all, I am now and then indulged with most comfortable prospects of the promised rest, which, like a live coal upon my heart, melt me down into the sweetest submission to the will of God in all His dealings with me.

You are now about to leave this troublous place, while I must a little longer abide in the Corinthian congregation, where some are carried away with the blighting wind of erroneous doctrines, and others are puffed up with vain conceits, earthly wisdom and wonderful revelations, ready to despise the afflicted and poor people left in the midst of Zion. But I remember that Mr. Huntington used to say of some in his day, "I let them go on, for I know they must come down where we are before they get to heaven."

May the good Lord take my dear friend under His special care and keeping while journeying to Leicester. May you find your dear family in health and peace, and be gladly received by your own people. May

every blessing of the everlasting covenant rest upon you, and when near the throne, may you remember the poor prisoner of hope, who remains
 Very affectionately yours,

John Keyt

THE INGATHERING TO THE GOSPEL KINGDOM

The substance of a sermon preached by Isaac Beeman (1764-1838), of Providence Chapel, Cranbrook

Text: “And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 8. 11).

The occasion of these words, was the faith of the centurion, who said, “Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed” (verse 8). It is said, Jesus marvelled, and said to them that followed Him, “Verily ... I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel,” by which we perceive this man was a Gentile. Then in the eleventh verse he mentions the call of the Gentiles, and in the next verse the rejection of the Jews.

But the call of the Gentiles and their spiritual privileges is my subject. The majority of the people of the Jews were amazingly ignorant of this, notwithstanding it had long been predicted, even from the time of Noah, that “God shall persuade (margin) Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem.” When God called Abraham, He said, “I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 12. 2, 3). These things, however, they saw not, but David was showed this when he saw the ascension of Christ, in Psalm 68, and says, after His ascending on high, leading captivity captive, and receiving gifts for men (verse 18) – that is, the Holy Ghost, and the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost – the gospel should spread far and wide; and when this joyful sound should go forth, called by him, in this Psalm, a mighty voice, that Ethiopia should soon stretch out her hands unto God, and that princes should come out of Egypt (verse 31) – he means such as God would exalt from their debased state under a sense of their sin, and set them among the princes of His people. Isaiah was showed this when he said, “And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious” (Isa. 11. 10), and again, “The

Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising” (Isa. 60. 3).

The last prophet, Malachi, says, “From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same My name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto My name, and a pure offering: for My name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.” These are the many that should come from the east and the west and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. And this blessing promised to Abraham was renewed to Jacob (Gen. 28. 14) where not only his natural seed is meant, but also his spiritual; for God is said not only to be their God, but the God of their seed also.

Old Simeon takes it up: “A light to lighten the Gentiles.” Paul, as well as Peter, who (to show the truth of these promises, and do away their natural prejudices) was first convinced by a vision, and then by a positive command, was sent to carry the first tidings to them of salvation. Paul goes into Arabia, Asia and the Greek islands, and to Rome, to bring these many predestinated sons and daughters from far, from the east, west, north and south. And this work has been carried on ever since the Jews’ rejection, and will be continued till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in (see Rom. 11) with the calling of the Jews, and so all Israel shall be saved. It is said, these many, ordained to eternal life, shall come. But how are we to understand this? John Bunyan says, it is the moving of the mind after Christ from the sound sense a man hath of the absolute need of Christ to save him. To this, in my judgment, there needs nothing to be added.

The next thing that shows the nature of this coming is the characters of these comers, set before us in the Bible. For instance, “It shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown,” [in allusion to the trumpet in Numbers 10, for the gathering of the assembly] “and they shall come which are ready to perish” (Isa. 27. 13), and also the outcasts; and until we are ready to perish, and think ourselves outcasts, we never come. But these things working within, make us feel our need of Christ to save us, and the promise is, “They shall come,” and no obstruction from sin, self or Satan shall finally hinder.

This great trumpet is sounded by none but those who are moved by the Holy Spirit, which may be seen in Isaiah 55, who cries, “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.” No man wants water to drink but he that is athirst; no man wants the water of life but he that is in the pit where there is no water, and is afraid he shall there die for want of that water of life. But when these poor and needy cry, and their tongues fail for thirst, the Lord will hear and show them the river of the water of life, and he that hath no money is to come; he that is stripped of his own merit, and sees and feels he has nothing, he shall come, not as the

Pharisee with his many good things, but as the Publican, only confessing his sin and pleading for mercy.

Another character is he that God meets as a bear bereaved of her whelps, and has rent the caul of his heart. "Come," say such, "and let us return unto the LORD: for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up" (Hos. 6. 1). And it is of no use here to try to patch up the old garment, nor can any healing be found in ourselves; we have no healing medicine. He only that has rent can bind up, and He that has smitten can alone heal, and to Him shall all such come. Again, "He that cometh to Me shall never hunger" (John 6. 35). Then he must hunger before he comes; but then it is only those that shall be filled: "He hath filled the hungry with good things" (Luke 1. 53); also "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink" (John 7. 37). Further, "And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22. 17). By this we see we must be made willing: no objection lies against such but what arises from Satan or themselves, for the word is plain, "whosoever is willing, let him come," and He that makes them willing will show them the way.

Therefore as such as these are to sit down with Abraham in the kingdom of God, the gospel reveals the way to this kingdom, and is called "the gospel of the kingdom." In this gospel Christ is called "the power of God, and the wisdom of God," and this gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth in this Christ. Also says Paul, "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith" (Rom 1. 17). Therefore as faith comes by hearing, they shall be brought to hear the gospel of the kingdom.

These shall not only hear the gospel of this kingdom, but shall have the grace of the kingdom, or the kingdom of grace in their hearts. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation," but "the kingdom of God is within you." Again, this grace of the kingdom is likened to a grain of mustard seed, and also to leaven hid, and in the hearts of God's elect is the grace of the Spirit hid. The grace of fear, the grace of life, the grace of faith, and the grace of hope are all found in the sincere seeker after Christ. Power also, in which this kingdom stands, is opposed to word only. Righteousness, peace and joy – it is said to stand in these – but then these, righteousness, peace and joy in the full sense and meaning of the words cannot be said to be enjoyed till we sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God. Here, seeking and sitting down are to be distinguished, for none but a fool in divinity will deny that Abraham had, as soon as God called him, the grace of life (for God calls and the dead hear) – the grace of fear, the grace of faith, and the grace of hope: under the influence of this grace of the Holy Spirit he went out, which is ascribed to faith, but where faith is, there is the other also.

This was the grace of the kingdom in its first influences, but you would not say he had yet found righteousness, peace and joy, nor did he find these till God revealed His Son in him, which was when he said, "So shall thy seed be." To be short, Paul tells us Abraham worked not, but believed on Him that justifies the ungodly, and that his faith was counted for righteousness, and tells us how, which was upon his believing on Christ as the promised seed, in whom Abraham himself, as well as all nations, must be blessed; even, says Paul, "as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (see Rom. 4).

Now this blessing of Abraham was the same as that which comes on the Gentiles by the faith of Christ: when righteousness was imputed to him, he found righteousness; when his iniquities were forgiven, he found peace and joy in believing God was reconciled to him through the atoning blood of Christ, which he received by faith. And now I am (as Mr. Huntington says), more than sure that Abel also sat down at the table furnished by infinite Wisdom long before ever Abraham was called, and ate of the bread and drank of the wine which Wisdom had prepared; and this was sitting down, and also eating bread, in the kingdom of God, and to which he was led under the first influences of the grace of the kingdom.

In allusion to the above table furnished by Wisdom, the Saviour speaks of a marriage feast (see Matt. 22), and at another place, "a great supper, and bade many"; also unto all people a feast on Mount Zion. To this feast all real seekers desire to come, nor can they sit down and feast till they are come to it so as to enjoy Christ in all His saving benefits, as the prodigal did when he came home; he found the covering robe; the shoes, peace, in the removing of sin, and in reconciliation with his Father; and the ring of eternal love. All these he enjoyed, as Abraham had before, at the feast of a crucified Christ, and no doubt they were sitting, some of them, and feasting too, while there was music and dancing at his return.

Solomon was not without some sight and knowledge of this; the spouse, at one place, is represented as seeking her Beloved; at another place, sitting down under His shadow; her labour and toil were ended when she found Him. As weary and heavy laden they come, but when once they get under His shadow, they sit down, and then comes the feast. "His fruit was sweet unto my taste." This is what I understand by sitting down in the kingdom of God in this world, in union of faith, with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, they all three being blessed in the same way and with the same blessings.

But we are not only to sit down with them here in the kingdom, in the unity of the faith of the Son of God, but also in the kingdom of glory. “We which have believed do enter into rest,” which is sitting down as before said. But then, besides, there is a rest remaining for the people of God; the keeping of an eternal Sabbath in the society of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God above. “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matt. 25. 34). What a sweet society will this be! The same faith they all had, the same experience of God’s power in calling them, the same experience of Christ’s blood that washed them from their sins, the same birth by the same Spirit, all clothed in the same robe, adorned with the same ornaments, decked with the same crown, and carrying the same palm; all their discourse of God’s wonders of grace to them, and all join in the same song to Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb! Here there is no room for pride; they are all humble, holy and happy, all monuments of God’s mercy, the Father, Son and Spirit, being equally concerned in bringing them out of their sinful state, through their manifold troubles, and safely to the eternal kingdom of glory.

BROUGHT THROUGH THE FIRE TO PRAY

By William Gadsby (1773-1844)

“I will bring the third part through the fire” (Zech 13. 9).

Our God is a God who loves us as well when He hides the light of His countenance as when He shines upon us; as well when He suffers us to grope within as when He raises our hopes and expectations to Himself; as well when He chastens us as when He smiles upon us; as well when He afflicts us as when He comforts us; as well when in the fire as when on the mount. It is easier to talk about God’s love than always to believe in it. The third part will be brought through the fire; not merely made to look at it, but be brought through it; the other two thirds – the carnal profane and the dead professor, will be left.

God’s Word is called a fire: “Is not my Word like as a fire? saith the LORD” (Jer. 23. 29). And I believe no man was ever yet sent to preach whose ministry was not a fire; for wherever the Word is faithfully dispensed, there is sure to be a burning up of our hay, wood and stubble – all our false hopes, false zeal. But the true gold sustains no loss. Christ is compared to a fire, and it is said He shall sit as a refiner.

Many of God’s children have a deal of fleshly love, fleshly charity, but Christ will purge them and refine them. Nothing shall stand in His

sight but what comes from Him, stands in Him, and leads to Him. He will burn it up, and it must be Christ alone for salvation and everything connected with it. Right eyes, right arms, right hands, dearest friends, must all go, that wish to stand in His way. When God brings Christ and the sinner together, there is an alarming blaze of the whole of the sinner's lumber [useless or cumbrous material that hinders or clogs up].

I have heard it said that as soon as a refiner can see his own image distinctly in the silver, he considers it pure. So God removes everything from the sinner but His own image; that is, He views him in Christ. We never prayed spiritually till we were put into the fire. Saul of Tarsus thought he had prayed many a time, but when God put him into the fire, he found he had never prayed before; and even God Himself then said to Ananias, "Behold, he prayeth." Bless you, it is more wonderful for a sinner to be made to pray than it is for a king to be made a beggar, because natural circumstances may bring and have brought that to pass, but God the Spirit must take possession of the man and bring him into the fire before he can pray. We cannot even rightly think of prayer without; for the Spirit helpeth our infirmities with groanings.

When God was blessedly pleased first to put me into this fire, one of the first things He did was to burn up my prayers. I formerly was so regular in them that I durst not go to sleep till I had said what is called the Lord's prayer, and very often I went off in a doze before I had done, just like the poor papist counting his beads. But now I could not even begin it. I dared not to call God, "Father." What right had I to say, "*Our Father*"? I felt there was something more in prayer than I was possessed of. Pretty words would not do now. I felt I stood before God as a lawbreaker.

You know it is very often the case, when you are called upon to go to prayer before a few friends, that you study more how to place your words prettily than to express the feelings of your heart; and sometimes God puts you in the fire in the midst of it, and conscience says, "You don't feel that; nor do you know that," till you are obliged to groan out, "O Lord, I am vile! Lord, teach me to pray! Come down, dear Lord, and support me, wretched man that I am!" There is more prayer in a few broken, unconnected sentences, sighs or groans, from a poor soul in the fire, than in all the fine words that can be used by the greatest orators in the world; for theirs is only like a knife with two backs, as it were, and no edge; there is nothing to cut. Now, God will bring His people through this fire – not leave them in it; and they shall be brought out as monuments of His discriminating mercy, and shall show forth His praise to all eternity, that ever He separated them from the world, and put them into the fire.

SIN AND ITS FRUIT

From an Exposition on the Proverbs by Charles Bridges (1794-1869)

“Bread of deceit is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel” (Prov. 20. 17).

Holiness is sweet in the way and end too. Wickedness is sometimes sweet in the way, but always bitter in the end. It is with *deceit*, as with every other sin, Satan always holds out a bait, always promises gain or pleasure as the wages of his service, and as surely disappoints the victims of his delusion. If corn be thrashed upon a *gravelly* floor, the grating soil would spoil the *sweetness of the bread*. O how many has this arch-deceiver allured by the *sweetness of his bread*, whose *mouths have been afterwards filled with gravel!* The bread, which a man hath got by fraud and cozenage [cheating] seems *sweet* and pleasant at the first taste of it; but by that time he hath chewed it a little, he shall find it to be but harsh gravel, that crasheth between his teeth, galls his jaws, wounds his tongue and offends his palate. Everything gotten wrongfully is here implied. Bitter was Achan’s sweet, *deceitfully* hid in the tent, which brought ruin upon himself and his family (Josh. 7. 21-24).

Look at Gehazi. What profit had he from his talents of silver and changes of garments? Bitter indeed was *the bread of deceit* to him (2 Kings 5. 20-27). Look even at Jacob, a true servant of God; and yet chastened heavily almost to the end of his days with the bitter fruits of *deceit* (Gen. 27; 42. 36-38). To the mass of such blinded sinners it is eternal ruin. Whatever be the tempter’s proffered advantage, his price is the soul, to be paid in the dying hour. O the undoing bargain! an eternal treasure bartered for the trifle of a moment! Charmed we may be with the present *sweetness*; but bitter indeed will be the after-fruits, when the poor, deluded sinner shall cry, “I did but taste a little honey ... and, lo, I must die” (1 Sam. 14. 43). So surely is the bitterness that springs out of sin the bitterness of death.

Not a single step can be trodden in the way of godliness without an entire renunciation of every accursed practice. Not even the smallest violation of the law admits of palliation [relief]. To venture on what we fancy the lesser shades of sin, is a most dangerous experiment. The smallest sin breaks down the fence, and this once overstepped, the impulse is beyond our restraint. Universal uprightness is the mark of the true servant of God. Let the man of doctrine exhibit the holiness of doctrine. Never let our religion be one thing, and our business another. But let the image and glory of the Lord give the pervading expression to our whole history. Every turning aside from the straight path grieves the Holy Spirit of God, darkens the sunshine of our soul, blasts the consistency of our profession, and wounds the church of God.

SIT UNDER A CHRIST-EXALTING MINISTRY

An extract from Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)

Be fixed under a Christ-exalting and a soul-enriching ministry.

Under that man's ministry that makes it his business; not a thing by the by, but his business, his work; not to tickle the ear, to please the fancy, but to enrich the soul, to win the soul, and to build up the soul. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears" (2 Tim. 4. 3). This age, yea, this city [London] is full of such slight, light, mad souls, that love nor like nothing but what is empty and airy.

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. 5. 21). It is sad to see how many in our days, under pretences of angelical attainments, make it their business to enrich men's heads with high, empty, airy notions, instead of enriching their souls with saving truths. If these are not strangers to that wisdom that is from above, I know nothing. "He that winneth souls is wise" (Prov. 11. 30). The Hebrew word signifies to catch souls, by using all art and industry, as fowlers do to take birds.* No earthly wisdom to be added to that which wins souls from sin and the world, and that wins souls to Christ and holiness; no other teaching to this. Remember this: you will never be rich in grace if you care not who you hear, nor what you hear. That Christ that commands you to take heed how you hear, commands you also to take heed who you hear. And every soul won to God is a new pearl added to Christ's crown.

BOOK REVIEW

A Heavenly Conference, by Richard Sibbes; paperback; 167 pages; price £5; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

This profitable book is an exposition of John 20. 16, 17, the sacred dialogue between Christ and Mary Magdalene in the garden on the morning of the resurrection.

Richard Sibbes, the well-known Church of England Puritan minister (1577-1635), here brings forth many precious truths concerning the relationship of Christ as a Brother to His people, and the relationship of God in Christ as the Father of His people. He also brings before the soul the necessity of seeking communion with Christ and the Spirit's witness in our hearts, and makes spiritual applications which are both instructive and searching. For poor distressed souls, he brings forth many sweet and comfortable truths from the bowels of God's love and mercy in Christ.

* He is the best preacher, not that tickles the ear, but that breaks the heart. T. Brooks

This book is clearly presented and the font is easy to read. One could wish the divisions were slightly more distinct; the main headings, however, are in bold and within each section there are subheadings, which aid the reader's progress through the book. Helpfully, Sibbes' exposition is both orderly and thorough, and his overall style is clear and easy. The book ends with a beautiful discourse upon the greatness and comforts of Christ's God being our God, and followed by application of this truth to our various spiritual conditions.

For the reviewer it was very refreshing that the spirituality of Sibbes, as gleaned from the book, is essentially the same as that for which we contend in our churches, namely, the vitality of the gracious indwelling, and work and witness of the blessed Spirit; the Person of Christ as being the sum and substance of all true religion; communion with Christ as being most sweet and blessed for poor, distressed souls; and the solemnity of our lost estate by nature.

Sibbes does occasionally apply the offer of the gospel, and some of his phrases taken out of context may be interpreted as implying creature power. It is plain, however, from the tenor of the book, that Sibbes believed in the sovereignty of God's grace, and the context and weighty and urgent manner of Sibbes' tones suggest rather that the solemn issues of neglecting such a great salvation are being soberly set before us.

Interwoven throughout the book is the doctrine of the sacred humanity of the Lord Jesus. Indeed, it is inseparable from a faithful exposition of this Scripture (John 20. 16, 17). The very words of Christ Himself, "Go to My brethren" [brothers], and, "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God," clearly reveal it as a foundation truth upon which all the comforts and hopes of heaven, for such lost and undone sinners as ourselves, firmly rest.

This is a good book, and if read prayerfully and carefully, the reader will find much spiritual and living matter. May it be our increasing concern to be found in the narrow way which leads to everlasting life; may we seek and desire to find the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in the secret places of our souls, and at last, through His eternal mercy, see Him face to face.

Stephen P. Rosier
Maidstone

OBITUARY

John Cornwell, faithful member and deacon of Hanover Chapel, Tunbridge Wells, passed away on September 9th, 2015, aged 99 years.

When he joined the church at Hanover in February 1986, he gave his readings:

"I believe the Lord began savingly with me many years ago in my late twenties when I was going home from Gower Street Chapel one Tuesday evening after the service. Before that, I had had checks of conscience and also things that kept me straight and convinced me that there was a God. I can recall when I was about four years of age that my father (Joseph Cornwell) mentioned in his sermon one day that he had been reading and meditating in his study, and got up to look into the

mirror and to comb his hair, when he suddenly had a view of the Lord by faith. This so impressed my father that his natural body turned round and looked, but of course he saw nothing with his natural eyes. As it happened, I was in his study and I saw him get up and turn around, but of course I did not know any more. When I heard him relate this from the pulpit I thought, Well all things that the ministers say must be true.

"When I was about ten years old, my father preached from the text: 'He is altogether lovely,' and he went on describing the beauties of Christ for about half an hour. I can remember thinking, 'If He is as beautiful as that, then He must be beautiful indeed.' When about eleven, I had just left a refuge in the middle of the road, when I had a sudden urge to pull back, and a car came sweeping by. I remember thinking, 'I wonder if it is for a purpose I am still living.' These and such like things worked upon my natural mind.

"I now come to a Tuesday evening in my late twenties. Mr. John Sperling-Tyler had been preaching, but I remember nothing of the sermon at all. As I went home, I suddenly felt the emptiness of everything. I had a career and was getting on quite well, but the great thing about it seemed to be this: it was empty, and it must all come to an end some time or other. I realised what sin was for the first time. I felt:

'My heart is pained, nor can it be
At rest, till I find rest in Thee.'

"My rest was taken away, and another rest was put in front of me. I said,

'Bid all my vile affections die,
Nor let one hateful lust survive.'

"This went on for some two or three years, and I got lower and lower. I knew what I wanted but could not get it.

"We had a move in providence to Buckinghamshire, and on Sunday mornings I used to walk along the country lanes to Prestwood Chapel. Here I believe the Lord deepened the work and showed to me the great evils that were in my heart. My heart was still pained, only more so, and the burden of sin became heavier and heavier. I used to repeat some of the hymns as I walked along. One of them was, 'Thou knowest well my secret smart, and readest all my aching heart.' I felt I had nothing, and no prospect of anything better. I was getting on in my career and this really made it worse. One of the things I used to say as I walked along was,

'Thou, O Christ, art all I want;
All in all in Thee I find.'

"This went on for a while, and I sunk to a very low place. I felt these things were not for me. I sat down on a stile and felt it was no use going any further. However, I did go on, and when I reached the chapel,

such a solemn feeling came over me, and I felt the Lord was there. It was a reading service, and the deacons there acted independently; neither knew what the other would read. The first deacon read the ninth chapter of Daniel, and when he got down to verse 3, I fell under it: 'I set my face unto the Lord God.'

"Now my face had been set the other way till now. The other deacon read the sermon and the text was Daniel chapter 9 verse 3. I reckoned that to be the time when my face was first set toward the Lord. After three weeks we had another read sermon preached by Mr. Popham, and the text was, 'There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High' (Psa. 46. 4). I had a little lift. I could not get to it, but I wanted it.

"After this I got into a legal spirit. I thought perhaps it would be applied to me one day if I read a verse or two of the Scriptures in the mornings, and got into a good frame of mind before going to the service. About this time we sung a hymn which reads,

'I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name,'

and that was all knocked out of me. I was trying to make myself suitable for the Lord to bless, but it was no use at all, and I felt I had come to the end of everything.

"We had to move in providence to Bexhill. We prayed, 'Lord, take us where Thou wilt bless us,' and He did. On the first Sunday we went to The Dicker chapel. Mr. Sperling-Tyler's text was: 'From this day will I bless you' (Hagg. 2. 19).

"One day we went to Mr. Offer's chapel at Eastbourne. I was feeling low again, and decided Mr. Tyler must be all wrong about this. I decided not to sing the hymns. This time it really was the end. I was not even going to listen to the sermon. Well, I went in chapel and sat down, and I did what so many of the Lord's people have done. I decided to take up the Bible for the last time. I opened on the words: 'Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another' (Job 19. 27). It was mine, and I was raised to a hope. I felt it exceedingly solemn that the Lord should take notice of me like this.

"Two or three days later I went to Rye as my father was preaching, and the text was, 'Thy words were found, and I did eat them' (Jer. 15. 16). It was a good sermon, and he closed the Bible and sat down. Then he stood up again and said, 'I shall see Him, and it will be glory, glory in my soul,' and then sat down. I felt such a union with him.

"I sank even lower in the following week. On the Sunday we were at Swanwick Shore and commenced with hymn 524: 'What sweet invitations the gospel contains.' It changed everything; it was just what I wanted. Then affliction came, and I sank very low. I had back trouble,

and was not able to sit down for thirteen weeks, and they said I would always be a cripple. I had a family, and had just started a new post, and everything seemed as black as it could be. In a sense I was glad I was afflicted, because I thought the Lord would be sure to bless me in the affliction, and I dreaded getting better without it. But this was not to be so. In the hospital the words came: 'I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance' (Psa. 42. 11). Well, I did not improve, and I thought of all the extra work my wife had to do, and I asked the Lord to make me better for her sake. In the morning I said, 'I think I will come and sit down for breakfast.' As I went something happened, and the pain was all gone, and I was better, and have never had it since.

"A few days later my father was preaching at Rye, and his text was, 'Thou hast led captivity captive: Thou hast received gifts for men' (Psa. 68. 18). The whole burden of the sermon was: the great thing that took everything else captive was taken captive itself. The very thing that caused all the trouble was taken captive itself. It was mine, and the Lord blessed me. A few days later I heard Mr. Offer at Eastbourne from a text on the priesthood of Christ, and I felt it was mine, and the burden was gone.

"After that, I felt that I should honour the Lord. I heard Mr. Sperling-Tyler and his text was: 'What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits?' (Psa. 116. 12). He said, 'Will you wait to praise Him?' I thought, 'No I will not.' But I did; I wanted another confirmation. I then had a letter from my father in which he said, 'I trust you are now in the enjoyment of Christ,' and he ended his letter by saying, 'Say, poor sinner, lovest thou Me?' I heard Mr. Offer from, 'By their fruits ye shall know them,' and I felt I must go. Then I went to an anniversary service at Ninfield. We sang hymn 440:

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

"Well, that did it. I went to see Mr. Offer, and joined the church at Eastbourne, Mr. Jupp taking the baptism because of Mr. Offer's advanced age.

"We had a move to Brighton, and in due course I transferred there. When my wife became ill, we moved to Sevenoaks to be near my daughter, but did not know which chapel to attend. When we came to hear Mr. Dobell I said to my wife, 'This is the ministry for me,' and she agreed.

"Before my wife died I did want a confirmation of her eternal safety. I knew she was safe really, but I did want a confirmation, and

that is where Mr. Dobell's ministry was so good to me. At the end of 1983 I drank in the ministry for three solid Sundays, every service, and in the week as well. He was so confirming in everything that happened. He did not know my wife was so near death, and he did not know of my feelings, but I well remember the middle Sunday. I came begging for a confirming word and in effect I said, 'Let me have the petition which I have asked of Thee.' The text was, 'If we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him' (1 John 5. 15). He said he wished to speak of the safety of another. He knew nothing of my exercise, but it was such a confirmation, and I felt I had the answer to the petition I had asked of Him.

"Then a short time afterwards there was a Sunday School anniversary, and the address was based on, 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me' (Mark 10. 14). During the last five minutes he said that sometimes older people may become as little children, and this applies to them just the same; He receives them. That was another confirmation to me.

"My wife died, and the exercise commenced: Should I return to Brighton, or stay here? About a month or more ago I had a persuasion that I should join the church at Hanover. A week later my daughter was ill. She has a large family, and I had thought for some time of offering to have one of them, permanently if necessary, to be a help to them, but did not like to suggest it. However I did so, and the offer was gladly accepted. This step was sweetly confirmed when visiting Swanwick Shore, and Mr. Ashby preached from, 'He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation' (Psa. 107. 7). The best word to me was 'them.' He mentioned a change in an earthly habitation, and I thought of Samuel; he mentioned a change of church membership, and I thought of Hanover. Then he said it could mean a serene satisfying contentment and persuasion that we are doing the Lord's will, and I felt, 'Yes that is it.' In the afternoon he said he wanted to connect the morning text with another: 'Occupy till I come,' and there is a work to be done."

Here his testimony closes.

His Pastor writes:

My prayerful desire for all the family of our dear friend is that the Lord would comfort them in their great loss, and support us at Hanover as another believer has by grace attained to glory. There he longed to be.

John Cornwell was a stalwart for the precious truths of free and sovereign grace, he being shown his great need of a Saviour and blessed with the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Appointed a deacon in 1988, he fulfilled his office honourably and I have found him to be a faithful friend, a great help in the church, an

appreciative hearer and one who upheld me continually at the throne of grace.

May the Lord raise up others also to bear the burdens of Zion.

Harold Jempson

The family have sent an account of the life of Mr. Cornwell. He was born in London on January 31st, 1916. As we read in his own account, he knew that, compared with his soul trouble, his earthly career was empty, and must come to an end. He now sings the lasting "new song" of the redeemed which is "the song of the Lamb." Therefore we believe he would not wish much to be said about his earthly success. We will just quote one paragraph to show something of his earthly pathway.

"His first headship was at the Russell School, Chorleywood, and his second at Little Common near Bexhill. Dad had a great interest in the development of backward children, lecturing at Oxford and elsewhere, and his recognition in this area resulted in him being asked in 1972 to head one of the most troublesome schools in the country, Whitehead, near Brighton. Here he used his long experience to quell the most difficult pupils and their parents (some of whom were in prison) and became well known for his successful, 'softly, softly,' but determined approach. He discovered that his peers were recommending him for an M.B.E., but he put a stop to this, wanting no such public recognition."

His dear wife passed away in 1984 after suffering from Alzheimer's disease for a few years. Mr. Cornwell cared for her to the end with much tenderness and love. Mr. Cornwell was a humble, self-effacing person, although a man of natural ability. His prayers were earnest from his heart.

Editor

AN EVENING REFLECTION

Another day is past,
The hours for ever fled,
And time is bearing me in haste,
To mingle with the dead.

Perhaps my closing eyes
No more may hail the light,
Sealed up, before the morning rise,
In everlasting night.

But I've a part to live,
A never-dying ray,

The soul, immortal, will survive
The ruins of her clay.

This mortal frame must lie
Unconscious in the tomb,
But O! where will my spirit fly,
And what will be her doom?

On the tremendous brink
Of vast eternity,
Where souls with strange amazement shrink,
What will my prospect be?

When the dark gulf below,
With death and horror fraught,
Reveals its scenes of endless woe,
O dreadful, dreadful thought!

But lo! yon shining skies
Beam down a cheerful ray,
And bid my drooping hopes arise
To glorious realms of day.

'Tis there my Saviour lives,
My Lord, my life, my light;
His blissful name my soul revives;
Adieu to death and night.

He conquered death and hell,
And His victorious love
Shall bear His ransomed friends to dwell
In His bright courts above.

Jesus! and art Thou mine?
O let Thy heavenly voice
Confirm my hope with power divine,
And bid my soul rejoice.

Then shall my closing eyes,
Contented, sink to rest;
For if tonight this body dies,
My spirit shall be blest.

Anne Steele (1717-1778)

Things would not much trouble us, if we did not expect too much from them, if we knew there were an emptiness in them. He that looks not for much from the creature, can never be much deceived. He that looks for much from God shall be sure to have his desire answered and satisfied; he shall never fall short of his expectation.

John Preston

THE
GOSPEL STANDARD
SEPTEMBER 2016

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

THE SACRED HUMANITY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

When the glorious Person of the Lord Jesus was living in this lower world, He clearly spoke of Himself as being “The Son of God,” and also as being “The Son of man.” It is a most serious heresy to deny the Divinity, or the sacred Manhood of the Lord Jesus.

It has been said by many over the years that while God raised up J.C. Philpot for many purposes, God particularly used him as an instrument to defend the doctrine of the eternal Sonship of the Lord Jesus. In Philpot’s day, there was a departing from, and a denying of, this essential truth among some Strict Baptist churches. Mr. Philpot was enabled graciously to expound in a skilful way the truth of the eternal generation of the Son of God.

He then also took up his pen to write on the subject of the sacred humanity of the Lord Jesus. These writings were serialised in the *Gospel Standard* in the closing months of 1859, and for a number of months in 1860. These meditations were triggered after Philpot had written a review in defence of a work by Dr. Henry Cole who had exposed some blasphemous views expressed by a popular London preacher named Edward Irving some years before. Mr. Philpot then expanded his thoughts into some further writings in *Meditations on the Sacred Humanity of the Blessed Redeemer*.

Very solemnly, this most vital doctrine of the fulness of the sacred humanity of the Lord Jesus has been opposed and denied in recent years by some who were at one time in communion with our Gospel Standard churches. This led to separation. However, a number of booklets have been circulated over the years, which promote such solemnly erroneous views of the Lord Jesus. We are very sorry and grieved that this year, two more booklets have been circulated and sent to chapel correspondents and probably to other people also. In these booklets there is a denial of the sacred humanity of the Lord Jesus. J.C. Philpot in his *Meditations* points out the awful errors of Nestorius and Eutychus. We quote: “Among the heresies and errors which pestered the early church, was the Nestorian heresy, which asserted that Christ’s human nature was a Person, and thus made two persons in the Lord, and the Eutychian, which declared that there was but one nature, the humanity of Christ being absorbed into His divinity.” Eutychus is used to support the heresies in these booklets. This inevitably leads into other gross errors

and denials of the most precious truths which belong unto our salvation. In an earlier booklet circulated, the truth that the Lord Jesus was made under the law to live in perfect obedience was denied. This immediately destroys the truth that the Lord Jesus is “Jehovah-tsidkenu,” that is, “THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

The truth that God the HOLY GHOST comes to us from the FATHER and also from the SON is turned into confusion. The Lord Jesus, who lay in the bosom of the Father, visited the earth, assumed our nature without sin, has returned to His Father, and is now set down at His right hand (He is the Son of man in heaven – see John 3.13), for He had finished the work that His Father gave Him to do. The Holy Ghost comes to us equally from the Father and the Son. The heresies in these booklets are leading to Unitarianism. Let us hear the Word of God.

“But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me” (John 15. 26). Also, “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you” (John 16. 7). And again, “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14. 26).

Satan loves to mix truth and error. This causes confusion. As Satan tries to deceive the very elect, he so works that men with lying spirits mix truth and error. One subtle way is to quote godly men out of context and twist their beliefs. This is a common practice in this lost world.

We believe that God in all His wisdom and foreknowledge of the present time, moved J.C. Philpot to write on the glorious truth of “God with us.” We therefore intend, God willing, once again to serialise the *Meditations on the Sacred Humanity of the Blessed Redeemer* in the *Gospel Standard*. Our dear friend, the retired Editor, Mr. B.A. Ramsbottom, edited the original writings from the *Gospel Standard*, and arranged them into chapters, which were then published in 1975 by Mr. O.G. Pearce in a profitable book, and later by the Gospel Standard Trust. The meditations will appear in that form, God willing. We expect that the meditations will appear month by month and through next year, God willing.

Some of our readers may find some confusion in their mind about these vital truths of our most holy faith. We can only counsel them to sink down on their knees in secret at the feet of the Lord Jesus, and plead for the Holy Spirit’s teaching, that they may be established in the precious truths of the gospel. When the Lord Jesus manifests His great love in pardon and peace, these vital truths are laid into the soul with much comfort and assurance. Even such a leading apostle as Peter was

carried away by a legal spirit, as recorded in Galatians chapter 2. Paul resisted Peter to Peter's profit and restoration. Some of the Lord's dear people (and we are much smaller in grace than Peter), may for a season be carried away by these evils, not realising where it will lead to. When the Lord restores their soul, they are so often much more established in the everlasting covenant than before. The Lord's dear people will always be restored by the Spirit of Grace, in God's everlasting love to them. Mr. J.H. Gosden once said, "That when we have received the truth in the saving love of it, error cannot have an abiding place in our heart." If a man persists in gross heresy all his days, it is a most solemn evidence of gross darkness.

Although J.C. Philpot was a learned man, yet his writings are so easily understood and valued by humble believers. He so skilfully and plainly sets forth those glorious truths of our great salvation. The prayerful reader will, under the light of the Spirit, be brought to begin to believe in, adore, and in measure embrace these great mysteries of our sure salvation. I believe the Spirit's work in the soul will create such a hunger and thirst truly to partake of His great salvation. And such will not be disappointed, according to the Scriptures. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5. 6). By comparison with Philpot's writings, the various booklets that have appeared are a labyrinth of confusion, with so many obscure and meaningless sentences that darken God's counsel. These things can only lead the reader into the catacombs of outer darkness, unless grace prevent.

If we receive reproach for Christ's sake for this editorial and the *Meditations* of J.C. Philpot, then "happy are ye" (1 Pet. 4. 14). In spite of this, we cannot sit back and ignore the soul-destroying heresies that are being circulated in our churches. My prayerful desire is still the same as it was on the day when, to my complete surprise, I found the *Gospel Standard* magazine laid upon me. My desire is that Christ might be exalted in its pages, and also in the hearts of each of the readers, who have precious, never-dying souls. We do not intend to enter into any correspondence with those who support such soul-destroying heresies. We would not for a moment enter into any dialogue with a "Jehovah's Witness" who will say, "We believe that Jesus is the Son of God," and then immediately deny His Deity with the Father and the Holy Ghost. Neither will we enter into correspondence with those who may in the letter of truth own that Jesus is the Son of man according to the Scriptures, and then immediately deny and rob Him of His full, sacred humanity of body and soul.

When the Gospel Standard Trust report was sent to me for editing, I was pleased and thankful to read that our retired Editor mentioned these *Meditations* in his address on the publications from the Gospel Standard

Trust. Mr. Ramsbottom will not know until he receives the printed magazine, that the first instalment of the *Meditations* had already been prepared for the September issue. I believe that this is more than just a mere coincidence, but rather a leading of the Spirit.

May the Lord be pleased to own and bless the *Meditations on the Sacred Humanity of the Blessed Redeemer* to His own glory and honour.

“Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also” (1 John 2. 22, 23).

To deny the fulness of the sacred humanity of the Lord Jesus, is to rob God of His wonderful and condescending love, to give His own Son to suffer, bleed and die, and to pour out His soul unto death (see Isa. 53. 12).

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa. 8. 20).

“If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” (Matt. 6. 23).

“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1. 8, 9).

“Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven” (Matt. 26. 64).

“Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained” (Acts 17. 31).

May we each be delivered from these damnable heresies, and by the riches of free and sovereign grace be found sitting at the feet of Jesus, as Legion, “sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind” (Mark 5. 15).

THE PRICE OF REDEMPTION

*Sermon preached by Jesse Delves at Galeed Chapel, Brighton, on
Lord's day morning, May 18th, 1947*

Text: “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Gal. 3. 13, 14).

These two verses are amazingly comprehensive. They seem in a few sentences to incorporate everything of vital importance that pertains to the destiny of man. They reveal something to us of the awful cost of redemption, the agony, wounds and blood of Christ, whereby it became

possible for a guilty, fallen sinner to be saved. If we had any clear conception by faith of the price of man's redemption, sin would be exceedingly bitter to us, and we should thereby be more truly sanctified in thought, word and life than we ever could be on the ground of legal obedience.

In these two verses the apostle speaks of a curse and a blessing, one of which is surely awaiting each one of us without exception. I thought about the solemnity of this in the reading this morning in the Corinthians: "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5. 10). What shall we receive, do you think? We shall all appear before the bar of God. We shall be there, but what shall we hear? Shall we hear a curse or a blessing pronounced? What do you think will be your eternal destiny? An undying worm, the bottomless pit, despair and the endless punishment of hell? or the light of His countenance, peace, happiness, joy, heaven? Never were two greater opposites than hell and heaven. To which, then, are we hastening?

The truth conveyed in the text, then, is of paramount importance. Beloved hearers, can anything be placed upon the same level as the soul? "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8. 36). What if he be a millionaire? If he die without God, what will all that wealth be to him? Have you ever trembled in the light of that word, "eternity"? I mean, when you have been dark in your soul, when there has been a cloud over your prospects, when you could see but little hope for yourselves? What a mercy if this has been so, and if the weight of eternal things has been so brought home to us as to cause us to realise that the one thing that matters is to be right before God! The subject is of personal importance, because we all have to die for ourselves. My religion will not do for you, or yours for me. We must know God for ourselves. I feel increasingly the need for personal revelation. There is a serious tendency to be general in religion; people have views and ideas, but nothing will save a soul but a revealed Christ. We must have Him or be lost for ever.

"Pause, my soul! and ask the question,
Art thou ready to meet God?"

It is of personal importance, for as the tree falls, so it will lie. It has been well said: "While repentance is never too late, it may be too late to repent." There is a state from which there will be no possible recovery. O what a mercy, then, if we are among the "*us*" in this text!

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Not by signing a document, but by being made a curse Himself. To my feeling there is a height and a depth here that we can

never fully fathom. It is the great wonder of the gospel. Sometimes this doctrine has amazed me; it has filled my soul occasionally with wonder and admiration. That scripture in the Corinthians is linked with this: "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5. 21). O my beloved hearers, I need no other gospel than this. Do you? If I have had any discovery of the gospel in my soul, it has been on two or three very particular occasions when I have had some revelation of the blessed atonement. Therefore I have no question whatever, in my own case, as to the ground of my hope. I can tell you where it is. It is in this word: "It is finished." I have none beside, but I can die upon that. Can you? Perhaps you say, "That is quite easy." But is it? The atonement is a theory with many people, but how many of us have really been crucified to the world through a sight of Christ? The blood of Christ is the great and grand foundation of the gospel, and the highest revelation of divine love to rebellious, guilty man.

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Now let me speak a little, to lay a foundation, about this law to which the apostle refers. It is a wonderful law. Have you ever thought much about this law? The Jews, we know, had several laws: judicial laws which pertained to their civil administration, and ceremonial laws which do not concern us, except that even in these there is profound teaching for believers in respect to the beauty of the type, as shadowing forth the blessed Person of our great High Priest. But this law concerns not the Jews only; it is binding on us all.

What is this law? It is a rule directing us, you and me, in respect of our duty to God, and our duty to our neighbour, which arises from it. It incorporates a double duty which is binding upon every rational creature. I would like to be clear upon this very solemn point in respect of the matter of man's duty to God. It is the duty of us all to serve God as His creatures. The law obliges us to do this. We must clarify this important point: every man has a duty to God, his Creator, to serve Him as His creature. Now here is the law. It is called the moral law, the decalogue, the ten commandments. It is a wonderful law because it reveals God, His perfections, who He is, what He requires of us, His claims and our duty. There is no exemption from this obligation; no excuses can stand before God's judgment bar in respect of this law.

Here it is. It is a holy law, and it claims holiness in the creature. Can you answer to that? It is a just law, because it was given by a just God, and it requires justice in the creature in every sense, not only with regard to outward actions, but in the heart. It is a good law, because it is given by a good God, and it would be good if it could be observed. It is a revealing law, because when it is applied it reveals to us the character of God's holiness, what we are and where we stand. It is a convincing

law, "for by the law is the knowledge of sin." It is an impartial law, for God is no respecter of persons; He makes no difference – rich or poor, high or low, all stand bound fast under this stipulation. It is perfectly impartial. God has a just claim to perfect obedience from every creature under this law. He claims it from you; He claims it from me.

There is a majesty in this law. It was given in such a way that it made the people tremble before the majesty of God on Mount Sinai. The thunderings, the lightnings and the voice filled them with awe, and they trembled. And if this God brings these alarms into your conscience, it will make you tremble. When it is so, the sinner is made sensibly guilty before God. Then sin works all manner of concupiscence. This law applied to the conscience is like a searching, penetrating light that pierces him through and through. It is the ministration of death to every sinner, to everyone who violates one precept of it. It is a wonderful law; it requires perfect obedience.

Just consider how it was introduced, how God prefaced His law when He gave it to His people. "I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Exod. 20. 2). What then? "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." Beloved friends, we are all slain at one stroke by this law. Say you, "I have never worshipped idols." Have you not? "Thou shalt have none other gods *before Me*." It is that word in particular I have been examining: "*Before Me*." Now, could you say that you have never put *anything* before God in your affections? The first precept of this law condemns everyone in this chapel, *everyone*. Idolatry is inherent in the heart of fallen man. Yet here is the law; God speaks it. He must be first in the affections.

Then the second commandment: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath ... thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them." What can the papists make of this commandment? This law requires that God alone shall be worshipped, and no one else. Say you, "I do." But can you trace your whole life through, and say that you have always been pure in your worship? Can you say, "I have served Him without fault or failure. I have never departed from the straight line of obedience required under this law"? We cannot. We are condemned. And he that offendeth in one point is guilty of all.

This law is like thunder; it fills the conscience with terror; it brings a trembling. We have offended God; we have sinned; we have departed from that straight line of obedience which the law requires; we are under the sentence of death. But the law proceeds with its penetrating stipulations, and we have to say, "Guilty, guilty."

Here is the precept of the third commandment: "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain." O when we think of the cursing

and swearing, and how the name of God is used by men, what an awful contemplation it is! But I have been thinking that the name of God is not only taken in vain by a profane world, but often too by a professing world. How many people lightly, glibly and carelessly, say, "Our Father which art in heaven." They use the name of God in a light way – it is in vain. What a solemn consideration it is! Then the fourth commandment. What terrible desecration of the Lord's day, especially in this day in which we live!

Well, here is our duty to God. Love is the first part. This first table of the law affirms our duty to God. Then comes our duty to our neighbour; not only to God, but to our neighbour. Among other things, the law forbids murder. Say you, "I am perfectly clear here." Are you? I have been looking into the Epistle of John – I had to stop and look at that carefully: "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." This forbids not only actual murder but anger, hatred, envy, malice and other murderous tempers. It comes, as it were, penetrating itself into the secret recesses of the heart: "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." I remember our late dear pastor [Mr. J.K. Popham] once said, "There are some murderers in this chapel." I thought that an extreme statement, but evidently it was true. What awful bitterness can be felt, even in a child of God, against another! What envy, malice, wrath and hatred will rise in the heart, even if nothing is said. Some of us know the pain of that. Well, then, here comes this holy law of God; we are convinced again, and we are guilty, for we have been murderers in that sense.

Again, the law says: "Thou shalt not steal." Say you, "I have never stolen anything that belongs to another." No? But have you ever looked at that Scripture: "Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation"? (Mal. 3. 9). What had they robbed Him of? Of tithes and offerings. Have you never robbed God of His honour and glory in anything? We are guilty of stealing, in this way, when we take to ourselves what is due to God.

Besides this, and let me say it carefully and in solemnity, the law says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Say you, "I am perfectly clear in this." Yes? But Christ says, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt. 5. 28). See, then, how close this law comes.

Again, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." Have we always laid aside, as Peter puts it, all malice, guile, hypocrisies, envies and all evil speakings? Have we always been perfectly correct in every statement we have made by word and tongue, in what we have said of others, especially if they have injured us? So we are pursued by this law.

Now you will bear with me while I reiterate the fact that it is a wonderful law; it takes in every man's thoughts, not only what he does,

but what he thinks. If everything outwardly, before the view of others, were perfectly correct, yet the law still condemns us, for the very “thought of foolishness is sin” (Prov. 24. 9). Beloved friends, it is a wonderful law; it is God’s law, and *cursed is everyone that continueth not in all these things to do them*. What then? Is there no hope? Not by this law, none whatever. “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight” (Rom. 3. 20).

“Cursed be the man, for ever cursed,
That does one wilful sin commit;
Death and damnation for the first,
Without relief and infinite.”

Nature, reason, unbelief, would say, “It is not a just law”; but it must be just, because it is God’s law. Reason would say, “It is not fair to claim from a person what he cannot give.” That is reasoning against a divine prerogative, which is adding sin to sin. It is sin which has brought us under this impotency; else it would be a holy delight to walk in His law. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (see Mark 12. 29-31). That is a good law, is it not? It cannot be anything but a good law. What a wonderful thing it would be if there were more conformity to it! But we are all under condemnation, for the law says, “Ye shall therefore keep My statutes, and My judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD” (Lev. 18. 5).

Now just observe here the difference between the law and the gospel. The law says, “Do and live.” The gospel says, “Believe and live; believe and be saved.” The law pronounces its sentence for one sin, without any relief whatever; but the gospel pronounces forgiveness for many offences. What a wonderful mercy it is that God has revealed a gospel, and a gospel for sinners!

Here is the law from which true believers are redeemed, but let us remember that “Christ hath redeemed us from the *curse* of the law” – that is the point, the *curse* of the law. How could that possibly be? There is only one way: “He hath made Him to be sin for us.” That is the only way whereby hope can ever enter a poor sinner’s soul; Christ must be made a curse. What is the curse of the law? Hell, divine wrath, pain, punishment, torment, the bottomless pit – that is the curse of the law. “Well,” you say, “how did Christ suffer that?” I answer that the curse of the law did necessarily enter into His very soul, for He suffered the hell which His people deserved to suffer themselves; else how could He have been made a curse?

This brings repentance, when we can realise it. He had, as it were, to go down to the lowest depths to be made a curse. He must suffer our hell to make our heaven possible. He must pay the price that Justice claimed, and cancel the mighty debt His people owed. He paid the full

price for their ransom. "The price, His own heart's blood." He did all that was necessary – I may say He did all He could do.

"He wept, He bled, He died for you;
What more, ye saints, could Jesus do?"

He gave all that He had to give for poor, worthless worms. O what a revelation of divine glory is here! He stopped at nothing – groans, agony, wounds, blood, pain, grief, sorrow, suffering, the cross and death. Was it worth it? Was it worth it for worthless sinners? It was in God's account, else it would never have been done. "I lay down My life for the sheep" (John 10. 15), He says. "I cannot pay too much for them. This is the highest manifestation of My love for them." "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15. 13). Now, sinner, here opens before faith a way to heaven through a bleeding Jesus; yes, and a way for you too, a way for every sensible sinner, who feels the pain of his sin. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3. 14, 15).

"Christ hath redeemed us." Let us remember that no one else could possibly accomplish such an undertaking, no one else. Shall I put it like this? If He failed, we should all have been swallowed up in hopeless, black despair – *if* He had failed. But He did not fail. He accomplished to full perfection all that was stipulated. He conquered when He died, yet though He died, He did not fail. Think of Him again – in Gethsemane's gloomy garden, where, as Paul recorded in the Hebrews: "Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared" (ch. 5. 7). When He prayed to His Father to save Him from death, He was heard. What death did that refer to? Surely not the death of the cross; for, for that purpose He came. Not the death of the cross, for had He thus been heard, we should have been lost. Sometimes it has struck me like this. When the Saviour was in the garden, the full conflict of the soul-agony, the bitter sorrow, the sword of Justice, the load of imputed sin, all crushing upon Him, as it were, was such, for the moment, as if He must actually expire there; and He prayed to be saved from a premature death, and was heard in that He feared.* Here is this harmless, blessed Son of God, standing

* [When this sermon was first published in the October 1947 number of the *Gospel Standard*, the then Editor, J.H. Gosden, made the following comment on this point: It behoves us to approach in deepest reverence so sacred a mystery as the inmost experience of the dear Redeemer's soul in transacting the tremendous business of our redemption. Great need there is to avoid any semblance of speculation in a matter so sublime. Our brother's interpretation is largely born out by the eminent and gracious theologian, John Owen, in his exposition of Hebrews 5. 7]. See the following article. Editor.

in the sinner's place. "Behold a scene of matchless grace." Has it ever brought a tear? O redeemed sinner, think of what this means. He was made a curse; for you He shed tears of blood. How many watery tears have you shed for Him, under a view of this – Christ was made a curse?

If this were brought home to us this day, we should worship. We should be so deeply ashamed of ourselves because we have sinned, that we should fall into the dust before this God. We should confess, and weep, and mourn, and yet rejoice, to think that it ever could be possible for a poor, hell-deserving wretch to have saving contact with God. What a wonderful redemption! O may God in His rich mercy bring it sweetly and freely this day into our hearts, so that we may feel indeed to be among the "us" whom Christ hath redeemed from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. Amen.

THE CONFLICTS OF JESUS

From Dr. John Owen (1616-1683) on Hebrews 5.7: "Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared."

Christ had an intimate sense of the wrath and displeasure of God against the sin that was then imputed to Him. All our sins were then caused, by an act of divine and supreme authority, to meet on Him: "The LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53. 6). Even all our guilt was imputed unto Him, or none of the punishment due unto our sins could have been justly inflicted on Him. In this state of things, in that great hour and wonderful transaction of divine wisdom, grace and righteousness, whereon the glory of God, the recovery of man, with the utter condemnation of Satan depended, God was pleased for a while, as it were, to hold the scales of justice *in equilibrio*, that the turning of them might be more conspicuous, eminent and glorious. In the one scale, as it were, there was the weight of the first sin and apostasy from God, with all the consequents of it, covered with the sentence and curse of the law, with the exigence [urgent claim] of vindictive justice – a weight that all the angels of heaven could not stand under for one moment. In the other were the obedience, holiness, righteousness and penal sufferings of the Son of God – all having weight and worth given unto them by the dignity and worth of His divine Person. Infinite justice kept these things for a season, as it were, at a poise, until the Son of God, by His prayers, tears and supplications, prevailed unto a glorious success in the delivery of Himself and us...

As He underwent whatever can be grievous, dolorous, afflictive and penal in the wrath of God and sentence of the law executed, so these

things really wrought in Him sorrow, amazement, anguish, fear, dread, with the like penal effects of the pains of hell; from whence it was that He offered up prayers and supplications, with strong cries and tears, unto Him that was able to save Him from death.

The prayers of Christ in this matter were of two sorts:

1. *Conditional.* Such was that prayer for the passing of the cup from Him: "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me." This prayer was nothing but what was absolutely necessary unto the verity of human nature in that state and condition. Christ could not have been a Man and not have had an extreme aversion to the things that were coming upon Him. Nor, had it been otherwise, could He properly have been said to suffer; for nothing is suffering, nor can be penal unto us, but what is grievous unto our nature, and what it is abhorrent of. This acting of the inclination of nature, both in His mind, will and affections, which in Him were purely holy, our Saviour expresseth in that conditional prayer. And in this prayer He was thus answered; His mind was fortified against the dread and terror of nature, so as to come into a perfect composure in the will of God: "Nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done." He was heard herein so far as He desired to be heard; for although He could not but desire deliverance from the whole, as He was a Man, yet He desired it not absolutely, as He was wholly subjected to the will of God.

2. *Absolute.* The chief and principal supplications which He offered up to Him who was able to save Him from death were absolute, and in them He was absolutely heard and delivered. For upon the presentation of death unto Him, as attended with the wrath and curse of God, He had deep and dreadful apprehension of it; and how unable the human nature was to undergo it, and prevail against it, if not mightily supported and carried through by the power of God. In this condition, it was part of His obedience, it was His duty, to pray that He might be delivered from the absolute prevalency of it, that He might not be cast in His trial, that He might not be confounded nor condemned. This He hoped, trusted and believed. Herein He was heard absolutely; for so it is said: He "was heard in that He feared." See Isaiah 50. 7, 8.

To deny that the soul of Christ was engaged in an ineffable conflict with the wrath of God in the curse of the law – that His faith and trust in God were pressed and tried to the utmost by the opposition made unto them by fear, dread and a terrible apprehension of divine displeasure due to our sins – is to renounce the benefit of His passion and turn the whole of it into a show, fit to be represented by pictures and images, or acted over in ludicrous scenes, as it is by the papists.

What a merciful High Priest we have in heaven, who fully understands our case. So much in our lives seems to hang in doubt, with inward fears and

tremblings, as to how matters will fall out unto us. Both Mr. Jesse Delves and Dr. John Owen point out something of the sufferings and conflicts of the Lord Jesus. May we each be helped in all our uncertainties, when life seems often to hang in the balance, to pour out our hearts unto Him who has gone before us, and is “faithful that promised.”

Editor

THE WIND IN HIS FISTS

Address given by Mr. B.A. Ramsbottom at Bethel Chapel, Luton, on Monday, February 2nd, 2004

Reading: Proverbs 30. 1-9.

We do not know who this Agur was who wrote these verses, but we do know this: he had very clear, believing views on the greatness of God. O may we have those very clear views, how great God is. The most impossible thing with Him is easy.

“Thou art coming to a King;
Large petitions with thee bring.”

So in our approaches in public and in secret, may there be the realisation that our prayer-hearing, prayer-answering God is almighty.

I think the thing about it that seemed specially to lay hold on me was this: that He has gathered the wind in His fist. We thought about it these last few days, even literally, naturally, these severe winds. Men cannot control them, but the Lord holds them in His fist. It means He has complete control. Man cannot make the wind blow and man cannot stop it blowing. It is a very striking figure. He holds it in His fist. If somebody has something tight in his fist, it is hard to get it out. Perhaps you remember those days when the children were little and they had something they should not have, and they held it in their fist and would not let it go. Could you force them to open their fist? If someone is holding something in their fist, even if they are only a child, it is hard work to get it from them. Almighty God is so great He holds the mighty winds in His fist.

And just two ways I see this, two aspects of it, and they are absolutely, completely different. First of all, the winds of trouble, sin, affliction, adversity, sorrow. Now He holds them in His fist. They cannot blow without His divine permission, and it is an easy thing for Him to stop them blowing. Are you familiar with Revelation 7? In one way it is one of the most beautiful chapters in Scripture. “What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?” But at the beginning if you remember there were those mighty angels and the wind was going to blow on the redeemed. These terrible winds were going to

blow, but by God's commandment these holy angels held these winds tight. "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." So He who binds the floods from overflowing is the One who holds the winds in His fist and the One to whom we pray.

Now the second view of it, completely, entirely distinct, in the light of Ezekiel 37 and John 3: the Holy Spirit in His powerful influences and His gentle influences compared to the wind. Ezekiel 37, the dry bones, and, "they were very dry." But, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." And that great shaking as bone came together with bone, and they arose a great army, a living army. And then John 3, the Lord Jesus speaking of the new birth. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." We might also mention that beautiful word, "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden" (Song 4. 16) – the Holy Spirit compared to the wind.

Now Almighty God, not just as the Creator, but as our covenant God in Christ, He holds the wind in His fist. You and I cannot command it. He can, and He commands it, and the wind blows, and that sinner is born again; and He commands again, and that sinner in bondage is brought into the sweet liberty of the gospel. He commands again and Jesus is revealed. He has complete control, however you see it, in Jesus as the great Head of the church. He holds the wind in His fist. Now we cannot control it, we cannot command it, but we can pray for it, and we are encouraged to pray for it, and we meet this evening to pray for it, the moving of the Holy Spirit in our midst.

WAITING FOR ACCESS

Reay Free Manse
July 1844

To Mrs. Taylor, Thurso

My dear Friend,

I expect a visit from you at this time. I am here in a lonely part of the vineyard, but I have a large house* and a good many rooms in it. The first room I have is, "Who can tell?" This is a very large room, but a very cold one, and I would not advise my friends to stay long in it.

The second room I have is, "Good hope through grace." This is a very fine room, and I like to sit in it; but through my neglect the robbers come in, and put the furniture out of order.

* Written on his taking possession of the Free Church Manse.

The third room is, "Love." This is a beautiful room, and there is always a fire in it, but I can seldom get access to it.

The fourth room I have is, "The secret chamber." The King Himself sits here, and we cannot get in till He opens the door and brings us in, and makes His banner over us to be "Love." Grace be with you all.

Yours affectionately,

Finlay Cook

SLEEPY SOULS WARNED

Sermon preached by John Samuel Green, at Gower Street Memorial Chapel, London, on Lord's day morning, February 3rd, 1957

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

This is a very solemn text indeed, and it shows to us the sad state into which God's church can get. It shows us also the sad state into which the individual believer may get.

What changes God's dear people are subject to. I have looked at the last verse in the preceding chapter, and how in that verse the church appeared most healthy, and she said, "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my Beloved come into His garden, and eat His pleasant fruits." There seemed such an intense longing for the dear Lord Jesus Christ, such a pleading for His blessed and sacred presence.

And then in the first verse of this fifth chapter, the Lord answers that prayer, and He says, "I am come into My garden, My sister, My spouse: I have gathered My myrrh with My spice," and so on. But a sad change had come over the church, the bride of Christ. Instead of being graciously anxious for His presence and for that blessed communion with Him, she had fallen into a sad, sleepy state and condition. Solemn to get there! A mercy to tremble at the very thought of getting into this state and condition! There is nothing I fear more, my dear friends, than being found where the church was found at this time. I know the painful, solemn experience of it. I could not stand here and say I have always been healthy in the things of God, always with my eye upon the third of Colossians: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." Ah, we come painfully and sadly short at times.

We read in the twenty-fifth of Matthew of those ten virgins; five were wise and five were foolish, but whilst the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept – the wise as well as the foolish. Slumbered and

slept – got into a sad, unexercised state and condition. The midnight was getting near, but they were all asleep. And that just shows, apart from the gracious, enlivening influence of the Holy Spirit, His rich, sanctifying grace, where you and I may get to.

A person who is asleep is unconscious of what is going on around him. A thief may be in his room and robbing him, and he be unaware of it. And there is not a shadow of doubt but that if you and I are left to get into this sleepy state, the devil will know it. He will come into our hearts as that thief and that robber, and he will spoil us. And it may be we shall have to go in that state and condition of being robbed and spoiled for many a day, for many a year. So the things of God are very solemn. “God is not mocked.” No, we shall not fool God. A solemn consideration, that! “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6. 7). If those of us who fear God sow to our own flesh, there will be a sad reaping day for us before we die. There will indeed! And so the wise virgins – they slept as well as the foolish.

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

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

As I meditated a little upon this text, I thought it will not be true of some of you who are coming towards the end of your life. When perhaps your poor body becomes so enfeebled that you cannot get to God's house, you will not look back and say, "There were Sabbaths when I could have gone, but I gave way to the old flesh." You will not have that regret. No. Through God's mercy, through His love to you in keeping you exercised, and in giving you much spiritual hunger and thirst, He has brought you to His sanctuary. Maybe times when this has been difficult; hard to get the poor old body to the chapel, yet you have been so hungry and so thirsty. A friend said to me once, and I have never forgotten it, "I would not give much for the religion of 'oncens.'" Those who are satisfied with coming once on the Sabbath will not get to heaven, unless grace makes a change in them. What a solemn consideration! If they have no love to meet with God's people in His sanctuary on earth, how could they meet in heaven to worship God and to be with His people for ever and ever? A solemn thing indeed it is to be left to our poor old flesh, to live in that sleepy state and condition in which thousands are found!

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

If God in His love and mercy thus makes you spiritually awake, spiritually hungry and thirsty, He will give you a little. I believe I have got a little this morning from the first hymn our dear friend gave out at the prayer meeting (1036). I said, "Lord, that is just what I want, how I feel; anxious to know my sins forgiven, to find an open way to heaven." I felt that summed up the inward exercise of my soul as I contemplated this subject. You may say, "Well, surely, man, you don't stand up in the pulpit and say that you want your pardon?" I know when I first had it. I can look back to that time, but I cannot live on that. If *you* can, then you are in a sad, sleepy state and condition. If the dear Lord favoured you a few years back and you received a little help by the way, and you do not want anything today, you are in an awful, sad state, a most

unhealthy, deathly state and condition. I can walk, I can get along with those poor sinners who, like the good hymnwriter, say:

“Daily I’d repent of sin,
Daily wash in Calvary’s blood,
Daily feel Thy peace within,
Daily I’d commune with God.”

O I do want a daily, an hourly religion. Do you? The good hymnwriter said,

“Whene’er becalmed I lie;
And storms forbear to toss;
Be Thou, dear Lord, still nigh,
Lest I should suffer loss;
For more the treacherous calm I dread,
Than tempests bursting o’er my head.”

I had rather be tossed about by devils and the corruptions of my own heart, than to be left to that careless, prayerless state and condition.

So when we come to examine the state and condition of the church in my text, we find she was in a sad and solemn condition. And it may be, sinner, that is where you are this morning. You sleep. I believe there are two particular occasions in the life of a child of God when he needs to fear this. The first is after he has been blessed; after he has been favoured with the pardon of his sins; when perhaps the Lord has dandled him upon the knees, when he is spiritually happy, spiritually contented; perhaps comes before the church in the sweet warmth of that love – and that is the time to come. That is the time to come. But that is the time when the old enemy gets to work, and he may say, “Well, you will get to heaven. Look what great things the Lord has done for you. Look how He has favoured you.” And in that subtle way he tackles that child of God, and that child of God attempts to rest, not in that blessed Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, but in his experience, short of Christ, and before one is aware, they are asleep. They grow unexercised; they grow careless; they become indifferent; there is not that pleading with God in prayer. An awful state they are in, and not aware of it. O my friends, beware of this. Those of you who are younger: you may be delighting in God, but let me warn you how subtle Satan is.

The other state is towards the end of life. It is a grievous thing to come across some. They may tell us something of their early days, what good days they had, how the Lord blessed them and favoured them. But towards the end of their journey, what death seems to come. I knew one old friend – she could speak sometimes of her early days, but you know, when I sometimes got in her company towards the end of her life, what a change. Speak about the newspaper and one thing and the other, but

one could not get her to speak anything upon the things of God. I used to leave her sometimes feeling sadly disappointed. Now, that is being in that sleepy state and condition – an unexercised, unhealthy state. May this be a word of warning to some of you who are growing old, but who may be thus answering to the description set forth in the Scriptures: “Asleep.” O that you may bring forth fruit in old age! O to be kept spiritually alive, that we may still pray and still plead that God will bless us and bless His church!

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

So the church said, “I sleep, but my heart waketh.” And God’s dear people know from time to time what it is to feel something like this. You read God’s Word, but you do not read it as you used to read it. You do not search it diligently as you used to search it. You read it to keep conscience a bit quiet; you read it merely for a duty. A sad state this is to get into, when there is no real hunger for the things of God. “I sleep, but my heart waketh.”

We may look at this sleep in another way. We may be too taken up with the things of this poor, dying world. And it is very easy to slip into this state and condition, to fall asleep. Well, you may say, “My business increases. I must give more time to it. The Scriptures exhort me to be diligent in business.” But it does not end there – “serving the Lord.” And when we get into that sleepy condition, we just take those parts of God’s Word that suit our case. And can there be anything worse, anything more solemn than to be resting in this way on God’s Word? Making the Word fit our sleepy state and condition? And so we have been found in that sad state and condition, when the things of this world prosper, when things have gone pretty well, and we find we must be taken up more, we must pay more diligence to the things of this life, and we let slide the things of God.

The enemy and our own hearts work together in this. I knew one good man, a very godly man, one I loved and esteemed for the truth's sake, but God permitted him to get on remarkably well in business. And this good man and his wife were at it until the clock struck twelve on a Saturday night, and then they packed up. And what happened on the Sunday? They were too tired to listen to the minister preach. Yes, too tired. And not only were they spiritually asleep, but literally asleep as well. O what a grief, what a sad example to the flock when such is the state and condition. And that was not the end of it. He got more sleepy, and at last had no time to go out to the midweek service. "We must get everything settled up," he said. And so he left the week evening service. I felt, solemnly felt, "God will deal with you, my friend. He will deal solemnly with you." And He did. Very, very solemnly! One day God struck him down, and they had to call the doctor quickly. The doctor said, "If you put your foot to the ground, you will die immediately." "Ah, but, doctor," he said, "look at my business" – not God's house. That was not considered; it was his business. But the doctor again warned him that he would drop dead if he put his foot out of bed. And there he had to lie. And there God solemnly taught him, and God weaned him on that bed from the things of this poor, dying world.

That is what He will do with us if we get into that state and condition. My friends, God will not leave us in this sad, sleepy state and condition. He will do something, and whatever He does will be very painful for your poor nature, very crucifying to your nature, but it will be in the end for your soul's good. And He will bring you out of that terrible sleep. He will exercise you again unto prayer. The church was exercised afterwards, and she said, "I opened to my Beloved; but my Beloved had withdrawn." Difficulties had come, things had gone wrong, and now she wanted Him; but before she had slighted Him. And so it may be with us. May God give us grace that we may be kept spiritually awake.

Another thing that may bring you into this sleepy state and condition – if you get like Martha. Martha was not lazy, you know. I know these earthly things must be attended to; I have proved that for many years. But the Lord said to her very kindly and graciously – and there was also a loving rebuke in it – "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things" (Luke 10. 41). You are getting too over-anxious, Martha. You are cumbered about much serving. This will not be for your soul's good. It will bring death into your soul, Martha. And so He kindly and graciously rebuked her. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten" (Rev. 3. 19). I believe Martha would take the word of rebuke. "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."

Now when the Lord thus rebukes His dear people and brings them out from that state and condition, what a mercy! But if we do not give heed to His word of rebuke, then we shall slip into this state where the church had slipped into in my text, and we shall fall asleep. These things of time and sense will so take up our time and our mind, that we shall have no time for the things of God. The Lord will watch, the Lord will see it, and He will say, I shall have to make time for that child of Mine to serve Me. I shall have to lay My hand upon him.

Then you look how one slights the Lord Jesus Christ when they get into that state and condition. The church, said, "It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh." She knew it was the voice of the Lord Jesus, and yet it did not move her. She had got into this sad, sleepy state and condition that even the voice of her Beloved that knocked did not move her. She did not want to be disturbed; she did not want to leave her bed; she plainly wanted to enjoy herself in her earthly comforts. And, poor sinner, is that where you are? With regard only for the poor, dying, foolish things of this life, and you know it is the Lord's voice? And yet you will not give way? But He will knock again. My dear friends, He will not leave you until He has brought you out of this sad state and condition.

But is it not a sad thing once to have been taken up with the dear Lord Jesus Christ, to have esteemed the words of His mouth more than our necessary food, and now not to be moved? Now, notwithstanding all His kindly, gracious pleadings with her, she will not move. But she will move soon. The Lord will see to it that she will come out after Him. He will cause something to come up in her life, some affliction, to bring down her heart with sorrow, that she will have to fall down. O, poor sinner, you will want your Beloved then! You will search for Him then! But it may be that you will have to go through the trouble without Him as to His felt, sacred presence. He will deny you that, and you will have to mourn that you have so slighted the tokens of His grace, that you have so grieved His blessed Spirit.

"I sleep, but my heart waketh; it is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to Me, My sister, My love, My dove, My undefiled." He goes on then to say, "For My head is filled with dew, and My locks with the drops of the night." But no; at present nothing moves her! She is content to remain in that sad, solemn condition. But God will bring her forth – bring her forth lovingly and yet solemnly. As we read in another portion of God's Word, He will take all her lovers from her, deny her all her earthly comforts, and that is when He puts His hand in at the hole of the door. And then she awakes from her sleep, and as it says further down, she sought Him but she found Him not. We may very easily lose the felt presence of the Lord Jesus, but it may be many

a day, many a month, or even many a year, before we are really and truly and sweetly brought back and favoured again to walk in the light of His countenance.

Well, you may feel that these things have been very solemn. Perhaps some of you have said, "They don't apply to me; he has missed me this morning; I am all right; I am safe enough; I am contented enough; I have gone on in this way for years, and I trust I shall be all right in the end." Bunyan tells us (in the *Pilgrim's Progress*) that Ignorance was just like that. He thought he would be all right in the end, but he was not, you know. He was weighed in the balance in the end, and found wanting. And if you put these things from you and say they do not apply to you, you are like Ignorance, in that sad solemn state and condition. Better far for us, if the Lord is teaching us and blessing us, to lean hard upon that knife that sometimes seems to cut us to the very quick. Better far to be where the psalmist was when he said, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psa. 139. 23, 24).

Amen.

DESIRE OF THE RIGHTEOUS TO BE GRANTED

An extract from John Kershaw (1792-1870)

"The desire of the righteous shall be granted" (Prov. 10. 24).

The soul of the righteous is desirous of knowing whether Jesus has loved him, and given Himself for him; he wants to have a personal testimony of the love of Christ. He says, "What will it avail me that Jesus has loved patriarchs, prophets and apostles, if He has not loved me, and shed His precious blood for me! I want to know the Lord for myself, to feel satisfied that He is mine; to be enabled to say, without doubt and fear, and that from God's blessed testimony and unction in my soul, that I have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of my sins, according to the riches of His grace, and to use the language of Job as my own: 'I know that my Redeemer liveth'! I want to know that God is my heavenly Father, that Jesus is my Saviour, that the Spirit is my Guide and Teacher, and that heaven will be my eternal rest and home."

I would say to such a precious soul as this, who has these desires, cannot you give yourself these things? for there are many persons that say, "We are warranted to believe and rest upon the Scriptures, and take God at His Word." But this poor soul says, "If I could have made it clear to my mind and satisfactory to my conscience that I was washed in the blood of Jesus, and interested in the love of His heart, I should have

convinced myself about it long ago; but I cannot do it, for God knows the earnest cries and desires which have gone up from my heart to Him to make these things clear to my soul!"

And, my friends, I have often been at this work; I have tried and toiled to apply Christ's blood and grace to my conscience, but I have found I could no more do it than I could pluck out the sun and stars from the heavens! And indeed, if I had the power to do it, then I could accomplish the work of the Spirit of God, but it is not in the power of any creature; it is the work of God Himself, and it is He alone that can do it, and He will perform it in His own time and way!

Now the Lord gives the desire first, and afterwards He satisfies the longing of the soul; He gives hungerings and thirstings after it. The desire may be long delayed, but nevertheless the fulfilment of it is sure. "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).

Observe again, "The desire of the righteous shall be granted." Now I would ask you, my friends, this important question: Next to the salvation of your soul, what is the chief desire of your heart, and your earnest petition before the Lord? I am satisfied, if the heart is right with God, and under the influence of His blessed Spirit, and He is your Guide and Teacher, that next to the salvation of your soul, your fervent cry at the throne of grace will be something like this: "Dear Lord, while I am in the wilderness, keep me very humble; keep me solemn; keep me ever watchful; keep me growingly acquainted with a knowledge of my total dependence on Thee, and of my own utter insufficiency; keep me ever jealous of my own heart, and never let me trust to it, and fall away from Thee; keep my conscience very tender by renewed applications of the blood of Jesus, and the bedewing influences of Thy blessed Spirit; let me have Thy fear continually before my eyes, both in my going out and in my coming in, that my desire may be, 'Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not' (Psa. 17. 5). O Lord, keep me, and I shall be well kept! Do Thou enable me to stand my ground, and having done all to stand! Keep me in the 'footsteps of the flock,' in the 'narrow way,' and never let me wander away from Thee! Thus, Lord, grant that the residue of my days may be devoted to Thy honour and glory! that I may increasingly love Thee and Thy ways, that Thine ordinances may be my delight, and that I may keep Thy commandments and precepts, and glorify Thee in body, soul and spirit, which are Thine, until the time shall arrive when Thou wilt come and receive me unto Thyself, that where Thou art, there I may be also!"

Now, my friends, I make nothing of the religion of any man or woman, if it does not produce effects like these; and God makes nothing of it either, unless there is an experimental feeling of these things in the

soul! Many persons want to go to heaven when they die, but they do not want their time, and their affections, and every power of their souls, to be consecrated to the Lord's service while they are in this world. We have the promise of a faithful, covenant-keeping God, that "the desire of the righteous shall be granted." The Lord never puts a desire into the soul of one of His family to disappoint him. I know that, "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life" (Prov. 13. 12). It is true, the heart may be sick and faint while waiting for the fulfilment of the promise; but nevertheless it shall come at the time appointed, and when it has entered into the soul of the poor sinner, accompanied with the blessed influences of the divine Spirit, it will then be a "tree of life" to him, and he will glorify and praise God for the enjoyment of it. Therefore, "The desire of the righteous," sooner or later, "shall be granted."

THE SACRED HUMANITY OF THE REDEEMER

CHAPTER 1

THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST

By J.C. Philpot (1802-1869)

In that wondrous prayer which the Lord Jesus Christ as the great High Priest over the house of God, offered up to His heavenly Father on the eve of His sufferings and death, there is a declaration which demands of all who fear God the deepest and most attentive consideration. It is this: "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" (John 17. 3). These words are often incorrectly quoted, by which much of their force and meaning is lost: "And this is life eternal, *to know Thee*." But the Lord's words are, "*that they might know Thee*." In the original, the article stands before "life eternal," so that the meaning of the whole passage is, "And this is the life eternal which He has to give, that they whom Thou hast given Him may know Thee." He thus explains what this eternal life is, and that it is given to the objects of His Father's love and choice, that they, and they only, might have the inward and unfailing possession of it in time and for eternity. In the preceding verse, the blessed Lord had told His heavenly Father that He had "given Him power over all flesh," for this express purpose, "that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him." But for the instruction of the church of God for all time, that she might clearly understand and know what this eternal life is which He has to bestow, and that on a matter so vital, so essential, no mistake might be made, He graciously adds the explanation to which we have already referred.

By this plain and decisive declaration, He would for ever show that the eternal life which He has to give is no visionary, imaginary, dim and dreamy heaven; no mere deliverance at death from illness, pain and suffering; no narrow escape from hell, just at the last gasp; no reward of merit, or purchase of a deathbed repentance; no fruit of juggling ceremonies or absolving priests, got in the very article of dissolution, by a drop of oil or a little bread and wine; no entrance for unregenerate souls into a paradise of unknown bliss, of which on earth there had been no foretaste, and for which no previous meetness or spiritual preparedness had been inwardly wrought. All such carnal views of heaven, all such natural notions of a state of happiness after death of deceivers and deceived, the blessed Lord at once and for ever cast out by declaring with His own lips of truth and grace that the eternal life which He had to bestow consisted in two things: the knowledge of the only true God, and the knowledge of Himself as the sent of the Father.

The importance and significance of this declaration it is impossible to overstate. Its infinite weight is determined by eternal life being laid in the opposite scale; its immeasurable breadth by the commencement of heaven dating from a life on earth. For eternal life begins below, to be consummated above; is sown in grace, to be harvested in glory. Thus Enoch walked with God before he was translated; Abraham was the friend of God; and Moses saw the Lord face to face. These and all the Old Testament saints desired a heavenly country before they reached it (Heb. 11. 16). But how could they desire a country of which they had no knowledge, foretaste or enjoyment? Can we desire that of which we know nothing, feel nothing, taste nothing, enjoy nothing? "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee" (Psa. 73. 25), is the experience of every soul that by the letting down of heaven upon earth, finds earth itself the very portal of heaven. But how can it know there is a God in heaven, unless it has found that God on earth; or desire none beside Him even here below, unless here below it has felt and known His love?

But it is not our purpose to open or enlarge upon this declaration of the blessed Lord in its general bearings, or as comprehending the whole of the important truth couched therein. The part which rests with weight upon our own mind at this present moment is that which places the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ on the same level with the knowledge of the only true God. How deep, then, how mysterious, and yet how blessed must that knowledge be – to obtain, to possess, to enjoy which is to be put into possession, whilst here below, of life everlasting. Science, learning, knowledge, general or special, mental ability, mechanical skill, political wisdom, intellectual refinement and every attainment which, in a state of high civilisation, elevates men above the slaves of drunkenness and debauchery, are well for time. Who can

despise modern wonders of science and skill, though he that fears God and trembles at His Word may call to mind the woes denounced against ancient Tyre for her riches and her pride (Ezek. 26, 27, 28), and may see with fear that what she was England is, and that the same sins may call down the same doom. But what are all the attainments of science, all the wonders of art, all the triumphs of engineering skill for eternity? Yes; were all the science and art, all the skill, wealth and power, now divided among thousands, concentrated in one individual, what would the whole collective array be compared with one grain of grace, one ray of divine teaching, one drop of atoning blood in the conscience, or one gleam of the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost?

If, then, this spiritual and saving knowledge of Jesus Christ whom God hath sent is a free gift, and yet is only bestowed upon those whom the Father has given to His dear Son, how precious the possession, but O how exclusive the boon! How, as with a two-edged sword, this word out of the mouth of the Son of God (Rev. 1. 16) cuts both ways; how, as a key worn on His shoulder and wielded by His divine hand, it shuts as well as opens; how, whilst with one hand it raises millions to hope and heaven, with the other it sinks millions into despair and hell. As a healing word from the Lord's lips it brings rest and peace to prayerful hearts, wounded consciences and contrite spirits; but, as a word of truth and righteousness it for ever seals the doom of the ignorant and unbelieving, the self-confident and the self-righteous, the dead in sin and the dead in profession.

As all true Christians believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is God and Man, this spiritual, saving knowledge of His Person and work, His love and grace, His blood and righteousness, divides itself into two branches: a gracious acquaintance with His Deity as the eternal Son of God, and gracious knowledge of His humanity as the Son of man.

As we have reason to believe that what we were enabled to write upon the eternal Sonship of our blessed Lord has been received with a measure of acceptance by those who know and love the truth as it is in Jesus, we have felt encouraged now to bring before them some reflections on the sacred humanity of the blessed Redeemer. To know Him as God, to know Him as Man, to know Him as God-Man, and this by a divine revelation of His glorious Person, blood and love to our souls – this is, indeed, to have eternal life in our breasts. Nor can He be savingly known in any other way but by divine and special revelation. “No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him” (Matt. 11. 27).

The apostle, therefore prays for the saints at Ephesus, “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" (Eph. 1. 17, 18). He prayed for the same blessing for them as he had enjoyed for himself, as he speaks, "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me" (Gal. 1. 15, 16). He knew, therefore, in himself, in his own blessed and happy experience, what it was to be "filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Col. 1. 9), and to be blessed with "all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment" – or knowledge – "of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2. 2, 3). Thus he travailed in birth again for the Galatians until Christ was formed in them (Gal. 4. 19), and prayed for the Ephesians, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" (Eph. 3. 17). He speaks also of their having "learned Christ," "heard Him," and "been taught by Him" (Eph. 4. 20, 21), all which expressions point to a divine discovery of His Person and work to the heart. The blessed Lord also assured His sorrowing disciples that He would come to them, and that they should "see" Him, and "live" upon Him; that they should know that He was in them, and that He would manifest Himself to them and make His abode with them (John 14. 18-23).

Nor were these blessings and favours limited to the Lord's own immediate disciples. As the precious ointment which was poured upon the head of our great High Priest "went down to the skirts of His garments" (Psa. 133. 2) so there is an anointing which teacheth the lowest and least of the members of the mystical body of Christ "of all things, and is truth, and is no lie" (1 John 2. 27). By this unction from above every one that hath heard and hath learned of the Father cometh unto Christ (John 6. 45), and knoweth for himself "that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true" (1 John 5. 20). If, then, we are favoured with this teaching, and "a man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven" (John 3. 27), we shall see by the eyes of our enlightened understanding the great mystery of godliness, which is "God manifest in the flesh," and what we thus see we shall believe, love and adore.

Should we not, then, with all holy awe and godly reverence, seek to approach this mystery of wisdom, power and love? For all salvation and all happiness, as well as all grace and glory, are wrapped up in it. Right views are indispensable to a right faith, and a right faith is indispensable to salvation. To stumble at the foundation is, concerning faith, to make shipwreck altogether; for as Immanuel, God with us, is the grand Object of faith, to err in views of His eternal Deity, or to err in views of His sacred humanity, is alike destructive. There are points of truth which are

not fundamental, though erroneous views on any one point must lead to God-dishonouring consequences in strict proportion to its importance and magnitude; but there are certain foundation truths to err concerning which is to insure for the erroneous and the unbelieving the blackness of darkness for ever.

(To be continued)

CORRECTED BUT NOT DESTROYED

A letter by Charles Hemington (1830-1904)

Devizes

January 30th (year unknown)

Mr. H.

My dear Friend,

I found a portion of the Word on Sunday to meet me to the pin's point. I have found comfort in the same blessed Scripture in days gone by; and in preaching on Sunday the words I spake came like a soothing plaster upon my wounds. The Lord says by the prophet Isaiah, "For I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb. For My name's sake will I defer Mine anger, and for My praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off" (Isa. 48. 8, 9). O how solemnly true I feel this to be! How true it is of the whole family of grace! What transgressors from the womb they have all been! How treacherously they have behaved towards God! and not only in their unregenerate state, but after being called by grace. My transgressions since I have known the Lord trouble me a thousand times more than all my iniquities before being called by grace. God in His mercy has preserved me during my profession from outward falls, but the backslidings of heart and many sins against light and knowledge have been over and over again enough for God in His infinite justice to cut me off. But then the Lord tells us that He knew all about it before ever we were born into the world. He knew, perfectly so, that we *should be* treacherous, and guilty in numberless ways all through our life, and yet He says, "For My name's sake will I defer Mine anger ... that I cut thee not off." O how blessedly this shows, as Hart says, that –

“’Tis not for good deeds, good tempers, nor frames;
From grace it proceeds, and all is the Lamb's.”

Take away election, and I should have no hope. Nothing can warp or prejudice Jehovah's mind in the truth of divine relationship. "He hateth putting away" (Mal. 2. 16). "He is in one mind, and who can turn Him?" (Job 23. 13). But then in the same chapter of Isaiah (chapter 48) the Lord goes on to say, "Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I

have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.” How this shows us that while the Lord loves His people with too strong a love to cast them off, yet that He hates sin in them, and therefore will put them into the furnace in order to chastise them for their folly.

With my poor, frail love in the Lord, believe me,
Yours very sincerely,

C. Hemington

THE GOSPEL STANDARD TRUST
50TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Report of the Meeting held at Clifton, Bedfordshire
on Saturday afternoon, May 14th, 2016

This meeting was a special time of thanksgiving to the Lord for the first fifty years of the Trust. It commenced with hymn 176, following which the Chairman, Mr. D.J. Christian, read Psalm 87 and asked Mr. David Lawson to ask the Lord’s blessing on the meeting. Following this, the Secretary of the Trust, Mr. Playfoot, spoke on the Annual Report and Accounts for 2015 and he highlighted a few points. The financial position was sound, and especially on the Publications side the Trust had been favoured to receive legacies over the last two years totalling £90,000. The Publications work was regarded as a ministry, and the average annual shortfall in recent years was over £20,000, so the Lord had indeed been mindful of the Trust.

Copies of the long-awaited book by Dr. Matthew Hyde, *With Mercy and With Judgement*, had just become available. This book is a record of Strict Baptists who served in the First World War. The price of £13 represented excellent value for between five and six hundred pages of profitable reading. The Trust is very thankful to Dr. Hyde and others for the tremendous amount of time spent in compiling this record. The mercies shown and the evidences of the work of grace are recorded of these men, mainly young, many of whom gave their lives in the cause of freedom.

There were no further news items to read out, and in referring to Malachi, the Secretary did encourage readers to write to the Publications Manager and to the authors when the Lord had made one of our books a help or blessing to their souls.

He reported that the usual work on the General side continued. The Committee had become more concerned with the fulfilment of the continuing responsibilities of trustees and church officers. The new website dealing with these issues had gone live from November 2015. The information on the website had now been produced in booklet form,

as some people find this easier for reference, especially when using the checklists. Copies are available free of charge from the Secretary or the Bookroom. When you own a public building such as a chapel, there are matters which require regular attention, and some with which the law requires compliance. We have sought to address these issues as well as matters affecting the occupying church, such as deeds, trustee conflicts of interest, gift aid, insurance, employment of pastors and visiting ministers and the use of church funds, etc. We had written recently to the correspondents of all the chapels where the Trust is one of the trustees to determine the extent of compliance and where further help was needed.

Attention was drawn to the Library, the accounts for which had been included in the Trust Report for many years. Younger people were encouraged to obtain a catalogue of the valuable source of spiritual reading there is at the library. The Secretary pointed out the need to remember the Library's finances, as the funds in hand would only last another four years at the 2015 rate of expenditure.

He said the Committee had been encouraged by the twenty-two new members of the Trust last year and thanked all the loyal supporters.

There were no questions for the Secretary, and the Report and Financial Statements were received. Two members of the Executive Committee, Mr. D.J. Christian and Mr. M.G. Bailey, retired in rotation and were re-elected. The Chairman thanked the members for the confidence shown. In his further remarks of thanksgiving, the Chairman referred to the hymn sung and the Psalm read and quoted, "All my springs are in Thee." He thanked the Lord that our springs are in Him both personally and for the Trust, as the Lord's hand had been seen during the last fifty years in supplying all of our needs. He wished to remember all those who had done so much to help and in particular mentioned the work carried out for Publications by the Manager and Mr. John Kingham, and also all the work done by the Secretary. He mentioned also Mr. Timothy Abbott who, after twenty-five years on the Executive Committee, had not sought re-election. The Trust owed a tremendous debt to him for the work done on the building side and latterly for much time spent on Publications.

The Chairman then displayed a specimen copy of *Elijah, Prophet of God*. This was the first in a new Faithful Footsteps series from the Old Testament for children, written by Mr. Ramsbottom with illustrations by Mr. Mark Philpott. This could be used in conjunction with the *Sketches* colouring books. He also mentioned one new idea for young people of producing a World War I sketch book and a separate book with suitable extracts of lives from Dr. Hyde's new book. It was hoped these will be available later in the year.

Hymn 99 was then sung. The theme for the three addresses which followed was, "Thou shalt remember all the way." The first speaker, Mr. B.A. Ramsbottom, spoke about the history of books published by the Trust.

The hymn, "How many good books that demand our respect" from the Young People's Hymnal had been suggested to him by his grandson as describing books published by the Trust. Looking back over the last fifty years, under the blessing of the Lord, Mr. Ramsbottom felt that the Trust had published many good books and they did deserve our respect. Right from its formation the *Gospel Standard* had been connected with publishing good books and he took us right back to the days of John Gadsby who had written many books himself. In the 1900s, Farncombe's in Croydon produced many godly books, but in due time they closed down. The Gospel Standard Societies did publish the occasional book, but did not really have the authority under their constitution, so the Trust was formed. There was quite a lot of opposition and quite a lot of controversy and concern about the direction the Trust might take and about books being produced contrary to the teaching of the *Gospel Standard* magazine. Mercifully, looking back he believed there has been no real reason for that concern.

The first book the Trust published was the poetry of Anne Steele and 1,200 copies sold very rapidly. Two years later in the Annual Report it was said that 10,000 books had been sold in that year. In those early days we needed to remember in a very special way Mr. Oliver Pearce and the wonderful work he did as Publications Manager – the activity, the enthusiasm, the visits to the annual book convention, his travels abroad to America and the wonderful blessing that rested on his labours. Since then we have been thankful for the work of Mr. John Rayner, Mr. Caleb Pearce and now Dr. Philip Skelton and Mr. John Kingham.

Over the years the number of books being published had fluctuated quite a lot. 1992 was the highest year when the ordinary publications were 28,575 books but special sales that year took the total to over 90,000 books. He then read a statement made by the Secretary some years ago in his annual report: "A figure can be put on numbers of sales, but what value can be put on one copy of a book that has been used by God to bless one of His people?" He felt that was a point for our prayerful consideration.

Many sermons had been published – Philpot, Gadsby, Kershaw, followed by our more recent ministers. We have had denominational books like *The Eternal Sonship* and *Ears from Harvested Sheaves*. We should never forget the work in publishing and distributing our dearly-loved Gadsby's hymn book, with a line by line index to go with it and things like our Articles of Faith and our Marriage and Burial Services.

He mentioned the two occasions when the Trust had branched out with something completely outside our denomination – *Mary Jones and Her Bible* and *The Dairyman's Daughter*. These had had excellent sales and had opened doors for the sale of our denominational books.

One of the lessons learned over the years was to think, not about what people want or like, but about the need spiritually. This applied to the children's books. He had had no thought of being a children's writer, but following a suggestion about the real need, he had ventured and the Lord had blessed those books to meet that need. He mentioned for particular thanksgiving the high quality of books produced and highlighted as an example Matthew Hyde's book, *Gadsby's: The Story of a Hymnbook*.

In his closing remarks, he named two books which had specially impressed him over the years. In *The Life of William Tiptaft* by J.C. Philpot, we had the witness of that man who really did sacrifice everything for Christ's sake. He considered the best book ever published by the Trust to be Philpot's *Meditations on the Sacred Humanity of the Blessed Redeemer*. In closing, "to raise this little talk from the mundane to the more sacred," he read a portion from that book commencing at the foot of page 63: "Whether, then, dying on the cross, or risen from the dead, or ascended up on high, He is still Jesus," through to, "It is sweet to see Him ascended up on high to take possession of the kingdom given Him by the Father before the foundation of the world," on page 64.

Mr. Stephen Hyde then addressed the meeting on the subject of chapel buildings, trustee responsibilities and the help given by the Trust. The responsibility of trustees and church members is to maintain the asset value and the state of repair of their properties. Many sacrifices would have been made by our forefathers to provide these chapels, and the standard of our care spoke much about our sincerity for worship. He expressed thankfulness to God for enabling the Trust to help some ninety chapels with advice over the last fifty years.

He gave a brief list to indicate trustee responsibilities, mentioning roof repairs and renewal, window repairs and replacements, problems with damp, flooring, boundary walls, heating, air conditioning and electrical installations as well as the need to insure. Chapels are communal buildings and trustees must comply with the law, and this now extends, for example, to disabled access, asbestos surveys and the management of asbestos, gas and electrical certificates. Graveyards must be kept in good order and potentially dangerous stones made safe. He was thankful that the Trust was able to give guidance in these areas, especially where there is not local expertise.

From those churches helped over the years, he mentioned fourteen particular cases. Among these, Bournemouth was an example of the sale

of a large building to provide a fund to purchase or build a new chapel. Nottingham and Grove were cases where the Lord's hand was seen going before them to provide new buildings. The chapel at Ripley is an old building with a small barn in the grounds, used for chapel teas at anniversaries, which had had to be demolished. There are also two chapel houses. Help with advice and funds for renovations is needed in cases like this.

He spoke of how the Lord's hand had been seen in the case of Swindon. The chapel building had been left unsafe by severe subsidence as a result of the development of adjoining property. Difficulties were encountered with the developer, but in the end the foreman in charge of the renovation was so helpful. The existing structure had been maintained and the inside of the building completely rebuilt so they have virtually a new chapel.

Upavon in Wiltshire was a case where the congregation diminished, maintenance was neglected and a wall collapsed. The walling was cob, made of clay and straw, which is perfectly adequate as long as water is not allowed to penetrate down from the top. After much negotiation this wall was rebuilt. He expressed thankfulness that the Trust had been able to help. Help had been given to both Southill and Station Road Chapel, Redhill, which are listed buildings and they needed to satisfy the requirements of the listed building authority, the English Heritage. The church at Bexley had been helped with advice for their new school room and funds for the replacement roof. His final example was Manchester, where the chapel house adjoining the chapel had been neglected and over many years water had been allowed to penetrate right down into this building. As a result there was very severe dry rot and all that could be done was to demolish that building. Thankfully the rot that had penetrated into the chapel could be eradicated.

This last example led him on to apply "rot" in a spiritual sense. Rot in a building is not very evident, and where the conditions are right, dry rot can creep up behind the plaster unobserved. So we needed grace to be able to observe and to be looking for this spiritually, because the churches are decaying. He believed there are at least two things which indicated rot, and one was fatalism. We needed to remember that we have a great God who is able to do for us far more "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." The Lord is able to build up the churches and we need to pray. Another rot was worldliness, which creeps in, just like dry rot, unobserved. It destroys the church and it destroys the pure worship, and we needed to be very conscious of this. He felt today there was a great lack of prevailing prayer and such a need in the spiritual building for the Lord to come and to build up Zion and to grant us true, urgent prayer.

The Secretary then gave an overview of Trust activities during the last fifty years. He spoke of the beginnings in 1966. The Gospel Standard Aid and Poor Relief Societies had given some advice and help over the years to chapel trustees in their dealings with chapel property and the Charity Commissioners, but the Societies could not act in law as a chapel trustee. A corporate body with its own legal entity was required. One of the real concerns at the beginning was the independent position of the churches. Would the Trust try to dictate to the churches? Well, the Secretary believed, the evidence of the last fifty years had demonstrated that the Trust had not sought to dictate, but it had tried to help the churches.

He then picked out a few events or areas which stood out for particular remembrance. Financial assistance built up slowly owing to lack of funds. A material change took place in 1989. The funds increased by almost 300% as a result of legacies of about £174,000 (Mr. G Instone) and £84,000 (Mr. K. Ashby) and £84,000 from the sale of Zoar Chapel, Milton-under-Wychwood. That timely increase funded grants to chapels in 1990 of £19,725, a one-third share in the pastor's house for the Leatherhead church and the increasing book stock.

Whilst Mr. Ramsbottom had mentioned the highest number of book sales being in 1992, he had not said that the total included 50,000 copies of the Miracles Series for India, North America and Singapore. In addition there was a grant made for printing 25,000 copies of *Bible Doctrines* in Russian. The Secretary did not have the number of books sold in the Miracles series and *Bible Doctrines* in English and many other languages, but he believed the total must be in the many hundreds of thousands.

The selling of chapels was really the most disheartening part. We had been involved in the sale of about twenty-six and were currently involved in the sale of two more. These sales had, however, provided much help for continuing churches. He named just two, Hope Chapel, Hurstpierpoint (with the chapel house) sold at auction in 2006 for £630,000 and Rehoboth Chapel, New Barnet sold in 2013 for £380,000. Churches in East and West Sussex benefited from the former and distributions were made to twenty-seven chapels from the latter.

It was very instructive to watch the Lord's timing. In 2000 we received £91,000 from the sale of Hope Chapel, Cambridge. In 2002 we made grants of over £130,000 including for the purchase of Birkenhead. Those grants were then more than replenished the following year by a half share in the sale proceeds from Ebenezer Chapel, Hertford. The hearts of the Baptist Building Fund committee were moved to make this allocation. For about twenty-five years up to 2002 we were able greatly to help the churches with insurance policies. Changes in regulations then

meant that we had to transfer over one hundred policies to Access Insurance of Croydon.

We needed to remember the contributions of the thirty-eight members of our churches who had served on the Committee. The longest serving was Mr. Stephen Hyde who was appointed in 1980. That was thirty-six years during which he had given a tremendous amount of advice to the churches on building matters as we had just heard. The contribution by Mr. Ramsbottom has been enormous. The Secretary believed twenty titles or more of the books distributed by the Trust were written or edited by him. Our deep appreciation must be to him for all his labour, and also for the labours of others such as Mr. Gerald Buss, Mr. Timothy Abbott and our departed friends, Messrs. Oliver Pearce, John Broome and John Watts for their significant contributions using the gifts which the Lord had given them.

The support from the Trust members and the churches was much appreciated. The highest level of the membership was back in 1990 when it was over 340, but bearing in mind the number of chapels sold since then, we would still be very thankful for the continuing level of support at over 260 members. The Secretary said we should not forget all those whom the Lord had enabled to serve as Chairman or as Secretary or as book agents, or in any other way helped in what the Trust had sought to do. His thoughts had gone particularly to the words recorded about the woman in the house of Simon the leper, "She hath done what she could."

The Chairman thanked each of the speakers for their addresses. He also thanked the friends at Clifton and all those who helped to provide refreshments. This interesting time of remembrance was closed with singing hymn 500 and the benediction.

Darrell J. Playfoot

BOOK REVIEW

Elijah – Prophet of God, by B.A. Ramsbottom, illustrated and designed by M.H. Philpott; hardback; 36 pages; price £5; published by Gospel Standard Trust Publications, and obtainable from the Harpenden bookroom and agents, and from Christian bookshops.

Often we have heard Sunday School teachers and parents bemoan the lack of sound and reverent Bible story books suitable for children, with sober, not cartoon-style illustrations. It is difficult to find a suitable illustrator who has empathy for the subject, together with an author who can write sensitively for children and yet accurately retell Bible stories in an interesting way. For many years Mr. Ramsbottom's children's books on the life of the Lord Jesus, and more

recently Paul and Peter, have been well received, but there has been a lack of books on Old Testament subjects. This new venture by the Gospel Standard Trust arose out of a few drawings by Mark Philpott for illustrating lessons in Sunday School which were felt to be suitable for a colouring book. It was then realised that the coloured pictures could also be used to illustrate a book of Bible stories, and with Mr. Ramsbottom agreeing to write the stories, two compatible books were produced – a Bible colouring book and a Bible story book which could use the same basic illustrations. Hence the recent publication of the *Sketches – Elijah and Elisha* colouring book and the *Elijah – Prophet of God* book of stories from the life of Elijah.

No recommendation of this book is needed for those who have read Mr. Ramsbottom's other children's books – the style is reverent but engaging and the design and illustrations will appeal to children.

John A. Kingham, Luton

CHRIST VERY GOD AND MAN

John 1. 29; Isaiah 9. 6

A Man there is, a real Man,
With wounds still gaping wide,
From which rich streams of blood once ran,
In hands, and feet, and side.

'Tis no wild fancy of our brains,
No metaphor we speak;
The same dear Man in heaven now reigns
That suffered for our sake.

This wondrous Man of whom we tell,
Is true Almighty God;
He bought our souls from death and hell;
The price, His own heart's blood.

That human heart He still retains,
Though throned in highest bliss;
And feels each tempted member's pains;
For our affliction's His.

Come, then, repenting sinner, come;
Approach with humble faith;
Owe what thou wilt, the total sum
Is cancelled by His death.

His blood can cleanse the blackest soul,
And wash our guilt away;
He will present us sound and whole,
In that tremendous day.

Joseph Hart (1712-1768)

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

THE FEAR OF DEATH

“And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb. 2. 15).

How apposite is the setting of this verse in the sacred context, to poor sinners who “believe in the LORD” and yet know much fear of death as they journey through this lower world. The apostle shows in verses 14 to 18 that Jesus likewise with “the children” took part of their “flesh and blood” that “He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” He then goes on to declare that, as “He took on Him the seed of Abraham,” “it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God.” Therefore the Lord Jesus who has Himself “suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.” The Lord Jesus Himself tasted “death for every man” (verse 9) (all that the Father had given Him), so He fully understands the temptations and tremblings of those who see the valley in front of them. We also read, “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death” (1 Cor. 15. 26).

The treasure of eternal life with precious faith is possessed in earthen vessels. The dear saints feel their great need of the fulfilling of that which we read in 2 Corinthians 4. 7: “That the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” Do we feel our great need of the Lord’s comfort and resurrection power as we each see the day approaching? All things will be proved in death. Genuine or counterfeit! The trouble is that we are such sinners! How pilgrims here below want Christ, and Christ to be with them, and to enter into the comfort of the gospel, “which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1. 27).

There are two glorious truths that stand for ever concerning this most solemn matter that we shall all have to face sooner or later.

Firstly: the doctrine of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. When the Lord Jesus died, He fully and completely put away sin by the death of Himself. We read that “our Saviour Jesus Christ,” “hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim. 1. 10). Also that “The LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53. 6). Peter also tells us, “Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pet.

2. 24). Paul also wrote to the Hebrews declaring that “By His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (chapter 9. 12). Also that He entered “into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (chapter 9. 24). We read in Romans 4. 25, “Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” Now these all are most pure and gracious truths declared by Almighty God, and written for the confessing sinners and needy souls seeking after Christ. May the Holy Ghost make the doctrine real and vital meat and drink to our hungry and thirsty souls.

Secondly: the glorious and firm promises that spring forth from the death and resurrection of Immanuel who has now ascended into heaven. Peter writes to those who are called, “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises” (2 Pet. 1. 4). The promise to the Israelites in their Egyptian bondage, as they kept the passover, was, “And when I see the blood, I will pass over you” (Exod. 12. 13). Those New Testament believers that keep the feast by pleading, “Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Cor. 5. 7), will prove the precious promise that, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1. 9). Another firm promise which is not only suitable for the trials in life, but for the approaching end of our days here below, is written by Asaph: “Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me” (Psa. 50. 15). For the poor pilgrims who trust in God, the Scriptures are pregnant with promises, such as, “For He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb. 13. 5); also, “And even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you” (Isa. 46. 4), and again, “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee” (Isa. 43. 2). These very precious promises have been sealed by the blood of Jesus, which is the “blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matt. 26. 28). The Lord Jesus intercedes in heaven for the tried and nervous pilgrims, who are so often anxious about the hour and article of death.

This same tender, merciful and reigning Lord Jesus now in heaven, knew also what it was for the sorrows of death to compass Him, and the pains of hell to get hold upon Him (see Psa. 18. 4, Psa. 116. 3). We read in Matthew chapter 26 that Jesus said, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.” He so cried with such a dolorous cry, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (Matt. 27. 46, Psa. 22. 1). As the Lord Jesus looks “down from the height of His sanctuary,” it is “to hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death” (Psa. 102. 19, 20). So the Lord Jesus, that true Friend of sinners will

hear the cries of the needy poor, who are anxious about their dying day, when they plead for His support and deliverance as they come to the swellings of Jordan. He lives to bring them safely through, and home to God. May the Holy Spirit comfort the anxious, for the Lord Jesus said, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me" (John 14. 1).

"Touched with a sympathy within,
He knows our feeble frame;
He knows what sore temptations mean,
For He has felt the same.

"Then let our humble faith address
His mercy and His power;
We shall obtain delivering grace,
In the distressing hour."

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

*Sermon preached by John Hervey Gosden at Blunsdon Hill, Wiltshire,
on Wednesday evening, May 1st, 1957*

Text: "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13. 38, 39).

If we had a spiritual apprehension of the mystery expressed in Gadsby's hymn just now sung (536), we should be more taken up with the Lord Jesus than even with the benefits that derive from His work. I met many years ago with an observation of Thomas Goodwin the Puritan, and it has stuck to me and recurred into my mind occasionally. He said, "The Lord is loved not only for what He gives, and for what He has suffered, but for what He *is*." Really, when you feel your heart taken up with a once-suffering Saviour, though His benefits are great, His Person is greater. That will be the blessedness and felicity of eternity, not only to enjoy the benefits of His death, but to enjoy *Him*. Man's last end is to know God and to be like Him and enjoy Him for ever. O what an end for puny man, worthless worms of the earth! But it involved all those unspeakably-awful sufferings which the Son of God underwent as a Surety and Substitute. He "bore all incarnate God *could* bear, with strength enough, and none to spare," and this in His free love, in His gracious determination, in His condescending faithfulness to His obligations undertaken in the covenant of grace.

For this purpose alone the Son of Man was manifested: He came from above for that only work, to accomplish redemption, to purchase His church, to honour the law, and to justify God in forgiving sin. We read in Romans, "That He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3. 26), and that justice of God in justifying believers lies in the satisfaction the Lord Jesus rendered to the law in His obedience and in suffering death.

This is to be preached, not by angels, but by sinful men ordained and anointed for the work. A very solemn and heavy and blessed responsibility this! As was observed this afternoon, when the preaching is in the Holy Ghost, there will be, from time to time, some meeting of the covenant purposes of God and poor sinners. There will be something done in their soul's experience – something that will last eternally. It has pleased the Lord that this should be the method of grace. Not exclusively – the Lord can bless His people and teach them and pardon them and take them to heaven irrespective of the ministry – but I believe that where He has provided the ministry He will not bless the neglect of it. It is His own provision. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1. 21).

We live in a sad day of declension, of superficiality, and much that makes us sad, but the same Holy Spirit lives; the same gospel is full of rich grace. What we need is the power of the Spirit to make the Word of His grace, through the lips of unworthy men, effectual through faith in the souls of the hearers. In the Hebrews we read of some that were not profited by what they heard, because it was not mixed with faith in them. There is a good deal of fatalism today, which is a perversion of the doctrine of election; but if we really believe in the doctrines of election and predestination, we shall be seeking after the knowledge of Christ and the fruit of those decrees in our experience, and the method of grace will be experienced by us. I know we may make too much of a minister, and the Lord may in displeasure shut that man's ministry up to us. On the other hand, we may think too little of it. I think it is Rutherford who says, "Happy is the man that can win to look up to God above the man in the pulpit." A good word that! For if you receive the word of man only, it will not be saving, but if by the Holy Ghost you receive the truth of God through a man, there will be saving efficacy in that.

See what is said here: "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." That is the *purpose* of preaching – for the obedience of faith: "All that believe." O this faith, how important it is! The faith of God's elect, that special faith which is the work of the Holy Spirit, the gift of God! There is a vast difference

between that faith, and natural credence or acquiescence in the verbal presentation of the truth, which may be only logical; and if I may, I would try for a moment to outline the difference in these – the difference in principle and in effect.

Natural credence so far is right, as Hart says, but there may be natural credence without grace, without repentance, without any apprehension, really, of Christ's Person and work, and certainly without any love and without humility. But real faith has attaching to it humility, repentance, love and union. It unites the person to the Object. That is a living faith. You may not always feel the union to be secure and all-satisfying, but it will unite in adherence, in desire, in trust. You will say, if you hear with the hearing ear of faith when Christ and His substitutionary death and obedience are set before you, "There is all my trust." Not a little thing to say! Trust for eternity! And there will be love attaching to it. Your heart will move towards Him. You will have a hope in the mercy of God, and feel enabled to ply the throne of grace for the enjoyment of those benefits that derive from Christ and Him crucified. "By Him all that believe are justified."

Faith has no merit in it. It is not the *cause* of justification, nor the ground of justification, but it is the means by which condemned sinners receive justification into their soul's experience. Justification is a legal term. It is the work of God. Only God can pass an act of justification upon one who deserves to be condemned. Very solemn it is, and yet very blessed, that God, who must condemn sin, can condemn it, does condemn it, has already condemned it in the Person of the Surety, and therefore can and does, and (I speak with deepest reverence) *must* justify the sinner for whom the Surety stood and suffered. I sometimes try – but I fail very much – to consider the character of God in salvation, and to see the beauty of the integrity of the divine character in all the free gifts of grace. The free gift of God's grace in the justification, the forgiveness, the sanctification, and the glorification of sinners is wholly consonant with the perfections of Jehovah. None of them are infringed, because all salvation flows from the free grace of God through the merit and work of Christ. That is the channel. Mercy flows that way. Why, my friends, we have no right to *live*, as sinners! We have forfeited our right to live. Condemnation is our right. Yet we read of the justification of life, the free gift of God's grace unto the justification of life, in a sinful worm who deserves to be condemned!

"By Him all that believe are justified." This faith is the gift of God. We can never manufacture it. Many a child of God has felt he would give all that he possesses for a grain of living faith, but the universe would not buy it. God's grace can never be merited, never be deserved, and never be purchased. It is *given*. Faith comes mysteriously. The

Holy Spirit works it in the heart. The gospel is to be preached for this purpose. It is difficult for one to say how it comes, but Paul, writing to the Romans, tells us: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10. 17). And he says, "How shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?" (Rom. 10. 14, 15).

The method of grace is really wonderful. Perhaps some of you can go back to some of your hearings, when the Lord Jesus has been made so real, so dear, so suitable, so sufficient to you, that your whole soul has gone out to Him in desire, in love, in trust, and in a gracious determination to seek after Him until you possess Him for your own portion, your own Redeemer. Now *that* is faith, and it is sweet to feel it, profitable to know it. It has a double efficacy in the soul who exercises it; it gives a hope in the Lord's mercy, and it purifies the heart. You cannot feel your heart going out in humble trust and love to the Lord Jesus, and at the same time roll sin under your tongue as a sweet morsel; and in that sense, experimentally as well as doctrinally, I believe it is right to say that justification and sanctification are inseparable graces. They are distinguishable. Justification is a perfect state. There cannot be a partial justification, for when God justifies a person, He justifies the whole person.

He does not justify his *sins*. As it says here, "By Him all that believe are justified *from all things*, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." The law is not against the gospel, but is satisfied by Christ's obedience. The law of Moses can justify no sinner, but the gospel can. God for Christ's sake can. Jesus Christ can, because He received the condemnation, and as we read in the prophet Isaiah, "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied: by His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities" (Isa. 53. 11). He who justifies is He who bore all their sin, and it is a free gift of grace. God for Christ's sake forgives and justifies the ungodly who believe in Jesus Christ.

This justification includes the imputation to the sinner of the obedience of Christ. Justification is something more than the removal of condemnation which we all deserve, and under which we may long languish as a sentence in our consciences against our sins. But when the Lord forgives sins, He will also justify the sinner and impute to that sinner a righteousness which was wrought out for him by Him who received the condemnation. In Romans 5 it is said that by one Man's obedience many are made righteous. And if God pronounces us righteous, we shall *be* righteous. That means, we have covering us, imputed to us, reckoned to our account, that obedience which Christ

rendered to the law, and by which He made it honourable. Natural righteousness in the innocence of creation was attached to our first parents. They were perfectly righteous. But that righteousness was lost, and all the human race was made unrighteous by the sin of Adam. It passed upon the whole human race. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" is the question. "Not one" (Job 14. 4). How can a man be just, then, before God? In this only way: by the righteousness of Christ put upon him by God. O what an act! Imputation! A double imputation that God alone could effect, for God only can impute sin, and He did impute it, and imputing it to His dear Son, did not spare Him. O if we did but look into this matter by the Spirit, and had we but that "scene of matchless grace" before us, how it would soften and humble us before the Lord! Then how wonderful to be covered with Christ's righteousness! Not His intrinsic righteousness as a holy God, but the righteousness which He *wrought out* by His obedience unto death when standing in His people's place. O what a mercy it is to have an inkling of it! The hymnwriter speaks of it, and I wish we might feel it. It would do us good; it would give us a felt sense, a humbling sense of being fit for God:

"And, lest the shadow of a spot
Should on my soul be found,
He took the robe the Saviour wrought,
And cast it all around."

It is Scriptural language, because those who get admittance into heaven and get a welcome there, and find heaven to be a holy, happy place of worship, tireless worship, they are there as having been brought out of great tribulation and having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; and they *wear* those white robes. It is the imputed righteousness of Christ, justification. By one Man's obedience many were made righteous.

And it is a *state*. Let me say a word or two on this, because it comes very near to experimental religion. The state of justification is unalterable. If Christ died for us, if He rose again for our justification, if God for Christ's sake imputes His obedience to us because our sin was imputed to Him and condemned in Him, we stand in that standing which is firmer than innocence.

"Adam, when the tempter foiled him,
His bright robes were quickly gone;
But this righteousness of Jesus,
Once applied, 'tis always on;
'Tis their title
To the mansion love ordained."

And, my friends, we *must* have it. A *title* for heaven is as essential as a *fitness* for heaven. But though the standing is unalterable, the enjoyment and experience of it may be and often is very intermittent. I remember the first time I felt in my own soul (as I hope) the sacred substance of that work we just now read, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5. 1). O it is a sweet, a rare experience! "By Him all that believe are justified." When faith is active, and when the witness of the Spirit is had in the heart, and a sense of peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ is enjoyed, then there is liberty. It is like that peace which Paul speaks of to the Philippians, and promises to those who are enabled by the Spirit to follow his direction, which is this: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." When you are under the power of the Spirit, your requests to God will chiefly include spiritual blessings, of which there is nothing greater than the remission of sins and the justification of the person.

And you see, this Man, the Lord Jesus, whom Paul preached here, is a living Christ. He lives in heaven to *bestow* the blessings of the covenant, the blessings that result from His precious death. He is there in heaven to give them out to those people for whom He suffered. He sits on the throne of grace to hear their requests and their prayers and their confessions, and to make intercession for them. It is very sacred, very solemn, to be brought near to God through Jesus Christ, "this Man," to feel Him near to you. A few weeks ago my mind was taken up rather sweetly and solemnly with that word in John 17. It did make the Lord Jesus precious to me. The Lord, in that prayer to His divine Father for His people, prayed for many things for them, but in the fifth verse He said this: "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." My faith seemed to trace the Lord Jesus in His sacred humanity and His sufferings and death and resurrection, and then when He gave that message through Mary to the disciples, and said, "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." He said, "Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended." He was not then glorified, as now He is, in His holy humanity, the Person of the Son of God incarnate in heaven, glorified with the glory which He had with His Father before the world was. *That* is the Man Christ Jesus, the eternal Son of God incarnate; a real Man, but glorified in His humanity.

Another thing connected with this is that *His people* are to be glorified. They are to be conformed to Him. Less than that will not satisfy, but it is beyond all we can conceive. If you walk about

sometimes feeling the ugliness of your sin and the constant defeats that you get, the defilement that you contract, and the conflict you have with indwelling sin and with temptation, it may make you long to get to heaven; but then the consideration of a meetness and a title will come in, and both the title and the meetness are from and in and with the Lord Jesus. So it is written in 1 Corinthians chapter 1 – blessed word; O I have seen in that such amplitude, such sufficiency! – it is said, “Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” “By Him” – this Man – “all that believe are justified from all things.” And if justified, then there is no more condemnation; and if justified, then glory must follow. Nothing can keep out of heaven a justified sinner who is united to Christ, his glorious Head. “Whom He justified, them He also glorified” (Rom. 8. 30).

Well, this text is a very solemn one, and it will be well for us if we look closely to our own cases, as to how we stand in respect of it. I did notice briefly this afternoon the two sorts of people listening to the disciples’ preaching; some of them cavilled, contradicted, were filled with envy; and some of them believed. O what a mercy if the Lord has given us faith, if He has made us believers! It takes the power of Him who made the world to make a believer, and I believe in a certain sense (you will understand what I mean) it is a greater work for God to take a sinner in hand and deal with him so, and make him a repentant sinner and a believer and a saint, and take him to heaven, than to create the universe. Insignificant we are indeed, and we may well say, “What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?” Yet if we are rightly instructed we shall want the Lord to be mindful of us and to visit us, and to bless us with the blessings wherewith He blesses His own chosen people. As the psalmist prayed, “Remember me, O LORD, with the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people: O visit *me* with Thy salvation.” It is a personal business; and if you take these two things in the balance, and see that we are either justified or condemned, and that that state will be fixed presently for eternity, the issues are very great. O to make a mistake is very solemn!

But I tell you one thing in the gospel that is known by those who are taught of the Spirit, and that is this: they are *so* convinced by the Spirit of their guilt, that they dare not think of appearing before God without Christ, and they dare not think of leaning to their own righteousness or justifying themselves. There was a young man who came to the Lord Jesus and asked Him how to attain eternal life – an interesting question, rightly given. But the Lord said to him, “What is written in the law? how readest thou?” Well, the young man said, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.” The Lord said, “This do, and thou shalt live.” But the young man, it is written, “*willing*

to justify himself” said, “Who is my neighbour?” He could not rise above even a little courtesy to his neighbour for a touchstone with respect to eternal life. He thought, I suppose, he kept the part of the law relating to God (see Luke 10).

O but where there is conviction of sin by the Spirit, the Lord will lay a person low. He will dread trusting in his own righteousness. He will understand and feel and acknowledge without any exaggeration that his own righteousness is but filthy rags. A painfully solemn thing to feel, but it is true. I have felt it sometimes, and have deprecated before the Lord in secret, appearing before Him in the very best service, the very best duty I have ever performed. Why, it is worthless, like polluted rags! But the righteousness of Christ is the thing. It is there you will look, there you will seek to be sheltered, to be accepted of God in Christ. If any of you feel that your sins are so numerous, so peculiar, that you cannot forgive them nor forget them, and entertain serious questions as to whether really you can ever get the forgiveness of them from God, may the Lord help you to remember *who* this Man is – the Son of God!

“O could we but with clearer eyes
His excellences trace,
Could we His Person learn to prize,
We more should prize His grace,”

and we more should trust and plead His name, merit and blood before the Father. There is none other name given under heaven among men but His name, whereby we must be saved; and when, and if, this justification reaches our hearts, and we feel the liberty of it, freedom from condemnation, and peace with God, that will liberate us to serve the Lord, it will make us anxious to live to His glory, it will give us a desire to do what Paul says the saints of God do – by the Spirit they crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts.

So far from free justification by divine grace through Christ’s redemption leading a person to a careless life, it rather stimulates a longing desire for holiness, and a person thus dealt with would live holily and godly in this present world, though he will never be satisfied with the standard he reaches. The best of saints know something of the Apostle Paul’s wretchedness: “O wretched man that I am!” (Rom. 7. 24) he said. Yet he was a blessed man. The Lord dealt with him graciously, afforded him much of the comfort of the gospel. He could say of the Lord Jesus, “Who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2. 20). But he had this indwelling sin. It did not interfere with his state of justification, but it interfered with his enjoyment of it.

But that is to come to an end one day. O the prospect for the people of God is sometimes very bright – holiness, perfect holiness of spirit, and perfect conformity to Christ. No more dark frowns from God. When

you get some providential trial, you perhaps immediately begin to examine yourself as to how you have offended the Lord. I got a trial yesterday; it came suddenly and unexpectedly, and a very painful trial it was; and immediately I began to wonder what I was guilty of, what the Lord was provoked about to allow such a thing to come. It is very solemn, but I believe very profitable to examine oneself, because it brings a person afresh into contact with God in Christ. It would be good if we could live in that word of the hymnwriter:

“Daily I’d repent of sin,
Daily wash in Calvary’s blood,
Daily feel Thy peace within,
Daily I’d commune with God.”

The nearer we get to the end, the more important it is to have the conscience purged, and kept purged and tender, by the blood of Christ. The Lord help us to seek this constantly.

But these people who are justified and shall be fully sanctified one day, and are partly sanctified here from time to time through the Word of truth as Christ said, “Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth” (John 17. 17) – these people shall prove that there is no vindictive wrath against them in God, though He shows His displeasure, and that in His love, for wrong things. There is no penal wrath, and they shall prove that all things work together for good. What a wonder that is! Everything that occurs will be made to work for their good, their ultimate, spiritual good! Job had a word when he was greatly tried, and when his friends thought he made so much of his trial. “Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace,” they said (Job 22. 21). Well, poor man, he said, “Oh that I knew where I might find Him! that I might come even to His seat!” (Job 23. 3). It did not look much like a justified person; but said Job, “He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold” (Job 23. 10). “I *know* that my Redeemer liveth” (Job 19. 25). Dark seasons, seasons of desertion, sin-provoked darkness, all those solemn things that we come into, the Lord will overrule for His people. Erskine is bold when he says – I would quote it rightly and advisedly, and graciously, but I believe what he meant was true; he said,

“Sin for my good shall work and win,
But ’tis not good for me to sin.”

“Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man” – this exalted, glorified, enthroned God-Man, the Friend of sinners, once a crucified Man; through this Man in whose hands now is all power in heaven and in earth – “is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.” “Why art thou afraid to come?” You may be afraid. I have

been many times afraid; afraid on my knees of approaching God, a holy God. How can we approach Him, apart from Jesus Christ? But get a glimpse of Jesus the Mediator and Intercessor and great High Priest on the throne of grace, then,

“*Why* art thou afraid to come?
 Why afraid to tell thy case?
 He will not pronounce thy doom;
 Smiles are seated on His face.”

The kindness of the Lord Jesus, His compassion toward His unworthy people, His ability to save to the uttermost, His unfailing faithfulness to His promises, and His undying love – these are invincible attractions to the people of God. Does not that make that word important in the chapter just now read? I know it is a very high standard of experience, yet I believe the Holy Spirit can and does bring His people into it from time to time, where the apostle says, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

That peace with God is independent of circumstances. O what a different outlook you have upon your circumstances of life and prospects for eternity when you feel peace with God through Jesus Christ! But he says, “We have access by faith into this grace *wherein we stand*, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” Then he says, “Not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (Rom. 5. 1-5). Now that is an experience for justified people. If you say, “I am deficient,” “if you say, “I faint almost at every trial that comes,” I can sympathise with you; but let us pray for the Holy Spirit to conform us to that word in our experience, to give us such a strengthening sense of interest in Christ’s righteousness and atonement, as that we shall glory in tribulation. Not in tribulation for its own sake, but because of what it leads to through sanctifying grace: They “came out of great tribulation” (Rev. 7. 14). There is an end to tribulation, but not an end to the benefits of Christ, not an end to the enjoyment of Himself. The glory of God “in the church by Christ Jesus” is “throughout all ages, world without end” (Eph. 3. 21).

Should the Holy Spirit bring us inside this text, and save us from being among those who despise the gospel, and give us faith to mix with it, and to entertain the Lord Jesus in our heart’s best room, and to live to His glory, how good it will be!

Nothing but the death of Christ for us will be the death of sin in us.

John Owen

SUPERABOUNDING GRACE OVER ABOUNDING SIN

An extract from John Rusk (1771-1834)

O how a poor child of God groans under the weight of the old man of sin, which I well know by bitter experience. The cravings and lustings of the flesh cause him many a bitter hour. Yet nothing can eventually stop this love of God in the manifestation of it to the soul. I had a proof of this again last night; for I went out to hear the Word, and on the road I felt worldly and carnal, and an indulging in things I ought not, and felt averse to all that is good. I thought of prayer, but unbelief worked so strong and I regarded iniquity in my heart and felt poorly in body. However, against wind and tide, and only in words, I called on the Lord, and very shortly afterwards He visited me with His love. I felt the change and could immediately see that it was a free love and not at all depending, in the manifestations of it, on my diligence, spiritual-mindedness, nor having my heart in tune by prayer, faith, or any other thing, but that the Lord loved me amidst all my baseness as much as when I lived near to Him and did that which is well pleasing in His sight. It did not make me sow to the flesh or try to gratify what was working in my heart. No; but a felt persuasion that the Lord was with me, and felt nearness and access and a cry to Him for myself and others, particularly for one who desired an interest in my prayers. I now felt I could pray for that person. When I reached the house of God I heard the Word sweetly, felt peace, quietness and no condemnation, and this feeling abode with me till I went to bed.

CHRIST FOUND IN THE PATHWAY OF CONFESSING SIN

51 Surrenden Road,
Brighton, Sussex.
1907

Dear Miss S.,

I was glad to see by your letter that you are kept lively in a humbling sense of sin. You felt when you wrote that you would "go softly all your days in the bitterness of your soul." May this remain with you; and when you feel the pardon of all sin you will even more deeply fall down and mourn, and go thus. But with what a change! I hope the sweet change may soon come to you, that you may say, "This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." Go on in the sound way of confession. Never neglect that. The Lord says to His people, "Only acknowledge thine iniquity." "If we confess our sins." This is the

way in which He will be found. Here He shows Himself beyond the utmost thoughts of a praying, expecting soul (Isa. 55). In this divinely-appointed way liberty is found. O such liberty! “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

I pray nothing may turn you out of the way of waiting, confession, and going to Christ, just as you feel yourself to be – an undone soul.

With every good wish,

Yours sincerely,

J.K. Popham

THE PRECIOUSNESS OF CHRIST

*Prayer meeting address given by Mr. Timothy J. Pocock
at South Moreton Chapel, on Wednesday, March 13th, 2013*

“Unto you therefore which believe He is precious” (1 Pet. 2. 7).

It is only by faith that the Lord Jesus can be known at all. How can He then be precious to anyone, but by faith? It is what faith sees in Him. When He speaks, that faith in Him is raised up in the soul. For the words He speaks make Himself known, when the Spirit testifies of who He is, and what He has done. What is it that causes a sinner to lay hold of this, and find Him so precious? Faith. Those of you then who, perhaps, wonder whether you have any true faith – has Christ been made precious to you at all? If He has, then you have been blessed with faith in Him.

There are two things especially that the Spirit does in the hearts of sinners that make Christ precious. He makes them feel their need, and shows them that Christ is the only One who can supply that need. Now, as He is the only One, how precious He is! And whatever your need be tonight, this Pearl of great price, Christ, is able to supply that need. “For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell” (Col. 1. 19).

In the previous chapter, Peter wrote especially of the precious blood of Christ. So precious, because nothing else can put away sin. So precious, because it is so precious to God. O how pleased God is with the sacrifice of His Son! How satisfied He is with those sufferings, and that offering of Himself. “Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree” (1 Pet. 2. 24), wrote Peter. And you see, it is regarding sin, that the Spirit makes Christ so precious. None of us here tonight have a greater need than the forgiveness of sins. Our sins are many, beyond recounting. They are beyond our measure, because they are sins against an infinite God. O how precious, then, is this Jesus! “Through this Man,” said the apostle, “is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:

and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts. 13. 38, 39).

"Unto you therefore which believe He is precious." He is *preached* to this people. O how precious He was made to the jailor. In what context was He made precious to the jailor? "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16. 30, 31). And the apostles, Paul and Silas *preached* unto him Jesus. They preached that through Him God forgiveth sins; they preached that through Him sinners are saved; they preached that that salvation is without money, without price; they preached that *His* righteousness is alone that which justifieth. And the Holy Spirit took those words that those apostles preached, and fixed them on the hearts of those people; and they believed, and were baptized. They took the apostles, and washed the stripes which they had, not many hours before, inflicted on them. That love to Christ, the love of Christ shed abroad in their heart, O how it moved them to do that in love to those men who had preached to them this precious Christ.

"Unto you therefore which believe He is precious." The previous verse concludes like this: "He that believeth on Him shall not be confounded." O how confounded the Lord's people feel to be! Confounded by the evil of their own hearts; confounded by the sins that rise up; confounded by the devil – those who know they have been, as Berridge wrote in that hymn we sang,

"All who have been Satan's tool –
Much his madman or his fool."

Confounded by all their helplessness and ruin; confounded before all their foes; confounded before the law of God; *until* Jesus speaks; until the Spirit takes of the things of Jesus; until the Spirit causes this sinner to look up from all the things that confound him; to look out of self, to look away from men; to look away from his foes; to look away from the things that make him fear; to look away from all that he deserves; to look away from all his unprofitableness; to look away from all his unrighteousness, to this precious Jesus. And then he is not confounded, because he believes on Him.

Now, the Lord help us to consider that precious truth: "He that believeth on Him shall not be confounded." Because the One who he believes in, why, *He* requires no good in this person; all good is in Him. And therefore, however much bad there is in this person, he that believeth on the Holy One and the Just shall not be confounded because of all his badness. And these great foes – they *are* great,

"Mighty enemies without,
Much mightier within."

O how Elisha's servant feared, when he saw that great company coming against them. "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" He thought they were going to be confounded. And Elisha prayed unto his God, "LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man." And he was not confounded then, because he saw then, "They that be with us are more than they that be with them" (see 2 Kings 6). Ah, my dear friend, there is more righteousness in Christ than there is unrighteousness in you. There is more virtue in His precious blood than there is evil in your sins. There is more love in His heart than there is enmity in yours. There is more life in Him than there is death in you. There is more wisdom in Him than there is folly in you. There is more grace in Him than there is sin in you. "He that believeth on Him," therefore, "shall not be confounded."

"Unto you therefore which believe He is precious." It is the want of Him, then, that makes Him precious. He is precious in the want of Him, and then He is precious in the possession of Him. If He is precious to you in the want of Him, really precious, you will be seeking Him with all your heart, and you will find Him. If He is precious to you in the want of Him, you will be made willing by Him to leave everything else. When that trader found one pearl of great price, he sold all his other pearls, that he might have that one. Precious! O it is this, my dear friend:

"Every prop will, first or last,
Sink or fail, but Jesus Christ."

O but what a path this is! These that find Christ precious are set forth by those that went down to that Cave Adullam. "Every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them" (1 Sam. 22. 2). Yes, O compelled by circumstances.

"Compelled I am on Christ alone to hang,
And plead that blood by which the church is freed."

"Unto you therefore which believe He is precious." O how good it is, then, when this faith is given. How it causes the sinner to leave all for Him. How it causes the sinner to renounce everything else for Him. You see, the Lord's people are called to this. This faith by which they believe that He is precious is a tried faith. "Will ye also go away?" Peter answered on behalf of them all, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" (John 6. 67-69). You see, it is tried because the path of the believer is not comfortable to the flesh. But let Christ be revealed to you, let faith see Him, my dear friend, His yoke is easy and His burden is light. O but when He is hidden, and when

unbelief prevails, as it did with Peter – Peter knows what he is writing about – and he denies his Lord with oaths and curses, O how precious Christ made Himself when He turned and looked upon him! You know, Peter, by the effect of that look, he went out and wept bitterly – he was blessed with repentance. And by the effect of that look, if somebody had said to him then, “And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth,” Peter would have said, “Yes,” because Christ had made Himself precious to him. O when grace is withheld, we are *nothing* but sinners; when grace is withheld, there is *no sin* we cannot commit – awful it is. But when grace is given, there is nothing we would not bear for Christ’s sake. Now there is the preciousness of Christ.

“Unto you therefore which believe He is precious.” O this is one’s desire for you each – I think particularly at the moment of you young ones – that the Lord might so make Himself precious to you. And then, concerning your steps, it will be, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” (Acts 9. 6). And if you are blessed with this faith, your steps will go toward Him; you will be followers of Him; and O how it needs a precious Christ – you know, there is no one but a precious Christ, no one who is so precious as having such grace to give, such love to shed abroad, such mercy to bestow, such pardon to speak, such eternal life to give. O none but He can pull you away from this world. “Draw me,” says the spouse, “we will run after Thee.”

“Unto you therefore which believe He is precious.” He is precious, because He sits upon a throne of grace. Do you know something of what the hymnwriter says,

“That were a grief I could not bear,
Didst Thou not hear and answer prayer;
But a prayer-hearing, answering God
Supports me under every load”?

Precious! To find that He hears prayer; to find that He does not spurn “the vilest sinner out of hell who lives to feel his need.” Precious in His promises, in the word He speaks. O have not some of you here tonight some precious pearls from this one Pearl of great price? The promises He has spoken, the words He has spoken to you, the deliverances He has given you. “Unto you therefore which believe He is precious,” in those words He speaks to you. O my dear friend, I believe this is how precious Christ makes Himself – you would not part with Him, or those words He has spoken to you for anything, because you know those things are worth more than anything else. The words of God through His dear Son, the Saviour of sinners.

He is precious in His precious blood. You know, if it were not for that blood, there would be no plea, would there? If it were not for that truth that He stood in the sinner’s room, place and stead, how could a

sinner come to God? There is no way but through that blood. It is a blood-sprinkled mercy seat.

Precious! Precious in His presence. O when you who have proved what the psalmist said: "God is our refuge and strength, a very *present* help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed" (Psa. 46. 1, 2). That presence you were granted there, or that presence you seek tonight, is a presence that no one else can give. No one else can be a substitute in place of Jesus. O when you were in that great distress, no earthly friend could be to you what Jesus was. "A Friend loveth at all times, and a Brother is born for adversity" (Prov. 17. 17). Precious, when refuge fails you, and no man cares for your soul. Precious when the law condemns you; precious to find Jesus, and to believe on Him who was made under the law, who stood in the law-place of His people; precious, because when He was in that place, He prevailed. Precious in the hour of temptation, because He stood in the hour of temptation. Precious through life. "He has trod this earth before us, He has felt its keenest woe." Precious in that light. Christ who went through every mountain, says to the sinner that trusts in Him, "I will make all My mountains a way." Precious, because *you* have mountains, child of God; *you* have impossibilities in your path.

The last point I will mention – that greatest mountain of all – death. "Unto you therefore which believe He is precious." O who else can help a sinner when they come to die? It is a mercy if we have those to tend to our bodies with care and affection, but my dear friend, what about our souls? But this Jesus careth for souls. O He carries souls through that great, last trial. He cleanses souls, so that when they come to the other side of that river, they are accepted, gathered into heaven, secure. Precious, because He has gone *through* that Jordan Himself. O to shelter beneath that precious blood when we come there!

"Unto you therefore which believe He is precious." And you know, if faith is given us when we come to die, how precious we shall find Him in that faith. Because you see, faith sees everything about Christ which is precious, and concerning death faith sees, faith trusts, in Him who conquered death alone.

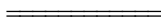
"Unto you therefore which believe He is precious." And what a blessed thing it is in the experience of a believer when their faith is raised to that measure that they can speak of His preciousness. He makes Himself so precious to them that they must come and "tell to sinners round, what a dear Saviour I have found." And then as they see Him by faith going through death for them, and by that going through death for them, they have that hope of eternal life. He is so precious to them, He has given the desire, He sheds abroad the love, which makes them willing

to follow Him. "Dear Lord, the ardour of Thy love" – ah, that is what we need.

"Dear Lord, the ardour of Thy love
Reproves my cold delays."

"If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest" (Acts 8. 37).

"Unto you therefore which believe He is precious." Amen.



DO I LIVE BY FAITH UPON THE PROMISE?

An extract from Ralph Erskine of Dunfermline (1685-1752)

Question: How shall I know if I be one of these that live by faith upon the promise?

Answer:

1. If you be living by faith on the promise, then you will find the promise to be the means of exciting faith, as well as it was the means of creating faith at first, or begetting it. The believer is in every respect a child of promise; his grace of faith is a child of promise, and his life of faith is a child of promise. The faith that believes the promise is begotten by the power of the promise; and the faith that lives upon the promise is also begotten by the power and virtue of the promise, and is cast forth out of the womb thereof. The promise that is the food of faith, on which faith lives, is always the seed of faith, from which faith springs; therefore the gospel is called the word of faith, in which believers are "nourished up" (1 Tim. 4. 6). "Thy Word hath quickened me," saith the psalmist (Psa. 119. 50), and the gospel is said to be the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believes. The same power that begets faith is necessary for the increase of it, and for drawing forth every act thereof. It is always, like Isaac, a child of promise, for it is a faith of God's operation. Grace, and virtue, and fire, come out of the promise, and kindle it.

I do not assert that there is constantly a felt virtue coming from the promise, or a sensible power felt at first, for sensible feeling follows believing; but there is a secret, ineffable, insensible power, while the man is perhaps but musing and meditating upon the promise, and thereupon the sensible power and fire follow: "While I was musing the fire burned" (Psa. 39. 3). Hence the believer finds faith, both in the beginning, and in all its actings, to be both the most difficult and the most easy thing: so difficult, that it is just impossible for him to believe, till power and virtue come out of the promise in some secret and insensible manner, while he is stretching forth the withered hand; and yet so easy a thing, that when

he is under the powerful influence of the grace of the promise, making him to roll himself upon Christ, as if he were carried on a wave of the sea, or hurled towards Him in a chariot paved with love.

2. If you be living by faith on the promise, then you will find your faith maintained by prayer, or in a way of praying, saying, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief," and, "Lord, increase my faith." This follows upon the former, for these prayers for the increase of faith say plainly that no man can believe when he will, and as much as he will: for, if a man may believe when he will, and as much as he will, what needs he go to God in Christ by prayer, for the increase of faith? Nay, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy" (Rom. 9. 16). Faith is the gift of God, and Christ is the Author and Finisher of faith. Therefore prayer must be made to Him for it, and for the increase of it. Yea, this prayer to the Lord, "Increase our faith" (Luke 17. 5), plainly says that they who pray so must have faith, otherwise they but mock God, to seek more of that which they never had. Yet many will say, O my faith is weak, Lord, increase it; while yet they never had knowledge or faith either. Faith is a fire, and prayer is like a pair of bellows to increase and blow up the fire; but where there is no fire, the bellows will never blow it up, but where the grace of faith is, it is usually blown by the prayer of faith. Many believe when they will, even as they can eat, and drink, and sleep, though they pray not for strength to do these things; but true faith waxes and wanes, according as the spirit of prayer is up or down, and they that think they live by faith, and yet their faith is not maintained by the means of importunate prayer, it is to be feared that they will be ashamed of their faith ere all be done.

3. If you be living by faith on the promise, then you will find satisfaction to your soul in the milk of the promise, and nowhere else, even as the child that lives upon the milk of the breast finds satisfaction therein, and cannot be at rest without it. Yea, the child is not content merely with the breast, unless it can find milk in the breast; even so the child of promise cannot find soul-satisfaction but in the promise, nor in the bare promise, unless he find the milk in that breast. What is the milk of the promise? Indeed it is Christ, and the child of promise lives upon Christ in the promise. It is not the Word alone that satisfies him, but Christ in the Word; it is not the ordinance alone, but Christ in the ordinance. The promise is the vessel or cup; Christ is the liquor that is in the cup, the living water that is in the vessel. And when one believes, and lives by faith, he does not take the vessel or cup only in his hand – nay, that would not satisfy his thirst, nor feed him – but drinks Christ out of that cup. He takes the living water out of it, and thus he is nourished, and refreshed, and satisfied. They that find soul-satisfaction elsewhere

are not living on the promise by faith. Some find satisfaction to their hearts in the world, and satisfaction to their conscience in their duties, but they are strangers to true satisfaction in Christ, both to heart and conscience. But here it is that the child of promise rests satisfied, when out of the gospel-breast he gets the milk of consolation, Christ, the consolation of Israel, for “wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor. 1. 30).

4. They that are living by faith on the promise are always poor and needy, kept from hand to mouth while here, that they may never cease living on the promise, and Christ in it. Though they get satisfaction here, and nowhere else, yet as the stomachs which we seem to satisfy just now, as I noticed on another occasion, yet within a few hours they are empty and craving, so it is with respect to the believer. And as the vessels which we fill today require a new filling tomorrow, so the believer’s spiritual wants still increase, and renew themselves. But though the vessel may be dry, yet the fountain is not; though the vessel may be empty, yet the fountain is full and still streaming. The goodness of God in Christ is a living fountain, and His promises are a perpetual bond, a perpetual fund for the maintenance of the believer all his lifetime, from the first moment that he is born and brought forth out of the womb of the promise, to the last moment of his age, “Hearken unto Me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by Me from the belly, which are carried from the womb: and even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you” (Isa. 46. 3, 4).

They that are full, and rich, and increased with goods, full of self-wisdom, self-righteousness, they live upon themselves, but not upon the promise; but the child of promise is a poor and needy, empty, hunger-beaten, starving creature, that sees need of depending constantly on a promise, and so receives out of Christ’s fulness daily, grace for grace. Try then, if you be living on the promise and laying God’s promise and your condition together, studying His promise and your case together; for they that study their case without studying the promise are ready to despair, but they that study the promise without studying their case are ready to presume.

5. They that are the children of promise are lovers of the promise, lovers of the gospel, and of the Word of grace, saying, “How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” (Rom. 10. 15). And again, “How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” (Psa. 119. 103). They are the posterity of Ishmael that do not love the promise; all that are, as Isaac, the children of promise, are lovers of the promise.

JESUS, A SYMPATHISING HIGH PRIEST

An extract from Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)

Is Jesus Christ God-Man? Is He very God and very Man? Then you may be very confident of His sympathising with you in all your afflictions. Then this may serve as a foundation to support you under all your troubles, and as a cordial to comfort you under all your afflictions, in that Christ partaking of the same nature, and having had experience of the infirmities of it, He is the more able and willing to help and succour us. “Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people” (Heb. 2. 17). If one come to visit a man that is sick of a grievous disease, who hath himself been formerly troubled with the same disease, he will sympathise more, and show more compassion than twenty others who have not felt the like. So here, from Christ’s sufferings in His human nature, we may safely gather that He will show Himself a merciful High Priest to us in our sufferings, and one that will be ready to help and succour us in all our afflictions and miseries, which we suffer in this life, inasmuch as Himself had experience of suffering the like in our nature. “For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted” (Heb. 2. 18). And this should be a staff to support us, and a cordial to comfort us in all our sorrows and miseries.

THE SACRED HUMANITY OF THE REDEEMER **CHAPTER 2** **THE NATURE OF THE REDEEMER’S HUMANITY**

By J.C. Philpot (1802-1869)

(Continued from page 292)

To glorify His dear Son has from all eternity been the purpose of the Father, and both in the plan and in the execution has He manifested the depths of His infinite wisdom, power and love. That the eternal Son of God should take into intimate and indissoluble union with His divine Person the flesh and the blood of the children, that in that nature He might manifest the riches of the sovereign grace, the heights and depths of the everlasting love, and the fulness of the uncreated glory of a Triune Jehovah, has been from all eternity the determinate counsel and purpose of the great and glorious self-existent I AM; and all creation, all providence, and all events and circumstances of time and space were originally and definitely arranged to carry into execution this original plan.

Creation, with all its wonders of power and wisdom, was not necessary either for the happiness or the glory of the self-existent Jehovah. Father, Son and Holy Ghost had, from all eternity, that holy, intimate union and intercommunion with each other, that mutual love and ineffable fellowship of three distinct Persons and yet but one God, which creation could neither augment nor impair. Time, with all its incidents, is but a moment; space, with all its dimensions, is but a speck, compared with the existence of a God who inhabiteth eternity, and therefore filleth all time and all space.

That a self-existent God should be amply sufficient for His own happiness and His own glory is a truth as self-evident to a believing heart as the very existence of God Himself. But it pleased the sacred Triune Jehovah that there should be an external manifestation of His heavenly glory, and this was to be accomplished by the incarnation of the Son of God, the second Person of the holy Trinity. The Father, therefore, prepared Him a body, which in due time He should assume. Thus addressing His heavenly Father, He says, "A body hast Thou prepared Me" (Heb. 10. 5). That He should take this prepared body into union with His divine Person was the eternal will of God; so that when the appointed time arrived for the decree to be accomplished, the eternal Son could and did come forth from the bosom of the Father with these words upon His lips: "Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me,)" – the volume of God's eternal decrees – "to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. 10. 7).

Now, the Word of truth declares that "God ... manifest in the flesh" is the "great ... mystery of godliness" (1 Tim. 3. 16). Therefore, without an experimental knowledge of this great mystery, there can be no godliness in heart, lip or life; and if no godliness, no salvation, unless we mean to open the gates of bliss to the ungodly, who "shall not stand in the judgment" (Psa. 1. 5), and to count for nothing that "ungodliness" against which "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven" (Rom. 1. 18). It is the truth, and, "as the truth is in Jesus" (Eph. 4. 21): it alone maketh free, sanctifies as well as liberates: "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth" (John 17. 17). How important, then, how all-essential to know the truth for ourselves, in our own hearts and consciences, by divine teaching and divine testimony, that, set free from bondage, darkness, ignorance and error, liberated into the blessed enjoyment of the love and mercy of God, and sanctified by His Spirit and grace, we may walk before Him in the light of His countenance. And as in the Person of the incarnate Son of God "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2. 3), how blessed is it to look up by faith to Him at the right hand of the Father, and to receive out of His fulness those communications of wisdom and grace which not only enlighten us with

the light of the living, but cause us to be partakers of His holiness, and thus make us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

As thus taught and blessed, we desire to approach this solemn subject, and to look with the eyes of an enlightened understanding and of a believing heart at the mystery of an incarnate God. And if Moses at God's command put off his shoes from off his feet when he looked at the burning bush, for the place whereon he stood was holy ground (Exod. 3. 5), much more should we, when we look on the mystery of God made manifest in the flesh, of which the burning bush was but a type, put off the shoes of carnal reason from off our feet.

The sacred humanity of the blessed Lord consists of a perfect human body and a perfect human soul, taken at one and the same instant in the womb of the virgin Mary, under the overshadowing operation and influence of the Holy Ghost. This is very evident from the language of the angel to the virgin: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1. 35).

1. The first thing to be borne in mind is, that it was a *real* and *substantial* human nature, consisting of a real human body and a real human soul, both of which were assumed at one and the same instant in the womb of the virgin. It was necessary that the same nature should be taken which had sinned, or there could have been no redemption or reconciliation of that nature, or of those that wore that nature. Thus the apostle argues, "For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham" (Heb. 2. 16), implying that if fallen angels had to be redeemed and reconciled, the Son of God must have taken angelic nature; but as man had to be redeemed, He assumed human nature. It was not, then, a shadowy form which the Son of God assumed in the womb of the virgin, as He had appeared in human shape before His incarnation to Abraham, Jacob, Gideon, Manoah and his wife, but a real human nature, as real, as substantial as our own.

Thus the Son of God "took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2. 7); "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1. 14); "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8. 3); "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same" (Heb. 2. 14). These Scripture testimonies abundantly show that the Son of God assumed a real human nature, but not a fallen, peccable, mortal nature. He was "*made flesh*," therefore real flesh; "in the *likeness* of sinful flesh," therefore not in the *reality* of sinful flesh. He took flesh of the virgin, or He could not have been the promised seed of the woman, which was to bruise the serpent's head (Gen. 3. 15), or of the seed of

Abraham, to which the promise was especially made (Gal. 3. 16), and from whom the virgin Mary was lineally descended. And this nature He so assumed, or to use a scriptural expression, so took hold of (Heb. 2. 16, *margin*), that it became His own nature as much as His divine nature is His own. It was not assumed, as a garment, to be laid aside after redemption's work was done, but was taken into indissoluble union with His divine Person. Nor did His death on the cross dissolve this union, for though body and soul were parted, and His immortal, incorruptible body lay in the grave, His soul was in paradise, in indissoluble union with His Deity. Thus, as each of us is really and truly man, by human nature being so personally and individually appropriated by us as our own subsistence, that it is as much ours as if there were no other partaker of it on earth but ourselves, so the Son of God, by assuming that nature which is common to all men (therefore called "the flesh and blood of the children"), made it His own as much as ours is our own nature. He is, therefore, really and truly "the *Man* Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2. 5).

2. The next thing to be believed in and held fast is, that this humanity was not a person, but a *nature*. This point may not seem at the first glance of deep and signal importance; but as all God's ways and works are stamped with infinite wisdom, it will be seen, on deeper reflection, that it involves matters of the greatest magnitude – of the richest grace and the highest glory. For look at the consequences which would necessarily follow, were the sacred humanity of our blessed Lord a person and not a nature. Were it a person, the Lord Jesus Christ would be two Persons, one Person as God, and another Person as Man, and thus would be two distinct individuals. But being a nature, which had of itself no distinct individuality, but was assumed at the very instant of its conception into union with His divine Person, the Lord Jesus is still but one Person, though He possesses two distinct natures. The angel, therefore called it "that holy *thing*" – i.e., that holy nature, that holy flesh, that holy substance – a "thing," because it had a real substance, "holy," because not begotten by natural generation, but sanctified in the moment of conception by the Holy Ghost, so as to be intrinsically holy, impeccable, immortal – capable of dying, but not tainted with the seeds of sickness or death. It was not a body like ours, "shapen in iniquity," and conceived in sin (Psa. 51. 5), but was begotten by a divine and supernatural operation of the Holy Ghost, and was therefore "holy," not relatively, and partially, as we, but really, thoroughly and intrinsically holy; "harmless," or as the word might be rendered, "free from all ill"; "undefiled" with any taint of corruption in body or soul, original or actual, in any seed, inclination, desire, feeling or movement of or toward it; "separate from sinners" in its conception and formation, in every thought, word or deed, so that it was as separate from sin, and sin as

separate from it, when on earth as it is now in the presence of God; “and made higher than the heavens,” by the exaltation of that human nature to the throne of glory; higher than the visible heavens, for what is the glory of sun, moon or stars to the glory of the sacred humanity of Christ in the courts of heaven? and higher too than the invisible heavens, for in His human nature as the God-Man, He is exalted “far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come” (Heb. 7. 26; Eph. 1. 20-22).

Among the heresies and errors which pestered the early church was the Nestorian heresy, which asserted that Christ’s human nature was a person, and thus made two persons in the Lord, and the Eutychian, which declared that there was but one nature, the humanity of Christ being absorbed into His divinity. Against both these errors the Athanasian Creed, that sound and admirable compendium and bulwark of divine truth, draws its two-edged sword: “Who, although He be God and Man, yet He is not two, but one Christ; one not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking the Manhood into God; one altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of Person; for as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ.” The Nestorian heresy is cut to pieces by the declaration that “He is not two” (*i.e.* persons), but one Christ; and the Eutychian by the words, “one altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of Person.”

But consider the blessings that are connected with and flow out of this heavenly truth. The glory and beauty of this mystery, it is true, can only be seen and known by faith; for faith, as “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,” alone gives to these divine realities a substantial existence in the believer’s heart. But looking by faith into this heavenly mystery, we may see in the two points we have thus far touched upon, signal beauty and blessedness. The human nature which the blessed Lord assumed into union with His divine Person hungered, thirsted, was weary, wept, sighed, groaned, sweat drops of blood, agonised in the garden and on the cross, was tried, deserted, tempted, buffeted, spit upon, crucified, and, by a voluntary act, died. Had it not been a real human nature, the sufferings and sorrows of the holy soul, the pains and agonies of the sacred body, the obedience rendered, the blood shed, the sacrifice offered, the life laid down, would not have been real, at least not really endured and offered in that very nature which was to be redeemed and reconciled. This is beautifully unfolded by the apostle: “Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the

sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. 2. 17, 18).

But again, were the human nature of our blessed Lord a Person, its acts would have been personally distinct, and the virtue and validity of Deity would not have been stamped upon them. We may thus illustrate the distinction between a nature and a person. Man and wife are mystically by marriage one flesh, but they still remain two distinct persons. Their acts, therefore, as persons, are individually distinct, and each is morally and really responsible for his or her individual actions. But were they so incorporated, like a grafted tree, as to become two natures and only one person, then the acts of the weaker nature, assuming for the moment that the female is the weaker, being the acts of one and the same person, would be stamped with all the strength and power of the stronger. Thus it is with the two natures of our blessed Lord. The human nature, though essentially and intrinsically holy, impeccable, incorruptible and immortal, being the weaker and inferior nature, yet becomes stamped with all the worth, virtue and validity of the divine nature, because though there are two natures, there is but one Person. Thus the grand, vital truth of the two natures yet but one Person of the glorious Immanuel is no mere dry or abstract doctrine, no speculative theory spun out of the brains of ancient fathers and learned theologians, but a blessed revelation of the wisdom and grace of God.

3. But much beauty and heavenly glory are wrapped up *in the way in which that humanity was assumed*. In the forming of this holy humanity we see the three Persons of the blessed Trinity engaged. The Father prepared the body, the Son assumed it, the Holy Ghost formed it. By the preparation of the body, as the act of the Father, we understand not its actual forming or framing in the womb of the virgin, but its eternal designation, its preparation in the council, wisdom and love of the Father. "A body hast Thou prepared Me" (Heb. 10. 5) *margin*, "Thou hast fitted Me," literally, "put together joint by joint." To design, to contrive, to put together in His own eternal mind, not merely the framework of the Lord's body and the constitution of His soul, but so to prepare it that, conceived in the womb of the sinful virgin, it should not partake of her sin, of her fall, of her sickness, of her corruptibility – this was a greater wonder to appear in heaven than what holy John saw in vision (Rev. 12. 1).

This body, thus prepared, the eternal Son of God assumed. By its assumption by the Son we understand not a creating act, as if the Son of God Himself created the body to be assumed, but that ineffable act of condescension and grace whereby He took at one and the same instant of its formation, that sacred humanity, consisting of a perfect human body and a perfect human soul, into union with His divine Person. We say "at one and the same instant," for we reject with abhorrence that vain

figment, that idle tale, that pestilential and dangerous error of the pre-existence of the human soul of the Lord Jesus. He was made in *all things* like unto His brethren, sin only excepted (Heb. 2. 17; 4. 15), and unless it can be proved that our soul was created before our body, and pre-existed ages before it, it cannot be shown that the human soul of the Lord Jesus had any such pre-existence.

This human nature, prepared by God the Father, and assumed by God the Son, God the Holy Ghost formed. By the forming of that sacred humanity by the Holy Ghost, we understand that act of miraculous power whereby He overshadowed the virgin by His operations and influence, and created, of her flesh, a holy human nature, which He sanctified and filled with grace in the very instant of its conception.

4. But this leads us onward to a fourth point, not less full of truth and blessedness. And we may put it in the form of a solemn question. How was it possible that in a nature so prepared, so assumed, and created, there could be *any taint of sin, corruption, disease or mortality*? The Father contemplated that human nature which He had prepared for His dear Son from all eternity with ineffable complacency and delight. Could He who made man in His original creation so pure and innocent, creating him in His own image, after His own likeness, have prepared for His own Son, His only-begotten, eternal Son, a body fallen, tainted and corruptible, or even capable of corruption and decay? Could the Son, who is the brightness of His Father's glory, and the express image of His Person, assume into union with His eternal Godhead any other but a pure, holy, immortal and incorruptible nature? It was not a body to decay with sickness and die of disease, and then be thrust away out of sight as the food of corruption, but taken into intimate union with Deity itself, as its immortal and incorruptible companion. Could the Holy Ghost form anything but a holy nature for the Son of God to assume into a union so close, intimate and indissoluble?

But it may not be unprofitable to examine these points of divine truth a little more closely.

i. And first, as to the intrinsic *holiness and purity* of the Lord's human nature. It was essentially a nature impeccable, that is, not only not tainted with sin, but absolutely incapable of being so tainted. As we read of its being "impossible for God to lie" (Heb. 6. 18), so we may say of the sacred humanity of the blessed Lord, it was impossible it could sin. The testimonies in the Word of truth are most full and clear to the impeccability of the human nature of the blessed Lord. "He hath made Him to be sin for us, *who knew no sin*" (2 Cor. 5. 21). He knew no sin; that is, in His own Person, in its taint or defilement or in any approach thereunto. "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me" (John 14. 30). Satan, the prince of this world, came to tempt and to

assail Him; but he had nothing in Him, as he has in us; that is, no internal material on which to work. If we may use such a figure, he had no ground within the walls on which to plant his infernal artillery. He might assault the blessed Lord from without, for "in all points" He was "tempted like as we are, yet without sin," which had neither birth nor being, root nor stem, nor the possibility of any, in the sacred humanity of the adorable Redeemer.

The late Dr. Cole, in a work published many years ago,* has exposed, in the most clear and forcible manner, the awful blasphemies of the once popular Edward Irving** on this point. Well may we call them "awful blasphemies," for Dr. Cole declares that he heard with his own ears this poor, miserable, ranting orator, for he called his own sermons "orations," term the holy humanity of the blessed Lord, "that sinful substance." The sacred beauty, the ineffable blessedness of that holy humanity mainly consisted in the Lord's being "a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1. 19), as was typified by the paschal lamb, (Exod. 12. 5), and indeed by every other ceremonial sacrifice (Lev. 22. 19-24; Deut. 15. 21). We must never lose sight of the peculiar nature of the blessed Lord's humanity. The nature of Adam was peccable, that is, capable of sinning, because, though created pure, it was not generated by any supernatural operation of the Holy Ghost. It was a pure created nature, but not a holy begotten nature. The two things are essentially distinct. Besides which, the humanity of Adam was a person, and therefore could fall; but the humanity of Jesus is a nature taken into union with His divine Person, and therefore could no more sin or fall away from Godhead than His Godhead could sin or fall off from His Manhood.

ii. It was therefore *incorruptible*. The body of the blessed Redeemer lay three days and nights, according to the Jewish mode of calculation, in the sepulchre, but it knew no corruption. As the apostle expressly declares, "He, whom God raised again, saw no corruption" (Acts 13. 37). The sacred humanity of the Lord Jesus had no seeds in it of decay. Though a real body, like our own, though it ate and drank and slept as we do, not being under the original curse, nor involved in the Adam fall, it was not subject to sickness or corruption, as our body is. The voluntary death of the blessed Lord severed for a while body and soul; but the body was no more tainted with corruption in the sepulchre than the soul was tainted with sin in paradise.

* *The True Signification of the English Adjective, "Mortal," and the Awfully Erroneous Consequences of the Application of that Term to the Ever Immortal Body of Jesus Christ, briefly considered.* By Henry Cole, London.

** 1792-1834. An exceedingly-popular London preacher, who adopted strange and erroneous views.

iii. This sacred humanity of the adorable Lord was therefore essentially *immortal*. The body of the Lord was capable of death; indeed, as dying was the main part of every sacrifice, it was taken that it might die. It did not die from inherent necessity, as our bodies die, which are essentially mortal, because involved in Adam's transgression; but it died by a voluntary act. This is most plain from the Lord's own words: "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father" (John 10. 17, 18). It was not the pain of the cross, the nails driven through the hands and feet, the exhaustion of nature or the agony of soul that killed, so to speak, the Lord Jesus. When He had finished the work which His Father gave Him to do, so that He could say, "It is finished," "He bowed His head" – the head did not decline of itself, weighed down by death, but He Himself, full of life and immortality, bowed it; and then, by a voluntary act, "gave up the ghost," or breathed out His life.

We conclude with an extract from Dr. Cole's book:

"The awful and inevitable consequences of applying this term 'mortal' to the body of Christ.

"If the body of Christ was 'mortal' in the unalterable meaning of that term, His death, as we have already hinted, was not *voluntary* but of necessity. He did not die of His own free will, but died, because, being a personal sinner (tremble my soul at the thought!), He could not save Himself from death! He had no power to 'lay down' His life, but was compelled to yield it up, because He had forfeited it by His own sins! He did not 'give His life a ransom for many,' but the just judgments of God took it from Him for His own transgressions: 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die' (Ezek. 18. 4).

"But is this the truth as it is in Jesus Christ? Is this the doctrine concerning the adorable Person of the Son of God that is revealed in the Word? Is this the instruction which the Holy and Blessed Spirit seals upon the heart of the redeemed? No, no! The Scriptures declare, and those that have been brought to experience the benefits of the death of Christ know and believe, that His death was not of *necessity*, but a *free and voluntary gift*. How plainly does He declare, and how expressively describe this Himself: 'I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.' 'I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.' (John 10. 11, 17, 18). His sacrifice is everywhere called 'a sacrifice of Himself, a voluntary gift.' 'He offered up Himself' (Heb. 7. 27). 'By the sacrifice of Himself' (Heb. 9. 26). 'Who gave Himself a ransom' (1 Tim. 2. 6).

And so universally. But all these scriptures are flatly contradicted, all this cloud of testimonies is utterly nullified, if the body of Christ was ‘mortal.’”

(To be continued)

BOOK REVIEW

With Mercy and with Judgement – Strict Baptists and the First World War, by Matthew J. Hyde; paperback; 552 pages; price £13.00 plus £2.85 postage; published by Gospel Standard Trust Publications, and available from the Harpenden book room and agents, and from Christian bookshops.

The centenary of the First World War has seen the publication of many books about the conflict, but this book is unique. Many have written of their experiences in the war, but this book describes, not only the painful and bitter woes our soldiers knew, but the inward conflicts of soul of some of those who God took in hand to mould them for His glory. Some most blessedly proved God’s mercy in their gracious communion with Him in the most hostile of conditions. Others bore testimony that their hearts remained hardened and unmoved under the most harrowing circumstances, till God in mercy softened them and drew them to His feet. Some were killed in the conflict having been made willing to leave everything in this vain world; others were given the assurance, often deeply tried, that they would be brought through.

The book commences with an overview of the war and its effect among Strict Baptists and their families, with many personal testimonies to life in the Army, the Navy and the relatively new Air Force. Then the changes at home and on the churches are considered, and how the war affected some who were ministers, and others who carried the burden of the ministry whilst serving overseas. The second section of the book is given over to diaries and records of men who served in the war. Some of these are mostly historical and often very moving; others relate the mingling of spiritual exercises in the midst of terrible dangers. The third section gives series of letters written, mostly by those on active services, but some from home. The last section gives a selection of poetry written during the war, some by soldiers, some by those at home. The book is copiously illustrated by photographs of the people and places mentioned and at the end of the overview are pages of maps giving details of the progression of the war in France and Belgium particularly, and where cemeteries and memorials can be found today.

There are several reasons why this book will remain a treasured possession to many. Firstly, there are many alive today whose forbears suffered in the war and who will value the book for its personal records. Secondly, it gives graphic personal testimony to the conditions and happenings in the war and will be valued for its historical accounts. Lastly, the exercises and heart-breathings of the godly will find an echo with the few who today still know the inward war between the flesh and spirit and who long to

“...taste the peace Thy blood imparts,
And feel the Saviour in their hearts.”

We highly recommend this book. And if some were to examine the book for the first or second of these reasons, and it was used so that they became no strangers to the last reason, we are sure the author will be amply satisfied.

John A. Kingham, Luton

MATCHLESS GRACE

“He hath made Him to be sin for us” (2 Cor. 5. 21)

Behold a scene of matchless grace,
 ’Tis Jesus in the sinner’s place;
 Heaven’s brightest Glory sunk in shame,
 That rebels might adore His name.

Tremendous clouds of wrath and dread,
 In vengeance burst upon His head;
 Ten thousand horrors seize His soul,
 And vengeful mountains on Him roll.

He sighed; He groaned; He sweat; He cried;
 Through awful floods He passed and died;
 All penal wrath to Zion due,
 Infinite justice on Him threw.

He rose in triumph from the dead;
 Justice declared the debt was paid;
 Then Christ with kingly grandeur flew,
 And took His throne in glory too.

Come, saints, with solemn pleasure trace
 The boundless treasures of His grace;
 He bore almighty wrath for you,
 That you might all His glory view.

William Gadsby (1773-1844)

NOTICE OF DEATH

Raymond Thomas Holman, a deacon at Providence Chapel, Staplehurst, passed away on Friday, September 16th, 2016, aged 87 years.

MINISTERS’ PRAYER MEETING

Once again a meeting of our ministers for prayer has been arranged, subject to the Lord’s will, for Friday, November 4th. This will be at Clifton chapel at 11 o’clock. All ministers who are members of our churches are warmly invited. Please let Mr. Christian know if you hope to come. Refreshments will be served as usual.

THE
GOSPEL STANDARD
NOVEMBER 2016

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

HELP LAID UPON THE MIGHTY AND EXALTED SAVIOUR

“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).

This prophecy by Ethan the Ezrahite has been both abundantly and wonderfully fulfilled. In the mighty and exalted Saviour is every help, and everlasting help, for poor sinners.

It is God Himself who has laid help for sinners upon Christ. This then is help from a finished salvation. It is help from One who can do everything, as Job confessed: “I know that Thou canst do every thing” (Job 42. 2). This help comes from the risen and ascended Saviour. After resurrection and before ascension Jesus said, “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth” (Matt. 28. 18). The help of the Lord Jesus is divine help, the true help of “the mighty God of Jacob.” As we read in Revelation 1. 8, Jesus is “the Almighty.” All the help that God has laid on Christ is for poor and needy sinners.

The blessed Lord Jesus is the only One who can truly help us in all our sorrow, sin, weakness and dying condition. His help is the help of an “everlasting salvation” (Isa. 45. 17). What daily help and upholding we each need. What a saving from our sins and ourselves we need day by day. We are in constant danger, for there are so many pitfalls and snares in this world to catch our unwary feet. The gracious and faithful hand of help is so much needed to save us, that we might endure unto the end.

Is there not some sacred sense of union among our readers, in our need of Christ to do everything? I believe there is among the dear people of God. What help we need still to trust and believe when we are so tried and tossed about in the tempests of this lost world. How we are brought to cry out for help in so many matters. There are many spiritual temptations and conflicts in the soul which pilgrims have to endure. What help we need to resist Satan, and to hold fast and continue, and truly to trust in, and look to the Lord Jesus at the right hand of God. Do we not need the arms of our hands to be “made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob,” as Joseph’s were (Gen. 49. 24)? We certainly do! Also when the Lord hides His lovely face, and when our faith is tried, and the hand of the Lord appears to have gone out against us; what help

is needed to “fight the good fight of faith,” and still wait patiently for God.

We have such a great need of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to be ministered continually. What grace is needed when under contest, contention and strife, to walk humbly and quietly, and wait for the Lord to appear. What help we need to be saved from our own spirit at such times. The Scriptures are plain: “Only by pride cometh contention” (Prov. 13. 10). Also when we meet with matters in Zion which we feel are wrong, and we cannot agree with, we need much grace to make a gracious stand, and quietly and humbly to point out the truth. We need much grace also to pray for those who are ensnared in evil doctrine or practice, that grace may be given to repent and confess, and to return to the true life of faith. We are also told to “love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be children of your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 5. 44, 45).

What grace and help is also needed to commit our way and to trust to the wisdom and love of God to do those things that are in His heart and are best for us. What gracious help we need truly to say, “Thy will be done,” especially when we are in deep waters of trouble and distress. What grace and help we truly need to be ministered, that we may wrestle with God in all the distressing scenes that we meet with. How Jacob wrestled with the man that appeared, and what seemingly extra help we need when we are faced with great woe, and death upon the road ahead.

May the Lord help us truly to believe in the fulness of the grace that is with Him. There are so many cares and worries with families, in churches, in the business, personal afflictions and trials, but worst of all we have such a dreadful sinnership in all these things.

David says in Psalm 121, “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.” The apostles prayed to the Lord, “Increase our faith” (Luke 17. 5). We read in James 4. 6, “But He giveth more grace.” So we have much encouragement from the Word of God to wrestle for all the help and grace that we so much need. The Lord said to Abraham and Sarah, “Is any thing too hard for the LORD?” (Gen. 18. 14).

May the Lord Jesus give us each His gracious help and more precious faith to believe in Him, and to “pray without ceasing” and trust in Him alone in all our matters in this changing and sin-cursed world. To look alone to the only “One that is mighty,” and as we read in Isaiah 63, “Mighty to save.” The psalmist declares in some of the Psalms, “The LORD reigneth.” We also read in Revelation, “Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth” (chapter 19. 6). Our only help, hope and salvation is in the ascended Saviour. Might, power and dominion are with Him. Love, mercy, truth and grace are with Him. The Lord Jesus cannot lie.

There is every encouragement in the Word of God to those that believe that He is the Christ, and that He is “faithful that promised.” Every help, support and consolation is with Him, who is more full of grace than we of sin. In all the sorrows, sicknesses and tremblings of His travelling pilgrims, it is true in every case, “and underneath are the everlasting arms” (Deut. 33. 27).

What a mercy it is that Emmanuel seated at the right hand of God fully knows and understands our case. He is “almighty,” one who “delighteth in mercy,” and is “love,” “for God is love.” What a mighty Saviour poor sinners are invited to go to with all their woes, sins and sorrows. Jesus said, “And him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6. 37). David says, “God is mine Helper” (Psa. 54. 4), and Paul says, “The Lord is my Helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me” (Heb. 13. 6).

“I have exalted One chosen out of the people”; we must leave this to our next number, if the Lord is pleased to help us.

(To be concluded)

CHRIST HONOURS THOSE THAT WAIT ON HIM

*Sermon preached by James Kidwell Popham at Galeed Chapel,
Brighton, on Wednesday, July 18th, 1934*

Text: “Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof: so he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured” (Prov. 27. 18).

“Whoso keepeth the fig tree” – not merely the owner, but the man who watches it, prunes it, takes care of it. If there be signs of decay or disease, he looks after it. It is his business; it is his anxious care, for on that depends, if not entirely, yet much of his sustenance. “Whoso keepeth the fig tree” in this sense “shall eat the fruit thereof.” It shall be his delight, his nourishment, his wealth; and the inference, the teaching drawn from this beautiful word is this: “So he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured.” Not the sluggard, who, lying on his bed of idleness, thinks it too much to take his hand from his bosom and convey food to his mouth, who lazily says, A little more sleep and a little more slumber, and so his poverty comes like an armed man, as one that travelleth. (See Prov. 6. 6-11.)

“He that waiteth on his master.” First, a word on the master. Christ instructs people not to call any man master, for He alone is Master of His house.* “He that built all things is God,” and this divine Son and Master

* This does not refer to the secular world. In the church of God we should not call men Rabbi, Pope, Father or Reverend. Pastor or gospel minister are scriptural terms. They serve and feed the flock of Christ. Ed.

takes care of His house, and will have His household watched. He is the divine Master, and the house and everything connected with it He is the Author of. It is a great thing to have a little faith that makes Christ real. We do well to examine ourselves on this point, whether God has ever made Himself real to us – not an idea, not something we imagine, nor yet the religion that is attainable by considering the works of creation. What may be known of God therein is before every man's eye, and the man who does not see God in those works is wilfully blind, and unutterably guilty of infidelity. The evolutionist will one day know whom he cast out of his reckoning. A man with a natural religion believes that there is a God, a directing mind and powerful hand in the work of creation, but though this Master of the whole world be thus known by some, there is yet a sense in which He is known far differently and above this natural knowledge. Washing the disciples' feet, He said, If I your Master have done this, take a lesson from it. (See John 13. 13-17.)

He is the divine Master of His people. The house is built by Him; the laws of the house emanate from Him. The house is built on the top of the mountains, and nations of poor, guilty sinners flow to Him, and they say, "Let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths" (Isa. 2. 3). This divine Master has given in His house doctrine, invitation, promise and precept, all of which we are to observe. No man – no Christian man – is to be a law to himself. There is a great and glorious Master in heaven who rules with love, who reigns in mercy, who watches over His people in a special way. Even in providence, all things are in His hand. Well, it is wonderful to see by faith this Master! It was said by Philip of old, "We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth" (John 1. 45). Well, if we can say that, really we are very highly-favoured people. Erskine asks,

"Dost mind the place, the spot of land,
Where Jesus did thee meet?"

Do you remember a room, a lane, a hedge behind which you were, the counter at which you were sitting, the bed on which you were lying, the table at which you were with your family, when Jesus Christ came, when you saw Him, when you worshipped Him and loved Him? And if the question had been asked concerning Him, "Whom do men say that He, the Son of Man, is?" you would have said, He is the Christ promised by God in Genesis, prophesied by Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms, Jesus the Son of God. You would say, I cannot explain it, but there did come a light, a living light, into my heart, and I saw what I never can express; I saw the Son of God. He became Lord in my heart; He became Master over my spirit and my circumstances. I cast my never-dying soul into His gracious arms. I fell at the foot of the cross. I found Him to be more precious to me than "fine gold," even "the golden wedge of Ophir."

Things to me were, in my measure, what all things were to Paul, in his greater measure: loss, dung, dross, that I may win Him. And this is the Master, Jesus; the Master, kind, tender, compassionate, wisdom itself, understanding itself, ruling in heaven and earth, angels, authorities and powers being made subject to Him. And I, a vile sinner, have been, by the gospel, made subject to Him.

And so some of you have learned that scripture experimentally, even if you have never thought about it in connection with this, your experience: "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10. 4, 5).

Was it not so just then? You had not a thought of helping in your salvation. You had not a thought against Him as far as you could then feel and discover. He was to you "the Chiefest among ten thousand" and the "altogether lovely" (Song 5. 10, 16). O the peace, the happiness brought by Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, the Lord of Life! And this is the Master. May the Holy Spirit reveal Him and glorify Him in this congregation so that we, in our hearts, may "weep to the praise of the mercy" we have found, and bow before Him and give Him our hearts, according to His gracious invitation, "My son, give Me thine heart" (Prov. 23. 26).

"Waiteth," or, as the word may be, watcheth, observeth. He that thus "waiteth on his Master shall be honoured." Well, do you watch for Him? "Blessed is the man that heareth Me, watching daily at My gates" (Prov. 8. 34), where My counsels are, where I am wisdom in the judgment and heart and affection of My people that watch for Me when I come to these gates and communicate to those who are sitting there.

It is written in the Psalms, "They have seen Thy goings, O God; even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary" (Psa. 68. 24). Take an example of this: Asaph, foolish, a reasoner, gathering before his mental eye the differences in God's providence, in dealing out trouble to His favourites and comforts to His enemies, and gathering all these circumstances – he said, I cannot understand them. I am perplexed. And so he remained and would have remained till his dying moment, had not God taken hold of him and conducted him into the sanctuary of God. There He dwelleth "between the cherubims" (Psa. 80. 1); there He sits in mercy; there, and from thence, He communicates goodness. He took Asaph into this sanctuary, and there Asaph got lessons, got instruction sealed on his heart. Ah, he saw himself as a beast. You will never know yourself so well as when you are near the Lord Jesus. Your life is never so vile in your own eyes as when you are near Him. You never hate yourself and your sins so much as when you are at the foot of the cross.

Asaph got that teaching. O, he said, "I was as a beast before Thee" (Psa. 73. 22). I have reasoned, I have reckoned, and I have become confused and have not known where I have been. Now I know; I know I am a fool. I know I have been as a beast without understanding. Now I know also that "I am continually with Thee" (Psa. 73. 23). Thou, in my wandering moments, and in my foolish reasonings, Thou hast been pleased to hold me up, and, while the wicked are set in slippery places, my feet have been kept. I am no better than the worst, but Thou hast dealt more kindly with me than with others.

Wait on this Master; watch His going in two places. Wait on Him in two places. First, in your own hearts. You have got enemies, sins innumerable and powerful. You have had a victory here and a victory there by grace. You now have to go to Him again with some enemies. Lord, shall I go up? Wilt Thou help me? He says, Do not go up. Go to the mulberry trees, and when thou hearest a sound thereof then move. Do you ever hear the motions of the Holy Ghost in your hearts? Does He sometimes, as it were, say with some distinctness of motion, Pray? Does He sometimes move you to cast your soul by precious faith into His hands, believing, feeling, "My times are in Thy hand" (Psa. 31. 15)? The blessed motions of the Spirit of Christ upon the soul – you watch them!

Sometimes you may find a very solemn rebuke for your unbelief. Ah, I can never say what that word has been in my heart: "How long will it be ere they believe Me?" (Num. 14. 11). I have brought you out of Egypt; I have brought you into the wilderness; I have allured you there. I have fed you; I have given you water to drink from the rock; I have given you the shoes of "the preparation of the gospel of peace" (Eph. 6. 15). I have given you to believe there is "a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God" (Heb. 11. 10), and now you are fretting because things are not easy! Was ever a pilgrim told that his way should be easy? Did ever a soldier hear his captain say, You are not to see an enemy? No. Then watch the motions of the Spirit of Christ in your hearts.

Ah, when you are feeling weakness itself, the Spirit's motion may be, "Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength" (Isa. 26. 4). When you are foolish and know not which way to take, the Spirit may say "This is the way" (Isa. 30. 21). Jesus Christ is the way; "so walk ye in Him" (Col. 2. 6). When your enmity rises, the Spirit's motion may say, God gave His Son out of love, and the Son out of love came, and the Spirit out of love has made Him known to you. Now you should love Him, give Him your heart, give Him your confidence, give Him all your trust. Watch for this blessed moving of the Spirit of God, and when you find that, follow it.

The second place that I would name is providence. Children are very foolish, and a wise Father has a rod for them. They should watch

that. Unbelief, as soon as trouble comes, says, This is against you. This is a sign of God's anger. This may lead you to destruction. And you are afraid. Who would not be afraid, when giving credence to unbelief? He looks at every stroke and that rod that inflicts it as if it must be necessarily a sign of God's anger. See now if the affliction and some scriptures fit in one with the other, and watch the Master in His handiwork. Watch Him as He moves His gracious lips, into which grace was poured, and watch this word and see if it fits in with your trouble. My son. What is that? My son, whom I love, I chasten. Every son I receive, I correct. O poor, tried child of God, think of it! "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (Heb. 12. 6). Ah, you say, if you knew my trouble you might think as I think about it. I should, if I were in that case and were under the power of unbelief. I have suffered from unbelief, and am often still suffering. I know what it is, but O, when the Spirit comes and moves and turns your eye, your faith, to the Lord, to His faithful love, to His kindness in not letting you destroy yourself, then you say, Here is my heart; here is my poor confidence; Lord, take me, manage me; I am unmanageable to myself. Manage my matters, and do not let me attempt to manage them myself.

Whoso waiteth on this Master in respect of His providence, in respect of the trials that come, in respect of the perplexities that arise out of circumstances, waiteth upon Him, waiteth till He shall speak, till He shall work, till He shall open a door that no man can shut. Observe His ways here. You will find, as you observe God's providence, you will never lack a providence to observe. So it has been well said.

Now what is said of this watcher, waiter? He "shall be honoured." What is it for God to honour the wretch who only waits occasionally, and yet in the principle of faith is always watching? What is the honour? First of all, it is an inward honour, and I would say it is a smile on the soul. There is a sinner confessing his sins and saying, Lord, I am not fit to live, and my own self is so black to myself. I loathe myself and I loathe my life, the life of my heart, unseen by men. And while the sinner is thus engaged in loathing himself and confessing his sins, suddenly – say suddenly, for it is so at times – there falls upon his afflicted spirit what I call a smile. It changes the scene at once. It does not make sin less loathsome, but it does give the sinner a realisation, in a measure at least, of what it is to be washed.

And the word of this divine Master is instructive and beautiful in the gospel of John. After Peter had made a strong objection to Christ washing his feet, Christ said, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." O, said Peter – Christ overcame him by that – wash "not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." Now Christ said, "He that is washed" – in the washing of regeneration – "needeth not save to wash his

feet” (John 13. 8-10). If you have been washed by that blessed washing of regeneration, all you need in future is to have your feet washed – your walk corrected, your backslidings healed; your misgivings and misjudging of God – these to be taken away. This, I apprehend, is having your feet washed.

Jesus comes, and that is an honour. O the honour of being smiled on, the honour of having another cleansing, our backslidings healed. Who can express it? He “shall be honoured.” You never will pray one real, Spirit-given prayer and go into eternity without an answer. The bulk of prayer may have no answer, and that may be a great blessing. O if God answered all our petitions, what would become of us? But when the Spirit breathes a prayer that brings groaning into your heart, groaning that you cannot utter, groaning that reaches heaven, enters into the ear of the Lord God of Sabaoth, that prayer, as I think William Gadsby says – that prayer is surely heard.

“And prayer indited by the Lord,
The Lord will surely hear,”

and that is an honour. It is an honour when the conscience, being again defiled, is cleansed; when again it pleases God to take away the bar that guilt made and set up between His divine majesty and your soul. Look for that. One said, “O LORD, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great” (Psa. 25. 11). Ah, the forgiveness of sins is a wonderful blessing. It is an honour when it pleases the Lord Jesus to say to you, “Be it unto thee even as thou wilt” (Matt. 15. 28). You have asked My guidance. “I will guide thee with Mine eye” (Psa. 32. 8), and I will afterward receive you to glory. And you will say, with Him who is your Master, who said, “I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel” (Psa. 16. 7).^{*} And what is the counsel that Christ has given you? Trust Me, He said. Trust Me; leave your soul and your body and your family, and your troubles; leave them all with Me. On My shoulder is the government. We are fools, my friends. We do not know how to manage matters. But when the Lord honours a child, a praying child of His, with counsel, then there is an honour. “Trust ye in the LORD for ever:” is His counsel, “for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.”

He “shall be honoured.” Men may despise him; a man may have trouble in his family because of his religion. But when in his room alone with God he gets a guiding word, a counsel spoken on his heart, then he has got an honour the world knows nothing about. He may meet with Richard Dore’s life and experience, when he comes to that part of it where Richard Dore walked at 6 o’clock in the morning to his work in London. Suddenly is the Lord with him, and he stopped and said, “There is a Man in heaven who loves me and whom I love.” What an honour!

^{*} Prophetic of Christ. Ed.

O think of it! “A Man whom I love” – you will never see Him without loving Him – “and who loves me!” He had been touched, Richard Dore, and the good man did not know it; and now the time has come when he knows it, and he said, “He loves me and I love Him.” That was an honour.*

Another honour is this, that the Holy Ghost is given. “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” (Luke 11. 13). Do you ask for this blessing? You will never get on well without Him. Your souls will never be healthy without Him. You will never realise union to Christ without the Spirit. You will never walk in wisdom’s ways without the Spirit. Turn aside, hungry soul; turn aside, O sinner panting for the Spirit, and ask this great blessing, the gift of the Holy Ghost. You have got a bad temper; He can subdue it. You have got a hasty spirit, and often speak bitter words in great haste to your great shame; He can manage you. You have got an unbelieving heart and do not know how to live sometimes; He can subdue that iniquity. Everything concerning the soul, everything concerning its interest in this life and in the life to come, the Holy Spirit gives. He rules, He teaches, He controls, He manages.

I wish we here, as a poor little congregation of sinners, might know more of this divine Spirit dwelling in us. “Know ye not,” said Paul to the Corinthian church, “that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost ... and ye are not your own” (1 Cor. 6. 19). May the Holy Ghost be with us, and what a mercy it will be if He would come to some who are dead in trespasses and sins and quicken them! O if I might yet have some sons and daughters more than I have, in that respect; that God would quicken some of you and also grant seals to the ministry!

As the man, the keeper, the owner of the fig tree eats the fruit of it, enjoys the fruit of his labour, and says, I did not labour in vain on those frosty days; I did not labour in vain, when the rain was heavy and I got wet through; now I have got the fruit; so a sinner may say, I was not allowed to faint in the day of adversity, and when the winter was on me I was enabled to labour before God. When the rain was heavy, still God helped me to go on, and I have got an answer, an answer in my conscience, an answer in my circumstances, an answer in my heart, and God is good. He is good. This is the testimony of one who has been enabled to watch. Watch. “Watch and be sober” (1 Thess. 5. 6). The word of Christ is, “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation” (Matt. 26. 41).

We have not come to one spot. We must come to a dying bed. Do you ever pray about it? I think I can say honestly now, no day passes over my head when I am not concerned about my end. It is very near to

* Richard Dore (1761-1849) was one of William Huntington’s hearers. Ed.

me, as of course you know. It must be. What about that? Philpot somewhere says, "If you wish for thorns in your dying pillow, live carelessly." I have often feared that I have prepared thorns for my dying pillow. I have walked very foolishly. But there is One who can make it soft as downy pillows are, One who can take every accusation from the conscience, and every thorn, richly deserved, from the pillow. Watch for this; pray for this. If we consider our latter end, it is well. "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Psa. 90. 12). What is that? Watching at Christ's door, waiting at His gates. Applying your heart to wisdom is praying, waiting on God, looking to Christ, hanging about Him, hungering after Him, and entreating the Holy Ghost to reveal Him in you. And what will the honour be? In my late illness I was favoured for some days. The Lord was with me, and I could only say, "Do take me home that I may never sin again." But I am here. O but I did want a good death bed! It will not make any real difference to a saint whether he dies in the dark or in the light. But when he considers matters, O, he says, Lord, do not let me die in the dark. We must needs die. May we die in the Lord. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Rev. 14. 13).

What next? Well, they shall be honoured with an abundant entrance into the kingdom of God. May that be in store for us. May you who may not be concerned about your souls be brought into a real concern by the washing of regeneration. May those of us who are born again have power given to us to wait on this divine Person, this heavenly Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, that we may yet receive the blessed word. They shall be honoured. Amen.

TRIED FAITH WAITING FOR LIGHT

50 Grasmere,
Trowbridge,
Wiltshire.

September 24th, 1997

Dear Mrs. F—,

Your present experience is not uncommon among the *living* family of God. Isaiah 50.10 describes it exactly. J.C. Philpot preached a sermon entitled, "The Heir of Heaven Walking in Darkness, and the Heir of Hell Walking in Light." It is all described in Isaiah 50. 10, 11.

You know exactly what you want, and this is because you have already tasted it. Satan cannot touch what the Lord has done already though it be clouded over from your eyes. The hymnwriter knew your path when he wrote,

“Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?”

Job came into the ditch and walked in darkness, yet his God never *actually* left him, though at times he felt naked and deserted.

What do you think it feels like to have to continue preaching when, as I have done much lately, I have felt like yourself and mourned an absent God, and felt little real access in prayer? I have dreaded sometimes of a Sunday morning going into the pulpit, yet I *must* say the Lord has never left me to confusion.

The result, in all the emptiness of it, has been to make me *really* lean hard upon the Lord in the pulpit and He never fills better a poor, earthen vessel that is *really* empty.

The way to heaven *must* be an ever-deeper knowledge of our sinful heart and an ever-increasing desire for Him. One day flesh and heart will fail. O then to be leaning solely upon Him!

When the Lord finished the trial of Job, Job could say, “I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42. 5, 6).

The Lord sustain you beneath the cloud and enable you to cling to His promise: “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” I have *never* stood up to preach in the last twenty-eight years without resting on it.

Yes! I have indeed known long periods of the Lord’s absence and have walked for several years now longing for His powerful presence again in all its sweetness and comfort.

May you stay upon your God.

Yours very sincerely,

J.R. Broome

THE HOLY GHOST COMING TO US FROM THE FATHER AND THE SON

An extract from George Smeaton, Edinburgh (1814-1889)

The Biblical foundation of the doctrine that the Spirit is *from the Son* as well as from the Father is explicit. Thus it is said: “He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you” (John 16. 14). The import is: *He shall*, in the sphere of divine truth and revelation, *deliver only what I have taught*, and by so doing, *glorify Me* as a divine Teacher; for it redounds to Christ’s glory that no other doctrine should be taught but that which was derived from Him. Christ had declared of His own doctrine that it was not His, but the Father’s who sent Him, and that He taught nothing but what He had heard of His Father – that is, *the Son received all from His Father in the eternal*

generation (John 15. 15), and the Spirit receives all by procession from the Son in the same way as the Spirit of the Son.

The same thing is elsewhere set forth as follows: “*For He shall not speak of Himself*” – from Himself – “but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak” (John 16. 13). As the Son said regarding Himself: “What I hear, I speak,” referring to His ineffable immanence [unutterable pervading permanence] in the Father, so the declaration that the Spirit should *not speak from Himself*, implies that He spoke nothing but what the Father and Son spoke by Him. There is a certain order, but no isolation of the one Person from the other, and the twice-repeated statement: “He shall receive of Mine” – united as it is with the declaration that the Son has the essence, attributes and perfections that the Father has – enables us to understand what is involved in this procession, viz. that the Holy Ghost receives the same numerical divine essence with the Father and the Son.

Such has been the belief of the church from the first as set forth in all the creeds. It must be accepted *as essential to the perfection of the divine nature* that the Father have a Son, and that there should be a Spirit proceeding from them both. The phrase: “Who proceedeth from the Father,” in the present tense, intimates an immanent, internal, ever-during act according to the unchangeable essence of the Deity.

PERSONAL CONFESSIONS

Extract from John Newton (1725-1807)

“If Thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared” (Psa. 130. 3, 4).

Let us first look at home. I am a man of unclean lips. I am a sinner. This confession suits us all, and is readily made by all who know themselves. A person approaching London from the neighbouring hills usually sees it obscured by a cloud of smoke. This cloud is the aggregate of the smoke, to which every house furnishes its respective quota. It is no unfit emblem of the sin and the misery which abound in this great metropolis.

The Lord said of the Amorites, at a certain period, “The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full” (Gen. 15. 16). I hope the measure of our iniquity is not yet full, but it is filling every day, and we are all daily contributing to fill it. True believers, though by grace delivered from the reigning power of sin, are still sinners. In many things we offend all in thought, word and deed. We are now called upon to humble ourselves

before God, for the sins of our ignorance, and for the more aggravated sins we have committed against light and experience; for those personal sins, the record of which is known only to God and our consciences; for the defects and defilements of our best services; for our great and manifold failures in the discharge of our relative duties, as parents, children, husbands, wives, masters, or servants, and as members of the community.

Our dullness in the ways of God, our alertness in the pursuit of our own will and way; our indifference to what concerns His glory, compared with the quickness of our apprehensions, when our own temporal interests are affected, are so many proofs of our ingratitude and depravity. The sins of the Lord's own people are so many, and so heightened by the consideration of His known goodness, that if He was to enter into judgment with them only, they could offer no other plea than that which He has so mercifully provided for them. "If Thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared" (Psa. 130. 3, 4).

REFLECTIONS ON A FLOWER GARDEN

An extract from Meditations by James Hervey (1714-1756)

What *sweets* are these, which so agreeably salute my nostrils? They are the breath of the flowers, the incense of the garden. How liberally does the jessamine [jasmine] dispense her odoriferous riches [fragrance]! How deliciously has the woodbine [honeysuckle] embalmed this morning walk! The air is all perfumed. And is not this another most engaging argument to forsake the bed of sloth? Who would lie dissolved in senseless slumbers, while so many breathing sweets invite him to a feast of fragrancy? especially considering that the advancing day will exhale the volatile dainties.

There is such a delicacy in the choice, and so much life in the description of these rural images, that I cannot excuse myself without repeating a passage from Milton. Whisper it, some friendly genius, in the ear of everyone who is now sunk in sleep, and lost to all these refined gratifications!

"Awake: the morning shines, and the fresh field
Calls you: ye lose the prime, to mark how spring
The tended plants, how blows the citron grove;
What drops the myrrh, and what the balmy reed;
How nature paints her colours; how the bee
Sits on the bloom extracting liquid sweets."

How delightful is this fragrance! It is distributed in the nicest proportion; neither so strong as to oppress the organs, nor so faint as to elude them. We are soon cloyed at a sumptuous banquet, but this pleasure never loses its poignancy, never palls the appetite. Here luxury itself is innocent. This balmy entertainment not only regales the sense, but cheers the very soul. "Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart" (Prov. 27. 9). And, instead of clogging, it elates its powers. It puts me in mind of that ever-memorable sacrifice which was once made in behalf of offending mortals: I mean the *sacrifice of the blessed Jesus*, when He offered up Himself to God "for a sweet-smelling savour." Such the Holy Spirit styles that wonderful oblation, as if no image in the whole sensible creation was so proper to give us an idea of the ineffable satisfaction which the Father of mercies conceived from that unparalleled atonement, as the pleasing sensations which such rich perfumes are capable of raising. "Thousands of rams," and "ten thousands of rivers of oil," from an apostate world, the most submissive acknowledgments, added to the most costly offerings, from men of defiled hands and unclean lips; what could they have effected? A prophet represents the "High and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity," turning himself away from such filthy rags, turning himself away with a disdainful abhorrence (see Amos 5. 21, 22), as from the noisome steams of a dunghill; but in Christ's immaculate holiness, in Christ's consummate obedience, in Christ's most precious blood-shedding, with what unimaginable complacency does justice rest satisfied, and vengeance acquiesce! All thy *works*, O Thou Surety for ruined sinners! all Thy *sufferings*, O thou slaughtered Lamb of God! as well as "all Thy *garments*," O thou Bridegroom of Thy church! "smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia" (Psa. 45. 8). They are infinitely more pleasing to the eternal Godhead than the choicest exhalations of the garden, than all the odours of the spicy East, can be to the human nostrils.

As the altar of old sanctified the gift, so this is the great propitiation which recommends the obnoxious persons and unprofitable services of the believing world. In *this* may my soul be interested! by *this* may it be reconciled to the Father! There is such a leprous depravity cleaving to my nature, as pollutes whatever I perform. My most profound adorations and sincerest acts of religion must not presume to *challenge* a reward, but humbly *implore* forgiveness. Renouncing therefore myself in every instance of duty, disdaining all shadow of confidence in any deeds of my own, may I now and evermore be accepted through the Beloved!

What colours, what charming colours are here! these so nobly bold, and those so delicately languid! What a glow is enkindled in some, what a gloss shines upon others! In one, methinks, I see the ruby with her

bleeding radiance; in another, the sapphire with her sky-tinctured blue; in all, such an exquisite richness of dyes, as no other set of paintings in the universe can boast. With what a masterly skill is every one of the varying tints disposed! Here they seem to be thrown on with an easy dash of security and freedom; there they are adjusted by the nicest touches of art and accuracy. Those which form the ground are always so judiciously chosen, as to heighten the lustre of the superadded figures, while the verdure of the impalement, or the shadings of the foliage, impart new liveliness to the whole. Indeed, whether they are blended or arranged, softened or contrasted, they are manifestly under the conduct of a taste that never mistakes, a felicity that never falls short of the very perfection of elegance. Fine, inimitably fine, is the *texture* of the web on which these shining treasures are displayed. What are the labours of the Persian looms, or the boasted commodities of Brussels, compared with these curious manufactures of nature? Compared with these, the most admired chintz [cotton cloth with coloured pattern and glazed] lose their reputation; even superfine cambrics [Flemish fine white linen handkerchiefs] appear coarse as canvas in their presence.

What a cheering argument does our Saviour derive from hence, to strengthen our *affiance* [faith] in God! He directs us to learn a lesson of heaven-depending faith from every bird that wings the air, and from every flower that blossoms in the field. If Providence, with unremitted care, supports those inferior creatures, and arrays these insensible beings with so much splendour, surely He will in no wise withhold from His elect children "bread to eat, and raiment to put on" (Gen. 28. 20). Ye faithful followers of the Lamb, dismiss every low anxiety relating to the needful sustenance of life. He that feeds the ravens from an inexhaustible magazine, He that paints the plants with such surpassing elegance, in short, He that provides so liberally both for the animal and vegetable parts of His creation, will not, cannot, neglect His own people. "Fear not, little flock;" ye peculiar objects of Almighty love! "for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12. 32). And, if He freely gives you an everlasting kingdom hereafter, is it possible to suppose that He will deny you any necessary conveniences here?

One cannot forbear reflecting in this place on the too-prevailing humour of being fond and ostentatious of *dress*. What an abject and mistaken ambition is this! How unworthy the dignity of *immortal*, and the wisdom of *rational* beings! especially since these little productions of the earth have indisputably the pre-eminence in such outward embellishments. Go, clothe thyself with purple and fine linen, trick thyself up in all the gay attire which the shuttle or the needle can furnish. Yet know, to the mortification of thy vanity, that the native elegance of

a common daisy eclipses all this elaborate finery. Nay, wert thou decked like some illustrious princess on her coronation day in all the splendour of royal apparel, couldst thou equal even Solomon in the height of his magnificence and glory, yet would the meanest among the flowery populace outshine thee; every discerning eye would give the preference to these beauties of the ground.

Scorn, then, to borrow thy recommendations from a neat disposition of threads and a curious arrangement of colours. Assume a becoming greatness of temper; let thy endowments be of the immortal kind; study to be all-glorious within; be clothed with humility; wear the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. To say all in a word, put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Let His blood be sprinkled upon thy conscience, and it shall be whiter than the virgin snows. Let His righteousness, like a spotless robe, adorn thy inner man, and thou shalt be amiable, even in the most distinguishing eye of God. Let His blessed Spirit dwell in thy heart, and under His sanctifying operations, thou shalt be made partaker of a divine nature.

These are real excellencies; truly noble accomplishments these. In this manner be arrayed, be beautified, and thou wilt not find a rival in the feathers of a peacock, or the foliation of a tulip. These will exalt thee far above the low pretensions of lace and embroidery. These will prepare thee to stand in the beatific presence, and to take thy seat among the angels of light.

A FATHER'S ENCOURAGEMENT TO CONTINUE

A letter by William Sutherland Cooper (1849-1940)

The Chestnuts,
Lakeneath, Suffolk.
Undated

My dear Daughter,

Your note to hand; we are always glad to hear from you. I feel those who are not of the household of faith become a snare, and thus the better part, which is sacred and holy, is not fed, and we are brought in guilty. 'Tis good when we only want companions who are helpful to the soul; but, like your father, you have a carnal nature which often brings you into captivity and wretchedness, and 'tis a good thing it does, or where should we get to? Many only know about outside sins, but where true fear is planted in the heart, there is a spirit which has to do even to the joints and marrow. Yet what a mercy it is that our standing is not always in what we feel. The real standing is in the Lord, and we shall want to know and feel it too.

Our very nature is opposed to the reign of grace, and you will find many foes trip you up. O to be enabled to watch! To be convinced of sin by the Lord is a good thing, but to hate it for love to His dear name's sake is better. If you believe He has heard your cries, and has had mercy upon you, that you have gone to Jesus Christ as God, prayed to Him as such, and believe He has heard your prayer, you need not be afraid to make His ways your choice.

May the Lord help you to follow Him, and keep you humble in His fear, doing the will of God from the heart. The Lord gives "power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength." May you be guided by His Spirit, is the desire and prayer of

Your affectionate

Father and Mother, for Christ's sake

RENDERING THANKFULNESS WITH LOVE

An extract from a discourse on thankfulness

by Thomas Goodwin (1600-1680)

The next thing to be considered are the ends of thankfulness, which must necessarily be added to all this, and they are two:

1. Principally to acknowledge His goodness, and
2. To testify our love.

Though we strive to render to Him the glory of His goodness never so much, never so long, and never so many ways as ample as can be devised, yet if the end be not principally to glorify it and testify our love, it is not thankfulness. If it be with an eye to reward, principally, to hook more in, it is not thankfulness; it is buying and selling rather, for thankfulness still hath relation unto, and must resemble His goodness and bounty, and answer to it. Now that is true bounty which gives, looking for no recompense, or not principally aiming at it. It is bounty doing a kindness freely, not to benefit ourselves, but the party it is done unto, and so God doth. For even the thanks He looks for is for your good (see Deut. 10. 18).

Therefore now, if you have hearts truly thankful, all you do for the glory of His goodness will principally be to glorify that goodness, and this was David's utmost end in that thanksgiving of his: "Now therefore, our God, we thank Thee, and praise Thy glorious name. But who am I, ... that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort?" (1 Chron. 29. 13, 14), praising God that he was able and willing to thank Him and to testify His love. See the holy disposition of this thankful man, when he had earnestly and willingly rendered unto God his thanks, are his next

thoughts, when he had done, what reward will God give me again? No; but he falls a-praising God afresh, that he was able to do what he did, and therefore thus to glorify God and thank Him; this was in itself his utmost end. Therein he rejoiced more than in anything else.

So it is said, "Now have I seen with joy," says he, and Thou that knowest the heart knowest I have done it in uprightness willingly (verse 17). Both are put in, not willingly only. So those that do all for reward may be very willing and forward, but we must be thankful in uprightness also, that is, principally arguing to glorify God's goodness, for therein lies uprightness of heart principally. It lies in our ends, which then are upright, when God is principally aimed at. David thought this the greatest mercy, that he was able to be thankful, though he ran most into debt when he went about to pay it.

I add, and couple with this, his other end also, namely that we ought to do all to testify our love, because love being the spring and root whence true thankfulness springs, therefore his end, that is truly thankful, is to manifest his love; therefore, in Psalm 116 (which is a Psalm made on purpose, and wherein David's heart is exceedingly enlarged with thankfulness for hearing his prayer, that he knows not again what to render Him, verse 12), he begins it thus: "I love the LORD, because He hath heard my voice." He makes profession of his love to God, for all the love He had shown him, as the ground of the ensuing thankfulness, that being the thing that in his thankfulness he would have God especially take notice of, because he that knows what true love is, knows that it desires to be paid in its own coin chiefly; and therefore receiving all from free love, he endeavours to return all again out of free love. "What shall I render unto the LORD for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD. I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all His people."

His obedience therefore comes not from him simply to satisfy a debt of thankfulness he owes (as many men do when they requite kindnesses, who return all but as a debt, only to discharge themselves of a duty and obligation they owe, and so do many men's consciences discharge themselves of duties to God, and are glad they are soon done); but he, as a thankful man, hath a further aim than simply to discharge a debt of it, and to have it taken notice of that such a thing is done, further to declare the willingness that was in his heart, when he did it, that especially he desires to show he hath a design. As he takes notice of God's free love principally to him in all, and thanks Him for it more than for all the things He hath given him, so he desires that God would regard his love in it rather than the performance, and rather desires He should take notice of it than reward him again.

THE SACRED HUMANITY OF THE REDEEMER

CHAPTER 3

THE REDEEMER'S HUMILIATION

By J.C. Philpot (1802-1869)

(Continued from page 331)

In approaching the solemn subject of the sacred humanity of our blessed Lord, as engaged in the work of redemption when here below, we desire to do so under the special teaching and unction of the Holy Ghost, not only that nothing erroneous, inconsistent or unbecoming may escape our pen, and that what we write may be in the strictest harmony with the oracles of God and the experience of His saints, but that life, and power, and savour may attend our reflections to those believing hearts which may desire to walk with us in these fields of heavenly meditation. To guide into all truth, to take of the things of Christ and to show them to His disciples, and thus glorify Jesus, is the especial work of the Holy Ghost (John 16. 13-15). To have this divine teaching is to have "an unction from the Holy One," whereby we "know all things" (1 John 2. 20), and is to be blessed with that anointing which "teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie" (1 John 2. 27).

Prayer and supplication, reverent thoughts and feelings towards the sacred Majesty of heaven, inward prostration of spirit before His throne, submission of mind to the Word of truth, faith in living exercise upon the Person and work of the Son of God, hope anchoring within the veil, and love flowing forth to the adorable Redeemer, will all accompany this heavenly anointing. So unspeakably holy, so great, and so perfect is that true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man; one not made with hands, as the tabernacle in the wilderness, but prepared by God the Father, assumed by God the Son, and sanctified by God the Holy Ghost, that we should as much dread to drop any word derogatory to, or inconsistent with its grace and glory as the high priest under the law would have trembled to carry swine's blood, or the broth of abominable things into the most holy place.

The sacred humanity of His dear Son, as the temple of His Godhead, and as irradiated with the beams of His eternal glory, the eyes of the Father ever contemplate with ineffable complacency and delight. Nor was this tabernacle less glorious in His holy eyes who sees things as they really are, not as they appear to man, even in Jesus' deepest humiliation and shame, when He was "a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people." When dogs compassed Him, when the assembly of the wicked inclosed Him, when they pierced His hands and feet, when He could tell all His bones as they hung stripped on the cross, when His enemies looked and stared upon Him, parted His garments among them, and cast lots upon His vesture (Psa. 22. 6, 16-18), He was as much

delighted in by the Father, and was as glorious in His eyes, as He now is at the right hand of His throne. He ever was from the hour of His incarnation, He ever will be the same Jesus Christ – the same yesterday, when He hung upon the cross, today as He sits at the right hand of God, and for ever in the eternity of His kingdom, power and glory. May we, then, who believe in His name, and cleave to Him with purpose of heart, as beholding “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4. 6), feel such a sacred communion with Him in His suffering humanity that we may be able to say with holy John, in the flowing forth of faith and affection, “And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1. 3).

The foundation of this sacred mystery was laid in the eternal purposes of God, and determined by a covenant ordered in all things and sure. The creation of this lower world, and indeed we may say, of the higher world of bright, angelic beings, was but a first step to the bringing to light of these hidden purposes of Jehovah. When He formed man in His own likeness, it was not merely after His moral image (Eph. 4. 24; Col. 3. 10), but after the likeness of that man who was set up in the mind of God from everlasting, or ever the earth was (Prov. 8. 23). It was utterly impossible that a holy God could create a sinful man. He, therefore, made man upright, but able to fall. During the period of man’s innocence the promises of the covenant of grace, so to speak, slept. They were in the bosom of the covenant, ready to appear, but were not yet needed.

But immediately that man sinned and fell, as soon as Justice, which, as the revelation of the intrinsic holiness of Jehovah, had the first claim to speak, had pronounced sentence on the head of the guilty criminals, mercy, as already laid up in the covenant of grace, stepped in with the first promise which issued from the lips of a sin-pardoning God, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head. Here was the first intimation of the manifestation of the Son of God to destroy the works of the devil. The bruiser of the serpent’s head was to be of the seed of the woman; and the sufferings of the sacred humanity to be assumed of the woman were at the same moment foreshadowed in the declaration that the seed of the serpent should bruise His heel.

As a further development of the sacred mystery of the slaughtered Lamb, the gracious Lord then instituted worship by sacrifice; for it is evident from Abel’s offering “of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof” (Gen. 4. 4) which he doubtless burned on the altar, in strict accordance with the Mosaic ritual afterwards appointed (Num. 18. 17), that the Lord then instituted the rite of sacrifice, and Himself clothed our first parents with the skins of the sacrificed victims as emblematic of the righteousness of the slain Lamb of God, who was thus revealed to their faith.

Let us not think that these solemn transactions in the Garden of Eden were a sudden thought in the mind of God – an expedient then and there for the first time devised to patch up the Fall. The covenant of grace between the three Persons of the sacred Trinity was entered into with a foreview of the Fall; and therefore the blessed Lord is called “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13. 8). It is, indeed, derogatory to the character of Him who declareth “the end from the beginning” (Isa. 46. 10), who “looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven” (Job 28. 24), to think that the Adam fall took Him, so to speak, by surprise, was an unlooked-for, unexpected event, of which there had been no foresight, and for which there had been made no provision. Far from our mind be such low, grovelling thoughts of the great and glorious self-existent I AM. Such views would root up the very foundations of our faith in His omniscience and omnipotence.

If God did not foresee the Fall, an event charged with the eternal destiny of millions, what minor circumstance can He foresee now? If God did not provide a remedy for the Fall as foreseen, where is His wisdom as well as His prescience of the circumstances whereby we are at present surrounded? Such a blind God groping, as it were, for a remedy amidst the ruins of the Fall, which He never foresaw, is worse than a heathen idol. At any rate it is not the God of the Bible – it is not the God whom living souls believe in, worship and adore. They admire with holy reverence His eternal foresight, and bow with submission before His fixed decrees; they adore His sovereignty in the election of the vessels of mercy and the rejection of the vessels of wrath; and when favoured with a sip of His love, bless His holy name for having loved them with an everlasting love from before the foundation of the world. If those foundations of our most holy faith be destroyed, “what can the righteous do?” (Psa. 11. 3).

But blessed be God, His prescience and His providence, His wisdom and His grace, His mercy and His love, are all from everlasting to everlasting, secured by a covenant ordered in all things and sure, fixed by firm decree and ratified by His word and by His oath, “two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie” (Heb. 6. 18). In this everlasting covenant it was appointed that the Son of God, the second Person in the glorious Godhead, should take our nature into union with His own divine Person, that He might offer it as a sacrifice for the sins of His elect people, and thus redeem them from all the consequences of the Fall, and reconcile them unto God.

* * *

We have already shown that this sacred humanity of our adorable Lord was a real human body, and a real human soul, taken at one and the same instant into union with the divine Person of the Son of God, and that it was essentially impeccable and immortal. We have, with God’s

blessing, in pursuance of our sacred theme, and as a further opening up of the truth of "Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh," to show the work accomplished in that sacred humanity whilst here on earth in its state of humiliation and suffering.

The first consideration is, *what He became* by this voluntary act of taking our nature into union with His divine Person. In opening up this part of our subject, we shall tread closely in the footsteps of that portion of holy writ where the Apostle Paul unfolds the sacred mystery of the humiliation of the blessed Lord (Phil. 2. 5-8).

1. He *emptied* Himself of all those outward adjuncts of His glorious Person wherewith He had for ever shone as the eternal Son of the Father in the courts of heaven. We use the word "emptied Himself," as being the literal translation of the word rendered in our version, "made Himself of no reputation," but we do not mean thereby that He deprived Himself of any one of the perfections of the divine nature. Not a single essential attribute of Deity was, or indeed could be, in the least degree diminished by His assumption of our nature, for He could no more cease to be all that God is than He could cease to be God. But He emptied Himself of them before the eyes of men laying aside their outward and visible manifestation. As an earthly king may lay aside for a while his regal state, and yet not cease to be a king, so the Son of God laid aside for a season those bright beams of His glory which would otherwise have shone forth too brightly and gloriously for human eyes to look upon; for no man can see God and live (Exod. 33. 20). Besides which, there was a secret purpose in the mind of God, whose glory it is to conceal a thing as well as to reveal it (Prov. 25. 2), that the glorious Person of His dear Son should be veiled from all eyes but those of faith.

As, then, the sun is sometimes veiled in a mist, or by passing clouds, through which his light shines and his orb appears, though dimmed and shorn of those rays which the human eye cannot bear, so the Son of God veiled His divine glory by the tabernacle of the sacred humanity in which He dwelt. He is therefore said to have "tabernacled among us," as the word "dwelt" (John 1. 14) literally means; for as the Shechinah, or divine presence, dwelt in a cloud of glory, upon the mercy seat, in the tabernacle erected in the wilderness (Lev. 16. 2), so that the most holy place needed not the light of the golden candlestick which illuminated the outer sanctuary, and yet was veiled by the curtains of the tabernacle (2 Sam. 7. 2) so the sacred humanity of the blessed Lord was as a tabernacle to His divine nature, veiling it from the eyes of men, and yet by its indwelling presence filled with grace and glory.

Thus, to common eyes, He had no form nor comeliness, was as a root out of a dry ground, was despised and rejected of men, and when they saw Him there was no beauty in Him that they should desire Him (Isa. 53. 2). It is true that sparkles of His eternal Sonship and glorious

Godhead shone through the veil of His humanity to believing eyes and hearts, for John says, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1. 14). And the Father not only outwardly, with a voice from heaven, twice declared that He was His beloved Son (Matt. 3. 17; 17. 5), but revealed Him inwardly as such to the hearts of His disciples, according to the Lord's own testimony in the case of Peter (Matt. 16. 16, 17). As long as He was in the world He was the Light of the world (John 1. 9; 8. 12; 9. 5), as the sun, however veiled by clouds, is still the light of the earth. Though rejected and abhorred of men, He could, therefore, still look up to His heavenly Father, in the lowest depths of His humiliation, and speak in the language of filial love and confidence, "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and My God shall be My strength" (Isa. 49. 5).

2. The second act of humiliation of the eternal Son of God in assuming our nature was *to take upon Him the form of a servant*. Some are born servants, as Abraham had three hundred and eighteen trained servants born in his house (Gen. 14. 14), and some are made servants by others, either taken captive in war (Deut. 21. 10) or bought with money (Lev. 25. 44-46). But the blessed Son of God took upon Him the form of a servant, as a voluntary act of grace; and not only the form, but the reality, for the word *form* respects not only His outward appearance whilst here below, but His inward subjection of soul to God. Therefore the Father said of Him, in the language of prophecy, "Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth" (Isa. 42. 1), and unto Him, "Thou art My Servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified" (Isa. 49. 3). He was formed from the womb to be God's Servant (Isa. 49. 5), so that He became a Servant at the very instant that He took our nature into union with His own divine Person in the womb of the virgin. Thus the apostle, quoting the words of Psalm 40. 6, "Mine ears hast Thou opened" (*margin*: "digged"), that is, "Hast made Me Thy willing Servant," in allusion to Exodus 21. 6, renders them, "A body hast Thou prepared Me" (Heb. 10. 5), for by taking the prepared body He became the willing Servant of the Father, according to His own words, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God" (Psa. 40. 8).

3. By taking this prepared body, He was therefore *made in the likeness of men, and was found in fashion as a man*. That is, though His sacred humanity was intrinsically different from ours, as being holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, impeccable and immortal, yet, in outward form and appearance, as in reality and truth, it perfectly resembled man's. It ate, it drank, it slept, was weary, sweat drops of blood, endured pain of body and travail of soul.

The early church was much pestered with what is called the Gnostic heresy, which, under the plausible assumption that real flesh was too

gross and material a substance for the Son of God to assume, asserted that He took a shadowy, aerial form, in which there was no real flesh or blood, but only the appearance. It is against this heresy that holy John draws his sword, when he declares that “the Word was made flesh,” and gives this as a test of saving truth and damnable error: “Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world” (1 John 4. 2, 3). We must hold fast, then, to this vital truth, that it was real flesh and blood, though holy flesh and blood, that the Son of God assumed in the womb and offered on the tree.

4. Having, then, thus voluntarily assumed the form of a servant, the blessed Lord took that in which the very essence of servitude consists, *obedience*, and that not only to the word, but to the will of His heavenly Father.

As this obedience forms our justifying righteousness and is a part of His finished work, it claims at our hands the most attentive, prayerful and meditative consideration. Not, however, to dwell too long on this part of our subject, we may briefly name these five particulars as most marked and blessed features of the obedience of Jesus, whilst here in this state of humiliation. It was voluntary – delighted in – perfect – vicarious – and meritorious.

i. It was *voluntary*. “Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God” (Heb. 10. 7), were, so to speak, the words in His heart and mouth when He came out of the bosom of the Father to take flesh in the womb of the virgin. There was no compulsion to bring Him down from heaven to earth but the compulsion of love. As the love of Christ is said to constrain us not to live unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us and rose again (2 Cor. 5. 14, 15), so, in a sense, we may say that the love of His people constrained Him to live and die for them. They were His inheritance, the portion given Him by His Father when He appointed Him “Heir of all things” (Heb. 1. 2), that they might be His eternal possession (Deut. 32. 9; Psa. 2. 8). “Thine they were,” He therefore meekly reminds His Father, “and Thou gavest them Me,” adding, to show the unity of mind, will, purpose and possession in the Father and the Son, “And all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine; and I am glorified in them” (John 17. 6, 10).

He, therefore, loved the church as His own bride, the spouse of His heart, whom He had betrothed unto Himself as the gift of the Father before time was (Jer. 31. 3; Hos. 2. 19, 20). Yes, “before the mountains were settled,” “while as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world,” even then was He “rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth” – that part which His saints should

inhabit – and His “delights were with the sons of men” (Prov. 8. 25, 26, 31). When, then, in and by the Fall, the church had become defiled and polluted beyond all thought and expression, when sunk beyond all other help and hope, the image of God in which she had been created, marred and defaced, she an enemy and an alien by wicked works, the willing captive of sin and Satan, with hell opening its mouth to swallow her up in the same gulf of eternal woe where the fallen angels were already weltering – then, even then, O miracle of grace! O wonder of unutterable love! the Son of God, by a purely-voluntary act, yet in accordance with the will and counsel of the Father and the Holy Ghost, gave Himself for her.

This free, voluntary gift of Himself, with all its blessed fruits and consequences, is beautifully unfolded by the apostle in that striking passage, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5. 25-27).

The forlorn, abject, helpless and hopeless state of the church by the Fall, and the pitiful compassion of the blessed Lord as her covenant Head and Husband, are beautifully set forth by the prophet Ezekiel, where he compares her to a poor, deserted, abandoned infant, cast out in the open field to the loathing of its person in the day that it was born. No eye pitied it, no hand was stretched forth to do it any necessary office, or give it food, warmth or shelter. Abandoned to die, had not He who is “very pitiful, and of tender mercy” pitied her (Jas. 5. 11), had not He whose love passeth knowledge loved her, into what an unfathomable depth of everlasting woe must she not have sunk!

But in this very hour of need He passed by, and the time was the time of love, for He spread His skirt over her, and swore unto her, entered into a covenant with her, and she became His. But before she could pass into His arms, He had Himself to wash away all her filth in the fountain of His own blood, to anoint her with the oil of His grace, and the regenerating, sanctifying influences of the Blessed Spirit, and to clothe her with brodered work, even the righteousness that He wrought for her by His own active and suffering obedience – the three blessings of which the apostle speaks as the present portion of the saints of God: “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (Ezek. 16. 4-10; 1 Cor. 6. 11).

ii. It was an obedience that the blessed Lord *delighted in*. His own words, in the language of prophecy, as if in holy anticipation of His coming from heaven to earth, a thousand years before the incarnation, were, “I delight to do Thy will, O My God” (Psa. 40. 8). Thus He could

say, when faint and weary at Samaria's well, His love and delight in doing the will of God absorbing all feeling of the natural wants of the body, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work" (John 4. 34). In this spirit also He said, a year before His actual sufferings and death, "But I have a baptism to be baptized with" – and O what a baptism of suffering and blood! of what agonies of body, and of what travail of soul! "and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke 12. 50) – as though His holy soul panted with intense desires for the overwhelming baptism of garden sorrows, and pressed forward to meet it, and the sufferings of the cross, as the fulfilment of His Father's will.

So, on His last journey out of Galilee towards Judea, "He went before," as if He would exceed His usual pace, and outstrip His lagging disciples, "ascending up to Jerusalem," where the will of His Father was to be obeyed, and the atoning sacrifice to be offered (Luke 13. 33; 19. 28). Blessed Lord! would that we could follow Thee in this holy example, and delight to do Thy will as Thou didst delight to do Thy Father's will. And such surely would be our desire and delight were we more conformed to Thy suffering image, and more moulded after the pattern of Thine obedience (Rom. 12. 1, 2). Animated by the same holy delight, He said to His disciples, on the eve of His sufferings and death, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer" (Luke 22. 15). And when the solemn hour drew nigh when the waters came in unto His soul, when He sank in deep mire where there was no standing, when He came into deep waters where the floods overflowed Him (Psa. 69. 1, 2)* in the gloomy garden, when He had to drink of the cup of wrath put into His hand, what meek submission, what holy resignation He showed to His Father's will! Where can we look to see such sorrows? But where can we look to find such holy obedience, such meek submission, such patient endurance of them?

iii. Again, it was a *perfect* obedience. Every thought, every word, and every act of that holy and sacred humanity were perfect, not only as proceeding from a nature intrinsically pure, but as filled with all the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, that glorious Person in the undivided Godhead who not only begot by a divine operation the sacred humanity of our blessed Lord in the womb of the virgin, but filled it with all His gifts and graces, descending upon Him more visibly at His baptism, and anointing Him as Prophet, Priest and King (Isa. 61. 1; Luke 3. 22; 4. 1; John 3. 34; Acts 10. 38; Heb. 1. 9), and abiding in Him in all His fulness during the whole of His ministry, sufferings and death. The law demanded a perfect obedience; it could, indeed, from its very nature, accept no other; and this obedience must be unwavering, flowing on in

* It is in the Psalms, especially Psalms 22, 40 and 69, that the inward experience of the blessed Lord as a Man of sorrows is set forth.

one uninterrupted stream from the heart, and that stream, like Jordan, all the time of harvest, overflowing all its banks with love to God and man. As the Lord promised that rivers of living water should flow out of the belly (or heart) of him that believed in His name, so the rivers of living obedience flowed from His own heart and lips, as He Himself believed in God and did His will from the heart.

iv. The obedience of Jesus to the Father's will was *vicarious* – that is, rendered on behalf of His church, and imputed to her for righteousness. He stood in her place and stead as her Surety and Representative. She owed a debt which she could not pay, an obedience to the law which she could not render. The Father accepted His Son's, and thus His obedience became hers. Thus, "as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Rom. 5. 19); for God made the Lord Jesus "to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5. 21).

v. This obedience was *meritorious*. Here we see the beauty, grace and glory of the incarnation of the Son of God. As God, He could not suffer; as Man He could not merit; but as God-Man He could suffer as Man, and merit as God. And though He has two natures, He has but one Person, His doing and dying, His sufferings and obedience, His blood and righteousness, are stamped with all the value and invested with all the validity of Godhead, because He who obeyed and suffered as Man is truly and verily God.

Here, then, is the great mystery of godliness, "God was manifest in the flesh." Here flow through this consecrated channel pardon and peace. Here God can be just and yet the Justifier of him who believeth in Jesus. Here every attribute of God is harmonised, the law magnified, the gospel revealed, the sinner saved, and God glorified.

(To be continued)

OBITUARY

Eunice Pearce, a member of the church at The Dicker, passed away peacefully on June 27th, 2015, aged 78.

She was born at Worthing on November 12th, 1936, to James and Ruby Rolph. Following her marriage, she attended Bethel Chapel, Luton, where she was baptized in 1968. It is recorded that she was enabled to speak of early days of conviction of sin and a fear of death which had been deepened during the previous two years. The ministry of her Pastor (Mr. B.A. Ramsbottom) had been used to this end. This fear of death was continued, with the greater fear of eternity, until she was delivered from her bondage when the words, "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psa. 46 10), were applied with power.

The following is taken from her own writings and from details supplied by her husband.

“The late Mr. E.A. Wallis was preaching at Bethel, Luton, speaking about following the Lord in His ordinances, and said that being disobedient to His commands, the Lord would hide His face. This had a profound effect on Eunice, feeling this was something she could not bear. The text that day was Psalm 45. 13, 14: ‘The King’s daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto Thee.’ The service closed with hymn 428 (‘Humble souls, who seek salvation.’) The late Mr. A.J. Watts spoke to a friend after the service and said that hymn was for Eunice, and so it proved to be. Eunice was baptized with the late Mr. John Watts in July 1968. The word given her on being received into the church was Jude 24: ‘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.’”

Eunice wrote of many blessings received under the ministry of her Pastors, and especially during the time of great anxieties: “In the year 1976, a specialist could not guarantee a full recovery without pain from a major back operation, and the chance of being disabled was 85%, while even to anticipate such an operation was a very high risk to take. However, he told us to go away to think about it, which we did, but kept all this news from everyone. So the following Sunday we went to chapel with a very heavy heart, and the Lord saw fit to open our Pastor’s heart to speak concerning the cup which the Lord hands out for His people to drink. We knew full well we had received the bitterest cup imaginable and to be able to drink it was quite impossible. Pastor then went on to say, ‘When the time arrives for you to drink it, it will not be one of anguish, pain and affliction, but a cup full of rich love, mercy, great blessings and thanksgiving.’ And so with the Lord’s great promise we were able to leave all, come life, come death, come whatever may, in His hands, and so take up that cup and to drink it quite up. I entered hospital full of peace and joy, knowing that the Lord was with me and also those which I had left behind at home. And although one was in the greatest pain possible, I felt that while in hospital, the Lord did take the sting of pain away, and I was resting in His love and faithfulness, and all we could say was, ‘My Jesus has done all things well.’

“On returning home it seemed as though the Lord filled the house with His blessings, such as, ‘I love thee well, My child,’ and hymn 329, especially verse 3: ‘I’ll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,’ for it was the Lord’s strength which taught me to sit, stand and walk again. My greatest cross was when I was so dependent on my dear ones.

“New year’s day actually came on a Sunday that year. The others all went to chapel and it was about 12.30 midday when the Lord appeared with the words, ‘Blest cross, blest sepulchre,’ etc., and so I learned to see the Lord’s love in it to me, and also to realise what it was meant for, and I would have it no different.

“However, four years afterwards I was to enter hospital again, and feeling so weak in body, without any strength of my own, I felt quite unable to pass through another major operation. But the following Sunday, a visiting minister was preaching, and he ended his sermon by saying, ‘One may find themselves wending their way to hospital again, but during the journey, the Lord will be with you and you will have such peace as you are found in His covenant.’ He knew nothing of my intended hospital visit.

“However, on the following Sunday, our dear Pastor (Mr. J.W. Sperling-Tyler) was preaching, when at last the Lord shone so wonderfully with the words, ‘His left hand is under my head, and His right hand doth embrace me’ (Song 2. 6). I came away from chapel rich in blessing, and as the days passed, I found I was actually looking forward to my hospital visit, for I wanted to feel His embrace.

“After the operation, the Lord came with those delectable words in the Song of Solomon: ‘Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away’ (Song 2. 10), and so the Lord granted me restoring mercies by giving me His strength once more.

“Since then, we have had many ups and downs, but with the great help from the ministry, we have been sustained.

‘Brought safely by His hand thus far,
Why dost thou now give place to fear?
How canst thou want if He provide,
Or lose thy way with such a Guide?’

“And so we want to make it publicly known and acknowledge the dear Lord’s great goodness to us. ‘Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory,’ for ever and ever. Amen.”

Her husband continues: “After some years at Bethel, Luton, Eunice became very favoured with the ministry of the late Mr. Sperling-Tyler and took every opportunity to hear him when he was preaching in the area. She had enjoyed Mr. Sperling-Tyler’s ministry when still living at Worthing.

“However, she felt she wanted a confirmation from the Lord, and prayed that if the matter was right, then Mr. Sperling-Tyler, who was preaching at Ashwell, would take for his text, ‘Be still, and know that I am God.’ This proved to be the very text that day, and so she was much comforted and blessed.

“About a year before moving to The Dicker, while staying at Eastbourne, she went to the Thursday evening service, and upon entering the chapel, she said it was as if the word ‘home’ was written down the aisle. This commenced an exercise about moving to The Dicker. She heard Mr. Sperling-Tyler preach from Judges 13, part of verse 19: “And the angel did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on.” This made her wonder what the issue would be. Some time after this, she heard Mr. Sperling-Tyler preach about Abraham’s servant finding a wife for Isaac. Although she had given no hint of her exercise to Mr. Sperling-Tyler, he said to her afterwards, ‘Well, you have the earring and the bracelets on,’ which she took to mean his persuasion that a move to The Dicker would come about.

“In 1976 a holiday was taken in Sussex, and attending the Dicker at that time, she felt more sure than ever that a move to The Dicker seemed to be the Lord’s will.

“On returning home, she sought the Lord’s will in the matter, asking the Lord for a confirmation on the future. On the first Sunday back at Bethel, Luton, Mr. Ramsbottom spoke from Revelation 3. 8: ‘Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.’ At the end of the sermon, he said he felt sure this was a word for someone there that morning, and so it proved to be. She moved with her family to Sussex on December 15th, 1976.

“About six months after moving, Mr. Sperling-Tyler said to her she should wait a little longer before wishing to join The Dicker church. This surprised her, because she had not mentioned a word about joining. However, in September 1977, hymn 447 was given out, and verse 2 (‘Lord, in Thy house I read there’s room,’) fully confirmed her in wishing to join The Dicker church, which she did with her husband. The word given to her on being received into the church was Isaiah 60. 19, 20: ‘The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.’ She enjoyed Mr. Sperling-Tyler’s ministry to the end of his life.

“Eunice felt sure her present Pastor (Mr. Robert Field) would be settled at The Dicker. She was sweetly blessed at one ordinance with the words, ‘I love thee well, My child.’ She much enjoyed our present Pastor’s ministry and even when her memory was failing, often said how the sermons had been good to her.

“Sadly Eunice had to go into care at Bethesda, where her mind continued to deteriorate. But on a visit, her brother-in-law, Mr. David Christian, quoted from hymn 232, verse 3:

‘His love in time past forbids me to think
 He’ll leave me at last in trouble to sink;
 Each sweet Ebenezer I have in review
 Confirms His good pleasure to help me quite through.”

“She said, ‘That was lovely.’ When she went into Bethesda, her husband had to complete all details on the admission forms on her behalf. One question is the hymns to be sung at the funeral. She could not tell her husband which ones. Remarkably, the hymns chosen by her husband were not only the right ones, but in the correct order, as confirmed in some details found some weeks later in her bedside cabinet.

“After going into Bethesda, her mind began to deteriorate further, and after nearly two years in the Home, she suffered severe epileptic seizures, resulting in her having to be moved to a nursing home. It was very distressing to see her condition, but the dear Lord kept her very calm until the end. It would have been good to have had some spiritual conversation, but this was not to be.

“At the end she was very peaceful, and without a struggle entered into the joy of her Lord at 2 a.m. on Saturday, June 27th, 2015.

“The funeral took place at Zoar Chapel, The Dicker, with her Pastor, Mr. Robert Field, officiating, on July 13th, 2015.

“And so a beloved wife, mother and grandmother leaves behind a sorrowing family, but for her she is now at peace.”

Roy Pearce

BOOK REVIEW

Sermons on Titus, by John Calvin, translated by Robert White; clothbound; 294 pages; price £15; published by the Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

Today, John Calvin is widely known as a Biblical commentator and theologian. However, Calvin himself saw his primary calling as a preacher and a pastor. He preached on average upwards of four sermons per week to his congregation. Only a few of these have been translated into English. The sermons in this volume were originally translated into English in 1579, and not reprinted until 1983 (and then as a facsimile) when they were given a warm review in the *Gospel Standard*.

The Banner of Truth have recently been issuing new translations of Calvin’s works into English, mainly the work of Robert White. We cannot comment on the accuracy of the translation, but although in modern language, the tone is reverent. The Bible quotes are translations from the French and do not follow the King James Version. We presume they are translations of the Olivetan, one of the great Reformation translations.

These sermons on Titus are expository. They have to be read in the context of their time. Europe was emerging from gross darkness, the people were hearing

the truth for the first time, and the Reformers had to begin with a basic opening up of the Word of God. Today, we think we know much and have progressed greatly in knowledge, but there is in fact much ignorance concerning even the basics of the truth, and preaching of the type Calvin favoured is more necessary than ever.

Although these sermons are on one of the pastoral epistles, dealing with matters relating to the ministry and church order, it does not limit the relevance of these sermons to ministers alone. Any church exercised about a pastoral ministry would profit from reading them. Ministers, deacons, indeed all office bearers in the churches, will find them to be searching reading. The Lord's people individually, and the church collectively, will become weak and spiritually sick if the truths dealt with in this volume do not have the right prominence in their teaching.

While there are many books vying for our attention – biographies, church history and commentaries – we believe published sermons should be counted amongst our most important reading material. It is by the foolishness of preaching that God has appointed to save mankind. While the reading of the preached Word is always very much second best (as is listening to it at home, whether by live relay or not – “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together”)* nevertheless the record of the preached Word is highly valuable. We recommend these sermons to the reader.

Matthew J. Hyde, Maidstone

A SINCERE PETITION

Hear, Lord, the heartfelt cry of one
Who daily feels himself undone;
In mercy speak, and pardon give,
And bid a dying sinner live.

Have I not tasted of Thy grace?
Have I not seen Thy precious face?
Have I not heard Thy voice most sweet,
When prostrate at Thy mercy seat?

Yea, Lord, I cannot be deceived;
For then my soul was so relieved
Of all her sins, and guilt, and shame,
That I rejoiced in Thy dear name.

How changed the scene, for now, dear Lord,
I scarce can e'en a prayer record;
In mercy speak, and pardon give,
And bid a dying sinner live.

Harry Patterson (1869-1936)

* The reviewer realises that some people may be severely afflicted, or may live at a great distance from a gospel ministry, as in North America and elsewhere. Ed.

THE
GOSPEL STANDARD
DECEMBER 2016

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

HELP LAID UPON THE MIGHTY AND EXALTED SAVIOUR
(Concluded from page 335)

“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).

“I have exalted One chosen out of the people.” The work of salvation is God’s greatest work. The gift of the Lord Jesus is surely God’s greatest gift. Eternal life is a life that will never die, and is exclusively a gift from God. Jesus said, “I give unto them eternal life” (John 10. 28). That life is maintained in sinners’ hearts as we are taught to “live by faith” in Jesus Christ. As we read in John 3. 16, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” The poet expressed it well, when he wrote:

“Jesus, the Gift of gifts appears,
To show that God is love!”

And what greater love can be demonstrated than by the “Gift of God” to be “chosen out of the people,” and then “Being by the right hand of God exalted,” to sit there as “a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins”? (Acts 2. 33 and 5. 31).

The Holy Ghost declares the descending of the Son of God in the opening chapter of the gospel according to John: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.” We further read in chapter 1, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” This is a most blessed and glorious truth that truly spells “salvation,” and such a sure, glorious and “everlasting salvation”! And for whom? Fallen sons of men who are completely ruined, and are real enemies to God and godliness. Is not this a wonder of all wonders? It is a wonderful truth that He who was “chosen out of the people” is now exalted to bring “many sons unto glory” (Heb. 2. 10), freely of His own “good will toward men,” by giving them grace here below and glory hereafter. No wonder that the angels sang, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2. 14).

In the Old Testament times there were a few pre-incarnation appearances of the Lord Jesus in a bodily form, such as in the fiery furnace at Babylon, and to “worm Jacob” at the brook Jabbok. It is a tremendous favour of God if we belong to that denomination of people called “worm Jacob,” who come out “of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues” (Rev. 7. 9). Immanuel allowed “worm Jacob” to overcome Him! Jesus is not here, but is risen and exalted at the right hand of God. He still allows, yea, helps poor sinners to overcome Him as they wrestle on in prayer here below, as Jacob did that night.

In the fulness of time the Lord Jesus appeared to a world that lay in great darkness. We read in Galatians 4. 4, 5, “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” This speaks of a full and complete salvation. O that we might be brought to value the Lord Jesus more and more.

Let us consider the birth of Immanuel as recorded in Luke 2. 9-14. Firstly: the message of the angel of the Lord in verses 9 to 12; secondly: the song that the holy choir of angels sang in verses 13 and 14.

Firstly: As the glory of the Lord shone round about the shepherds, “they were sore afraid.” The angel said, “Fear not.” When poor sinners get some apprehension of the holiness and majesty of God, and their own dreadful condition, they are full of fears. Yes, they begin to suffer so many fears about themselves, the state of their souls, and their affairs. “Fear not,” said the angel, “behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy.” Whatever the pain we feel in our souls over our sins, death upon the road, heaviness in the heart, soul distress, trying scenes in our providences, fiery trials, temptations from the adversary, yet, “I bring you good tidings of great joy.” God is love, and has provided such a mighty Saviour, who has “come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19. 10). What great joy is known and felt in the hearts of pilgrims when the Holy Ghost makes salvation known in a precious Christ; when a poor sinner is favoured with a glimpse within the veil and beholds the exalted Saviour for a few moments; or when the Spirit confirms a soul that he belongs to Christ; or when the Spirit intimates to a sinner that he is washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.

“Which shall be to all people.” To both Jew and Gentile. “And in His name shall the Gentiles trust” (Matt. 12. 21). When the Holy Spirit anoints a man to preach the gospel, it is with a divine commission: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16. 15, 16). So the Lord’s ministers desire to minister the gospel wherever there is an open and effectual door. Gospel ministers know that they are much smaller in grace and gifts than the

apostles, yet they have to preach the same glorious gospel. Salvation is for sinners!

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” How accurate is the Word of God! “The city of David,” as foretold in 1 Samuel 16 (in type and shadow) and Micah 5. 2. Truth cannot fail! Truth cannot fall! Truth will triumph at last, and especially when “shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matt. 24. 30).

“A Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” This blessed Lord Jesus is a mighty Saviour, as William Gadsby expresses:

“Jesus is a mighty Saviour;
Helpless souls have here a Friend;
He has borne their misbehaviour,
And His mercy knows no end;
O ye helpless,
Come, and on His grace depend.”

In Matthew we read, “Thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins.” When we find ourselves so defiled by sin, God has given an all-prevailing name for sinners to plead. The sinner blessed with eternal life is saved from the sins of his whole life, both inward and outward sins against a holy God, and sins against his fellow men. God Himself has given this precious name that prevails in the court of heaven, for deep-dyed sinners. “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom. 10. 13).

“Ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.” A real, living Babe! Not a phantom babe. A true Babe who is the Son of God, and now in this wondrous night has appeared as the Son of man. And this blessed Babe needed all the loving and tender care, the warmth and nourishment of His mother, that all babes born into this world need. A most blessed Babe indeed! A Babe like as we were ourselves, with one such vital exception and distinction. He had no sin; He could not sin; because He is also Deity, the Son of God. “Neither was any deceit in His mouth” (Isa. 53. 9). He could only die by His own voluntary act, to save sinners. This holy and pure Son of man who lived here, was and is the Son of God, and now lives in heaven as the exalted Saviour. He grew up into adulthood and loved God with all His heart, and magnified the law in perfect obedience, and delighted to do the will of God. Here is “THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS,” lying in a manger. Yes indeed, and for poor, proud men like ourselves! Left to ourselves, how unwilling we are to be the least, to be despised and looked down on. The blessed and humble Babe of Bethlehem is the “KING OF KINGS, AND

LORD OF LORDS.” When He was born in the stable and laid in the manger, He was unnoticed by the busy and bustling crowds seeking their portion in this life. There were just a few who knew who He was by revelation, such as these shepherds, the wise men, Simeon and Anna.

Secondly: we must consider the song of the heavenly host (verses 13 and 14). “Glory to God in the highest.” Almighty God has got to Himself the highest praise and glory that can ever be known, by the gift of Immanuel. The psalmist when praising God says, “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me” (Psa. 50. 23). How true that is. When poor sinners have been released from prison, and the shackles of the law in all its relentless demand of perfection, and are brought to the blessed feet of Jesus, then, and only then, can they begin to sing the song of the redeemed. It is then that the Word of the Lord, and especially the “Word made flesh,” becomes, as Jeremiah says, “The joy and rejoicing of mine heart” (chapter 15. 16). It is in this gospel liberty that we truly know gospel repentance, which is “godly sorrow for sin.” This is so different from legal repentance under the law which brings only an outward show of heaviness and pretended holiness. When poor sinners are blessed with repentance and faith, they long to live to the glory of God. We graciously mourn because we cannot serve Him as we would.

“And on earth peace.” This is an everlasting peace given to us by the Lord Jesus, and sealed by the blood of the everlasting covenant. This peace was brought about by the dying of the Lord Jesus, as He “died for the ungodly.” We read in 2 Corinthians 5, “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” We also read in Micah, “And this Man shall be the peace.” Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14. 27). It is a peace that is known by faith, and will be fully entered into hereafter. May the Holy Spirit bring something of this peace into the hearts of all His seeking, poor and needy people, who wait for His appearing, and as they see the day approaching.

“Good will toward men.” This is “the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush” (Deut. 33. 16). God said to Moses, “I have surely seen the affliction of My people,” “and have heard their cry,” “and I am come down to deliver them” (Exod. 3. 7, 8). This “good will toward men” is displayed in the swearings of the everlasting covenant. The blessings of it are promised to them who believe, trust, come, look unto, confess to, and pray to the Lord Jesus alone. Such shall be saved according to the Scriptures. It is all God’s work. God cannot lie. He cannot repent of or deny the glorious truth of the “everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure,” by Jesus Christ. “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away” (Matt. 24. 35). These are the blessings which

spring from the blessed One, who is the “exalted One chosen out of the people.”

What a comfort to the believer that Jesus is “exalted” at the right hand of God. He is the living Saviour, who is still the “Friend of publicans and sinners,” though now in heaven. He is exalted to “pour water upon him that is thirsty,” and to hear the prayer of the “poor and needy” that “seek water.” He is exalted to do everything for His people upon earth, to bring them safely home to God. He is exalted to reign in covenant love and faithfulness over them. He is exalted as that “merciful and faithful High Priest,” who fully understands and knows the cases of the poor, for He Himself was “a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” He reigns as King over His people, governing wisely, skilfully, tenderly and graciously over His church here below. He is exalted to bring them safely through life and safely through death to heaven at last. They must come into His presence at last, where they will exalt and praise their exalted Redeemer. He is so worthy to be praised, and it will be in holy delight that they will praise Him for ever. As they see, love and adore the Lord Jesus, they see and love their God who saved them. David said, “I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness” (Psa. 17. 15). So will the whole church of God.

“Thanks, everlasting thanks be given
To God, to Christ, to matchless grace;
And to that Dove who seals for heaven
All who shall sing Jehovah’s praise!”

So help has been laid upon the mighty and exalted Lord Jesus who was “chosen out of the people,” to bring His people to “their desired haven,” and “that they may rest from their labours.”

SEEKING THE KING OF THE JEWS

*Sermon preached by Mr. Gerald D. Buss at Old Baptist Chapel,
Chippenham, on Friday morning, December 25th, 2015*

Text: “Where is He that is born King of the Jews?” (Matt. 2. 2).

This was a question put by godly men, men who feared God; men to whom a precious Christ was precious; to a king who had no desire; and to religious men, who ought to have been seeking as these wise men were, but who were sunk in the deadness of an orthodox tradition. They had no heart for the One of whom the wise men spoke. What a mercy if you can join with the wise men this morning – not in the false words of Herod who professed to want to worship the Saviour but with evil intent – but you can say as our text says at the end of it, “We have seen His star

in the east, and are come to worship Him.” And if we have come aright this morning hour, we have come to worship Him, and were He *not* God it would be wrong to worship Him. If He were just an angel it would be wrong to worship Him. If He were just a good man, an excellent man, it would still be wrong to worship Him. Worship is something that is exclusive to the honour and glory of God alone. The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are equally worthy of our worship. And these wise men – we do not know how many there were, we do not need to know – but this we do know: they had no doubt at all that the Babe they were seeking, the One whom they were desiring to view, was none other than God manifest in the flesh.

It is very interesting to notice that there is a word fulfilled in Isaiah’s prophecy here – more than one word actually – but there is a word which is not often referred to: “Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?” (Isa. 60. 8). The picture there, of course, is of doves feeding on the lawn, and then something comes to disturb them, and they fly up to the dovecote and straight into the windows, all going to the same place. Well, as doves to their windows, these wise men, and the shepherds, and Simeon, and Anna, all went – they were all after the same precious Object of faith. They came from different quarters: the shepherds from fields near Bethlehem, Simeon and Anna within the temple itself, and the wise men from this far country in the east; but they all had one object. They were like the doves flying to the window, and the window they wanted to enter into was the same as the noble Greeks years later: “We would see Jesus” (John 12. 21).

I wonder how many here this morning are come with this desire: “*We.*” “We would see Jesus.” You younger ones may say, But we cannot see Him; you tell us by the Word of God that He is in heaven, and so He is, and bless God for that. But we may see Him in His Word, and we may see Him as we sing His praises, and more than that (and this is very important), that as the Holy Ghost works, we may see Him by faith. But, “No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost” (1 Cor. 12. 3), and that was the difference between the wise men, and the scribes and the Pharisees with whom Herod conferred concerning where Christ should be born. The scribes and the Pharisees were not moved by the blessed Spirit. They knew the Scriptures well; they were teaching others what the Old Testament had to say; they were telling them there was a Messiah to come and they knew where He was to be born. But they had no true revelation of who He was, no true understanding of why He should come.

These wise men were made to differ, and the Holy Ghost made them to differ. We are not to conjecture how it was they came upon their knowledge. Well, God is a Sovereign, is He not? And in that respect we

do not need to conjecture, but it has been suggested that the captives who were taken in the Babylonish captivity years before would have had an influence in the countries to which they were sent in the east, and it may be that God left their humble testimony behind and it brought a seed of expectation for the coming Saviour – that we can only surmise at. This we do know, that these wise men who had some knowledge of astronomy were watching the stars and watching the heavens, and they noticed an unusual star appear, a star that was different from all the rest, a star that, with God's wisdom given to them, showed them something mighty had happened, and that mighty thing was that the King of the Jews had been born. Others may have seen the star, but they did not look at it the same way as the wise men did. There is the distinction, you see, of God-given faith; and such was the difference, that it made these wise men travel hundreds of miles. It must have been a long, arduous journey over many weeks, probably months, but on they went, and their one object was, "We would see Jesus." This was their desire, like those doves fleeing to the windows; this is what they desired.

We have it in Isaiah's prophecy, in that very wonderful prophecy, this very event. In chapter 60 verses 1-3 we read: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." And if they indeed had the prophecy of Isaiah at hand, they would have known the previous verses in the last chapter that precedes it (59. 20) – "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD." They believed Someone had come – the Redeemer had come to Zion – and they desired to see Him. "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?"

Now, no doubt when they received by faith this precious word from the Holy Spirit concerning the coming of the Saviour, their natural mind immediately thought that the place to go for the birth of a king was a palace. That was their natural understanding, and we can understand why they thought like that. But dear friends, it is a sad thing to have to say, that Christ has not been found in many palaces, in the history of this world, has He? You think of the kings and the princes and the emperors and the presidents, those who have ruled over this earth. How few among them have been God-fearing? Even in Old Testament times, the kings that sat on the throne of Judah and Israel, how few of them were God-fearing men. It shows us, dear friends, that "not many mighty, not many noble, are called." It does not say, "Not any," and that is a mercy, isn't it? These wise men were noble men, but they made a mistake in assuming that it would be in the palace of a king they would find the dear Saviour.

We must be careful, dear friends, of assuming. We need the light of the Spirit every step of the way. Yet they came to Herod by God's permission and secret overruling appointment, as had been prophesied. Herod in his enmity, later slew all the children in Bethlehem from two years old and under. We read in Jeremiah, "Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not" (chapter 31. 15). What a deep sorrow must have descended upon Bethlehem after Herod's cruel and terrible act. And of course, we have seen similar things in our own generation in recent times; the sword has been used many times, especially against those who believe in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

But to return to the wise men. One thing they did receive in Herod's palace (through ungodly men, true; through unbelieving men, true), was a word from the Lord, and the word from the Lord was that this Babe was to be born in Bethlehem. Now assured by God's word where He would be born, they go to Bethlehem, and as soon as they make their way from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, the star which they saw in the east (the one that was God's message to them in their first understanding of this event) appears to them, and guides them to the very spot where the dear Babe was to be found. And we are told that, "When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy." It confirmed the word that God had given them; it shed a light on the path which they were in. It was that hymn we sometimes sing, wonderfully fulfilled: "The way I walk cannot be wrong, if Jesus be but there." No wonder one of our hymns also says:

"Visit, then, this soul of mine;
Pierce the gloom of sin and grief;
Fill me, Radiancy Divine!
Scatter all my unbelief;
More and more Thyself display,
Shining to the perfect day."

"Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" And when they came into that humble home where our Lord lay as a Babe, they bowed before Him. They did not worship Joseph; they did not worship Mary; but they worshipped Him. And the gifts they gave – gold, frankincense and myrrh – were indicative of their understanding of the work of this Babe. Gold – His Kingship; frankincense – His work as the Priest; and myrrh "sorrowful unto death," and the grave; not because of any sin of His own (pure, holy, harmless, undefiled, impeccable He lay there), but ah! He came as John the Baptist says why He came: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1. 29). This was the fulfilment of the word spoken by Abraham half way up Mount Moriah: "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering" (Gen. 22. 8). Not just that God *made* the provision, but God now *is* the

provision – the Person of His dear Son manifest in the flesh. What a wonderful thought that is!

You know, when Solomon dedicated the temple at God's command, *he* provided the offerings; hundreds, thousands of sheep and bulls were slain on that day. Well, a greater than Solomon is here. God the Father has provided now the offering – not a bull or a bird or a goat, no, all that is past; He sent His only begotten Son. “For God so loved the world, that He *gave* His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3. 16). This is an offering that God the Father has provided for poor sinners because no other offering could be acceptable. And here you are, perhaps some of you this morning, and you feel poor in your hearts; you feel destitute of what you feel you *ought* to be. You would be holy, but you are unholy. You would be upright, but you see so much of your old nature. Such a struggle, isn't it, against sin, the world, the flesh and the devil? Where are you to look? Where is there an offering suitable for a sinner like you, the chief of sinners? It is in this dear Babe, this dear Lamb of God. It is in this One of whom we say, “For God so loved the world, that He gave...” – for whom? Poor, needy sinners, who have got no hope in themselves, no help in themselves, full of guilt, often tempted, often in the dirt, often in the ditch, often assailed, often on their back – for such, the dear Saviour came. For those like the man who fell among thieves on the Jericho road, that is the one for whom the Lord came. The dying thief, that is the one the Lord came for. Vilest offenders, vile sinners.

“For sinners, Lord, Thou cam'st to bleed;
And I'm a sinner vile indeed;
Lord, I believe, Thy grace is free,
O magnify that grace in me.”

I want now to consider for a moment, the title given. It is “King of the Jews.” It is very significant. This was the title that, as it were, hung over His cradle, and it is the same title that hung over His cross. JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. Did not Pilate say, “Art Thou a King then?” The Lord Jesus Christ said, “Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice.” He is not an earthly king and had not come for an earthly sceptre or palace or throne. No, His throne is in heaven and He has a throne in the hearts of His people who believe in His name, who have been brought by the blessed Spirit to repentance and faith. “Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool” (Acts 7. 49). I have a place where My feet rest, in the hearts of poor sinners, saved by grace – that is where His kingdom is.

This was something Pilate did not understand; do *you* understand it? “The kingdom of God is within you.” And the real Jews in our text – not that we should despise the Jewish nation; God forbid that we should do that; they were a most favoured nation, raised up from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob for a specific purpose, the main one of which was to be the nation from which the dear Saviour would come – KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. They were a favoured nation and they still are in many ways. God has purposes yet to fulfil ere this world finishes concerning them, but in the context in a spiritual way (leaving aside the national one), a spiritual Jew is something different. We read in Romans that a spiritual Jew is one not circumcised in the flesh, but in the Spirit. Let me just read these words: “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh” (Rom. 2. 28). But this is the true Jew, and not any ordinance of man can make one: “But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God” (Rom. 2. 29). And the Jews in that sense in our text are those in whom the Holy Spirit comes and takes residence, breaks up the fallow ground in their heart by His teachings, showing them their awful sinful state, engraving on their heart the truth concerning their lost state, and yet showing them a precious Christ, bringing them to the foot of the cross, and there to rejoice in this glorious name, “King of the Jews.” So let me ask you this question this morning hour: is He *your* King? Is He *my* King?

“Reign o’er us as King, accomplish Thy will,
And powerfully bring us forth from all ill;
Till, falling before Thee, we laud Thy loved name,
Ascribing the glory to God and the Lamb.”

Now, we sometimes pray in what is called the Lord’s prayer, “Thy kingdom come.” And remember, it is an inward kingdom. Yes, it has outward effects, but it is an inward kingdom. Are you so desirous of this, that it should take the place of your lusts, your corruptions, your worldliness, your pride, your unbelief? Are you desirous that all that should be banished from your heart, and this precious King should rule and reign there in holiness and in purity? O, may He come, may He come with a whip of small cords if necessary, and drive out the buyers and the sellers that He might reign alone in our hearts.

“Where is He that is born King of the Jews?” Doesn’t one of the hymns often sung at this time end like this: “Be born in us today”? Wasn’t that what Paul meant in Colossians at the end of the first chapter: “Christ in you, the hope of glory”? They are the true Jews; they are the true spiritual Jews, of whom our Lord is the true spiritual King, the ones whom He will gather to His right hand when time shall be no more. But He calls this spiritual Israel, He calls them out of every kindred, nation,

tribe and tongue. He is gathering them now, and we do pray we may be among that gathered people. May it be our concern to be so, and not be content to be just onlookers.

The scribes and the Pharisees could tell the wise men where the Lord Jesus was to be born, but they did not make one step to go and find Him. And everyone in this house of prayer who is of readable age can tell me where Christ was to be born, but have you left it there? Have you ever been by humble faith to Bethlehem and sought to see Him whom your soul so much needs? You may have heard of the man who lived near the Niagara Falls – ten miles away. He could hear the roar of that mighty waterfall. Some of us have seen it. It is a tremendous sight as well, and you can hear the roar from miles away, certainly when it is in flood. There was a visitor who wanted to go and see it and he asked this man the way, and the man told him exactly how to get there, and he asked the man what it was like. The man said, “O I’ve never been there.” He lived within ten miles of that mighty sight and never went there!

And some of you dear friends have lived very near to the gospel for a long while, but you have not made any steps toward it. Be honest; look into your heart and ask yourselves, “Why is it?” Because there is no felt need of it; there is no felt need of this precious Jesus; you are satisfied with your sins and you are satisfied with your so-called righteousness and your chapel-going, and your name christian with a small c. You are satisfied with it, but you have not yet come into that place where it is, “Give me Christ, or else I die.” I say it kindly, lovingly, affectionately – it is your souls that matter to me; that is the vital thing. I must give an account. O that it might stir you up this morning hour to be seeking this precious Christ. “I love them that love Me; and those that seek Me early shall find Me” (Prov. 8. 17).

Now there are those among us here this morning who have found Him, and if you can remember those precious days when, awakened by the Spirit, nothing could satisfy you but to have Christ as your own, and you sought and you prayed, and you wept, and you mourned, and you wrestled until that wonderful moment when the Holy Spirit showed you a precious Christ. You have all heard of the little Scottish maid have you not, many years ago, who had no knowledge of these things whatsoever? And a wise minister bid her pray, “Show me myself,” and she did pray it, and the Lord did just that, so much so she was rendered unfit to work. The sight of her sins was so great, and the sight of what she owed under the law was so immense, and her prospects of a lost eternity rendered her unfit to do anything. Well, the minister came again and asked where she was, and she told him what had happened. And he said, “Now, pray this prayer: show me *Thyself*.” And she did pray it, and in due season the Lord answered her prayer and brought her up out of that horrible pit and that miry clay, and set her feet upon a rock, and put a new song in her

mouth, even praise to our God (see Psa. 40. 2, 3). She could say, “I found Him whom my soul loveth: I held Him, and would not let Him go” (Song 3. 4).

“Where is He that is born King of the Jews?” And if you trace His holy life, where will you find Him? You find Him in that humble home at Nazareth, that obscure place. “Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?” said Nathanael to Philip. But ah! He was content to live there. We find Him in the temple, and quietly answering His parents’ question: “Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us?” Jesus answered, “Wist ye not that I must be about My Father’s business?” That is where you will find Him, friends, doing His Father’s business – yes, not the devil’s business. If you are doing the devil’s business you will not find the King of the Jews; you will find the King of the Jews in the steps of a precious Christ; that is where you will find Him.

And so we go through that holy life towards His end, and where do we find Him? Yes, at His baptism, with the waters rolling over His holy head, signifying the waters of wrath that were to roll over His head in Gethsemane and on Calvary. “Where is He that is born King of the Jews?” You will find Him at last between two thieves, bleeding, dying. Why? Because this is the end to which He came. He came to suffer; He came to bleed; He came to die, “the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God” (1 Pet. 3. 18), to gather in one this vast company whom He calls the Israel of God, washed in His blood, clothed in His obedience, presented at last to His Father: “Behold I and the children which God hath given Me” (Heb. 2. 13).

And you find Him at last laid in a tomb. That holy, harmless, undefiled Lamb of God lay in the tomb, His holy soul in the bosom of His heavenly Father until the resurrection morning. Now where do we find Him? Risen from the dead, showing the disciples His hands and His side and His feet, to prove infallibly it was this same Jesus. Where is He now? At the right hand of His Father. How do we know that? Because many of us have pleaded His dear name. We have learnt what the hymn-writer meant:

“This is the name the Father loves
To hear His children plead;
And all such pleading He approves,
And blesses them indeed.”

Have you proved Him like that? Have you proved this at the throne of God’s right hand? Do you know it because you have proved His name, pleaded His name?

“That Christ is God I can avouch,
And for His people cares,

Since I have prayed to Him as such,
And He has heard my prayers."

Have you proved Him? "O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him" (Psa. 34. 8).

Where is the King of the Jews? And dear friends, He is coming again. He is coming again, and what a day that will be when He returns, "without sin unto salvation." When it says "without sin," it means without His people's sins. They are for ever cast behind His back, for ever dealt with by the agonies of Gethsemane and Calvary, for ever atoned for by His blood, for ever covered by His obedience. "Without sin." "Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9. 28).

"Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" Just one last thought seems to come to my mind. You know, dear friends, He should be evidenced in our lives, shouldn't He? "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" Where is that Christ-like spirit? Where is that evidence that we have Christ in us, the hope of glory? When do men take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus? This is the true, living church of God here below. There is a gathering together of those in whom Christ dwells and whose lives have been sanctified by His blessed, Spirit. That is the living church of the living God.

"Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" Well, one day, dear friends, those who are true, spiritual Jews will see Him face to face: "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off" (Isa. 33. 17). It may seem very far off to you this morning. What with one thing and another, indwelling sin, temptation, the world and all the crooks of the lot and the thorns in the way, it may seem a distant prospect, but just remember what the dear Saviour said not long before He died: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12. 32). Amen.

CHRIST'S LOVE RECEIVED UNDER SUFFERING

A letter by Samuel Rutherford to Robert Douglas, a minister of the gospel in Scotland, who served for a time as chaplain to King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, a champion for the Protestant cause.

Aberdeen,
March 7th, 1637

My very dear Brother,

Grace, mercy and peace be to you. I long to see you on paper. I cannot but write you, that this which I now suffer for is Christ's truth, because He hath been pleased to seal my sufferings with joy unspeakable

and glorious. I know that He will not put His seal upon blank paper. Christ hath not dumb seals, neither will He be a witness to a lie. I beseech you, my dear brother, to help me to praise and to lift Christ up on His throne above the shields of the earth. I am astonished and confounded at the greatness of His kindness to such a sinner. I know that Christ and I shall never be even; I shall die in His debt. He hath left an arrow in my heart that paineth me for want of real possession, and hell cannot quench this coal of God's kindling. I wish no man to slander Christ or His cross for my cause, for I have much cause to speak much good of Him. He hath brought me to a nick [higher notch or place] and degree of communion with Himself that I knew not before. The din and gloom of our Lord's cross is more fearful and hard than the cross itself. He taketh the bairns in His arms when they come to a deep water; at least, when they lose ground, and are put to swim, then His hand is under their chin.

Let me be helped by your prayers, and remember my love to your kind wife. Grace be with you.

Your brother, and Christ's prisoner,

Samuel Rutherford

“BEWARE OF COVETOUSNESS”

By Abraham Booth (1734-1806)

An extract from an address to a newly-ordained Pastor. We feel it is also gospel instruction to all pilgrims.

“And He said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which He possesseth” (Luke 12. 15).

I will now adopt the words of our Lord, and say, “Take heed, and beware of covetousness.” That evil turn of heart which is here proscribed [denounced] with such energy and such authority is, through the false names it assumes, and the pleas which it makes, to be considered extremely subtle and equally pernicious. It evidently stands opposed in Scripture to contentment with the allotments of Providence: “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb. 13. 5); to spiritual-mindedness (see Luke 12. 16-21, the parable of the rich man whose heart was taken up with building greater barns, and was not ready for death); and to real piety. “Covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col. 3. 5); “For this ye know, that no

whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Eph. 5. 5). See also 1 Cor. 5. 11.

It is an extremely evil disposition of the heart, of which, notwithstanding, very little account is made by the generality of those who profess the gospel of divine grace, except when it procures the stigma of penuriousness [stingy, mean or grudging], or the charge of injustice. But, whatever excuses or palliatives may be invented, either to keep the consciences of covetous professors quiet, or to support a good opinion of others respecting the reality of their piety, the New Testament declares them unworthy of communion in a church of Christ, and classes them with persons of profligate hearts and lives. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, *nor covetous*, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6. 9, 10).

The existence and habitual operation of this evil, therefore, must be considered as forming a character for hell. "For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth" (Psa. 10. 3). Nor need I inform you that, for a long course of ages, myriads of those who assumed the appellation of Christian ministers have been so notorious for an avaricious disposition, for the love of secular honours, and for the lust of clerical domination, as greatly to promote infidelity, and expose Christianity to contempt.

"Take heed," then, "and beware of covetousness." For neither the comfort, the honour, nor the usefulness of a man's life consisteth in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. "Let your conversation be without covetousness," and, possessing the necessities of life, without being indebted to any man, "be content with such things as ye have," for He who governs the world hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." For a man's happiness does not consist in things, but in spiritual mindedness, not that abundance after which the carnal heart so eagerly pants, and is adapted to gratify such as a fond imagination, pride of show, the love of secular influence, the lust of dominion, and a secret desire of lying as little as possible at the mercy of Providence. For we should not forget who it was that said, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" (Luke 18. 24).

I said, *Possessing the necessities of life, without being indebted to any man*. For this purpose, resolutely determine to live, if practicable, within the bounds of your income; not only so as to keep out of debt, but, if possible, to spare something for the poor.

“I DIE DAILY”

London.

September 5th, 1835

My dear Friend and Brother,

The bearer is my faithful brother, Mr. Wright, who is also one of our deacons, with whom you may freely speak of the grace that is in Christ Jesus, if you feel your heart so disposed. Alas for me! I feel often no heart for anything good, and then writing is my hardest task. So children must be enticed to obedience by sugar plums. A true and bold venture upon Christ is above nature. To live as a Christian, I find I must die daily. But this dying work is puzzling work to all my reasoning powers. I go on much as usual. I preach as well as I can, and bad is the best. I would not speak ill of my Master, but I do not, I cannot exalt Him sufficiently. I would see a long way before me if I could, but it pleases the Lord to keep me moping about in the dark, and that makes me feel that I am not fit to preach. I have sometimes a holiday and a sunny day, but I am apt to make too much of the day and the sunshine, and too little of Him who grants these unmerited favours.

In bodily health I am much better than I was when I saw you last, but in soul health much worse; not so much from fiery and active lusts, as from the deadly nightshade that grows in and about the walls of my mud cottage, producing stupefaction, forgetfulness, hardness of heart, and a train of other evils. I think I can guess at Paul's meaning: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Thus I could keep on grumbling all my letter through:

"O when will God our joy complete,
And make an end of sin?
When shall we walk the land and meet
No Canaanite therein?"

I hope your little cause will prove to be the cause of God indeed, and that many of the purchase of Immanuel's blood may have to bless God for His mercy in directing one and another of His own faithful servants to preach His most holy and precious gospel in N. God help you, my brother, to maintain a firm stand. And may God keep all His real children that are with you from fleshly and angry contentions. O what a sweet place is a throne of grace, with a peaceable conscience and the approbation of God! But the fire of fleshly contention will bring the Father's rod upon His children, and His frown is as death.

My best love to Mr. E. and to William. Tell William to study well the last three verses of Proverbs 4. My love to Mrs. B. and daughter, and others. Mercy and peace be with them and with you.

Ever yours,

H. Fowler

THE SACRED HUMANITY OF THE REDEEMER

CHAPTER 4

THE DEATH OF THE CROSS

By J.C. Philpot (1802-1869)

(Continued from page 359)

Well might the apostle, as if in a burst of holy admiration, cry aloud, as with trumpet voice, that heaven and earth might hear, "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3. 16). A mystery indeed it is, a great, a deep, an unfathomable mystery; for who can rightly understand how the divine Word, the eternal Son of God, was made flesh, and dwelt among us? "Who shall declare His generation?" (Isa. 53. 8), either that eternal generation whereby He is the only-begotten Son of God, or the generation of His sacred humanity in the womb of the virgin, when the Holy Ghost came upon her, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her? These are the things which "the angels desire to look into," which they cannot understand, but reverently adore. And well may we imitate their adoring admiration, not attempting to understand, but believe, love and revere; for well has it been said,

"Where reason fails, with all her powers,
There faith believes, and love adores."

Nor, if rightly taught and spiritually led, shall we find this a barren, dry or unprofitable subject. It is "the great mystery of godliness." Therefore all godliness is contained in it and flows out of it. There never was, there never will or can be a truly godly thought, feeling or desire – no, not one godly word or work, a godly heart or a godly life, which does not arise out of, and is not sustained by, the great mystery of an incarnate God. There may be, indeed frequently is, a legal holiness, a fleshly piety, a tithing of mint, anise and cummin, and a profusion of good works, so called, independent of the grace that dwells in the Lord the Lamb; but godliness, as consisting in a new and heavenly birth, with all its attendant fruits and graces, can only flow from the fulness of a covenant Head, communicating life to the members of His mystical body.

And this covenant Head, we know, is the Son of God, once manifest in the flesh and now exalted to the right hand of the Father. How clear on this point, that all life is in Him and out of Him, are His own words of grace and truth: "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14. 19); "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (John 14. 6); "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you" (John 6. 53); "I am the Vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing" (John 15. 5).

If, then, our hearts, as touched with an unction from above, are bent after godliness, as a felt blessing; if, as made daily more and more

sensible of our miserable emptiness and destitution, and the drying up of all creature springs of happiness and holiness, we long more and more to realise the inward possession of that promised well of water, springing up into everlasting life, we shall desire to look more and more into this heavenly mystery, and to have its transforming power and efficacy more feelingly and experimentally made known to our souls. "If any man thirst," said the blessed Lord, "let him come unto Me, and drink"; and to show that not only should he drink for his own soul's happiness, but for the benefit of others, He graciously added, "He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly" – or heart – "shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7. 37, 38). The whole of God's grace, mercy and truth is laid up in, is revealed through, is manifested by, the Son of His love; "For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell" (Col. 1. 19); and this as Immanuel, God with us. Thus His sacred humanity, in union with His divine Person, is the channel of communication through which all the love and mercy of God flow down to poor, guilty, miserable sinners, who believe in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.

If blessed then with faith in living exercise, we may draw near and behold the great mystery of godliness. To tread by faith upon this holy ground is to "come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Heb. 12. 22-24); for every blessing of the new covenant, if we are but favoured with a living faith in an incarnate God, is then experimentally as well as eternally ours.

* * *

The last acts of the suffering obedience of our adorable Redeemer are couched in the words of the apostle, "And became obedient unto death, *even the death of the cross*" (Phil. 2. 8). The death of Christ was the fulfilment of the purpose for which He came into the world, which was, to give "Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour" (Eph. 5. 2). "Now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. 9. 26). The sufferings, bloodshedding and death of the Lord Jesus Christ were a sacrifice offered for sin, and are therefore spoken of as a propitiation (Rom. 3. 25; 1 John 2. 2; 4. 10) and an atonement (Rom. 5. 11). But in a sacrifice two things are absolutely necessary:

1. That *the blood of the victim should be shed*, for "without shedding of blood is no remission"; "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Lev. 17. 11) and,

2. That *the victim should die*; for death being the penalty of disobedience (Gen. 2. 17; Ezek. 18. 4), the sacrifice offered as an atonement for sin cannot be complete without the death of the victim. In the sacrifice of Himself, offering up His sacred humanity on the altar of His Deity, the blessed Lord accomplished these two essentials of a propitiatory offering.

1. His blood was shed upon the cross – the actual, living blood of His sacred humanity. It is therefore called “the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pet. 1. 19), and “His own blood” (Acts 20 28; Heb. 9. 12). It was precious as flowing from His sacred humanity; precious, as stamped with all the validity and merit of Deity; precious in the sight of God as a sweet-smelling savour; and precious in the hearts of His people as cleansing them from all sin. Sin is an evil so dreadful, so hateful and abhorrent to His righteous character, so provoking to His justice and holiness, that God could not pardon it unless an atonement were made adequate to its fearful magnitude. Thousands of rams and ten thousands of rivers of oil could not atone for sin. Did all men consent to give their firstborn for their transgression, the fruit of their body for the sin of their soul (Mic. 6. 7), all could not suffice to outweigh the magnitude of sin. Lebanon is not sufficient for a burnt offering. Nothing short of the blood of the only-begotten Son of God could be an atonement of sufficient worth, of equivalent value.

2. But the death of the victim was also required. He who freely and voluntarily stood in the sinner’s place must die in his room, or the substitution could not be effectual. Here, then, we see the mystery of the death of Jesus. There was no natural mortality* in that sacred humanity which the Lord assumed in the womb of the virgin. And yet He took a nature which could die by a voluntary act. The whole of His obedience in His state of humiliation was voluntary. Therefore the last act of it was as voluntary as the first – the death on the cross as much as the assumption in the virgin. The Lord’s own words are decisive here:

* Though we have in our preceding chapters used the word “immortal” as applicable to the sacred humanity of the blessed Lord, we are well aware that it is a term not fully appropriate; for the word “immortal” strictly means “not capable of death,” and is in this sense applied to the soul of man as not only not dying with the body, but not capable of dying.

In this sense, the humanity of the blessed Lord was not immortal, for it could and did die. If such a word were admissible, “unmortal,” or “non-mortal” would be a preferable term – denying that it was mortal, and yet not asserting that it could not die. The main difficulty arises from the inherent defect of human language as applied to heavenly mysteries. The mind naturally contemplates only two states of existence: 1. What must necessarily die, and, 2. What cannot possibly die. The first it terms “mortal,” the second it calls “immortal.” A third idea, that of a body which does not necessarily die, and yet is capable of dying, as being a conception lying out of its reach, it has invented no word properly to express.

“Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father” (John 10. 17, 18).

The very merit of His obedience unto death, whereby it became capable of being imputed for righteousness to the church of God, consisted mainly in two things: the dignity of the obedient Sufferer and the voluntariness of the sacrifice as an act of obedience to the will of God. Had our blessed Lord not been God, and that as the eternal Son of God, there would have been no merit in His sufferings, bloodshedding and death. As the brightness of God’s glory and the express image of His Person, as His co-eternal Son, He thought it not robbery – no unhallowed, disallowable claim – to be equal with God (Phil. 2. 6); and therefore the very infinity of Deity itself attached to His words and works, so as to stamp efficacious merit upon them. It was not because His humanity was perfect that it was meritorious. Had His humanity been as perfect as it was, if Deity were not in conjunction with it, no merit could have been attached to it any more than there was merit in the obedience of Adam, or in that of an angel. But being God as well as man, the merit of Deity was stamped upon all the acts of the obedient suffering humanity, so that, as we have sometimes said, Godhead was in every drop of His precious blood.

Again, if the life of the blessed Lord had been violently taken away, contrary to His will, where would have been the obedience unto death? Had He been killed, so to speak, by the cross – had died because He could not help dying, had His life been violently torn from Him – where would have been the laying down of His life as the last act of His voluntary obedience? What power could man have had over Him? Had He so willed, He could have freed Himself from the hands of His enemies. Therefore He said unto Pilate, “Thou couldest have no power at all against Me, except it were given Thee from above” (John 19. 11). And again, “Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?” (Matt. 26. 53). When, then, the band of men and officers from the chief priests came to take Him with lanterns, and torches, and weapons, He freely “went forth” to yield Himself up; but when He said, “I am He,” or rather, as the words literally mean, “I AM,” the glory of His eternal Deity so flashed forth, that “they went backward, and fell to the ground” (John 18. 3-6).

Thus truly was He “brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth” (Isa. 53. 7). What heart can conceive, what tongue express what His holy soul endured when “the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquities of us all”? In the Garden of Gethsemane, what a load of guilt,* what a weight of sin,

* Jesus was guiltless, but endured the punishment of our guilt. Ed.

what an intolerable burden of the wrath of God did that sacred humanity endure, until the pressure of sorrow and woe forced the drops of blood to fall as sweat from His brow. The human nature in its weakness recoiled, as it were, from the cup of anguish put into His hand. His body could scarce bear the load that pressed Him down; His soul, under the waves and billows of God's wrath, sank in deep mire where there was no standing, and came into deep waters where the floods overflowed Him. (Psa. 69. 1, 2). And how could it be otherwise when that sacred humanity was enduring all the wrath of God, suffering the very pangs of hell, and wading in all the depths of guilt and terror?

When the blessed Lord was made sin (or a sin-offering) for us, He endured in His holy soul all the pangs of distress, horror, alarm, misery and guilt that the elect would have felt in hell for ever; and not only as any one of them would have felt, but as the collective whole would have experienced under the outpouring of the everlasting wrath of God. The anguish, the distress, the darkness, the condemnation, the shame, the guilt, the unutterable horror, that any or all of His quickened family have ever experienced under a sense of God's wrath, the curse of the law, and the terrors of hell, are only faint, feeble reflections of what the Lord felt in the garden and on the cross; for there were attendant circumstances in His case which are not, and indeed cannot be in theirs, and which made the distress and agony of His holy soul, both in nature and degree, such as none but He could feel or know.

He as the eternal Son of God, who had lain in His bosom before all worlds, had known all the blessedness and happiness of the love and favour of the Father – His own Father – shining upon Him, for He was “by Him, as one brought up with Him: and ... was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him” (Prov. 8. 30). When, then, instead of love He felt His displeasure, instead of the beams of His favour He experienced the frowns and terrors of His wrath, instead of the light of His countenance He tasted the darkness and gloom of desertion – what heart can conceive, what tongue express the bitter anguish which must have wrung the soul of our suffering Surety under this agonising experience?* A few drops of the wrath of God let down into the conscience of a child of God have made many a living soul cry out, “While I suffer Thy terrors I am distracted. Thy fierce wrath goeth over

* Those who deny the eternal Sonship of Jesus rob Him of His grace as well as of His glory, by diminishing His sufferings, and thus really strip away the greatness, and consequently much of the merit of His sacrifice. It was because He was God's own true and proper Son He so deeply, so keenly felt His wrathful displeasure. A son by office, by mere name – without any filial relationship but a bare title which might have been any other – could not feel towards his adopted Father what the true, the proper, the only-begotten Son of God felt to His heavenly Father. One error always lets in another, and thus we see that the denial of the eternal Sonship of Christ lowers and disparages the greatness, and consequently the merit of the atonement. Let the deniers of the eternal Sonship look to this.

me; Thy terrors have cut me off” (Psa. 88. 15, 16). But what is all that Job, Heman, Jeremiah or Jonah experienced, compared with the floods of anguish and terror which all but overwhelmed the soul of our blessed Lord? We therefore read of Him in the garden, when the first pangs of His agony came on, that He “began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy,” and this made Him say to His three disciples, who were to be eye-witnesses of His sufferings (1 Pet. 5. 1), “My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death” (Mark 14. 33, 34).

So great was that load that His human nature must have sunk beneath the weight – His body and soul been rent asunder – but for four sustaining props: the power of His Deity, for though that purposely did not display its strength, it remained in firm union with His sacred humanity; the help and support of the Holy Ghost sustaining His human nature under the load laid upon it; the joy set before Him, which enabled Him in the prospect to endure the cross, “despising the shame” (Heb. 12. 2); and the strengthening of the ministering angel sent from heaven (Luke 22. 43). Thus supported and sustained, our gracious Redeemer sank not in the deep waters, but, as our great High Priest, “offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared” (Heb. 5. 7) – not as some have foolishly thought and said, fearing the miscarrying of His undertaking, or that He should sink into hell, but because He feared His heavenly Father with the reverence of a Son,* for filial fear, with every other grace, was in the heart of Jesus as His treasure (Isa. 11. 2, 3).

Let us ever bear in mind that the sufferings of the holy soul of Jesus were as real, that is, as really felt, as the sufferings of His sacred body, and a thousand times more intense and intolerable. Though beyond description painful and agonising, yet the sufferings of the body were light indeed compared with the sufferings of the soul. It is so with the saints of God themselves, when the Lord lays judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet in their conscience, and lets down a sense of His anger and displeasure into their soul. What is all bodily suffering compared to a sense of God’s displeasure and the arrows of His wrath sticking in the conscience?

So it was with our great High Priest, when both as sacrificer and sacrificed, alike priest and victim, He was bound with the cords of love and obedience to the horns of the altar (Psa. 118. 27). Surely never was there such a pang since the foundations of the earth were laid, as that which rent and tore the soul of the Redeemer when the last drop of agony was poured into the already overflowing cup, and He cried out, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” Nature herself

* The margin reads, “for His piety,” but the truer and more literal meaning is, “on account of His reverential fear,” “Had God in honour” – Luther.

sympathised with His sorrow, and was moved at His cry, for the earth shook, the sun withdrew His light, and the graves yielded up their dead. Yet thus was redemption's work accomplished, sin atoned for and blotted out, the wrath of God appeased, everlasting righteousness brought in, and the church for ever reconciled and saved.

When, then, the Lord had been fully baptized with His baptism of suffering and blood, when He had drunk the cup of sorrow and anguish to its last dregs, and had rendered all the obedience which the law demanded and the will of God required, He cried out with a loud voice that heaven and earth might hear, "It is finished!" and then, and not till then, He meekly bowed His head, laid down His life, as the last act of His voluntary, suffering obedience, and gave up the ghost.

(To be continued)

BOOK REVIEWS

The Baptist Chapel, Lamberhurst, 1816-2016: A Time for Thanksgiving, by Matthew J. Hyde; hardback; 141 pages; the book is free but there is a post and packing charge of £2. Obtainable from the Pastor at Lamberhurst, Mr. J.R Rutt, 5 Flimwell Close, Flimwell, Wadhurst, East Sussex, TN5 7PP.

There is something both humbling and encouraging in reading the accounts of the Lord's gracious dealings with His people, and this book is no exception. God's sovereignty has often given us cause to look on in awe. Sometimes the congregation of a seemingly-prosperous place of worship has suddenly been scattered and a chapel closed. At another, a few praying souls have met together under much discouragement, and yet in sweet unity have been enabled to continue, and abundantly to prove the Lord's blessing. The church at Lamberhurst has indeed cause for thanksgiving in looking back over two hundred years.

The chapel was originally built as a branch of the church at Matfield under the pastorate of Mr. Thomas Gladwish, who preached alternately at the two chapels. Later in 1851, when a new pastor was elected, the friends at Lamberhurst were given an honourable dismissal to form a separate church, Mr. Thomas Ray becoming pastor. Following Mr. Ray's death in 1878, Mr. William Boorman took the pastorate in 1881, continuing for forty-five years until his death in 1926. From the relative prosperity of its earlier years, the congregation declined in the 1930s and was reduced to just seven elderly attendants in 1957. At this juncture, when closure seemed to be almost inevitable, the Lord gave a gracious promise to the deacon, Mr. E. Relf, "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." From that time there have been many occasions when the Lord has given marked evidences of His favour, not least in an increasing congregation and the provision of two godly pastors.

This book has been well researched, and sensitively written by an author who can mingle the historical background with the concerns of the spiritual prosperity of Zion. It is also well illustrated with photographs of many of the people God has used in maintaining the church and congregation over so many years. At the end of the book are given two sermons preached by Mr. Jabez Field, pastor from 1973-1991, and a further sermon and prayer meeting address by the present pastor, Mr. Jabez Rutt.

We give an extract of just one sentence from page 62, describing circumstances in 1971: "What a picture of a favoured church – love toward the brethren, the Lord's hand in bringing souls in to hear the Word, blessing in the pulpit, and a speaking one to another of the goodness of the Lord." May this long be true at Lamberhurst.

John A. Kingham, Luton

Jewels from John Newton, compiled by Miller Ferrie; hardback; 366 pages; price £15.50; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

John Newton (1725-1807) is a name endeared to the hearts of many readers by the Christ-exalting, experimental nature of his hymns, which we trust have been owned and used of God in the salvation and blessing of many souls. Perhaps less well known about this former slave trader, who became by God's great grace a preacher of the gospel, is the fact that he was also a prolific letter writer and the author of several works. Selections from his writings have here been compiled into a book of daily readings.

The spiritually-minded reader will discover with delight that the same "self-renouncing, grace admiring" spirit that so marked his hymns is also that which breathes throughout these selected portions; many precious jewels of sweet truths will be found scattered amongst its pages. It was for this reason that the editor, Miller Ferrie, a retired English teacher in the United States and married to the pastor of Grace Reformed Church of the Lord Jesus, Leipzig, North Dakota, felt constrained to compile these readings. In her short preface she writes, "I have been greatly blessed by the writings of John Newton... What impresses me about this man is his honesty in readily admitting his struggles, sinfulness and failures. This aspect of his writings has been such an encouragement to me personally...."; and again concerning Newton, "He never ceased to be amazed at God's grace in the gospel, and it was this grace that he sought to proclaim to his dying day." We wonder how many others there are who, at least concerning their spiritual testimony, will speak similar things to these which we profess to hold dear.

The book is attractively laid out and well presented. John Newton's style of writing is exceptionally easy to follow and, in the reviewer's opinion, almost beautiful. We did find a few minor typographical errors in the book.

Occasionally, as is often the case with daily portions, we found that the sense of the portion seemed incomplete with respect to the text that was chosen to go with it. Yet we would also readily submit that the book's excellent content amply compensates for this shortcoming.

The portions were selected in groups from Newton's works, so that there is often a continuity found spread over several successive portions. Very

occasionally this may give the daily portion an incomplete doctrinal sense as the argument is culminated in the next portion. However, this is only a minor criticism and by no means deflects from the very profitable nature of this book. Some of the truths that John Newton brings forth are simple, yet so profound that we found they made a lasting impression upon us: we hope for good.

In the reviewer's opinion, this book, above many other daily portion books, merits a place alongside *Through Baca's Vale* and *Ears from Harvested Sheaves* – those very excellent daily portions of J.C. Philpot – which we find, even when we just dip into them, to be the finest of the wheat, and living streams from Lebanon.

We highly recommend this book, and submit that it is most appropriately titled: *Jewels from John Newton*.

Stephen P. Rosier, Maidstone

OBITUARY

John Sayers, member of the church at Mount Zion, Leatherhead for 25 years and a deacon for 22 years, entered his eternal rest on March 5th, 2015, aged 92.

Father was born into a godly home in South Norwood, Croydon on September 24th, 1922. His parents, Ebenezer Sayers and Grace Ward, had married in 1919 at Mount Zion, Leatherhead. It was in the years immediately following the Great War that our father was born, with an older and younger sister. In his personal notes our father recalled: "My mother often related their early life in Croydon; the difficulties they experienced in finding a house and how they were provided for. It is this that I have often been led to meditate on – how the Lord overrules all the matters of our lives, as the hymn says,

"Parents, native place, and time,
All appointed were by Him."

The family attended West Street Chapel in father's earliest years, during the pastorate of Mr. Brooke. Just over two years later, in March 1925, his father contracted septicaemia, or "sleepy sickness" as it was termed, following a tooth extraction, and passed away a week later at the age of 27, when father was only two years old. The grief and consequent trials of widowhood to our grandmother can only be imagined, being only 35 years of age and remaining a widow for over 45 years until her death in 1970. She bore a patient and gracious spirit through many paths of providence, as her children referred to at the time of her death: "Mother was specially blessed with these words: 'And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again ... and your joy no man taketh from you.' Often she would refer to these words and the solid comfort they

were to her in all her pathway. Left a widow with three children under four years, the Lord wonderfully provided" (*Gospel Standard* 1971). Father also added: "As my father died when I was a child, I have no memory of him, but have been told that he was a godly man, and so my upbringing was the result of my dear mother's care and I am sure, her prayers. Due to my father's death we had to leave Croydon and were able to find our first home in Leatherhead."

Thus began our father's long association with Mount Zion Chapel. Father's spiritual beginnings cannot be easily marked. When his Grandfather Ward passed away, he wrote, "The matter that remained with me was his death. My Uncle George Ward told us that when he came to see him shortly before his end, he told him how he felt 'to be nothing,' and yet 'to have a sight of heaven.' That matter of nothingness has remained with me and I hope will remain to my dying day. Medley's hymn 172 has a sweet line that reads, 'Be something, and yet nothing, there.'"

Father's working life began at the age of 14, as an office boy in an accountancy practice in Dorking, until the war intervened. Father joined the R.A.F. in 1942, qualifying as a pilot in 1943, travelling to the U.S.A., Canada and parts of Africa. He had a love for flying, often speaking about it later in life, although he was often fearful that it was a snare to him. He had thoughts of going into civil aviation once the war was over, but this was not the Lord's will for him. Speaking of it later he said, "I must say on looking back over those years how the Lord watched over me in all the many dangers and difficulties, preserving me from death on several occasions. At one time I was on a ship going to Egypt crowded with troops, and so one tried to find a peaceful spot for a quiet read. I clambered up on to a pile of life rafts with a blanket and with a copy of Charnock's *Works* in my hand. Not long after the crew came out with hoses to wash the decks down and I was getting drenched and so tried to descend from the pile of rafts but fell onto the deck and was knocked unconscious for about two hours. On coming to, the line came to mind,

‘The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.’

At that time I was bent on continuing to fly, but in the end I felt that as my demobilization number had come up, it was more right to come home and settle down. Looking back, I feel that the Lord overruled things at that time and kept me from what would have been a very different life. On returning (to civilian life) at the beginning of 1947, I found life rather difficult and different to what I had been through, but was enabled to settle down." Years later, he also recalled how he was given instructions that he would be flying to Israel. Father said how

much he was looking forward to visiting the places of biblical interest. On his flight to Israel he was unexpectedly informed that he was not to land and was most upset. As he was pondering his disappointment in not being able to see the sights of the Holy Land, the words dropped in: "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

In 1946 our mother was moved in providence to Leatherhead, and it was here that our parents met and began their courtship in 1949. Our parents were married on August 12th, 1953 by Pastor Howard Stovold at Mount Zion. Mr. Stovold's ministry was clearly a great help to father, and he often spoke very fondly of him in later years, particularly of one time on the word, "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." They lived at Langley Vale on Epsom Downs, with our mother's parents for a number of years, where their four eldest children were born, and then in 1963 they moved to Leatherhead when they were provided with the means to purchase their own home. Father wrote: "It was during the early years of our marriage that I feel things really began in a spiritual sense." When reading to his little daughter Jane one Sunday afternoon, he came to the words, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow," which so affected him, he had to leave off reading. He wrote, "How often since that time have I had to ask the Lord to confirm that that was real and to plead with David all the rest of that Psalm."

Mr. Stovold left Mount Zion chapel quite suddenly in 1963, and this was a great grief to father. He writes of this time in relation to his own experience: "I was cleaning the chapel one day and seemed low in myself, but got round the dusting and seemed to feel what a low spot to be in. Following this I was down at Horsham to some services and Uncle George Ward asked me how things were with me. I broke down and told him of these feelings of being nothing and then we parted. What has tried me is that one reads of a 'law work' being part of the experience of the saints. Hart writes, 'To be cured and not be wounded,' and in his hymn 'The Dialogue' concludes:

'Soul: But I'm cold, I'm dark, I'm dead.
Believer: Jesus will revive thee.'

"Thinking on this, the word dropped in, 'By the law is the knowledge of sin,' and as I believe John Owen writes, 'The life of a Christian consists of greater and greater views of the grace of God to overcome his sin as he progresses to his end.' To realise that we are found as the Apostle Peter says, as 'grass' – 'surely the people is grass' (Isa. 40. 7). We have to wait for His appearing and beg our way along."

Having worked for many years at Herbert Parnell and Co., accountants in Woking, in 1977 father joined the Trinitarian Bible

Society as Financial Secretary. These were the most enjoyable years of his earthly calling, working alongside the Lord's people in the translation and distribution of the Word of God. He retired in 1987, but retained an active interest in the Society.

For many years, father was called on to pray at the services at Mount Zion, despite feeling unable to join the church. He served as chapel caretaker, auditing the accounts and also entertaining ministers. In 1990, following a regular meeting with the Pastor over the church accounts, father felt able to tell him some of the Lord's dealings with him. After that he was able to relate this to the church. Often so composed, father was quite broken down in relating his experience to the members at the church meeting. He wrote at this juncture: "Mr. Charlie Beadle seemed led on his recent visit to set out plainly the path of baptism, and the word, 'Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ' seemed much in my mind afterwards. The matter of baptism has often tried me, as I see that it is part of the entry into church fellowship, and yet it is the *one baptism of the Spirit* that seems the important one." Father was baptized on August 1st, 1990 and joined the church. He was made a deacon in 1992 and served the cause in this capacity until he moved to Harpenden Bethesda Home in October 2014.

Father was a gracious example to us as a family, and his conversation on better things and pointing us to Christ as the solid rock, was such a favour. An avid reader, he loved the writings of many Puritan writers including John Owen, but also many others. He found great encouragement in the hymns of Hart and Berridge.

In 1997 our parents moved to a smaller home in Leatherhead. This they saw as a wonderful provision in so many ways, and often mentioned the Lord's goodness to them in this regard. He was often an encouragement to his children during this period. He wrote to one of them shortly before they joined the church: "May you find as you come before the church the liberty to tell of the dear Lord's work upon your soul. As you are led in that way of dependence upon Him alone, I am sure all needed help will be given. It is a very narrow pathway that has to be trodden, as many have described it, and no doubt as you continue you will find it to be a daily exercise to be delivered from the many temptations that have to be experienced. The hymn says, 'But grace, though the smallest, shall surely be tried.' All the verses conclude thus, and I am sure that you will find it so. Above all things though, I would commend the Scriptures as the only guide. Verse 6 of hymn 814 is very clear:

'This written Word with reverence treat;
Join prayer with each inspection;

And be not wise in self-conceit;
'Tis folly to perfection.'

"I would also thoroughly recommend the hymns of Joseph Hart. His experience has been recommended from many quarters."

At his youngest son's wedding he remarked with thankfulness to the Lord in looking back over the many happy years of his own marriage: "Both mother and I wish to acknowledge our thanks to Him. It is this matter of receiving, as the Lord says, 'What hast thou that thou didst not receive?' that we would like to thank the dear Lord for all His gifts to us each. You two now joined, and we two near the end of our course, need to reflect on the path with thankfulness, and to look forward, trusting in that One who alone can bring us safely to Him."

As father was brought into senior years, it was as if the Lord took him back to the foundation truths in the Word of God. He would often quote with much emphasis the opening verses of the Gospel according to John. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." He was a character who was led gently, much like Lydia, "whose heart the Lord opened." This was a concern to father at times, as he was not able to point to a particular place and time where the Lord first met with him. He was never one to speak of great things regarding his own spiritual experience, and yet he often gave a glimpse through comments in conversations of a soul deeply taught of the Lord. His natural disposition was gentle and kindly, which endeared him to many. He would often counsel the family about the need to be brought by the work of the Holy Spirit to the place where we are nothing in ourselves that Christ might be All in all. As Samuel Medley puts it so aptly:

"Though of myself I nothing am,
I'm dear to God and to the Lamb;
Though I have nothing, I confess,
All things in Jesus I possess."

Father loved Mount Zion, his Pastor and the friends at Leatherhead. At our parents' golden wedding in 2003 he remarked: "We feel Mount Zion to be our spiritual home and for which we feel so thankful in every sense. We feel we can say the Lord has ordered all our steps, and all our needs have been supplied in abundance." In latter years, the Pastor and his wife would visit father and mother each Thursday evening, which they both much appreciated. As a family, we very much appreciated the practical and loving support given to our father and mother, especially in their final few years, by the friends at Mount Zion.

In July 2013 our dear mother was taken home very suddenly. This was a great loss to father, for he so deeply loved her, but he was given

much grace to bear it, despite being 90 years of age. Father was able to continue to live at home, and one of his granddaughters lodged with him, enabling him to continue to attend the chapel and lead a relatively normal life. He underwent an operation to remove cataracts from his eyes around this time, and this restored his sight significantly, so much so that he was able to read large portions of Scripture. During this time his memory began to fail, but he was kept much in prayer. On one occasion when reading and praying with his granddaughter after breakfast, he said, "The name of Christ – what a wonderful thing that is!" On another occasion not long before moving to Bethesda, he quoted the text, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." On one occasion at home, holding up his Bible, he said to one of his sons-in-law, "This is what I want. This is all I want." He also commented, "Every single word is so important."

With failing health, he moved into Harpenden Bethesda, where he was lovingly cared for by the staff. He suffered a number of chest infections, which resulted in several periods in hospital. Despite increasing weakness of body, his mind remained wonderfully clear, and he was able to read and pray with the family, often Psalms 23 or 121. He particularly loved to read John 17, which was his theme almost constantly after mother passed away. On another occasion, two of his family went to visit him in hospital, and as they came into the ward, they could see him in a corner with his Bible open on the bedside trolley in front of him, totally engrossed by what he was reading. They almost felt they should leave him alone. On another occasion, he said, "I've just been thinking about those words, 'By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.'"

He entered Luton and Dunstable Hospital for the last time in February 2015, suffering from heart failure. Father initially rallied with increased medication, but it soon became clear that his end was near and he was gently brought down to his end. Many of his children and grandchildren visited him in the two weeks before he died. During this time, he spoke to a number of his children. To one he said, "The most important thing is that we have union with Christ." To another he said, "I do wonder how things will be with me health-wise, but I just have to look to the Lord every day."

Most of the family gathered around his bed on his last day on earth. He breathed his last on Thursday, March 5th, at 5.40 p.m., the Lord gently taking him to be with Himself. Having spent so much time around his bedside in the final weeks of father's life, we felt as a family the thankfulness that his earthly sufferings were at an end. "So He bringeth them unto their desired haven."

We were favoured to have a loving father with a gentle, kindly disposition. Over a long life he was brought through many things and,

though not one to speak much of himself spiritually, bore a continual witness to the Lord through his walk and most of all referred to the Scriptures so frequently in conversation. We have lost a very dear father, grandfather and great-grandfather who loved the house of God and sought, with our mother, to lead us in the fear of the Lord.

The funeral was held on March 27th, 2015 at Mount Zion, before a large gathering of friends and family. He was buried with our dear mother in the nearby churchyard, near to many of his forbears, to await the glorious resurrection day. His Pastor remarked at the grave with much feeling: "Now we have laid to rest in this same grave two dear saints of God. My mind went to this – they are together. They were brought together by the providence of God; they were married together; they walked together through life and all its trials and concerns; they were heirs together of the grace of life, that their prayers should not be hindered; they were together in the church militant and we believe they will rise together to be in the church triumphant. O what a blessing that unity is!" The committal was closed with the singing of Psalm 23. It was requested that the grace should be sung afterwards, and the final verse seemed so apposite in considering all the earthly toil that father had now been delivered from:

"In paradise, within the gates,
A nobler entertainment waits,
Fruits new and old, laid up in store,
Where we shall feast, and want no more."

Truly as a family we feel to have lost a loving father and to many others a brother beloved.

The Family

Note from his Pastor:

We as a church at Mount Zion, Leatherhead, have lost a pillar and have cause to mourn our weakness. It was very notable how sad our dear friend was to leave the chapel where his soul was fed and he attended all his life.

We might just say he was the last of a family of Sayers who have attended the cause since its opening in 1869.

Peter Woodhams

Ye that go to the Father, and think to set yourselves in His presence, and stand as the objects of His delight, on the footing of your own righteousness, shame and confusion of face will cover you before you are aware. Paul durst not be found in it, but looked upon it as dung; and dung, you know, is offensive in itself and unable to support the man that stands upon it.

T. Crisp

THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH

John 1. 14

See what glory now surrounds us,
 God made flesh, and born a Babe;
 Here's a mystery quite confounds us,
 Yet 'twas done our souls to save.
 What a stoop, my soul adore it,
 Omnipresence clothed in clay;
 Reason's power must fall before it,
 Faith alone can it survey.

The eternal God of glory,
 Veiled Himself in human flesh;
 Who can tell the pleasing story,
 And not feel a sacred blush;
 Blush to think how we're beloved,
 Yet what little love we show;
 Matchless was the love that movéd
 God to dwell with worms below.

All the glories of creation,
 Seem but like corrupted earth;
 When compared with that salvation,
 Couched in the Redeemer's birth;
 Mourning sinner, lost and starving,
 Jesus Christ was born for thee,
 Born to bear thy base deserving,
 Born to set thee fully free.

Born to give His life a ransom,
 For a vile, rebellious race;
 When the birth of Christ we mention,
 May we feel His matchless grace;
 Shout His praises and adore Him,
 Cast upon Him all our care,
 Humbly prostrating before Him,
 All His ways and works revere.

William Gadsby (1773-1844)

NOTICE OF DEATH

Brian Hedley Honeysett, deacon at Providence Chapel, Shoreham-by-Sea, passed away into eternal rest on October 19th, 2016, aged 86 years. Our late friend was very helpful in installing sound, relay and loop systems into many of our chapels. "Taken away from the evil to come" (Isa. 57. 1).

THE
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OUR MAGAZINES

We humbly acknowledge divine help. May Christ be exalted in the pages of the *Gospel Standard*. May the pilgrims in Zion be fed and watered.

The Editor