

THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
JANUARY 2015

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

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NEW YEAR ADDRESS

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If there is one time when we are specially called on to remember our mercies, surely it is as we pass from one year to the next. We read recently of an old couple who every Saturday evening devoted half an hour to talk over the mercies of the past week, and to bless God for them. May we ever be delivered from the spirit of ingratitude in the nine lepers who were cleansed, and yet never returned to give thanks to the Lord Jesus.

Ingratitude is one of our greatest sins, especially when, in looking back, we consider our sin and unworthiness. "He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." May the goodness of God lead us to repentance.

"Monstrous ingratitude I own,  
Well worthy wrath divine;  
Can blood such dreadful sins atone?  
Yes, blood as rich as Thine."

There are mercies in providence and grace; in home, life, family and circumstances; in the church of God; in deliverance from trouble – and numerous other mercies. Sadly we often take them for granted. What a special mercy it is to be brought safely through another year! "He that has loved us *bears* us through." Prayers heard and answered, deliverances granted, strength equal to our day, promises fulfilled, needs supplied.

"All creatures to His goodness owe  
Their being and their breath;  
But greatest gratitude should flow  
From souls redeemed from death."

"Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift."

We need to be reminded that we are delivered from dangers unseen as well as seen. Some have been brought through great troubles, but others have been mercifully spared. In Puritan times a father and his son arranged to meet each other, each travelling twenty miles on horseback. On arrival the son cried, "O father, I have so much to be thankful for. My horse stumbled three times, but it neither fell nor threw me off" – to which his father replied: "I am equally thanking the Lord for His mercy in that my horse never stumbled once!"

It is not surprising that Nehemiah used the word, “*Manifold mercies*” (9. 19, 27) – so many and so varied. “Yet” (despite Israel’s dreadful rebellion and sin) “Thou in Thy *manifold mercies* forsookest them not in the wilderness”: “In the time of their trouble, when they cried unto Thee, Thou heardest them from heaven; and according to Thy *manifold mercies* Thou gavest them saviours.”

But in the church of God the last year has been a time of plucking up as well as planting. So it must ever be: “A time to be born, a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted.” Each one of us has been planted to live on this earth for a little time, but certainly the time for plucking up lies before each one of us. Every new year reminds us that we are nearer that time than ever before. If taught by the Holy Spirit, our great concern will be to be right, to be ready, clothed in the Saviour’s righteousness and washed in His precious blood.

If, through mercy, we are plants of the Father’s right hand planting, uprooted from the world and a state of unconcern and nature’s darkness and death, and planted in better soil, rooted and grounded in Christ, then that final plucking up will be a blessed time. It will be a fulfilment of that beautiful word: “My Beloved is gone down into His garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, *and to gather lilies*” (Song 6. 2).

That is delightful language for those who are graciously prepared:

“Lord, I believe Thou hast prepared  
 (Unworthy though I be)  
 For me a blood-bought, free reward,  
 A golden harp for me!

“’Tis strung, and tuned, for endless years,  
 And formed by power divine;  
 To sound, in God the Father’s ears,  
 No other name but Thine.”

We pray that our churches may still be favoured with the Lord’s gracious presence and kept faithful to the truth. We are still favoured with the glorious gospel of the grace of God among us.

Sadly, things generally in our once-favoured country are in a dreadful state spiritually. We cannot agree with much of William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army’s, theology or some of his methods; but no one spoke a truer word when he said the next century would live to witness six things in the churches:

1. Religion without the Holy Ghost.
2. Christianity without Christ.
3. Forgiveness without repentance.
4. Salvation without regeneration.

5. Politics without God.
6. Heaven without hell.

How solemnly true his prediction has proved to be!

We never thought we would live to witness the awful departure from God of our country. In high places in politics, little honesty. God is not in all their thoughts. Men of stature are missing. Wisdom seems to be taken away. “Lo, they have rejected the Word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them?” Good laws and age-old customs are removed; God-dishonouring laws are brought in. The legalising of same-sex marriages must be one of the most disgraceful acts in the history of our nation.

A spirit of dreadful hatred of the very mention of Christianity has appeared. We feel for our little ones born into this awful world, and our young people who at school, college or work have to mingle with it. Our deepest sympathy is with those who are suffering open persecution because of their stand for the truth and right things (e.g. open air preachers, registrars who will not register same-sex weddings, teachers who refuse to teach things contrary to Scripture, hotel owners who refuse same-sex couples, etc.) We gladly support societies like The Christian Institute who strive to stand against these things, and whose voice is heard in high places.

If ever there was a time when God’s people (especially the young ones) need to be kept, it is the present. But sin, Satan and the world can never erase that glorious truth: “God is able.” (Able to save to the uttermost; able to keep from falling; able to deliver; able to do exceeding and far abundantly above all we can ask or think; able to make all grace to abound.)

“Lord, help us by Thy grace to stand,  
And every trial well endure,  
Preservèd by Thy sovereign hand,  
And by Thy oath and covenant sure.”

We have been encouraged by the case in Scripture of Obadiah. The background is one of dreadful apostasy in Israel, similar to Britain today. The name of Jehovah was despised or even forgotten. Baal reigned supreme.

But when a little boy was born in that evil day, his parents were not ashamed to call him Obadiah, which means “servant of the Lord Jehovah,” or, “worshipper of the Lord Jehovah.” And so their prayers were answered. He feared the Lord from his youth – at a time when Elijah felt he was the only one left.

And what of a life to be lived at that frightening time (when Jezebel was slaying the people of the Lord – something like Christians in the

Middle East today). But almost unbelievably he was able to stand firm even in his exalted position as governor of wicked Ahab's household. It seems an impossibility – but we are told the secret: “Now Obadiah feared the Lord *greatly*.”

What an encouragement this is for those who are called to work in a hostile environment; for young people going to university; for those surrounded with a thousand temptations; and for godly parents and grandparents who are concerned for them! The Lord is able to uphold them.

At the same time we deeply sympathise with the suffering church in Syria and Iraq and other places in the Middle East, and would seek to remember them continually in our prayers in public and in private.

We wonder what impression the various articles in our magazine make on our readers through the year. Do some things remain? Do some have a lasting effect?

We were deeply impressed by the emphasis that J.C. Philpot placed on godly living. Writing of his friend J.C. Tuckwell (*Gospel Standard* 2014, page 316), how Philpot emphasised the importance of a ministry that insisted on vital godliness, in life as well as profession! Stephen Offer [Tuckwell's minister] “well taught and exercised in the things of God ... strongly insisted upon a godly, consistent walk.” This was a leading feature in his ministry.

Most people have thought of the old people connected with the founding of the *Gospel Standard* as extremely strong on doctrine and insisting on deep experience. But no people ever insisted more strongly on the fruits of the spirit as being seen in the life of the believer. Stigmatized as antinomians, in their Christ-exalting lives they put to silence the accusations made against them. And it was the beauty of their lives that affected so many around them – the ungodly, some of them savingly convinced; others, against their own wills, compelled to gaze and admire.

So when J.C. Philpot's friend was buried. He could “live thirty-eight years in a small village where every eye was upon him, and besides a sweet and marked experience of the blessing of God, so carry out his profession of religion as not during all that time, amidst much temptation, to have been betrayed into any one inconsistent, unbecoming word or deed, and to live and die not only in the esteem and affections of the people of God, but to win for himself the general esteem and respect of all who can value amiability of disposition, kindness in word and action, and consistency and uprightness of life” (page 345).

What a witness! And what a testimony for the present day! We have included this month an article by J.C. Philpot on this important

subject (page 12) and a beautiful account by John Kershaw of the sanctifying effect of grace in one of his church members (page 21).

Many, many examples might be given, to the honour and glory of God, from more recent times. We give just one.

Er Grace, the godly pastor at Ossett, Yorkshire, for fifty-three years worked down the pit as a coal miner. Apparently it was the custom for the miners each week to estimate how much coal they had mined. They were paid accordingly; but, of course, there were regular check ups. Normally it was found that most miners had claimed for more coal than what they had mined.

When Mr. Grace retired at the end of the fifty-three years, the management sent for him and told him that *there had not been one single occasion* when he had estimated and claimed for more than he had actually mined.

These are the things which glorify God on the earth, and for which men like J.C. Philpot so earnestly contended.

But as well as looking back, and around, and up, we have to look forward. There is a new year before us. What is our chief desire for the new year? Is it as Newton prays:

“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”?

Do we long that the Lord Jesus might come right where we are, like the good Samaritan, and do everything that as sinners we need?

The Apostle John wrote: “And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin” (1 John 3. 5). What a beautiful description of the Person and work of the Son of God! He was manifested in His birth, in His life, and especially in His sin-atonement death and glorious resurrection. This is the foundation of our hope.

But living souls long for a personal manifestation of the Son of God – not some dream, or vision, or fanciful experience, but the Holy Ghost revealing the Saviour in all His blessed suitability to meet our need and in all His preciousness. The old people often used the word “manifest.” May, then, this living desire be fulfilled in our souls’ experience in the new year.

“Jesus, now Thyself reveal;  
Manifest Thyself to me;  
Make me, Saviour, make me feel  
All my soul’s delight in Thee.”

We send our prayerful wishes to friends young and old, at home and abroad. Some are walking in a pathway of tribulation. Others have

known bereavement. Many have mountains before them. We pray that like Caleb you might be able to say, "Give me this mountain," even though it be infested with Anakims (Josh. 14. 12). This is solid ground: "If so be the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able ... as the Lord said."

The Lord be with you.

With love for Christ's sake,  
The Editor,  
B.A. Ramsbottom

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### THE EMMAUS ROAD

#### A NEW YEAR SERMON

*Sermon preached by J.S. Green at Gower Street Memorial Chapel,  
London, on January 1st, 1956\**

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**Text:** "But they constrained Him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And He went in to tarry with them" (Luke 24. 29).

We have in this wonderful account of these two disciples and their journey with the Lord Jesus Christ the wondrous proof of His resurrection. When this is applied by the blessed Holy Spirit, it will bring such comfort and such peace into the hearts of God's dear people. But how many have sought to dispute the resurrection of Jesus! It is a most vitally important thing. The apostle, writing to the Corinthians, said that if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain and your hope is vain. But the dear Holy Spirit has been exceedingly gracious to His people, and He has left us these infallible proofs of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. These two disciples who were privileged to entertain the Lord Jesus Christ had not the slightest doubt of His resurrection. And if the dear Holy Ghost has favoured you in your heart to entertain for a little while the Lord of life and glory, you have not had the slightest doubt about His resurrection.

It was this particular thing that was so attractive to the Apostle Paul. It was a great part of his ministry to preach Christ's resurrection. And he was wonderfully favoured to see and know in a particular way the Lord Jesus. Well, that is one thing that is particularly set forth in this verse.

I believe also there is couched within a very gracious exhortation. My mind goes to that word in the Hebrews: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." What a word for you young people as you grow up! O that God may so bless

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\* There is some mystery here. This is the date of the beginning of Mr. Green's pastorate, but there is not a hint of this, or any suggestion that this is New Year's Day.

you and fill your hearts with that real love to His dear people! You see, these two disciples did not know that it was the Lord Jesus Christ when they constrained Him, when they said, "Abide with us." They did not then know who He was. But O how attracted they were to Him! How they loved Him! How they felt that the things He was pleased to speak of to them were the very things they loved, the very things that warmed their hearts! They were absolutely in their element. I believe they were as happy as it was really possible for them to be. They knew they loved this apparent Stranger. They knew they were one in heart and one in affection, and so they constrained Him. May that be our blessed experience, may that be our privilege, so to love the dear sheep of God, to become so attached to them, that we may seek, as opportunity may offer itself, to entertain them. It is a great mercy if they are to us the excellent of the earth.

I used to know one dear, old, godly deacon. A more spiritually-minded man I never knew. O how he delighted to have the company of God's people, and how many went into that dear old man's room, and I believe it was made spiritually an Emmaus road to them. Their hearts would burn within them while they talked of the things of Jesus, and when Jesus Himself would draw nigh. So it is a great mercy to have that love, that tender love, towards the Lord's dear people.

We see another thing in this wonderful account, how that when the Lord does speak, when there is the sacred influence of the blessed Spirit, what unity there is, what oneness, what humility! How these two disciples were absolutely one, and how they were one with this apparent Stranger! No great or high thoughts of themselves, but they were blessedly absorbed with Christ. They were taken up with that blessed gospel which He was so pleased to preach to them. And that shows, my dear friends, that the more fellowship, the more communion you and I have with the dear Lord Jesus, the more love we shall feel one to the other, if we fear God. And the more of the Lord's presence we have, the more humble we shall be.

Some of us perhaps look back to our earlier days when the Lord so blessed us that, as Job said, "The candle of the Lord shone upon us." What blessed days of communion and fellowship they were! Were we ever more humble? Were we ever laid lower in the dust than when the Lord turned our captivity, when He so blessed us, when He assured us that our sins were all forgiven, and that at last we should enter heaven to be for ever with Him? O friends, those days, those experiences were very, very blessed indeed! But were we ever more humble? What a privilege we felt it was to enter the doors of the sanctuary! Not a duty then! No, no duty at all, but a real privilege. Have you felt a desire to get into the Lord's house, a willingness to be nothing or anything, that He might be honoured and glorified?

So these two disciples were completely taken up with Jesus and those things He was pleased to set forth before them. May that be our privilege. Some of you may be feeling so poor and so needy. You may be pursuing your journey feeling like these two did when this Stranger joined them and said unto them, “What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?” If the dear Lord were to give you a visit today, perhaps He would find you sad. Your communications one to the other are something like this: you feel, O that the Lord would bless me! O that I knew where I might find Him, that He would really and truly come and bless me, give me to feel the forgiveness of my sins, and to feel that my unworthy name is in the Lamb’s Book of Life! It is much better, friends, to know something of this secret sadness as you walk along, as you pass on from day to day, than to have the hypocrite’s false joy and false pleasure. It is so much better to have grace to wait humbly upon the Lord till He in His love and mercy turn your captivity and make you glad.

You see the love He had to these two. Now that He is in heaven He has exactly the same love to all His dear people. I could not help feeling, as these words came to my mind and I was reading them, the especial love the Lord had to these two. For the time being He left all others and He spent this time after His resurrection with these two. He had wonderful compassion upon them. He manifested wonderful patience. He most kindly chided them for their lack of faith, and He said, “What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?” They were astonished to think that one should ask such a question when they had lost their best Friend, the Lord of life and glory. They were so confused, so troubled, so distressed by these things that they hardly knew what to do. “And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto Him, Art Thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that are come to pass there in these days? And He said unto them, What things?” And how wonderfully did He draw them out! “And they said unto Him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people.” What a wonderful testimony these two were enabled to give of the dear Lord Jesus – that He was that wonderful Prophet, mighty in deed and word before God.

Then they told Him of His death and His crucifixion. But they said, “We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done.” He listened very attentively to them, and I believe He does now, my friends. I believe He lends that kind, that loving ear to the trials and the difficulties and the perplexities of His dear people. There is wonderful relief in being enabled sometimes to pour out one’s heart to the Lord, in being enabled to tell Him all one’s case.



And then, you see, He did chide them. He said, “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” Now, my dear friends, you will never have happier moments on earth than for the dear Lord Jesus to come and to open up to you in the blessed Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Whatever your state or your case might be, whatever difficulties might be in your pathway, if the dear Lord by His Spirit is pleased to come and open up to you in this sacred Volume the things concerning Himself, it will do you good. Nothing else really can do a poor sinner good.

My mind goes to God’s servant Philip when he was sent into the desert and there he met with the eunuch. He knew what that man needed. The dear Lord wonderfully instructed him. Philip knew that he was a humble seeker, and beginning at that scripture, he preached unto him Jesus. And the effect of Philip’s ministry was exactly the same as that of the Lord Jesus Christ to these two. I believe the heart of the eunuch burned within him. O my dear friends, have you ever had Christ preached to you? Has the Lord’s servant ever stood here and been enabled to preach this blessed Jesus as the Way, the Truth and the Life, and you have said secretly in your heart, as the Holy Spirit has enabled His servant to preach it:

“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”?

Blessed hearing times, those, you know; sacred seasons when the Scriptures are opened to one’s understanding! Without the Holy Spirit, we may hear the truth preached all our lives and never feel this sacred pardon, never understand anything savingly about the Lord Jesus Christ.

It has exercised me a good deal of late, what the Lord Jesus said in His ministry about believing. Everything hangs on this – whether you and I really and truly believe in the Lord Jesus; whether you and I really and truly know Him. And as one has been thus secretly exercised, I hope that deep down in one’s heart there have been times when we have felt, Yes, I do believe. We believe that He who was rich, for our sakes became poor. We believe that He who was the only-begotten, the eternal Son of God, became incarnate for one particular thing – that in that humanity He might suffer, the Just for the unjust.

Now these two disciples were true believers. As Jesus Himself, unknown to them, preached to them of Himself and opened the Scriptures to them, there was no doubt at all; they believed. What have

you and I believed? Can we really say that the Holy Spirit has made us true believers? You may say, Why do you stress that point? Because, friends, we are either believers or unbelievers. If we know nothing of what these two disciples were favoured to know, we shall not get to heaven. We shall be lost. We shall sink at last into hell, where hope and where mercy can never come. I believe that Christ was exceedingly precious to these two disciples as He thus preached Himself, and “expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” Has He really been preached to you? Peter says, “Unto you therefore which believe He is precious” – precious to those who believe and to those alone. Others may speak of Him, but it is only those who truly know and believe, who really find Jesus to be precious. Has He ever been made more precious to you, my friends, than all things else beside? Have you ever had a few minutes when He has been all and in all to your soul, so that you have quietly worshipped Him in your heart, and He has been to you the Chiefest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely? It is a mercy if He has.

Well now, this apparent Stranger “made as though He would have gone further, but they constrained Him.” I like this clause very much. “But they constrained Him, saying, Abide with us.” Come in with us; go no further. They loved Him, they loved His company, and they could not bear the thought of parting. I believe, my dear friends, that it will be so with us as the dear Lord is pleased to bless us; we shall find in our hearts this constraining grace. We shall say, as did these two, “Abide with us,” especially when we are really and truly favoured to know Him, when we are favoured to see Him, when we have enjoyed a little fellowship and communion with Him. There will be times when you will enter a little into the experience of the church in Solomon’s Song, where she says, “I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till He please.” O the church there could not bear to think of anything coming to disturb her communion and her fellowship with the Lord Jesus.

There are times in the experiences of God’s dear people when it does seem that He is about to leave them. They know what it is sometimes to mourn an absent God. But if He returns and journeys with you a little, if He is pleased to bless you, I believe you will find this same spirit in your heart as was in these two disciples. There is no company like the company of the Lord Jesus. There are no such pleasant walks as those when Jesus Himself draws near. There are no sermons so precious as those which the Lord Jesus is pleased to bless. There is no subject more sweet to God’s dear people than this.

May it be our favoured lot to know more of this sweet constraining grace in our hearts; that if we are favoured to have a little communion

with Jesus we may seek to be preserved, we may seek to be kept. It is surprising what a small thing may cause the Lord Jesus to depart from us. In prayer, maybe, for a few moments your heart is enlarged, you enjoy that real communion with Him, you are enabled to pour out your heart before Him, you constrain Him, and then your mind begins to wander, and you find that all too quickly the Lord has gone. You feel, O that I had constrained Him to remain with me, to abide with me!

There were not many at Christ's resurrection; there were not many when He was here on earth that said thus: "Abide with us." There were not many who wanted His company, His presence. Why? Because of this. If the dear Lord is pleased to abide with a sinner, if He is pleased to presence Himself with a sinner, I am sure He will spoil them for the world. They will not want the world. Most professors in our day want the world; they do not want the Lord Jesus in their hearts, in their lives. They want the world. Many want a profession that permits them to go into the world and to enjoy the world.

Now these two disciples who were in the sacred enjoyment of this fellowship and communion with Jesus, they meant what they said: "Abide with us." And you will mean what you say when you pray this little prayer with them. And when the Lord is pleased in His infinite love and mercy to come into your heart and sweetly to answer it, then you will be dead to the world and to the things of the world. Why, business and other things did not concern these two disciples for a minute whilst they were walking along with Him. I do believe that nothing entered their minds but the Lord Jesus and the things of Jesus. If you are thus favoured, you will say from your very heart, "Abide with me."

My dear friends, it is the Lord's sacred presence that makes all the difference. Look at that godly man Moses. Great trials, difficulties, burdens lay heavy upon him, but he prayed for the Lord's presence, the abiding presence of his God. He felt that if he had the abiding presence of his God he could continue, he could go on, he could bear what God in His sovereignty had ordained for him. And you will feel exactly the same. In all the various things in your lives, the one great thing will be to have the Lord's presence. The Lord gave His servant Moses a wonderful promise. He said, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."

Now I believe in the various things in our lives – afflictions, providential troubles, things regarding the church – everything is sweetly wrapped up in these few words: "Abide with us." I felt, as I looked forward to coming here today, in trying to pray that the Lord would really give me a suitable word, this seemed to drop in with such profound sweetness: "Abide with us." It is Thy presence, Lord, we need. One said,

“In Thy presence I am happy;  
 In Thy presence I’m secure;  
 In Thy presence all afflictions  
 I can easily endure.”

It is the felt presence of the Lord that makes the ministry profitable. We may read good Dr. Gill, we may read many good books, we may have our mind well stored with good things, we may be able to preach in an entertaining way, but if our ministry lack this, the abiding presence of Christ, there would not be anything in it apart from that which would just please our natural ear. I am afraid that in the day in which we live, a good many look more at the man, they look more for a good sermon, they look more for half an hour’s entertainment than they do for the Lord’s gracious presence.

My dear friends, it does not matter how poorly a sermon may be preached if Christ is really in it. It will be Christ who is commended to your heart. It will be that blessed Person whom you will worship. When that is preached into our hearts we shall say, Lord, bless us; Lord, abide with us. Amen.

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**A PECULIAR PEOPLE: REDEEMED,  
 ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS**  
*From J.C. Philpot on Titus 2. 14*

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If the Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and thus purify us unto Himself, it was for a certain end – that we might be “a *peculiar people*,” “a people that dwelleth alone, and is not numbered with the nations.” The word literally means a people for a possession, and has not the Lord said of them, “This people I have formed for Myself; they shall shew forth My praise”? (Isa. 43. 21). It is as if He bought them and formed them, that He might look down from heaven His dwelling-place upon His saints on earth and say, “These are My people and I am their God. These are the people for whom I gave Myself out of the bosom of My Father, in which I lay from all eternity as His co-equal, co-eternal Son, in blissful communion with Himself and the Holy Ghost. And I gave Myself for them that they might be eternally Mine, to glorify Me upon earth, and to be for ever with Me in heaven.”

If, then, the blessed Lord “gave Himself that He might redeem us from *all* iniquity,” its guilt, its filth, its love, its power, its practice; from all iniquity without and within, past, present and to come; from sins of omission and sins of commission; iniquities as high as the loftiest

mountains, as deep as the deepest seas; are we not bound by every sweet constraint of dying love to live to His praise? If He came for this express purpose that He might redeem us from *all* iniquity, and is now looking down from heaven His dwelling-place, having gone back to His Father's bosom, with eyes of pity and affection upon us as "the travail of His soul," and is separating us by His grace from this wicked world and from our no less wicked selves, what a load of obligation lies upon us to live to His glory! Shall His people have been redeemed by such sorrows and such sufferings from all iniquity, and then continue to live in sin? Shall He have suffered such cruel agonies of body and soul that they might trample upon His wounds, and instead of repaying Him with gratitude and obedience, repay Him with that which His soul abhors? How can anyone who knows anything of the blessedness of atoning blood and redeeming love and the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit continue in sin that grace may abound? Doctrinal professors may do these things, for a mere letter knowledge of the truth brings with it no deliverance from the power of sin; but the living soul, in whom the God of all grace is carrying on His gracious work – can it trample under foot the cross of the suffering Son of God?

It is impossible that a man who knows for himself the redeeming efficacy of Christ's atoning blood, and whose conscience is made tender in the fear of God, can, under the sweet influence of His love, deliberately crucify Him again. Not but what there is a falling under the power of sin and temptation, as David and Peter fell, but there will not be a wilful sinning against Him when the blessed Spirit is bringing near His blood and grace and love.

May we never forget that the suffering Son of God gave Himself to purify unto Himself a peculiar people – a people whose *thoughts* are peculiar, for their thoughts are the thoughts of God, as having the mind of Christ; a people whose *affections* are peculiar, for they are fixed on things above; whose *prayers* are peculiar, for they are wrought in their heart by the Spirit of grace and supplication; whose *sorrows* are peculiar, because they spring from a spiritual source; whose *joys* are peculiar, for they are joys which the stranger intermeddled not with; whose *hopes* are peculiar, as anchoring within the veil; and whose *expectations* are peculiar, as not expecting to reap a crop of happiness in this marred world, but looking for happiness in the kingdom of rest and peace in the bosom of God.

And if they are peculiar *inwardly*, they should be peculiar *outwardly*. They should make it manifest that they are a peculiar people by walking in the footsteps of the Lord the Lamb, taking up the cross, denying themselves, and living to the honour, praise and glory of God. What has given so much force to the objection against the doctrine of grace as the ungodly lives of its professors? The strongest argument you

can present to the unbelieving world in favour of the doctrines which you profess is a godly life. Let them see by your good works that you *do* adorn the doctrine, that you *do* bear fruits; and make it manifest by your conduct, in your family, in your business, in the whole of your life and deportment, that your religion bears upon it the stamp of inward and outward holiness. This will be your best answer to the charge that your doctrines lead to licentiousness. Let them all be able to look at you and say, Here is a man professing these doctrines; yet where shall we find one so distinguished for honesty, integrity, uprightness, liberality, kindness – for everything, in short, that adorns the gospel of Jesus Christ?

So you must, if you belong to this peculiar people, “*be zealous of good works,*” not doing them grudgingly, not eking out a tardy, forced obedience, as though you hated Christ’s yoke and only bore it through a slavish fear of hell, but as full of holy warmth and earnest zeal, mourning that your good works are so few, yet making it manifest that you are zealous of them.

But it may well be said, Where shall we go to find a people like this? Far and near, over hill and dale, sea and river may we look, and look till our eyes fail, before we shall see a people corresponding to this description. Yet there have been such a people. There were such in the days of the New Testament, and there have been such even in our own land, but in our degenerate times, where are we to “find a peculiar people, zealous of good works,” as described in the text? Are good works even mentioned or insisted upon in the ministry of the present day, and are they not thought rather to be marks of legality and bondage than of free grace and gospel liberty? You may indeed find one here and there who is not inconsistent, in whom there is no very great blot, who does live a little like a Christian, but to find those who shine as stars in Christ’s right hand, cities set on a hill, lights placed upon a candlestick to give light to all in the house, where in these degenerate days will you find them?

Yet the power of Christ’s grace is the same, His blood the same, His love the same, and He can work in us, as He wrought in days of old, to make us and manifest us a peculiar people, zealous of good works. O that He would do so! It is my desire that He may – that you and I *may* be a peculiar people, and not be content with a few lazy doings, but be zealous to adorn the doctrines we profess by that godly, holy and consistent walk which is so desirable for our own peace as well as the glory of God. By so doing, we shall meet the charge brought against us by our enemies in the most satisfactory way, by showing that grace does not lead to sin, but to holiness in heart, in lip, in life.

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## GRACE IN OLD AGE

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Dear Friend,

Kindly put the following acknowledgement in the *Gospel Standard*. I think of you in your more abundant labours. May the presence of God strengthen you and make His burden light and His yoke easy. I buried my dear, loving wife yesterday and feel desolate. I have a good hope of her which is a comfort.

My heart and flesh fail. I need my "house" put in order and my hope confirmed.

May you be spared. Ignore criticism. Let no man take your crown. Excuse this scrap. I feel dazed.

With love in the gospel,

Frank Gosden

Bethesda, Hove, December 1979

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## A MEDITATION ON DEATH

*From Thomas Boston*

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Lord, gather my thoughts, that I may profitably meditate on this, which will gather me and all mankind into the grave at length, and open mine eyes to see it before I feel it.

O my soul, what is death? It is a dissolution of soul and body, a parting of these two loving companions, which God did unite in the womb. Consider, O my soul, there is a twofold death, violent and natural, and which of them may be my lot I do not know. Each of these may be done several ways. Either this life of mine must go as a candle that is blown out, or else will waste with diseases or age till like a candle, it die out of itself when the wick and grease are consumed.

But O, what are the causes of death? Why, the cause is in myself. I bear about the seeds of so many diseases as will cut me off at length, but the first cause of all is sin, that brought death into the world with it. Seeing I have sinned, I must die.

And now, my soul, cast thine eyes on the effects of death. How does the approach of this grim messenger fill all the body with pains, make the eyes stare, and the face grow pale; and when he gives his stroke, the breath goes, the soul departs, the body is left a lump of lifeless clay, while friends fall a-weeping that the dead is gone, and they will see him no more in the land of the living.

But what are the properties of death? Why, it is certain, it is uncertain. It is terrible in its most pleasant shape. It is a way we can but once go; if it once go wrong, we cannot put it right.

O my soul, what are the opposites of it? Even life which we now enjoy here, which is sweet, and eternal life in glory, where we shall be liable to no more death. And why should I forget, the death of Christ that unstings it, according to that (Hos. 13. 14): "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will by thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction."

What is death like? To what may I compare it? It is like the blowing out or wasting of a candle; like the Egyptian jailor that opened the prison door to the baker and butler, restoring the one to the court and sending the other to the gibbet. What say the Scriptures? They tell me, "It is appointed unto all men once to die."

Now, O my soul, how terrible is death? What a king of terrors is this? What need of preparation for it? But alas! how little is my hard heart touched with the consideration of this? How little am I affected with this, which I must feel? O that I were suitably affected with it, that I were wise, to consider my latter end! But alas! I cannot command this of myself; I cannot have one serious thought of it! I may as well dig through a rock with my nails as think to affect mine own heart with it. But, O Lord, to Thee I make my request. Do Thou give me a heart duly touched with it. Thou hast prepared death for me; prepare me for it. And I desire to believe Thou wilt do it, for Thou workest all our works in us. Blessed be the Lord, that has opened a way how we may be delivered of its sting. And so into Thy hands I commit my spirit. Be my God and Guide even unto death. Amen.

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### THE WAY TO HEAVEN NOT EASY

*A letter from Samuel Rutherford to John Gordon, the Laird of  
Rusco Castle, two miles from Anwoth*

Dear Brother,

I earnestly desire to know the case of your soul, and to understand that ye have made sure work of heaven and salvation.

1. Remember, salvation is one of Christ's dainties He giveth but to a few.
2. That it is violent sweating and striving that taketh heaven.
3. That it cost Christ's blood to purchase that house to sinners, and to set mankind down as the King's free tenants and freeholders.
4. That many make a start toward heaven who fall on their back, and win not up to the top of the mount. It plucketh heart and legs from them, and they sit down and give it over, because the devil setteth a sweet-smelled flower to their nose (this fair-busked world), wherewith they are bewitched, and so forget or refuse to go forward.



5. Remember, many go far on and reform many things, and can find tears, as Esau did; and suffer hunger for truth, as Judas did; and wish and desire the end of the righteous, as Balaam did; and profess fair, and fight for the Lord, as Saul did; and desire the saints of God to pray for them, as Pharaoh and Simon Magus did; and prophesy and speak of Christ, as Caiaphas did; and walk softly and mourn for fear of judgments, as Ahab did; and put away gross sins and idolatry, as Jehu did; and hear the Word of God gladly, and reform their life in many things according to the Word, as Herod did; and say to Christ, "Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest," as the man who offered to be Christ's servant (Matt. 8. 19); and may taste of the virtues of the life to come, and be partaker of the wonderful gifts of the Holy Spirit, and taste of the good Word of God, as the apostates who sin against the Holy Ghost (Heb. 6). And yet all these are but like gold in clink and colour, and watered brass, and base metal. These are written that we should try ourselves, and not rest till we be a step nearer Christ than sunburnt and withering professors can come.

6. Consider, it is impossible that your idol-sins and ye can go to heaven together; and that they who will not part with these can, indeed, love Christ at the bottom but only in word and show, which will not do the business.

7. Remember how swiftly God's post time flieth away, and that your forenoon is already spent, your afternoon will come, and then your evening, and at last night, when ye cannot see to work. Let your heart be set upon finishing of your journey, and summing and laying your accounts with your Lord. O how blessed shall ye be to have a joyful welcome of your Lord at night! How blessed are they who, in time, take sure course with their souls! Bless His great name for what you possess in goods and children, ease and worldly contentment, that He hath given you; and seek to be like Christ in humility and lowliness of mind. And be not great and entire [your heart wholly there] with the world. Make it not your god, nor your lover that ye trust unto, for it will deceive you.

I recommend Christ and His love to you in all things; let Him have the flower of your heart and your love. Set a low price upon all things but Christ, and cry down in your thoughts clay and dirt, that will not comfort you when ye get summons to remove, and compear before your Judge to answer for all the deeds done in the body. The Lord give you wisdom in all things. I beseech you sanctify God in your speaking, for holy and reverend is His name, and be temperate and sober. Companionry with the bad is a sin that holdeth many out of heaven.

I will not believe that you will receive the ministry of a stranger, who will preach a new and uncouth doctrine to you. Let my salvation stand for it, if I delivered not the plain and whole counsel of God to you

in His Word. Read this letter to your wife, and remember my love to her, and request her to take heed to do what I write to you. I pray for you and yours. Remember me in your prayers to our Lord, that He would be pleased to send me amongst you again. Grace be with you.

Your lawful and loving pastor,

S.R.

Aberdeen (where he was banished), 1637

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## LOOKING UNTO JESUS

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Dear Madam,

I address my letter to you, but consider myself as writing to the whole of the little society I had the pleasure of meeting at your house, and at Miss K.'s. I still reflect with pleasure on the opportunities I was favoured with among you, and if, as I hope, my little visits were not unacceptable to each or any of you, let us not lose a moment in apologies or compliments to each other, but refer the whole praise where it is wholly due.

Salvation in its whole extent and in each particular step is of the Lord. Though we can but lisp a little word about His goodness, yet when He is pleased to be near us, His presence and blessing can work by the meanest instruments, and cause our hearts to burn within us. On the other hand, when He withdraws, we can no more help each other than we can help ourselves. Then the very best of us prove miserable comforters, fruitless teachers and blind guides. Could I bring my heart to this point, to regard myself as insufficient to think one good thought or to speak one profitable word any further than is influenced by that enlivening Spirit which Jesus is exalted on high to bestow, I should be well; but alas, I am often hurt by a fond desire of being or doing something considerable, and this, so often as it prevails, like a sudden fatal blast spoils my fairest blooming prospects of comfort and usefulness. It is a great point to be constant and diligent in the use of all appointed means, and yet to have our souls waiting only upon God in a deep persuasion that neither the best means, nor the closest attendance upon them, can do anything for us in themselves, and that nothing short of renewed communications from Him can either satisfy or sanctify our hearts.

The best advice I can send, or the best wish I can form for you, is that you may have an abiding and experimental sense of those words of the apostle, which are just now upon my mind: "*Looking unto Jesus.*" The duty, the privilege, the safety, the unspeakable happiness of a believer are all comprised in that one sentence. Let us first pray that the

eyes of our faith and understanding may be opened and strengthened, and then let us fix our whole regard upon Him.

But how are we to behold Him? I answer, in the glass of His written Word. There He is represented to us in a variety of views. The wicked world can see no form nor comeliness in the portraiture He has given of Himself, yet blessed be God, there are those who can “behold His glory as the glory of the only begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth,” and while they behold it, they find themselves “changed into the same image, from glory to glory,” by the transforming influence of His Spirit. In vain we oppose reasonings, and arguments, and resolutions, to beat down our corruptions and to silence our fears, but a believing view of Jesus does the business.

When heavy trials in life are appointed us, and we are called to give up, or perhaps to pluck out, a right eye, it is an easy matter for a stander-by to say, “Be comforted,” and it is as useless as easy, but a view of Jesus by faith comes home to the point. When we can fix our thoughts upon Him, as laying aside all His honours and submitting, for our sakes, to drink off the bitter cup of the wrath of God to the very dregs, and when we further consider that He who thus suffered in our nature, who knows and sympathises with all our weakness, is now the Supreme Disposer of all that concerns us, that He numbers the very hairs of our heads, appoints every trial we meet with in number, weight and measure, and will suffer nothing to befall us but what shall contribute to our good – this view, I say, is a medicine suited to the disease, and powerfully reconciles us unto every cross.

So when a sense of sin prevails, and the tempter is permitted to assault us with dark and dreadful suggestions, it is easy for us to say, “Be not afraid,” but those who have tried, well know that looking to Jesus is the only and sure remedy in this case. If we can get a sight of Him by faith, as He once hung between the two thieves, and as He now pleads within the veil, then we can defy sin and Satan, and give our challenge in the apostle’s words: “Who is He that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again ... who also maketh intercession for us” (Rom. 8. 34).

Again, are we almost afraid of being swallowed up by our many restless enemies? Or are we almost weary of our long pilgrimage through such a thorny, tedious, barren wilderness? A sight of Jesus, as Stephen saw Him, crowned with glory, yet noticing all the sufferings of His poor servants, and just ready to receive them to Himself and make them partakers of His everlasting joy, this will raise the spirits and restore strength; this will animate us to hold on and to hold out; this will do it, and nothing but this can. So if obedience be the thing in question, looking unto Jesus is the object that melts the soul into love and

gratitude, and those who greatly love, and are greatly obliged, find obedience easy.

When Jesus is upon our thoughts, either in His humbled or His exalted state, either as bleeding on the cross or as worshipped in our nature by all the host of heaven, then we can ask the apostle's question with a becoming disdain: "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" God forbid. What! Shall I sin against my Lord, my Love, my Friend, who once died for my sins and now lives and reigns on my behalf; who supports, and leads, and guides, and feeds me every day? God forbid. No; rather I would wish for a thousand hands and eyes and feet and tongues, for ten thousand lives, that I might devote them all to His service: He should have all then, and surely He shall have all now! Alas, that in spite of myself, there still remains something that resists His will! But I long and pray for its destruction, and I see a day coming when my wish shall be accomplished, and I shall be wholly and for ever the Lord's.

I am your affectionate servant,

John Newton

September 10th, 1760

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### EXTRACTS FROM HILL'S "DEEP THINGS OF GOD"

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It is not to be wondered at that Hazael, who knew nothing of his own heart, should say, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?" but the self-confidence of Peter was extraordinary when he said, "Lord, though all men shall deny Thee, yet will not I." O how little do many of the Lord's dearest people know what will befall them before they reach the end of their pilgrimage! When temptation is at a distance and all goes on smoothly, we are apt to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think, but let a strong temptation work upon a suitable corruption in the heart (Satan and opportunity blowing up the flame), and there is no saying what may happen.

It was well observed by that evangelical divine, Mr. John Hill, that heed ought to be taken by the best of saints against the worst of sins. "Watch and pray, therefore, that ye enter not into temptation." And, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." But if thou hast fallen, let not thy sin drive thee to despair, but to Christ, that thou mayest be delivered both from its guilt and its power.

The apostle bore this testimony to the believers of the church at Corinth, that they gave to the poor, not only to the utmost of their power, but even "beyond their power." But there is a certain *close-fistedness* (if

I may be allowed the expression) among too many professors of our day, who seem frightened out of their wits when any poor objects are recommended to their notice, insomuch that their niggardliness is even seen through the muscles of the countenance, though they generally shelter their covetousness under the fear of giving amiss. It is true, we are not to encourage idleness, and it well becomes us to see that our benevolence be not ill placed, and yet I have frequently thought that if the Lord were to deal with us, and were to bestow His favour upon us only according to our deserts, the best of us would be very badly off indeed. But He is "God, and not man."

But O the subterfuges which the avarice of the heart will fly to, whilst yet it is anxious to save appearances! "It is peculiarly inconvenient at this time." "Nobody knows how many calls I have lately had." Then a hint shall be thrown out (with a seeming wish to conceal it) how much has been given upon other occasions.

After all, it is certain every man is the best judge of his own abilities to give, as well as of the temper of his own heart in giving. Therefore, "to his own Master he must stand or fall." But let none be unmindful of the command given by one apostle, nor of the question put by another: "Do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." "If any man see his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" In a word, we are stewards of all we possess, and the Lord will require an account of every talent committed to our charge. May grace enable us to use them aright!

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### FAITH WORKING BY LOVE

*By John Kershaw*

*A wonderful account of a widow who, when Hope Chapel, Rochdale, was enlarged, contributed £50 – a vast sum in those days.*

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The Lord appeared in His beauty to build the temple. We were increased and poor sinners flocked to hear the Word, like doves to their windows, so that the cry was often heard, "We want room to accommodate the people who come to hear the gospel's joyful sound."

Having previously for many years felt the weight of a heavy chapel debt, I was very backward to begin to enlarge until I saw the moving of the pillar of the cloud and fire. At length the unanimous voice of the church and congregation was, "We must have the chapel enlarged," and a willingness was shown to provide the means to do it, so that I both saw and felt it to be our duty to arise and build. I cannot describe the strong

cries and wrestlings, the earnest desires I had that the Lord, as the Breaker, would cause His goodness to go before us in the way and provide the means, so that when we re-opened we might be free from debt. Knowing that example was more powerful than precept, I felt it my duty to do all I could out of my own purse, as well as give my unwearied exertions to accomplish so desirable an end.

Previously there was sixty pounds my friends gave me, which I promised to make into one hundred if the chapel was enlarged within two years. The Lord had impressed it upon my mind, whilst upon my knees in prayer, to make the sixty pounds into one hundred, feeling persuaded He would enable me to do so. When this was made known it greatly encouraged the people. A subscription was entered into, and four of my friends gave fifty pounds each. As my old begging book which I took with me to London was not full, the case of the enlargement of the chapel was entered in it; for as Goliath's sword to David, no new book could be like this one to me.

The first person I waited upon privately was our senior magistrate [the mayor of Rochdale], from an impression I had upon my mind that he had a respect for me as a neighbour, believing if I could get his name, and a sovereign or two, it would have its effect with others. He received me very kindly, saying he understood that our chapel had for some time been too small.

He carefully examined my book, the names and sums put down, and said, "Although I am a churchman, I am no enemy to Dissenters," and putting a £5 note upon the book, said, "It is with the greatest pleasure I give you this towards the enlargement of your chapel, for I have had my eyes upon you for more than thirty years. You have been a man of peace, plodding about the town, visiting and relieving the sick and afflicted, doing all the good you could; and such men as you we must and will stand by and support."

As he spoke these words, the language of Paul came powerfully to my mind: "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil.... Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same" (Rom. 13. 3).

His liberality had the desired effect, as four of the other magistrates followed his example, also many other gentlemen in the town and neighbourhood.

In looking over my list of subscribers, the magistrate first named noticed the name of Elizabeth Chadwick, who had put down fifty pounds, and enquired who she was.

I told him she was a widow woman who kept a baker's and provision shop; that her first husband was my son William, who died of cholera, and that her second husband was also dead, leaving her with two small children.

He answered that he thought fifty pounds was too much for her to give.

I said that I had thought the same, but when she gave me her reasons for doing so I was obliged to take it.

He enquired what the circumstances were.

I asked him for a Bible, as in giving him the account I should have to read him a portion of it, which led to it. I then told him, as she was a widow woman and a member of our church, I felt it my duty to call upon her every week, and on a recent visit I asked her what she was thinking of giving to the enlargement of the chapel.

She replied, "If you will come to your tea next Monday, I will tell you."

I went accordingly, and renewed the enquiry, when she got her Bible and said, "I need not tell you that when my late husband died, he left me in insolvent circumstances, and had it not been for you and my uncle standing by me and helping me, my creditors would have come upon me and sold me up, and my poor children and I would not have had a bed to lie down upon, nor a seat to sit on. Also I was in a poor state of health, encompassed with these difficulties, which often bowed me down both in body and mind. I often went into my room to tell the Lord my troubles, and to plead His promise to be the Husband of the widow and the Father of the fatherless.

"On one of these occasions, when faint and ready to give all up, I opened the Bible to seek a little comfort there. As the Lord would have it, I opened to the twenty-eighth chapter of Genesis and began to read it, and I felt encouraged, especially when I read the fifteenth verse, where the Lord promised Jacob that He would never leave him nor forsake him. The Holy Spirit bore witness with my spirit that Jacob's God was my God and that He would never leave nor forsake me. He enabled me to cast my burden and care upon Him who cared for me, and would sustain and make a way for me.

"My mind was so supported and comforted in reading this chapter that I went into my chamber, and like Daniel, kneeled before the Lord to thank and bless His dear name, and like Jacob, I vowed unto the Lord, saying, 'If God will be with me, and shall keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, and prosper me in my business, so that I can pay my creditors, whatever He might give me more, I would give a tenth to His house,' for at that time I had an impression on my mind that the chapel would have to be enlarged. The reason I asked you to my home today is that I might have time to reckon what I am worth, and what a tenth would be, and I find it will be fifty pounds." (This at the proper time she gave me in sovereigns.)

When the worthy magistrate heard this relation he said, “God bless Betty Chadwick. It is the best tale I ever heard. Under these circumstances you could not but take it.”

Hope Chapel was enlarged in 1848 to seat 730.

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### BOOK REVIEW

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**Gadsby’s: The Story of a Hymnbook, 1814-2014**, by Matthew J. Hyde; hardback; 325 pages; price £12 plus £2.80 postage; published by Gospel Standard Trust Publications, and obtainable from the bookroom or from agents.

This is an outstanding book. The author has researched widely, made the book interesting, produced an extensive bibliography at the end, and very graciously acknowledged help where he has received it.

We wondered at first if this might only be a book for students of hymnology or those who wondered how Gadsby’s evolved; but in every sense this book is *comprehensive*. It covers so much.

There is an excellent synopsis of the life of William Gadsby himself. A chapter deals with the beginnings of hymn singing and the controversy aroused. Mention is made of other hymnwriters and other hymnbooks. Not least is the chapter on the music associated with Gadsby’s and the origins of the Companion Tune Book, as well as some of the first tune books and the first composers. We were amazed to read even of the Deighn Layrocks (a remarkable group of musicians and singers in the wilds of the Rossendale Valley, the leader of which became well known as a godly Particular Baptist pastor).

There are numerous illustrations; some of the old photographs must be rare. In all, a delightful book; beautifully presented.

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### OBITUARY

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**Grace Parish**, for over forty years a member of the church at Bethel, Luton, was called away to be with her Lord on February 19th, 2014, aged 76.

Grace Broughall was born on October 12th, 1939. She was to live a life of many trials and sorrows with the loss of two dear husbands, yet in them prove the Lord’s tender care and unchanging love to an “unworthy sinner.” Truly she proved hymn number 7 of Gadsby’s, especially now the last verse:

“Hereafter He will make me know,  
And I shall surely find,  
He was too wise to err, and O,  
Too good to be unkind.”



Her extensive writings begin with how the Lord began to deal with her at the age of 18 years old. The year was 1955 and her mother had begun attending Haydock chapel the year before and asked Grace to go with her instead of the General Baptist chapel where she sang in the choir and enjoyed the “lightness and ease” of the worship. She reluctantly agreed to go “just this once,” but from that moment onwards could never go back to the General Baptists.

She was still very much in the world, going dancing, going to the cinema and playing hockey for Liverpool, who were at the time the best ladies’ hockey team in the country, and this continued until 1960.

Around April 1960 the Lord began to deepen His dealings with her and then the tussle began. She tried in her own strength to “turn over a new leaf.” She changed her job to get away from worldly companions, but felt that it was her own heart that was evil.

She wrote: “This was in April 1960, and I soon made more worldly companions. I found I was planning the best way to arrange the hockey team during sermons. I was team captain and loved my hockey above all else, especially as we were winning so many cups. I began to see my case in the hymn:

‘I tried, resolved, and toiled, and tugged,  
But filthier still I grew;  
My darling sins in secret hugged,  
Nor how to leave them knew.’

“In November 1960 my mother suggested I went to the Manchester meetings (on a Saturday! out of the question – it was the beginning of the hockey season). I managed, however, to get to the evening service. The following day I felt so condemned for putting my pleasure first that I vowed I would not play another game of hockey and I did not. What a commotion it caused, the captain letting down the team at the start of the new season! How I felt the contempt of the world when I could not give what they thought was a ‘satisfactory reason.’ I was then 23 years old. I also had an ungodly companion (boyfriend) whom I felt I had to give up, but just could not do so and prayed that the Lord would do it for me, which He did.”

The first time she felt the working of the Holy Spirit was in prayer on Christmas day 1960 when she wrestled with the Lord in prayer at chapel for her grandmother.

She was made Matron at Haydock Bethesda Home in 1964 when it opened, and married Thomas Wheeler in September 1965. When led to move away to Garstang, she felt a comfort from these words: “Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord” (Jer. 31. 16). She was very concerned whether they were making a right move, and on Sunday awoke with this verse on her mind:

“Can a woman’s tender care  
Cease towards the child she bare?  
Yes, she may forgetful be,  
Yet I will remember thee.”

She begged the Lord that if He had any good thing toward her in the move, could she have it again that day. He graciously gave it to her with power from Mr. Hesketh’s sermon, and she felt she could move without any fear, no matter what men thought.

From her own writing again: “Then commenced an exercise concerning baptism from which I could not get away. I felt totally unfit, but various texts seemed to draw me. I felt I still dare not go, as I had not been (like Paul) cut down and felt the exceeding sinfulness of my sins, and that if I knew not this, then I did not know anything. I tried to ask the Lord that if my case was not to be so clear as Paul’s, would He unmistakably draw me.”

The following Sunday Mr. Walshaw quoted, “I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.” Hymn 344 (“For us the dear Redeemer died”) was also sweet, but she shrank again, feeling that she had been so wicked and that she should feel more contrition.

The next Sunday, Mr. William Wheeler preached from Isaiah 63. 7: “I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the Lord,” etc., and quoted, “I have loved thee,” etc., and she felt a great sweetness in hymn 297, last verse.

“Then a few weeks went by when I did not seem to get anything and felt the Lord was withdrawing because of my disobedience, but still I wanted to feel more contrition. Mr. Hesketh preached from, ‘Jesus said, Come and dine,’ and my heart said, ‘O how I wish I could!’ Mr. Walshaw followed with, ‘Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there.’ I felt this was telling me, but hung back. I had a desire that week to find those words, ‘Arise, My love, My fair one, and come away,’ and on the Friday Mr. Reuben Mercer came and quoted that and also, ‘I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.’ I felt so softened by the Lord’s patience with me. The following Sunday, hymn 906 was so sweet and I felt this to be my desire.”

A fortnight later, on Tuesday, November 28th, 1967, during the night the Lord visited her soul and showed her what she was in His sight. She saw all the worldly people she knew and worked with rushing headlong into hell; not only them, but she was following hard after them, and these words were raised up: “And if my soul be sent to hell, Thy righteous law approves it well.” She burst with grief and begged the Lord to have mercy and show that she was His child.

In her own words: “I was continually begging and the words were spoken, ‘Seek, and ye shall find.’ I said, ‘I am seeking, Lord.’ Then,

‘Knock, and it shall be opened unto you,’ and I said, ‘I am knocking.’ The Lord then put my dear husband before my eyes and I could give him up. (Three months later he was suddenly taken by a heart attack.) Then came, ‘You want the writing on the wall.’ I replied, ‘I want my Jesus as my All.’ This dialogue went on all night, and by morning I was completely and utterly exhausted, with no real answer. My husband, when he awoke said, ‘I had a strange dream that the number 1085 was written over our front door in large numbers,’ having no idea of my experience (he was deaf without his hearing aid). I asked him to pass the hymnbook as I felt too weak to get up, and it was then that he realised something was amiss. I turned to 1085. I said to Tom, ‘This has been my whole night’s experience.’ He went to put on the kettle and I picked up my Bible to try to get a word, when such a feeling of helplessness came over me that I did not know where to look, and hymn 906 came to mind: ‘O where shall I find a guide to direct?’ My Bible fell open at Isaiah 55. The whole chapter is mine. O how I loved the Lord! The third verse, ‘Incline your ear, and come unto Me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David,’ made me say, ‘O how unworthy I am!’ I knew then what it means where it says, ‘The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.’ It was Wednesday and I praised the Lord all day, and all day Thursday begged for a confirmation that night. Feeling my utter unworthiness and helplessness, I fell on my knees saying,

‘Nothing in my hand I bring;  
Simply to Thy cross I cling.’

“That night Mr. John Hesketh took for his text, ‘Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God.’ What more can I say than this was all I needed, because it was applied with power.”

She was baptized on December 30th, 1967, by Mr. B. Walshaw, as Mr. Hesketh was unable because of age and infirmity.

Then came another great trial. Three months after her baptism her dear husband Tom had a heart attack and passed away saying, “Dear Jesus, my Shepherd, come.” Now she had to walk out the assurances given by her to the Lord that she could give him up. Deep financial trials came with sore attacks by Satan, but brought through with many tears she proved:

“And if our dearest comforts fall  
Before His sovereign will,  
He never takes away our all –  
Himself He gives us still.”

She struggled on financially until she came to the point where it seemed impossible to carry on and became low in spirit. When walking by the River Wyre in Garstang and looking over the bridge she felt to know why some people commit suicide, although she had no desire to do so. On returning home, she read a portion on the refining of silver, how it is a slow but intense process. The burning of all the dross – the refiner sits to do this because of the time it takes until he can see his own image in the silver. She felt she could say, “Lord, if that is the purpose for all my trials, poverty, sorrow, loneliness, carry on Thy work until Thine own image appears in me,” little knowing then she would lose another husband in that process.

In 1969 she became the first Matron at Harpenden Bethesda Home following some remarkable leadings. This was the means of her meeting Mr. Bernard Parish to whom she was married on October 3rd, 1969.

Her own writing again: “During this time, it was discovered my dear one had heart trouble, and thus began another exercise. We are given ballast when it is needed. On our honeymoon in Bournemouth we heard Mr. J.A. Short preach and his text greatly impressed me. (Neither of us knew Mr. Short.) It was this: ‘Take this child away, and nurse it for me’ (Exod. 2. 9), October 8th, 1969, a Wednesday evening. He spoke about the Lord putting someone in another’s care naturally and spiritually and I felt it to be both in my beloved husband’s case. Although I was sure Bernard was a child of God, I wanted it made manifest.

“In June 1970 I had a miscarriage and felt so disappointed and rebellious. God’s Word says, ‘The rebellious dwell in a dry land.’ I longed for sweet submission to His will, but felt we were not young. I was tempted not to pray any more about the matter and as we had a large, young congregation, a number of babies were born at this time which made it doubly hard to bear. Although no mention of our disappointment was made to anyone, our pastor preached about Hannah and Elkanah when he asked, ‘Am not I better to thee than ten sons?’ He mentioned how Elkanah was a good husband and provided all Hannah needed providentially, but she could not be consoled.”

Following this, exercises about transferring church membership from Kirkland at Garstang to Bethel, Luton, were laid upon her. This caused a great exercise in the soul of her husband which came to a head with him pouring out his soul’s experience to her one evening. Her own words again: “I said to him on hearing his testimony, ‘What have you been doing all these years after the Lord has spoken the words to you, “What is that to thee? Follow thou Me”?’ It meant you were to follow Him all the way in His footsteps through the waters as well.’ The dear Lord blessed him with that realisation and it was such a time of rejoicing for both of us. He awoke the next morning with the words feelingly:

‘O why did Jesus show to me  
The beauties of His face?  
Why to my soul did He convey  
The blessings of His grace?’

“We truly felt the ‘time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land’” (Song 2. 12).

Bernard Parish was baptized on December 3rd, 1971 and they were received into the church together.

The desire to have a child was still very much upon her, and the Lord heard her prayer. “My first son was born on November 27th, 1972. ‘For this child I prayed.’”

She suffered another miscarriage in the following years but then had the gift of another son two-and-a-half years later on May 9th, 1975. She wrote: “‘Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.’ The Lord is good and me so undeserving.”

By April 1980 her husband was suffering more with ill health. During the last week in April he suffered a coronary thrombosis and a day or two later prayed so sweetly for her, the children and all the family. Having put on a tape of hymns which was playing, “Abide with me,” she went to get his tablets as it was 9 p.m. As soon as she stepped out of the door, he took his last breath. His time to leave these shores had come – Saturday, May 3rd, 1980.

She wrote: “How to tell my little boys their daddy had died, I knew not – Jonathan 7½ years old and Tim to be 5 years old in a week’s time. I prayed for the Lord to guide me and He did. The next morning walking up the steps of Bethel chapel as a widow again those words from the hymn flooded in: ‘There my best friends, my kindred dwell; there God my Saviour reigns.’ Both boys accepted their father’s death wonderfully well and attended his funeral right to the grave, which helped them acknowledge and accept the end of his life. No doubt it was the answer to many prayers for us.

“Commencing now is another season of the ‘dross to consume and the gold to refine.’ There is so much dross.”

On Sunday, June 20th, 2004, in her own words: “After many years longing for a touch from the Lord in connection with His sacrifice for His dear people, the Lord granted me a crumb – a sweet softening during hymn 950. The times I have sung that hymn and others of a similar vein and remained untouched and longing and praying for such a touch, especially at the Lord’s supper. The sermon was good to me, Isaiah 53. 2, last clause: ‘And when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.’ But we who have had our eyes opened to see our wretched self see a great beauty in Him.”

Diary entry, October 2004: “It appears that I must have a major operation and I am so fearful. Our pastor says all the promises in

Scripture are for the Lord's people and that is a great comfort, as I cannot doubt after all the dear Lord has done for me in plucking me as a brand from the burning when He showed me I was rushing headlong into hell, that I am one of His children, but why me? 'Why such a wretch as me? Who must for ever lie in hell were not salvation free.' 'I'd creep beside Him as a worm.' O my wretched, black heart! Hymn 950 was very sweet to me a few weeks ago, but I want to feel His presence again." She was wonderfully brought through the operation.

Diary entry, March 2006: "Have not had any pain from that day to this in regard to the operation. Praise Him, praise Him. Nearly two years have passed since then and how I pray for His sweet presence, but my heart remains so hard and cold. There must be, surely, a tiny spark; if only the dear Lord would fan it into a flame. 'Draw me, and I will run after Thee,' is my almost continual prayer, but where is that urgency?"

"April 25th, 2006: I have to enter hospital again. Very fearful, but once more trusting in the Lord to bring me safely through. The operation lasted seven-and-a-half hours."

"May 13th, 2007: A good hearing time under our pastor from, 'Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away.' This was one of the texts the Lord began to draw me with, also, 'Draw me, we will run after Thee,' and, 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.' This latter text he mentioned this morning also and my soul was filled with love to the dear Lord for all His tender mercies and compassion to such a hard-hearted creature. Pastor entered my path in many instances and said, 'Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee.' Song 4. 8: 'Come with Me' – then he mentioned all the other things in that verse – 'from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards' – as if there are many dangers to pass through. The hymn 906 was greatly blessed to me before my baptism and one line, after all the sweet ones, said, 'But many a lion is in the way found,' and I have found it so with Satan's many vile temptations."

On November 2nd she moved to the Bethesda flatlets which was a time of real happiness, but the same week was diagnosed with "inflammatory breast cancer." The specialist said it was a fairly rare type and aggressive. It was a time to prove, "This is not your rest."

Diary entry: "A good day at Bethel on Sunday, July 22nd. Pastor spoke from Hebrews 12. 7: 'If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons,' and evening, 2 Kings 3. 18: 'He will deliver.' Looking to the Lord for His help, as the disciples said, 'To whom else can we go?' These are my feelings:

'Let me not murmur nor repine,  
Under these trying strokes of Thine;

But while I walk the mournful road  
Be still and know that Thou art God.”

Diary entry: “August 30th, 2012: A mastectomy was performed and all margins were clear of cancer. Took thirteen lymph glands away, eight cancerous. Although it has been a very trying stroke to bring me back from ‘bypath meadow’ spiritually, He has wonderfully helped me through.”

Towards the close of 2013 she developed what the doctors thought were asthma symptoms, but in early January close family began to think it was something more serious. After a particularly bad period of poor breathing she was taken into hospital with suspected pneumonia on Lord’s day, February 2nd, 2014. The first week in hospital was a very anxious one for her and she longed for the Saviour to draw near and give her the sense of His presence again. Many blessings she had were comforting, but there was no full peace granted until the following week.

On Monday, February 17th, the doctors finally diagnosed the recurrence of the breast cancer and a tumour in her lungs. Arrangements were made for her to be moved back to Bethesda the next day and MacMillan nurses to attend. That evening I read to her Psalm 45 and spoke about the King’s daughter. Her eyes lit up – “What, me?” she said, “Even such a poor sinner like me?” I said, “Yes, there is a raiment of fine needlework waiting for you and that will cover any shame you may feel as having once been a sinner.” We left her that night in perfect peace which only the dear Saviour can give. The banner over her was love.

On Tuesday at lunch time the family received a call from the hospital saying that she would not be able leave hospital as her health was failing fast. At 5 p.m. she slipped into a deep sleep from which she never really stirred. She passed peacefully away on Wednesday morning at 11 a.m., her pastor having just visited and her two sons and daughters-in-law present by her bedside with her sister who also had been admitted into hospital at the same time.

There were no last cries, no great final speeches (her life was testimony to the power and glory of the risen Saviour), just the quiet and peaceful falling into the arms of her Saviour, her Beloved, her never-failing Friend and Him who had proved Himself a Husband to the widow. “My Beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away” (Song 2. 10).

T.J.P.

*Note by her pastor*

Mrs. Parish stood firmly for the old paths in which is the good way. It was a privilege to witness how she stood every storm, and stood at last. “So He bringeth them into their desired haven.”

## NEW YEAR'S DAY

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Another year is gone,  
 And I still live on earth;  
 Death has its millions swept away,  
 Since God first gave me birth.

The moments just appear,  
 Then instantly are fled,  
 And the next fleeting moment may  
 Lodge me amongst the dead.

Great God! make bare Thine arm,  
 Bless me with vital faith  
 In Christ, the covert from each storm,  
 And antidote of death.

'Midst all the cares of life,  
 Teach me to keep in view  
 That Captain, who can end my strife,  
 And make me conqueror too.

His sin-atoning blood,  
 With energy apply:  
 Teach me to make Him mine abode,  
 And on His arm rely.

At His dear, piercèd feet,  
 And near His loving heart,  
 May I, each moment, take my seat,  
 Nor once from thence depart.

There, musing on His grace,  
 I would my minutes spend;  
 The openings of His goodness trace,  
 And on His love depend.

Then let time swiftly fly,  
 And death its dart discharge;  
 My endless home's beyond the sky,  
 Where I shall walk at large.

William Gadsby (1773-1844)

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## OBITUARY

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**Raymond W. Woodhams**, a faithful minister of the gospel, and for many years pastor at Rotherfield, died on December 12th, 2014.

“Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth.”



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD

FEBRUARY 2015

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

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Some years ago a Jewess came to this country seeking to learn about the Christian religion. In process of this she visited churches and chapels of all sorts and heard preachers of all descriptions. Coming to hear one of our preachers, she asked to speak to him afterwards.

“There is a difference between your preaching and all the others I have heard,” she said. “In what way?” asked the minister. Her reply was: “Every other preacher I have heard speaks to my head. Your preaching speaks to my heart.”

Our churches have always contended for a living experience of the truth, especially a vital, personal knowledge of self and of Christ. This has always been the desire of our preachers. So it has always been the concern of this magazine. Over the years, month by month, we have sought to print articles which will be of spiritual edification, and which, if used by the Holy Spirit, will *reach the heart*, comforting, correcting, leading, feeding, refreshing. May we ever be delivered from what the old preachers used to call “a Sandemanian religion,” holding fast merely to the letter of divine truth without it affecting heart and life. We believe that sadly there is much of this religion about today.

We were, therefore, interested and pleased to hear of a recently-published book, written by the well-known and highly-respected minister Stuart Olyott. Its title is *Something Must Be Known and Felt*, which is unashamedly acknowledged as from Gadsby’s Hymns number 237. The sub-title of the book is, “A Missing Note in Today’s Christianity.”

Mr. Olyott writes:

“Believers need to know that ‘without powerful, personal dealings between a man and his God, religion is a sham’ [the conviction of the famous Welsh preacher Daniel Rowland]. They need to know that feelings are part and parcel of a true Christian’s experience, and how to tell the difference between holy emotions and unspiritual ones. They need to know something of how the Holy Spirit works in the soul. They need to know that it is possible to feel that you are a child of God and to have the experience of being guided by Him. They need to know about the felt presence of Christ and how to distinguish it from its counterfeit. They need to know about the prayer of faith – I think it is safe to conclude that most believers today have never heard of such a thing. They need to know what it is to have a ‘heart strangely warmed,’ and why the heart really is at the centre of all true religion.”

If the Lord “returns to Jerusalem with mercies” and in mercy grants “a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord,” we are sure there will be soft hearts, hearts wrung with repentance, grateful hearts, and hearts where the love of Christ is shed abroad by the Holy Ghost.

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### THE LITTLE A RIGHTEOUS MAN HATH

*Sermon preached by R.S. Jupp at Rehoboth Chapel, Swindon, on January 1st 1959. We have never met a man who had lower views of himself and his preaching than Mr. Jupp, yet his ministry was with authority, and he held a large congregation for many years.*

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**Text:** “A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked” (Psa. 37. 16).

The psalmist is setting forth in this Psalm the different estates of the godly and the ungodly. The psalmist had much to do in His pathway with the ungodly, for that enemy Saul was a source of trouble and affliction and sorrow to him, and having to do with him in that special, particular way, as the Scriptures set forth, he had an insight into some of that iniquity that was made manifest in the hearts of the ungodly; and also the psalmist had a little of that divine teaching whereby he knew that he had that malady in his heart.

Now what a mercy if we should be found among these characters that are spoken of in this verse! A little of the Holy Spirit’s teaching in a person’s heart is better than an accumulation of all the riches of this dying world. There is no comparison. They cannot be compared at all, for the things of this life that the wicked seek after, and for the most part have in possession, are perishable. When death comes, those things have to be left on this side of the grave, and if there is not any of that real, genuine work of God upon the heart, then the end of that person or persons will be very solemn; while that little that the Lord bestows upon His dear children is imperishable, because it is the implanting of God in the heart, that eternal life which must and will live for ever in this life and through the countless ages of eternity.

Now we have the character before us, a righteous man, and that word *righteous* may appear to be a word of such magnitude that you may be ready to cut yourself off and say that the application of this truth cannot be in any regard to your case. Now by the help of God we will define a little of what it means to be a righteous man.

By nature, “There is none righteous, no, not one,” says the apostle in the Epistle to the Romans, and what a solemn truth that is! As we

each stand in our federal head, Adam, we participate in every degree in that shameful fall, so that in every part there is no soundness and no health whatsoever, no righteousness in any man by nature which can be acceptable to God. We must look at these words from the standpoint of divine truth, wherein it is the Lord Himself that pronounces that a person is righteous, first in connection with the choice; for all those that are righteous in the sight of God through the work of the Redeemer have been chosen in the everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure, and the time is set and appointed in heaven when, as each one has a being upon this earth, there is a work of the Spirit made manifest in regeneration, when the principles of true godliness are deposited in a new heart in those who are chosen to life and to salvation.

These people are the recipients of the holy, filial fear of God – a righteous principle – and that person who is the recipient of this work, this favour, is taught by the same Spirit, in the measure in which He is pleased to teach him, his *unrighteousness*. We as natural creatures have an apprehension of things as if there were something that is acceptable to God, and until the Holy Spirit is pleased thus to illuminate the heart and to give the understanding, and to take away the veil of ignorance, one may continue to go on in this path, thinking that he has power to perform acts which will be acceptable to God. And O, my friends, this work which is accomplished in His children's hearts is often a very gradual work, but very effectual to the pulling down of Satan's strongholds, for the removing of that principle which is ungodly in one's heart, thinking that he has power to perform acts acceptable to God. But the Lord brings His children at the time appointed to that painful place which is spoken of in the prophecy of Isaiah, "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; we all do fade as a leaf."

Now in respect to this gospel truth, has there been, and is there, a little of this divine teaching going on in your heart? It is not the quantity of religion that is necessary, but it is the quality; it is whether the stamp of God is upon it. I believe that for the most part the Lord's real, tried people are so exercised in their breasts because they possess such a little. It is often like it is spoken of: "Here a little, there a little, line upon line, line upon line, precept upon precept" – a gradual opening here, a gradual bringing down here, wherein often they wonder greatly whether they do possess eternal life. They wonder sometimes whether after all they shall be "weighed in the balances, and found wanting."

Now, amalgamated with this teaching, there is a little that the Lord has been pleased to put into that heart whereby there is an issuing forth from time to time of real, living desire to be made right and to be kept right. And I would add this, my friends: it is not altogether the fear of hell, though that may prove extreme, but where the principle of godliness

is in the heart, there will be a bubbling up from time to time, desiring to fear with a holy fear the Lord God of Israel, and to worship Him in sincerity and in truth. There will be also a bubbling up in your heart of hatred to those things that you at one time indulged in during your unregenerate days. And not only so in connection with the things that you participated in in the days of your unregeneracy, but as the Spirit of the Lord is pleased gradually to open your understanding and to touch your heart, there is a little breaking up of the fountain of iniquity in your breast; and that righteous principle if you possess it in a tiny measure, will hate that which is contrary and displeasing to the Lord, and there is begotten in the breast a little mourning before God.

Now some of you here present can respond to this, can you not? Is there not something in your breast which the Lord has put there (it is not there by nature), that would live godly, that would, if it were possible, live without sin? That is the principle of grace, my friends, and that little that is set forth as eternal life; for the life of God is in that soul, and that life cannot live upon secular things. The natural life does. It lives upon food and drink, and it also lives upon the vanities of this world. That is the natural life. It takes pleasure in it. But when the life of God is deposited in the heart, then the things of this life, though to our shame and grief often they seem to have the ascendancy in our heart and in our affections, yet in reality they begin to recede, and there is vanity and vexation of spirit stamped upon these things, so that you can no longer take pleasure in those things that you formerly did, and you begin by the help and grace of God to love those things that you once hated, and to hate those things that you once loved. A little real desire is given you to be made right in the sight of God and to be kept right.

In regard to the work that was begun and accomplished in Lydia, that was a gentle work, but very effectual, very genuine, and the effects of that work being of God brought love and obedience to her Lord and Master. For there is, and there was in her case, a particular power. It is the power of truth that opens the heart. "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." Now come, my dear friends, some of you, the Lord has been pleased to open your heart a little in this way, so that first you had a little manifestation of what you were in the sight of a holy God, and in your own sight too. There was a real need produced in your breast; you began to be in want; and if you once really and truly begin to be in want, you will have that renewed in you more or less through life's journey; and as the Lord may be pleased to bestow upon you from time to time a crumb of mercy or a sip of the water of life, that will be very sweet and very precious and blessed to you; but you will again want, and be in real need. A little of eternal life – that life needs feeding, needs watering.

Now if that life in your heart is of God, it will be found in prayer before God. That will induce prayer in you; that will bring you upon your knees in private before Him; that will bring you into that position before God from time to time of holding up your case before Him while you may sometimes be engaged in the duties of life. It is the life of God; a little of that real prayer issues forth. I have likened it to this natural apprehension of truth: when a child is born into the world the mother seeks for a sign that that is a living child, and when the child cries the mother has the evidence that it is a living child. You may be greatly tried about your prayers.

What will be the first cry, more or less? A cry for mercy.

“A beggar poor at mercy’s door,  
Lies such a wretch as I.”

A little like the publican had, my friends, that teaching in his breast. He had very low views of himself. The Lord began to make his beauty consume away like a moth, and He will yours if He is pleased to take you in hand. That poor man felt to be so far off from God, and that is just how you will feel. There will be such a disparity between this holy God and you, that holy fear being in your breast and in exercise in some humble measure will preserve and keep you from presumption, and in this we are likened to the publican: he could not so much as lift up his eyes unto heaven. Now he felt really and truly that it would be presumption so to do, but he smote upon his breast signifying where the trouble was. It was inside. He was not troubled about any other person; it was himself. “Thou art the man.” The power of that was brought home to his heart, and that which the Spirit of the Lord was pleased to breathe into him he breathed out.

O my friends, if we have the religion of the publican, that has the stamp of God upon it. For not only did he speak those words, “God be merciful to me a sinner,” but there were two things in it: there was a little faith and a little repentance. If we leave repentance out then religion is but halt, and it is like offerings without salt. Now we read that that man went down to his house justified rather than the other. The other proud Pharisee who was very proud of his endeavours to serve God – this poor publican was despised in his eyes, but the Lord rejected that Pharisee. So there is hope, there is mercy, for these poor sinners who carry within their breast a secret exercise concerning these things before God. It may be that I have a person here who sits alone and keeps silence because of the power of these things upon him.

Now that life of God leads you to the Word of God. That is something very definite. Godly literature is permissible, and godly literature has been used by the Spirit of God, and is used, for the tuition

of the church of God; but there is one thing very definite, and that is if your religion is of God it will lead you to His holy Word, and the perusal of that Word will be made by you in quest for something for your immortal soul. Sometimes this holy Word cuts; sometimes it is like a sword, for it divides between the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. A little of that Word by the Spirit – it is the power of it, my friends.

Also incorporated will be a little hunger and thirst after the bread and water of life, and here is where it is to be found, and here is where the soul will be found seeking it: at the footstool of mercy. That life which is of God must be supplied by God Himself, and that will produce an exercise within you that something in His Word may be applied. It is application, my friends, that is it! Now I ask you not at present whether you yet have received something, but are you after it? That is the point first. If you are in possession of eternal life it will be after something from God; and it will be after the removal of that bondage and guilt that you will feel upon your heart when sin is charged home upon you.

Also, you will be found among the children of God in His sanctuary. O how wonderful are the leadings of God with His people, because some of His people are found among the free-willers as well as in the world at large. How the Lord is pleased to seek and to search them out, and to bring them out; a gradual opening, as it were, of the understanding, and the veil of ignorance removed, so that they find they have a spiritual hunger and a spiritual thirst that those various denominations cannot bestow upon them. That preaching of free will, my friends, is derogatory to the truth of God. They cannot feed under it. They may have done previously, but when the life of God is deposited, it must have something from Him.

If some of you have been brought up to attend the means of grace from babyhood, when the time appointed arrives when God sees fit to quicken your soul into life, He may begin in a gentle way, but you will begin to be in want; you will have a hunger and a thirst after the bread and water of life, and your hearing will be very different from formerly, because you will begin to hear for yourself. You will have a case, and that case will require and need attention from time to time. That will cause sincerity within you, and as you come to the house of God there may be this working in your breast: O Lord, do remember me, a poor, unworthy sinner; grant that the ministration of Thy holy Word may be brought home to my heart with power, that I might have some evidence that I am a child of Thine. There is that hunger and thirst, and you will be found in the sanctuary of God, seeking for something.

Now the Lord is pleased at times to drop a little help and a little sweetness and a little encouragement into that breast. It is not all cutting

work, my friends. No, the Lord is a sovereign in regard to it, and His methods are diverse. It is the same Spirit, but to have a little of it, that is the point. What the Lord intends is that His children shall be brought to nothing in themselves, they shall be brought into the dust of self-abasement, where the Person of Christ will become the very foundation of their hope. Their hope will centre alone in Him, and that is the work of the Holy Ghost – the work of the Holy Ghost first in quickening, and then in the revealing of where the truth is, and salvation. It is in Christ.

Now this is a very important matter, my friends, in regard to the foundation upon which you will build your hope for eternity. I believe this, that there will be bestowed upon you a measure of that divine power attending that revelation of the Holy Ghost in regard to Christ being the Way, the Truth and the Life. Now when we speak about revelation, we mean an illumination in the heart, a perception by faith, received concerning Christ and His finished work; and the sound of that truth spoken either by the ministry or through that medium which the Lord has ordained will become very precious to you because it is just suited to your case. You perceive by faith that everything has been accomplished by the Person of the Son of God, and there is a little faith given in the heart so that there is a longing and a desire to apprehend that which is perceived. Also there is a little beauty that is brought to bear upon that heart in regard to a precious Jesus. You begin to see a little of the beauty that is in Him. Isaiah says, “Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.”

Perception by faith is very small; it is “through a glass darkly”; it is very little; but it is sufficient to draw that sinner unto Christ. I have likened Christ in this respect, speaking solemnly and reverently, to a magnet. You know a magnet draws. It draws still. It has that effect. And Christ, as He is proclaimed through the gospel, when the power of the Spirit is administered with that Word, has a drawing effect. My friends, the gospel has glad tidings in it; it speaks of mercy, pardon full and free, through Christ the Lamb once slain.

These people are righteous in His sight, and these will perceive a beauty in the glorious righteousness of Christ. Not only the beauty will be seen therein, but the need will be felt for the imputation of that righteousness on your behalf. O my friends, what a glorious work the Lord Jesus did while here upon earth, how in every jot and tittle He fulfilled the Father’s law, and out of love, so that He brought in a perfect righteousness and sealed it all with His precious blood! There will be a beauty in it. And now, as you perceive the beauty of that glorious dress, there will be begotten in your heart a little which is spoken of in the Gospel of Matthew: “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” – that is, they shall be filled with

the knowledge of this definite truth; and not only so, but they shall feel the blessed effects of being shrouded in that glorious righteousness, that beautiful dress. Now come, do you perceive a beauty in these things? Is there a breathing out to the Lord, and sometimes as it is set forth, there is something within you that reaches and stretches forth after it, if only you could be favoured to realise your interest in it?

Now my friends, there is more in this – we speak reverently and soberly – there is more in this than having your mind stocked as it were with the doctrines of grace without the experience of those doctrines. You mark what I state. The doctrines of grace are fundamental, and they are needful to our Christian faith; we believe in them; we trust by the teaching of the Spirit in some humble measure there is a belief in those doctrines. But where so many make a mistake is in this: is the experience of those doctrines in some humble measure in the heart? Now where the Lord has a favour to a person who may have attained to great lengths in respect to a doctrinal notion of the truth, the Lord will presently unmask it all; He will take it away; and what a solemn time that will be if He unmasks it all on a dying bed! We know this, that the Lord never will leave any of His dear children to perish, but we have a prospective view of the solemnity of it, to have everything removed in that way and manner that you so hope upon, and then to be launched into eternity and have nothing suitable, no good foundation. Consider how solemn it is.

Hence the need of having some indubitable mark and evidence, a sure foundation. I have thought this, my friends, in regard to this building. I understand that there is a movement in regard to the foundation. Now this building has been up now for a good many years, and I have considered since I have been here, it is very solemn, very real, very true in respect to the foundation upon which we may be building our hope of heaven, if it is not built upon Christ, if it is not upon that one foundation alone, we may continue for a long season, even among the church, but the Lord may permit something to come, as He has in this which has taken place here in this chapel building in some measure – the Lord permits it, and that reveals that there is not the stability that is needful, and hence there is a sandy foundation. You know what the gospel says about that, about them that build upon a sandy foundation. It shall pass away; that building will tumble; but that which is built upon the Rock, the Rock of eternal ages, Christ Jesus, that will stand. You see, there is teaching in it, my friends. There is to me.

That brings us to this very solemn point: “Lord, search my heart, try my ways, see if there be any wicked way in me, lead me in the way everlasting. Lord, if Thou hast not begun that real work in my heart, do begin it now!”



Now there is an essential that I have not spoken of, and that is a little love. Where the work of God is, time will come when there will be manifested, as the Lord is pleased first to give it, a little love issuing forth from the heart, and especially when He is pleased to bestow upon you some gracious benefit. How the apostle does definitely state in the thirteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians the need of charity. Now come, some of you hope and believe that there have been a few seasons when the love of Christ has been shed abroad in your breast; you have a little of it; and that signifies this, my friends, the indwelling of God in your heart. If you read one of the chapters in the General Epistle of John, it signifies there very definitely that if you have the love of Christ in your breast, you have the indwelling of God, His Spirit within you; and that will make itself manifest in a practical way. A little of it, that will love His truth, love His people, and it will love His ways.

That is where I believe the Lord either commences or deepens the exercise of believer's baptism, where the Spirit of the Lord is pleased to deposit that principle within, as the Lord is pleased to bestow upon that person some intimations of His will: "If ye love Me, keep My commandments," there will be a deepening of it, and that will incorporate the poor and afflicted children of God. You will begin to feel more deeply an attachment to them. Do you know what this is in some humble measure, like Ruth? O I do hope, my friends, if I am not awfully deceived, that at one particular juncture in my life especially, when my predecessor [Jabez Field of Blackboys] was preaching in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ, when He was set up upon the gospel pole, there was something that went forth out of my heart to lay hold upon Him, and also something special in regard to the church of God. I have likened it more or less to what Ruth said, and her choice that by grace she made: "This people shall be my people." That is a special people, and the power of that truth and what Ruth says there will be verified in your heart. You will have a little of this. And though the Scripture says, and it will be performed, "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it," it can be strained, but it can never be drowned. The Lord permits love to be strained sometimes, but there can be no drowning. I believe the Lord renews it and He confirms it.

Now the goodness of the Lord leadeth to true repentance. This is what I desire that we might be favoured to know more of, and that is a little real softness of heart, a little of that true, evangelical repentance, that there might not only be a grieving over sin, but a grieving because of grieving the Lord; to have the heart broken, to have a little of this. I believe that has the stamp of God upon it, and if you have in possession some humble measure of these things, your state before God is far better than the wicked.

I conclude by saying this: I do desire that the Lord may be pleased to give to you dear young friends a little in your hearts towards the Lord God of Israel. We read of one young one in His Word in whose heart there was some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel. Now that good thing, deposited by God, will have its end in eternal glory. Amen.

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### **CHRIST, THE SINNER'S SURETY**

*By Henry Fowler (1779-1838)*

“Be Surety for Thy servant for good” (Psa. 119. 122).

A surety is one who answers for another, that stands in the place of another, who answers for the debts of another to the respective creditor; such is Christ. He stood forth from eternity as the Head and Representative of His elect. He gave His bond for the payment of their vast debt; not then indeed actually contracted, but which the Lord saw would be contracted through the devil's influence by Eve and Adam at a very short period after their formation. Thus man became a debtor, and so deeply involved, that neither himself nor the interference of an angel could deliver him out of the hands of his injured creditor. I doubt not but the glorious plan of salvation by grace was revealed and made known to Adam soon after the Fall. I conclude that it was, from the Lord having given him a promise, which includes the whole gospel, and Paul seems to have had his eye upon that very promise. “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” (Gal. 4. 4, 5). Here we see the Surety come forth from the Father, standing in the sinner's place under the law, to fulfil the law which we had broken, and to pay our debt by shedding His blood, in laying down His life, yea, giving His life a ransom for many, for that was the price demanded by justice for our redemption. Thus, “the offended died to set the offender free.”

Having cast my eye on a page of the truly excellent Herman Witsius [Dutch divine: 1636-1708], and found much sweetness in reading it, I cannot withhold it from the reader. “What penetration of men or angels was capable of devising things so mysterious, so sublime, and so far surpassing the capacity of all created beings? How adorable do the wisdom, justice, holiness, truth, goodness and philanthropy of God display themselves in contriving, giving and perfecting this mean of our salvation! How calmly does conscience, overwhelmed with the burden of its sins, acquiesce in such a Surety, and in such a suretyship, here, at length, observing a method of our reconciliation both worthy of God and

safe for man! Who, on contemplating these things in the light of the Spirit, would not break out into the praises of the most holy, the most righteous, the most true, the most gracious, and the most high God? O the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God! O the mysteries which angels desire to look into!

“Glory to the Father, who raised up, accepted and gave us such a Surety! Glory to the Son who, clothing Himself in human flesh, so willingly, so patiently and so constantly performed such an engagement for us! Glory to the Holy Spirit, the revealer, the witness, and the earnest of so great happiness for us! All hail, O Christ Jesus, true and eternal God, and true and holy Man, both in one, who retainest the properties of both natures in the unity of Thy Person! Thee we acknowledge, Thee we worship, to Thee we betake ourselves, at Thy feet we fall down, from Thy hand alone we look for salvation. Thou art the only Saviour. We desire to be Thy peculiar property; we are so by Thy grace, and shall remain such for ever. Let the whole world of Thine elect, with us, know, acknowledge and adore Thee. This is the sum of our faith, of our hope, and all our wishes. Amen.” (*Witsius on the Covenants* vol. 1. page 272: 1775).

Jesus became the Surety, and is the Head and Representative of the elect world: their sins and their curse He bore; their persons He represents in heaven before the Father; their cause He pleads as their most righteous Advocate with the Father; He is their great High Priest, made such “after the power of an endless life,” that they may eternally live and reign with Him. It is but reasonable to conclude that if Christ be our Surety for good, for which David prays in the text, and Job also (chapter 17. 3), and Hezekiah (Isa. 38. 14), He will most assuredly withhold no needful grace or blessing to carry on the work in the hearts of His elect to full perfection, that He will not leave them nor forsake them, for if He were to leave them in the devil’s hands, or in their own hands, or to the power of their lusts and indwelling sin, all that their Surety has done for them would amount to no good at all. But He is our Surety for good, to give us all the good that He has promised, even His Holy Spirit, to help us to pray in faith, to live in hope, and to rejoice in tribulation. And but for the Holy Spirit, who comes down as the dew and as the rain in the name of Jesus into our hearts, we should never pray spiritually and in faith, nor ever hope, nor ever rejoice in tribulation. “We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith” (Gal. 5. 5).

Did the Surety, in the prospect of His awful hour, sweat as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground in Gethsemane? Did He smart beneath our dreadful load of guilt? Did the Father make His dear and well-beloved Son an offering for sin? And shall the dear-bought and

redeemed inheritance of the Lord of Hosts not be watered every moment, and amply and abundantly supplied from the fulness of that grace which is treasured up in Jesus? Hear, ye heirs of promise, the words of the Holy Ghost by Paul: "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). And again: "He that 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).

Did the Surety pay our debts and bear our sins in His own body on the tree? Learn from this what a dreadful evil sin must be, that nothing less than the blood of the Son of God could atone for. O my soul, never trifle with that, never think light of that, which cost thy Surety such inexpressible agonies! Did the Surety lay down His life through His free love for vile rebels? How many, and how great are the obligations we are laid under to love Him, to serve Him, to suffer for Him, and to take patiently our daily cross for His name's sake!

Believer, the suretyship engagements of Christ, and the full payment of the debt by Him, must always be thy plea before thy Father; and to Him thou mayest come at all times with humble boldness, nothing doubting, nothing wavering; but with a free, open heart, though thou art a poor, vile, ruined sinner in and of thyself, for thy Surety says, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you" (John 16. 23). Does conscience clamour, and thy carnal reason oppose? Art thou brought exceedingly low by the powerful working of thy indwelling sin? Be assured, there is no remedy nor support for thee in this thy terrible warfare but in Jesus, and from Jesus, who is thy Surety for good. Does Satan harass thee with his fiery darts, and throw hellish suggestions into thy mind against the most holy Trinity, or against the adored Person of thy Surety, to lessen Him in thy esteem? Use, in faith, if thou hast no comfort, the best of all weapons, the Word of God, and tell Satan that He who hath saved thee from the damning power of sin and the curse of the law is the mighty God who will, according to His promise, perfect that which concerns thee! "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever, Amen" (Jude 24, 25).

A debtor and nothing to pay,  
Dear Lord, unto Thee I confess;  
My Surety, my Life, and my Way,  
In Thee would I seek my redress.

Thy Word is my comfort and prop;  
Thy heart-cheering voice let me hear;

When sinking, do Thou bear me up;  
Or when I'm pursued, be Thou near.

Let goodness and mercy attend  
Thy servant, the whole of his days;  
Then to Thee his voice shall ascend,  
In heartfelt thanksgiving and praise.

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### NONE BUT JESUS!

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My dear M.,

I was glad to have your letter. To be drawn, there must be attraction. Attraction is by affinity. In grace this is by Christ drawing to the soul in the communication of His Spirit; in the soul it is the tendency of it to Christ as felt to be every way and infinitely suitable. As the plumbline in perpendicular is deflected by a mountain, so the soul halting between self, sin, the world and God is invincibly deflected, drawn to God by His amazing, great, infinite love in Christ. Watch these motions.

But sin. Yes, the trouble is there. And you must have known something of it. Tell me in your next. But still pray for the drawings: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." One of the safest signs is the soul's moving after Christ. The material cannot fill and satisfy the spiritual.

"The God of spirits only can,  
Fill up the vast desires of man."

May nothing turn you aside. Follow on: "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord." All is well with us if He is ours. No cure can be found but in Him; no ease, no comfort, no satisfaction outside Himself. "Where is there any other that may save thee?" To one who has seen Him by faith there is none. O how empty then is the whole world! The Lord be with you, about you, and in.

Your affectionate friend,

J.K. Popham

December 29th, 1908

My dear M.,

I am glad to have your letter and see that you are not at ease. Tormenting fear is better than presumption. But fear will not prove you to be right, nor bring any comfort to you. Neither can any man enable you to believe that your conviction and knowledge of sin are from God. Notwithstanding it is written: "God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man

perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night," etc. Seek then to have this point cleared. But now what will clear it, and all other things about which you may be perplexed? The blood of Christ applied, the witness of the Spirit with your spirit that you are a child of God. In the removal of your sin you would perceive what had been burdening you; in the light of the Spirit's testimony you would lose your dismal doubts.

May you not be allowed to rest without the "double for all your sins." Don't try to prove yourself right, or build on any comfort you may feel. The more utterly lost you feel, the more you can fall down a ruined creature; the more ignorant, alienated, guilty, weak, overcome sinner you realise yourself to be, the more fit for Christ you will be, and the nearer deliverance. "Christ is the Friend of sinners." This truth is calculated to help you in your worst hours, help you to "seek the Lord while He may be found." As seen by faith it will show you a path to heaven, and give you courage to pursue that.

Beware of ease. Fear yourself. Seek the Lord in every way opened to you. One day I hope to see the present exercises you speak of brought to a gracious ripeness. Believe me,

Your affectionate friend,

J.K. Popham

May 1st, 1909

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### A LIVING TESTIMONY

*Part of a sermon preached by Jesse Delves at his recognition services at Clapham on June 10th, 1935. We believe many of our readers have loved the truths preached in his sermons, and will be glad to know something of Mr. Delves himself.*

I believe the Lord brought me into concern about my soul when about seventeen. I was labouring under a heavy temptation. I have no real reason to believe that I then knew anything savingly of God, but I prayed to be delivered from the temptation pressing upon me. In a particular way the Lord removed it, but also quickly brought me, as it were, into bondage and condemnation under a broken law. I remember feeling in those days that the law of God was so spiritual, and so strict, that if I had but one impure thought in my whole life, it would be enough to condemn me and send me to perdition, and I felt the sentence of death in my conscience.

I began to attend Galeed chapel, with very mixed feelings at first, but continued to attend for about five years, until I believe the Lord appeared for me and set my soul at liberty. During that time I had many helps, sometimes in the preaching, but never till then got what I wanted,

never felt satisfied in my soul that anything I experienced came from God.

In this state of uncertainty, I remember during an illness, one night suffering from an attack of haemorrhage, I felt to be facing death, with no comforting hope in the near prospect of entering eternity. About that time or soon after, one Lord's day morning, thus exercised about my state, I felt just this: I could pray the publican's prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and that was all my religion. I went to Galeed under that feeling, and soon after my pastor [J.K. Popham] commenced to preach, he said, "Perhaps someone here feels he can only pray the publican's prayer." This remark entered into my soul with such power that I felt I must get up and say, "I am the man." He said, "If you can really pray that in your heart, go on, you are in the right way." It was a help.

But I did not get what I wanted until January 1916. I had heard Mr. Dickens preach at Galeed with some encouragement, and felt a desire in my heart to write to my pastor and convey to him some things that I had passed through. Very late that night I wrote a letter to him. The next day I was very troubled as to whether I had done right. In the evening at work at my bench, suddenly a light shone in my soul, the way the Lord had led me along from the beginning appeared clearly before my view, and the Spirit seemed to bear His own witness that it was His work, that I felt in my very soul confirmed and assured that it was the seal of the Spirit to His own teaching.

That witness was followed by a view of the Lord Jesus Christ as suffering upon the cross for my sins, and so clear was that sight to my faith, that it could not have been more real to me had I looked upon Him with my mortal eyes. I saw Him by faith and was absorbed in that view, having never seen anything like it before. Although I had heard Christ preached from infancy, it was as though I had never heard His name, and I believe He spoke that word to me, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."

While under this revelation, the suggestion came: What of the Father? And then this word: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." That night I was made in my very soul a Trinitarian. I believed in the eternal Father, the eternal Son, the eternal Spirit, and I loved each blessed Person in one eternal triune God, and I worshipped Him. O my friends, the memory of those days stands out fresh in my view now. O that I could again feel what I then felt! but now I often have to say, "Oh that it were with me as in days past"! My language then was, He is to my soul the Chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. I could claim Him as my Portion, and I believe He owned the kindred in my soul.

When my pastor called to see me, I was enabled to tell him what I had experienced. He said, "We have a church meeting tonight, and you

must come.” I went that evening, and related to the church a little of what I hoped the Lord had done for me, and was baptized the following week.

That is a very brief relation of what I might in all humility, perhaps, at least hope was a call by His grace. If I am not deceived He has brought me to desire a knowledge of Christ. I hope I have had some view of the blessed Redeemer as dying to atone for my sins and guilt, as having them laid upon Him, and have felt in my conscience the purging and cleansing efficacy of His precious blood.

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### **CHOSEN IN THE FURNACE**

*A letter by Samuel Rutherford*

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*To Robert Stuart*

My very dear brother,

Grace, mercy and peace be to you. Ye are heartily welcome to my world of suffering, and heartily welcome to my Master’s house. God give you much joy of your new Master. If I have been in the house before you, I were not faithful to give the house an ill name, or to speak evil of the Lord of the family. I rather wish God’s Holy Spirit (O Lord, breathe upon me with that Spirit!) to tell you the fashions of the house (Ezek. 43. 11). One thing I can say, by on-waiting ye will grow a great man with the Lord of the house. Hang on till ye get some good from Christ. Lay all your loads and your weights by faith upon Christ; take ease to yourself, and let Him bear all. He can, He dow [doth], He will bear you, howbeit hell were upon your back. I rejoice that He is come, and hath chosen you in the furnace; it was even there where ye and He set trust. That is an old gate of Christ’s. He keepeth the good old fashion with you, that was in Hosea’s days: “Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak to her heart” (Hos. 2. 14, margin). There was no talking to her heart while He and she were in the fair and flourishing city, and at ease; but out in the cold, hungry, waste wilderness, He allured her, He whispered news into her ear there, and said, “Thou art Mine.” What would ye think of such a bode [bargain]? Ye may soon do worse than say, “Lord, hold all; Lord Jesus, a bargain be it, it shall not go back on my side.”

Ye have gotten a great advantage in the way of heaven, that ye have started to the gate in the morning. Like a fool, as I was, I suffered my sun to be high in the heaven, and near afternoon, before ever I took the gate by the end. I pray you now keep the advantage ye have. My heart, be not lazy; set quickly up the brae [hill] on hands and feet, as if the last



pickle [grain] of sand were running out of your glass, and death were coming to turn the glass. And be very careful to take heed to your feet, in that slippery and dangerous way of youth that ye are walking in. The devil and temptations now have the advantage of the brae of you, and are upon your wand-hand and your working-hand. Dry timber will soon take fire. Be covetous and greedy of the grace of God, and beware that it be not a holiness which cometh only from the cross; for too many are that way disposed. "When He slew them, then they sought Him: and they returned and enquired early after God." "Nevertheless they did flatter Him with their mouth, and they lied unto Him with their tongues" (Psa. 78. 34, 36). It is part of our hypocrisy to give God fair, white words [plausible speeches], when He hath us in His grips (if I may speak so), and to flatter Him till He win to the fair fields again. Try well green godliness, and examine what it is that ye love in Christ. If ye love but Christ's sunny side, and would have only summer weather and a land-gate, not a sea-way to heaven, your profession will play you a slip, and the winter-well will go dry again in summer.

Make no sport nor bairn's play of Christ; but labour for a sound and lively sight of sin, that ye may judge yourself an undone man, a damned slave of hell and of sin, one dying in your own blood, except Christ come and rue upon you [pity you], and take you up. And therefore, make sure and fast work of conversion. Cast the earth deep; and down, down with the old work, the building of confusion, that was there before; and let Christ lay new work, and make a new creation within you. Look if Christ's rain goeth down to the root of your withered plants, and if His love wound your heart whill [until] it bleed with sorrow for sin, and if ye can pant and fall aswoon, and be like to die for that lovely One, Jesus. I know that Christ will not be hid where He is; grace will ever speak for itself, and be fruitful in well-doing. The sanctified cross is a fruitful tree; it bringeth forth many apples.

If I should tell you by some weak experience what I have found in Christ, ye or others could hardly believe me. I thought not the hundredth part of Christ long since, that I do now, though alas, my thoughts are still infinitely below His worth! I have a dwining [pining], sickly and pained life, for a real possession of Him; and am troubled with love-brashes and love-fevers, but it is a sweet pain. I would refuse no conditions, not hell excepted (reserving always God's hatred), to buy possession of Jesus. But alas, I am not a merchant, who have any money to give for Him! I must either come to a good-cheap market, where wares are had for nothing, else I go home empty. But I have casten this work upon Christ to get me Himself. I have His faith, and truth, and promise, as a pawn of His, all engaged that I shall obtain that which my hungry desires would be at; and I esteem that the choice of my happiness. And for Christ's

cross, especially the garland and flower of all crosses, to suffer for His name, I esteem it more than I can write or speak to you. And I write it under mine own hand to you, that it is one of the steps of the ladder up to our country; and Christ is still at the heavy end of this black tree, and so it is but as a feather to me. I need not run at leisure [I am not obliged to run slowly] because of a burden on my back; my back never bare the like of it; the more heavily crossed for Christ, the soul is still the lighter for the journey.

Now, would to God that all cold-blooded, faint-hearted soldiers of Christ would look again to Jesus and to His love, and when they look, I would have them to look again and again, and fill themselves with beholding of Christ's beauty, and I dare say then that Christ would come into great court and request with many. The virgins would flock fast about the Bridegroom; they would embrace and take hold of Him, and not let Him go. But when I have spoken of Him, till my head rive [almost breaks], I have said just nothing. I may begin again. A Godhead, a Godhead is a world's wonder. Set ten thousand, thousand new-made worlds of angels and elect men, and double them in number, ten thousand, thousand, thousand times; let their heart and tongues be ten thousand, thousand times more agile and large than the heart and tongues of the seraphim that stand with six wings before Him (Isa. 6. 2), when they have said all for the glorifying and praising of the Lord Jesus, they have but spoken little or nothing; His love will abide all possible creatures' praise.

O if I could wear this tongue to the stump in extolling His highness! But it is my daily-growing sorrow that I am confounded with His incomparable love, and that He doeth so great things for my soul, and hath got never yet anything of me worth the speaking of. Sir, I charge you, help me to praise Him; it is a shame to speak of what He hath done for me, and what I do to Him again. I am sure that Christ hath many drowned dyvours [drowned over head and ears in His debt] in heaven beside Him; and when we are convened, man and angel, at the great day, in that fair, last meeting, we are all but His drowned dyvours: it is hard to say who oweth Him most. If men could do no more, I would have them to wonder: if ye cannot be filled with Christ's love, we may be filled with wondering.

Sir, I would that I could persuade you to grow sick for Christ, and to long after Him, and be pained with love for Himself. But His tongue is in heaven who can do it. To Him and His rich grace I recommend you.

I pray you, pray for me, and forget not to praise.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus,

S.R.

Aberdeen, June 17th, 1637

## THE DEATH OF RUTHERFORD

*The beautiful poem by Anne Ross Cousins, "The Last Words of Samuel Rutherford," has long been loved by the people of God. Here is a short account of his last days, written by Andrew Bonar in his introduction to Rutherford's Letters.*

When Charles II was fully restored, and had begun to adopt arbitrary measures, Rutherford's work, *Lex Rex*, was taken notice of by the Government. For reasonable as are its principles in defence of the liberty of subjects, its spirit of freedom was intolerable to rulers, who were step by step advancing to acts of cruelty and death. Indeed, it was so hateful to them that they burnt it in 1661, first at Edinburgh by the hands of the hangman, and then some days after, by the hands of the infamous Sharpe, under the windows of its author's college in St. Andrews. He was next deposed from all his offices, and last of all, was summoned to answer at next Parliament a charge of high treason. But the citation came too late. He was already on his deathbed, and on hearing of it, calmly remarked that he had got another summons before a superior Judge and judicatory, and sent the message, "I behove to answer my first summons, and ere your day arrive, I will be where few kings and great folks come."

We have no account of the nature of his last sickness, except that it was a lingering disease. He had a daughter who died a few weeks before himself. All that is told us of his deathbed is characteristic of the man. At one time he spoke much of "the white stone" and "the new name." When he was on the threshold of glory, ready to receive the immortal crown, he said, "Now my tabernacle is weak, and I would think it a more glorious way of going home to lay down my life for the cause at the Cross of Edinburgh or St. Andrews, but I submit to my Master's will."

Some days before his death, after a fainting fit, he said, "Now I feel, I believe, I enjoy, I rejoice." And turning to Mr. Blair, "I feed on manna: I have angels' food. My eyes shall see my Redeemer. I know that He shall stand on the earth at the latter day, and I shall be caught up in the clouds to meet Him in the air." When asked, "What think ye now of Christ?" he replied, "I shall live and adore Him. Glory, glory to my Creator and Redeemer for ever. Glory shineth in Immanuel's land."

The same afternoon he said, "I shall sleep in Christ; and when I awake, I shall be satisfied with His likeness. O for arms to embrace Him!" Then he cried aloud, "O for a well-tuned harp!" This last expression he used more than once, as if already stretching out his hand to get his golden harp and join the redeemed in their new song. He also said on another occasion, "I hear Him saying to me, 'Come up hither.'"

His little daughter Agnes (the only survivor of six children), eleven years of age, stood by his bedside. He looked on her, and said, "I have

left her upon the Lord.” Well might the man say so, who could so fully testify of his portion in the Lord, as a goodly heritage. To four of his brethren who came to see him he said, “My Lord and Master is Chief of ten thousands of thousands. None is comparable to Him in heaven or in earth. Dear brethren, do all for Him. Pray for Christ. Preach for Christ. Do all for Christ; beware of men-pleasing. The Chief Shepherd will shortly appear.”

He often called Christ “his Kingly King.” While he spoke even rapturously, “I shall shine! I shall see Him as He is! I shall see Him reign, and all His fair company with Him, and I shall have my large share” – he at the same time would protest, “I renounce all that ever He made me will or do as defiled or imperfect as coming from myself. I betake myself to Christ for sanctification as well as justification.” Repeating 1 Corinthians 1. 30, he said, “I close with it! Let Him be so. He is my All and All.” “If He should slay me ten thousand times I will trust.”

He spoke as if he knew the hour of his departure; not perhaps as Paul (2 Tim. 4. 6) or Peter (2 Pet. 1. 14), yet still in a manner that seems to indicate that the Lord draws very near His servants in that hour, and gives glimpses of what He is doing. On the last day of his life, in the afternoon, he said, “This night will close the door, and fasten my anchor within the veil, and I shall go away in a sleep by five o’clock in the morning.” And so it was. He entered Immanuel’s land at that very hour, and is now (as himself would have said) “sleeping in the bosom of the Almighty,” till the Lord come.

We may add his latest words. “There is nothing now between me and the resurrection but, ‘This day thou shalt be with Me in paradise.’” He interrupted one speaking in praise of his painfulness [labours] in the ministry, “I disclaim all. The port I would be in at is redemption and forgiveness of sin through His blood.” Two of his biographers record that his last words were, “Glory, glory dwelleth in Immanuel’s land!” as if he had caught a glimpse of its mountain-tops.

It was at St. Andrews he died, on March 30th, 1661, and there he was buried. “Lament’s Diary,” p. 133, says: “He was interred on March 30th, in the ordinary burial place.” Had he lived a few weeks his might have been the cruel death endured by his friend James Guthrie, whom he had encouraged, by his letters, in stedfastness to the end. The sentence which the Parliament passed, when told that he was dying, did him no dishonour. When they had voted that he should not die in the College, Lord Burleigh rose and said, “Ye cannot vote him out of heaven.”

His death was lamented throughout the land, and to this day few names are so well known and honoured. So great was the reverence which some of the godly had for this man of God, that they requested to be buried where his body was laid. This was Thomas Halyburton’s dying

request. An old man in the parish of Crailing (in which Nisbet, his birthplace, is situated) remembers the veneration entertained for him by the great-grandfather of the present Marquis of Lothian. This good Marquis used to lift his hat as often as he passed the spot where stood the cottage in which Samuel Rutherford was born. He was twice married. His widow survived him fourteen years.

If ever there was any portrait of him, it is not now known. The portraits sometimes given of him are all imaginary. We are most familiar with the likeness of his soul. There is one expressive line in the epitaph on his tombstone, in the churchyard at the boundary wall opposite the door of St. Regulus' Tower:

“What tongue, what pen, or skill of men,  
Can famous Rutherford commend!  
His learning justly raised his fame,  
True godliness adorned his name.  
He did converse with things above,  
*Acquainted with Immanuel's love.*”

A monument to his memory was erected in 1842, by subscription, on the Boreland Hill, in the parish of Anwoth. It is sixty feet in height, and thus, seen all around, it seems to remind the inhabitants of that region how God once visited His people there.

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## THE LORD IS THY KEEPER

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Psalm 121. 5: “The Lord is thy keeper.” Two principal points are asserted in these previous words.

1. Jehovah, and Jehovah alone, the omnipotent and self-existent God, is the Keeper and Preserver of His people.

2. The people of God are kept, at all times and in all circumstances, by His mighty power unto everlasting salvation; they are preserved even “for evermore.” In the first particular, the divinity of the great Keeper is declared, and in the second, the eternal security of His people through His omnipotence and faithfulness. This was the psalmist's gospel. He preached it to others and he felt it himself. He did not speculate upon what he did not understand, but he had a clear evidence and a sweet perception of these two glorious doctrines which he delivered to the people....

This character, under the name of Jehovah, is the character of Christ. Just such a one is Jesus, the Shepherd of Israel. He says of Himself to the Father, “Those that Thou gavest Me *I have kept*, and *none of them is lost*, but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.” .... From what has been premised, it seems evident that the

Keeper of the faithful is no other than Jehovah. This the psalmist has proved. It appears equally evident that Christ is their Keeper and Preserver. This He hath declared Himself, and His apostles have repeatedly declared it of Him. It follows, therefore, that Christ is truly and essentially Jehovah. All the sophistry in the world cannot elude this conclusion, nor all the heretics in the world destroy the premises. And if Christ be Jehovah, He is all that supreme, eternal, omnipotent being, which Arians, Socinians and others deny Him to be.

Ambrose Serle (1742-1812)

Psalm 121. 7, 8: It is of importance to mark the reason why the prophet repeats so often what he had so briefly and in one word expressed with sufficient plainness. Such repetition seems at first sight superfluous, but when we consider how difficult it is to correct our distrust, it will be easily perceived that he does not improperly dwell upon the commendation of the divine providence. How few are to be found who yield to God the honour of being a “keeper,” in order to their being thence assured of their safety, and led to call upon Him in the midst of their perils! On the contrary, even when we seem to have largely experienced what this protection of God implies, we yet instantly tremble at the noise of a leaf falling from a tree, as if God had quite forgotten us. Being then entangled in so many unholy misgivings, and so much inclined to distrust, we are taught from the passage that if a sentence couched in a few words does not suffice us, we should gather together whatever may be found throughout the whole Scriptures concerning the providence of God, until this doctrine – “That God always keeps watch for us” – is deeply rooted in our hearts, so that depending upon His guardianship alone, we may bid adieu to all the vain confidences of the world.

John Calvin (1509-1565)

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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**Reformation Studies**, paperback; 182 pages; price £8 including postage and **Puritan and Covenanter Studies**, paperback; 207 pages; price £10 including postage; both by J.M. Brentnall, published privately by the author and obtainable from him at 5 Rosier Crescent, Swanwick, Derbyshire, DE55 1RS.

These two books are written in a similar style and each has a collection of essays. *Puritan and Covenanter Studies* is divided into two main sections on the Puritans and the Scottish Covenanters, each with a very helpful historical introduction on who they were and how they lived. At the end is a single essay entitled “Puritans and Covenanters on Knowing God.” The essays on “Samuel Rutherford at Aberdeen” and “John Davidson and the 1596 Revival” were both solemn and sobering. Most of the others related to a particular person and his

views on a certain aspect of doctrine, for example, “John Owen and Evangelical Theology,” “Samuel Hudson and the Church.” Some of these were informative and helpful; others seemed to lose what should be the central theme of glorifying God in His Person and work, and to wander into complex reasoning on opinions about some theological issue far removed from “the simplicity that is in Christ.”

*Reformation Studies* contains essays on features of the lives and teachings of various reformers from Wycliffe through to Calvin. Subjects include “The Letters of Jan Hus,” “The Conversion of John Calvin” and one essay not related to any particular reformer: “Music: Handmaid of the Lutheran Reformation.” Many were both interesting and helpful – we particularly liked “Calvin and the School of God.” We much preferred this book overall.

John A. Kingham, Luton

**From the Mouth of God**, by Sinclair B. Ferguson; paperback; 209 pages; price £7.50; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

The author is a former minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Columbia, South Carolina, U.S.A., and serves as Professor of Systematic Theology at Redeemer Seminary in Dallas, Texas.

The book is in three parts: “Trusting the Bible,” “Reading the Bible,” and “Applying the Bible.” It is a revised and enlarged edition of *Handle with Care*, first published in 1982. Although a theological book, the author states that the pages do not have “specialists” in view, but “ordinary Christians” who want to think through what we should believe about the Bible. The point is made that it is only in the last four hundred years or so that ordinary people have owned their own copies of the Bible. Thus, for the longer part of the history of the Christian church, daily Bible-reading was the luxury of the few rather than the privilege of the many. (Perhaps we do not sufficiently value our privileges.)

Preliminary subjects dealt with include inspiration, how God (quoting from Calvin) “accommodates the knowledge of Himself to our slight capacity,” and how that every word that proceeded from the mouth of God has come to us through the instrumentality of men. The question of the canon of Scripture is thoroughly investigated, as well as principles of interpretation. Appendices include a Bible Reading Plan taking you through the entire Bible in the course of a year, and a bibliography for suggested further reading.

The book includes much of interest with many points made to which we had previously given little consideration. However, all biblical quotations (and there are many) are from the English Standard Version. We were unable to avoid mentally re-translating these portions back into the familiar Authorised Version, which was a severe hindrance to one’s enjoyment of an otherwise useful book.

Trevor Scott, Harpenden



King Antigonus, pulling a sheep with his own hands out of a dirty ditch as he was passing by, drew his subjects exceedingly to commend and love him. So King Jesus, pulling poor souls out of their sins – and, as it were, out of hell – cannot but draw them to be much in the commendation of Christ and strong in their love to Christ.

Thomas Brooks

## OBITUARY

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**Jabez W. Buss**, faithful minister among our churches since 1950, and for a time pastor at Southill, Bedfordshire, died on January 2nd, 2015, aged 93. He was formerly a member at Bethersden, where he was baptized by his father-in-law, Mr. Herbert Dawson, but for many years now at Southill. “The memory of the just is blessed.”

**Muriel Grace Sayers**, member of the church at Mount Zion, Leatherhead for 46 years, entered her eternal rest on July 19th, 2013, aged 80.

It is a scriptural precept that “the memory of the just is blessed,” and we read of the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31 that “her children arise up, and call her blessed.”

Muriel, known as Grace by all who knew her well, was born in Croydon, only child to John and Grace Aldworth, who were members at Tamworth Road Chapel during the pastorate of Mr. George Rose. Her father had contracted tuberculosis prior to our mother’s birth, and his journal records the many anxieties of this time in their needs as a young couple. His illness necessitated a period of rest at Ninfield Sanatorium, and for a time he recovered strength, during which time our mother was born. Her father recorded: “A week ago our little daughter was born – such a bonny little girl. She is making good progress and we hope will prove one of the Lord’s lambs. This is our earnest and constant prayer and we pray, too, that she may be spared to be a blessing to us.” Sadly, he passed away only eighteen months later. Our grandmother penned a few lines in her own writings (which are a comfort to us as we write now about our dear mother), beginning,

“Safe in that happy home  
Where there’s no night.”

There being little provision for widows in those days, the early years of our mother’s life were spent travelling with our grandmother between various family relatives as far apart as Wales and Kent. Being an only child, she formed a particularly close bond with her Kent relatives, with whom she maintained close links throughout her life. She spent a short period during the war living in Pluckley and attended Union Chapel, Bethersden. She also spent some time in Croydon during the war years, including taking her eleven plus exam during an air raid.

In the providence of God, our mother and grandmother moved to Leatherhead in 1949 and began to attend Mount Zion Chapel, where both met those who would become their husbands. Our grandmother married one of the deacons, Mr. Harold Miller, and moved to Epsom, where they ran a post office and general stores. Our mother began a courtship with



John Sayers, and they were married at Mount Zion on August 12th, 1953 by the pastor, Mr. H.G. Stovold. The first ten years of their married life were spent living with our mother's parents, where four children were born. The way was provided for them to purchase their own home in Church Road, Leatherhead (just along from Mount Zion Chapel), where three more children were born.

Around this time, mother was brought into spiritual concern, and her writings begin at this point: "I believe the Lord has, in His mercy, been dealing with my soul over the last two years. Before this time I had seen the Lord working for my good in providential matters, and had had some answers to prayer, but it wasn't until this time that I believe He began a work of grace in my soul.

"In the beginning of it I was brought into great darkness of mind. At first it was only natural depression, but as it increased so I cried to the Lord to deliver me from it, and I found that I was pleading for mercy for my soul. This awful darkness and fear was with me day and night, and I found that the Lord whom I had thought I trusted in was also a holy God, and I was a sinner before Him. I felt to be in a very solemn place and could get no relief.

"I did have two special encouragements at this time. One was when Mr. C.A. Wood preached at Leatherhead from Isaiah 50. 10: 'Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.' Also John reading at home Jeremiah 17 when verse 7 gave me a little hope: 'Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.'

"I felt that I must ask the Lord that if He had a favour towards me that He would grant me a token for good. I prayed that He would send us another child. I was tried as to whether this was right, but the following Sunday Mr. R.E. Sayers preached at Leatherhead from, 'Shew me a token for good.' This encouraged me to believe that I was right in seeking for a token, and the Lord in His mercy granted it, and gave us another child.

"I had several sweet confirmations during 1965. One was in reading a sermon preached by Mr. H. Dawson on the text: 'I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the Lord.' This sermon was read twice at Leatherhead on separate Sunday mornings afterwards, which was very confirming. Then in October Mr. Tyler preached from Psalm 118. 23: 'This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.' Also whilst we were on holiday we heard Mr. R.E. Sayers preach at Heathfield from Philippians 1. 6: 'He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.' This raised me to a hope that the good work was begun.

“Our little one was born in January 1966 – James – and the first time we brought him to chapel Mr. R.E. Sayers preached from 2 Kings 4. 26: ‘Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well.’ I believe the Lord used it in this way. I felt I could say it is well with my husband, and that in the Lord’s time He would prove that it is well with the child, but is it well with me? The Lord used it to deepen my experience. I could see that the Lord’s people possessed something that I didn’t and I longed to be like them.

“When Mr. Nicholas came to preach he mentioned ‘new things’ and I felt I did possess some of the new things that a child of God experiences. As I was walking up to the chapel that Sunday, the word dropped into my heart from Revelation 22. 14: ‘Blessed are they that do His commandments.’ Now I could see that I was unable to keep the commandments and I was tried. Soon after this I read a sermon in *Zion’s Witness* and that verse was opened up. I was led to see that by the commandments was meant believing on the Lord Jesus and love to the brethren. Also in this sermon the minister said, ‘Come away from yourself, come away from your good deeds. Jesus says, “Come unto Me and I will give you rest,” perfect, abiding rest in My finished work.’ This was a great help to me.

“Soon after this, I heard Mr. L.S.B. Hyde preach from Revelation 21. 5: ‘Behold, I make all things new.’ This was made a help to me. About this time I was reading the second part of *Pilgrim’s Progress* and Mercy’s exercise about not having an invitation as Christiana had, and it seemed so applicable to my case. Then I read the book, *Seeking Jesus*, by R.F. Chambers, which spoke of Mercy, and the whole book seemed so helpful. It was like a spring of water. As I sought the Lord earnestly for His mercy and grace, so He was pleased to open up these things to me.

“In May 1966, Mr. L.S.B. Hyde preached from 2 Kings 2. 21: ‘And he went forth unto the spring of waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land.’ This was a special hearing time to me. Mr. George Sayers gave out hymn 979 that afternoon which was also made a help: ‘Jesus those happy souls does bless, who hunger for His righteousness.’

“Two other special hearing times about this time were Mr. J. Relf preaching from Colossians 3. 1: ‘If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.’ Also Mr. B.A. Ramsbottom preaching at Easter from 1 Corinthians 12. 31: ‘Covet earnestly the best gifts.’ I became much exercised as to what it was truly to believe, and prayed that the Lord

would enable one of His servants to open it up. I heard Mr. B. Honeysett preach from Acts 16. 31: 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' This was made a blessing to me and brought forth much exercise of mind. 'O could I but believe.'

"I knew that Mr. R.E. Sayers was preaching at West Street Chapel, Croydon in October and I felt a desire to go and hear him. During the afternoon the text came to me: 'Wilt that go with this man?' When we went to West Street in the evening that was Mr. Sayers' text, Genesis 24. 58. He took the whole of the verse, including Rebekah's answer: 'And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.' Mr. Cockram gave out hymn 543: 'Jesus is the way to God.' It was a blessed time to me, and I felt that by faith I could go and follow the Lord Jesus. This commenced my exercises about following the Lord by baptism. The following Wednesday, Mr. James Hill was unable to come to Leatherhead and Mr. R.E. Sayers took his place, speaking from Song of Solomon 2. 14: 'Let me hear Thy voice.' He spoke of the Lord delighting to hear poor sinners speak of Him. I prayed that the Lord's servants might be led to speak of baptism, and Mr. George Ward preached from Exodus 3. 12: 'Certainly I will be with thee.' In the evening he said, 'Go home to thy friends, and tell them what great things the Lord hath done for thee.'

"The next Sunday, Mr. Philip Hope preached from Genesis 24. 27: 'And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren.' This was most confirming. He so traced out my path in asking for a token; he mentioned verse 58 ('Wilt thou go with this man?') and also quoted,

'Hinder me not, ye much loved saints,  
For I must go with you.'

"Mr. R.E. Sayers preached the next Sunday from John 21. 17: 'Lovest thou Me?' In the evening he spoke of our speaking of the Lord if we love Him. Then the next Wednesday, Mr. C.A. Wood preached from Matthew 28. 19, 20: 'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.' We closed with hymn 428, 'Humble souls, who seek salvation.' What an answer to my poor prayers!

"Later that month, John read Psalm 28 at breakfast one morning and verse seven was made very sweet to me: 'The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped: therefore my heart

greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise Him.’ When the post came there was a new *Gospel Tidings* and the sermon (Mr. Stanley Delves) was on that very verse. The sermon was so suitable to my case even mentioning, ‘Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is,’ and also speaking of simple testimonies, which was a help to me. I did ask the Lord to grant me a word especially for myself that day and I opened my Bible on Ruth 3. 11: ‘And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest.’ What a help this was to me! It was as if the Lord said, ‘Don’t look at yourself; look at My finished work. I will perform what is needful for your soul.’ The following Sunday, Mr. Cockram read the sermon in *Gospel Tidings* at our morning service, which was a confirmation to me.

“One evening, John read 2 Kings 7 and verses 8 and 9 seemed to fit my case: ‘And when these lepers came to the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid it; and came again, and entered into another tent, and carried thence also, and went and hid it. Then they said one to another, We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king’s household.’ I felt I had some ‘treasure which I had hidden,’ and I did not well. This verse was continually on my mind. When Mr. R.E. Sayers came to preach in December he took 2 Kings 7. 9 for his text. He told me at a later date that the word had been on his mind for two or three weeks previously but that he knew it was for Leatherhead.

“One morning after this, John read Psalm 39 at breakfast and the word was brought home to me: ‘And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in Thee.’

“I was baptized by Mr. Sayers on February 4th, 1967. The following day (Sunday, February 5th) Mr. Sayers was preaching at Leatherhead. He took for his text Ruth 3. 11: ‘And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman.’ This seemed to me a seal on the whole matter. Not only was it a word which I had previously been helped by, but it was opened up to me that the Lord would indeed be my God and do all things for me.

“How unworthy I am of such a wonder-working God. May He have all the glory.”

Our mother’s writings end here.

Our mother was a devoted wife to our dear father for very nearly sixty years, a grandmother to over thirty and latterly a great-grandmother. She was enabled to write to each of her children on their birthdays, with encouragements to seek the Lord and to go forth into the unknown way,

trusting in Him. So thoughtful in the little details of life, we were indeed favoured, above all this, to have a praying mother who brought us each daily before the throne of grace.

There are many times that can be recalled when one or another of us were in trouble, and her simple yet very real dependence on the Lord proved such an encouragement, and when those prayers put up for us were answered.

Our mother was also well known for her correspondence to many, or a quiet word in season. She was a true mother in Israel who will be much missed by those who knew her. She especially wrote to several of the young members of the church and congregation at Mount Zion, Leatherhead. In particular, she was able to send a quiet letter of exhortation to one or another, whether in trouble or in joy. Our mother was someone who remembered dates and anniversaries and often wrote to encourage many of us in the way: "Not that we want to put too much emphasis on dates, but there is to be a right looking back. 'Thou shalt remember.'"

Our mother was particularly exercised to pray that the Lord in His mercy would bring us each to Himself. In 2005 she wrote: "There are some days in our lives when the dear Lord gives us a special token of His love, and Dad and I feel that last Thursday and Friday were two such days. To hear of the Lord's work in the heart of poor sinners is greatly cheering and encouraging to those who fear God, and have a hope in His mercy. However, when it is made known in our children it is an unspeakable mercy. Feeling to be a poor, needy sinner myself, how gracious the Lord is to condescend to call my children by His grace."

Our dear mother suffered much in her latter years in failing health. Always stoical by nature, she was given much grace and patience in bearing the increasing frailty and immobility, especially as she possessed such an active mind right up to the last. It was hard to watch the deterioration in her general condition, yet she was enabled to look to the Saviour: "It has been a strange path, but I believe the Lord has 'sweetened the bitter cup' with His applying certain words and hymns. It is not until we come into these places that we are brought to look to Him alone."

On another occasion, she wrote of the Lord's strength given in much weakness: "My present problem has been a trial which I hadn't expected, but which I believe has been used of the Lord to teach me my frailty and that my strength can only come from the Lord. One night I was in great pain when the nurse was treating it with some medication which seemed sensitive to it. I really cried to the Lord to relieve the pain and help me to sleep. It seemed as if I felt His support literally under my head and the word spoken, 'The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the

everlasting arms.’ I fell asleep and the pain must have gone. I don’t say these things lightly, as these times are not to be known very often. Do we really look for them enough?”

In July 2012, mother fractured her hip and was mercifully brought through a general anaesthetic. In February 2013, despite many fears, she was again brought through major surgery and rejoiced in the Lord’s goodness, sharing her thankfulness with the family around her.

Our mother’s final illness was very short. Despite her frailty, none of us imagined that her life was to be taken so suddenly. We met together as a family to mark her eightieth birthday in June 2013, but only a few weeks later she developed cellulitis in her right leg, a condition she had suffered from previously. She spoke to one of her sons on the Tuesday evening of July 16th concerning the pain she was in. The following afternoon she was admitted to hospital with a high temperature. By late Thursday afternoon she was beginning to lose consciousness as septicaemia set in.

Mother was admitted to ITU around 6 p.m., as it was hoped to stabilise her whilst under sedation. The staff allowed the family who were present five minutes to speak with her prior to this, and her son-in-law asked if she would like him to read and pray. We will never forget the way mother said, “O that *would* be lovely.” It was so obviously something she really wanted, the Word of God and communion in prayer. The twenty-third Psalm was then read and we prayed with her.

Our mother’s condition rapidly deteriorated during the evening and the family were called to be with her. We spent a few, sacred hours around her bedside, several of the family reading and praying with her. Around 4.30 a.m., we gathered for one final time of reading and prayer led by our dear father, who was wonderfully upheld. How often we had joined around God’s Word all our lives in this way as a family. We then sang, “Sovereign Ruler of the skies” quietly together. It was hard especially to sing the final verse, “Plagues and deaths around me fly; till He bids I cannot die.” Our mother’s earthly life came peacefully to its end around an hour later.

Our mother had an embroidered verse by her bed at home, which typified the grace she was given to bear the many physical trials and pains of her latter years. We realised what she must have felt so often in such bodily weakness, yet finding such strength in the Lord to bear her cross. And now that earthly toil was over:

“If Thou, dear Jesus, still be nigh,  
Cheerful I live and joyful die;  
Secure, when mortal comforts flee,  
To find ten thousand worlds in Thee.”

The funeral was held at Mount Zion Chapel on August 2nd, a beautiful day, and was taken by her pastor, Mr. P. Woodhams. The opening hymn was, "Join, all who love the Saviour's name," which our mother had chosen for her baptismal service.

We all miss our mother's godly and gracious example, but would return thanks for the witness she bore to us and to many others of the Lord's goodness and faithfulness to her in trouble and in joy. May the Lord in His mercy prepare and bring us all to that place where "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

The family

*A note from her pastor:*

When we received the solemn, unexpected news of the home call of our dear, departed sister, we had to come in with the psalmist, "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because Thou didst it," and were forcibly reminded of the word, "For in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." But we trust her spirit has risen to join that blessed throng who have gained the victory and are ascribing their conquest to the Lamb.

We as a church have lost a praying, exercised member of long standing, but our loss is her eternal gain.

As enabled, we conducted her funeral with a large congregation of relations, friends and neighbours. We ventured to make a few remarks on John 17. 10, the word found on her coffin and gravestone, where her mortal remains were laid to rest in sure and certain hope of resurrection unto eternal life.

P.W.

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**WHAT MUST WE DO TO BE JOYFUL?**

*(The original title)*

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Rejoice in God, the Word commands,  
And feign would I obey;  
Yet still my lingering spirit stands,  
And trembles with delay.

How can my soul exult for joy,  
Which feels this load of sin?  
How can sweet praise my tongue employ  
While darkness reigns within?

Whence should my lips give rapture birth,  
When I no rapture feel?  
Or how should notes of heavenly mirth  
Sound from a heart of steel?

If falling tears and rising sighs  
 In triumph share a part,  
 Then, Lord, behold these streaming eyes,  
 And search this bleeding heart.

My soul forgets to use her wings,  
 My harp neglected lies;  
 For sin has broken all its strings,  
 And guilt shuts out my joys.

In vain I search the creatures round;  
 Their every answer this –  
 “No pleasure can in us be found  
 If God is not your bliss.”

At length I hear a gentle voice  
 Salute my ravished ears –  
 “Rejoice, thou ransomed soul, rejoice,  
 And dry those falling tears!”

Amazed, I turn, grown strangely bold,  
 This wondrous thing to see;  
 And there my dying Lord behold,  
 Stretched on the bloody tree!

“Sinner,” He cries, “behold the head  
 This thorny wreath entwines;  
 Look on these wounded hands, and read  
 Thy name in crimson lines:

“These wounds I bear, these pains I feel,  
 This anguish rends My breast,  
 That I may save thy soul from hell,  
 And give thee endless rest.”

The power, the sweetness of that voice  
 My stony heart can move,  
 Make me in Christ my Lord rejoice,  
 And melt my soul to love.

No more my harp neglected lies  
 With silent, broken strings;  
 From earth my soul has learned to rise,  
 And mount on eagle’s wings.

My dying Saviour’s wondrous love  
 On earth employs my tongue;  
 And when I walk in white above,  
 That love shall be my song.

Joseph Swain (1761-1796)

Our readers will notice that four of the verses have been taken and adapted  
 as number 951 in Gadsby’s.



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
MARCH 2015

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

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**EVEN TO OLD AGE**

*Substance of a sermon preached by J.W. Tyler at  
Zoar Chapel, The Dicker, on February 6th, 1955*

**Text:** “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).

There is a promise from the lips of the blessed Lord in the Scriptures suitable to every state and condition and age of His dear children. There is not a place that ever a child of God may be brought into but there is a blessed, kind, merciful, loving word from the Lord to embrace it and to assure His people of His presence and faithfulness toward them. And in the Psalm read this afternoon (Psalm 71), we find the psalmist in prayer to God to be supported in his old age, and this word of the Lord, this promise in our text, is without doubt the blessed and abundant answer to such living prayers.

I feel that it is only because the Lord has, I hope, put this word into my heart to come with that I am able to venture with it, not being exactly in the category of the text myself,\* but I can claim to have had union and fellowship with the Lord’s aged saints and ministers, and to love and esteem them dearly, and I believe that it will be so in this church as long as God has a people here. We shall find aged saints and those who may be spoken of as babes in grace, united in Christian love and fellowship. For what I am persuaded of is this, that there will be those in this place who long to feel that the saints of God in maturity have their soul and their welfare at heart; it will mean much to you, those of you who are younger, if you believe that God’s aged saints are in prayer for you.

Now this is the Lord’s complete promise and message to His dear people concerning their advanced age, and I do want to speak a little before we come to that promise of old age or long life, as it concerns the people of God. First, when the Lord appeared to Solomon and said, “Ask what I shall give thee,” in his response to the Lord he made no mention of long life, or riches, or the life of his enemies. He sought one thing, even a wise and an understanding heart – which brings me to believe this: that the Lord’s dear people in seeking the one thing needful for their souls are enabled to submit to the Lord and feel reconciled to His will in the matter of the length of their days. For whether a child of

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\* He would have been only in his early 40s at the time.

God is taken in middle life or old age, this is true of them spiritually: "Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season." And whatever the age of the death of a child of God, their souls have been brought to a full age, the work of grace is completed. But of the lesser things in that list that the Lord spoke of, that Solomon had not asked for, length of days or long life appears to be of the chief importance, greater than riches and the life of his enemies. And there are several promises and prayers in the Scriptures where long life is spoken of as it concerns the people of God. In Psalm 91, one of the blessings of the godly is, "With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him My salvation." Then the prophet in Psalm 102 speaks thus: "He weakened my strength in the way; He shortened my days." Then he fervently prayed thus: "O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: Thy years are throughout all generations."

How do these things affect us, dear friends? Let us make here a personal application of it. Where do you feel to be? In the midst of your days where He has weakened your strength in the way and shortened your days? Do you feel willing to be taken now or shortly? Or is your exercise to pray that God would spare you? And is there something attractive to you about the promise I have referred to: "With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him My salvation"? What then is the blessedness of length of days to the people of God? "With long life will I satisfy him." There is a blessedness in it; there is something to be desired in it by His dear people. I view it in this way, where the Lord gives an exercise to His people so that they shall from their very hearts pray to Him that they may recover strength before they go hence and be no more and not be taken away in the midst of their days, is it not because they hope to see the Lord's purpose ripen, to see it fulfilled, and to live to see their prayers answered before they go hence and be no more? And is it not then, "Thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel"? That is one of the blessings of the godly. And I believe this is something that the Lord puts into the hearts of His people. Now, dear friends, tell me, are there things you are hoping to be spared to see fulfilled before you are taken?

And then there is this. "A hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness." So that a child of God seems to receive such a crown in old age, indicating a maturity of gracious experience and of discernment in the truth as it is in Jesus. And so in a certain sense we may say that there is something attractive in the promise of long life to the saints of God, in that they hope that they will receive such a crown as this.

Now in this setting we have the Lord's promise to His dear people in such a case: "And even to your old age I am He." Two things the psalmist prayed relative to old age. "Cast me not off in the time of old

age; forsake me not when my strength faileth.” Those two things obtain relative to the creatures frequently: old people are often cast off by younger people and even forsaken and left alone when their strength fails! How despicable it is when younger people neglect, forsake and cast off those that are old, but it often is the case. Many an old saint has been sorely buffeted in old age through being unwanted and almost uncared for, and we little realise when we are surrounded with dear ones and are spared to each other what we may come into before we cross the river. But he prayed to the Lord, “Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth.” Now says the Lord, “And even to your old age I am He.” I can remember a dear old lady who went to heaven when she died, who was afflicted with palsy, and visiting some relatives, some of the younger members of that family disappeared, and would not be seen near her because of her affliction – very sad. My friends, the promise of God to His dear people is, “And even to your old age I am He.”

Another experience that some of His saints have, which we have seen by observation, is that they may outlive their generation and lose all their friends so that they feel solitary and lonely; but I hope such a thing never is felt in the heart of an aged saint in this house of God. I hope you will feel that there is a warm place in my heart and in our hearts for you who have come to old age, who fear God. I believe that as is in our power we would do everything we can for the Lord’s aged saints especially. As Christ commended to His dear disciple His mother, so He commends to His church His dear saints, especially the widows and the solitary, that they might care for them and love them. So this is a comforting promise, that whatever the people of God come into, “even to your old age I am He.” That is, “I am thy God, thy Guide till death, thy everlasting Friend.” I am He. It comes to my mind to mention the case of a daughter of one of our late dearly-loved friends who is with the Lord, and she is too now; a godly woman, very afflicted, but in her latter days, although highly favoured before, she walked in so much darkness. But one day when I bent over her frail, dying form, she said this: “The Lord has spoken to me and told me that with Him is no variableness neither shadow of turning.”

“Even to your old age I am He.” “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.” This same blessed Jesus who allured you, spoke comfortably to you, brought you into the wilderness, drew you after Him to go through the wilderness to the promised land, you will know what it is for Him to be the same to you yesterday, today, and for ever, and you will come up, dear aged saints and all the Lord’s people, in due season, from the wilderness leaning upon your Beloved. And Christ is everything to His people. But we have to be brought into privation and loss to know all the offices that Christ fills. The more a

child of God is brought into a sense of earthly desolation, the loss of loved ones and things around him, the more he realises that Christ is All in all. A widow who fears God knows more of Christ as her Husband than she could have done before; when she becomes a widow, when her earthly husband is taken, Christ fills that breach. I cannot now go into all that part, but in every sense of desolation that we enter into the Lord comes and fills the breach Himself. He is spoken of as the everlasting Father. He comforts His people as a mother. He is Husband, Bridegroom, Friend, Brother, all indicating the offices Christ fills. So, "Even to your old age I am He." It is an easy word to say, but it means something for a trembling heart to feel it.

"He never takes away our All,  
Himself He gives us still."

"Even to your old age I am He." And that is the time when the strong men bow themselves, when the poor body begins to break up and break down, when infirmities increase, and the mourners go about the streets, but, "Even to your old age I am He."

"And even to hoar hairs will I carry you." We can do no better than to think of such an one as Jacob. The Lord remarkably did this for him. He came into a period of enormous strain and trial, enough to break his vessel completely, and when you get into that you will feel as a broken vessel. But the Lord brought Jacob to hoar hairs, carried him to it, the last seventeen years of his life being nourished by Joseph, entering into a measure of rest. The Lord does sometimes give to His dear people when "hoary hairs their temples adorn," their best days. Some of you are in your best days; you have never had days equal to them, and I believe there is a measure of anticipation and prospect brought into the hearts of some of the Lord's people by God's promise that they have these days to come, their best days, days when they will be in the land of Beulah, by faith climbing where Moses stood and viewing the landscape o'er. These are those who have known what it is to sow in tears. "Thou, which hast shewed me," said he in the Psalm read as our lesson, "great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side." Blessed old age then!

"And even to hoar hairs will I carry you." We have already mentioned the Scripture which saith, "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness." What this means to the church of God to have such may be calculated from the words of James: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

The Lord's people are not alone; their strength is not in themselves; it is in Him and by Him that they are carried through. You say perhaps when you open your eyes in the morning, Lord, how shall I get through

today? He will carry you. And so it will be to the end. You look on today, to the future, and then it will presently be to look at the river – How shall I get through, how shall I come through, Lord? He will bear you through, that is how. You look at this flood, these rivers, this sea, and say, How shall I come through? He will bear you through, and there shall be no more sea.

And He has said, “I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.” “I have made.” I can only mention it thus now, the testimony of the apostle: “By the grace of God I am what I am.” “I have made.” The Lord made him what he was, and he was what he was by the grace of God. And also this, and it is a kind word to us: “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame” – “I have made.” “For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust.” “I have made.” And what will the Lord do for these? “And I will bear.” He will bear them in His arms, in His bosom. He will bear them. Just as a kind mother bears her infant so the Lord will bear His people. “Even I will carry.” Can we want more than that, for the Lord to carry us through everything, through every flood, every storm, tempest, difficulty, and fear; to carry us through? We shall come out unharmed if we are the Lord’s. There will be no loss; all that is lost is dross and rubbish; there is no loss of the precious gold. “Even I will carry.”

And then the text is concluded with this blessed promise of deliverance: “And will deliver you.” This is the final deliverance out of all tribulation, sorrow, sighing and tears, to be for ever with the Lord shut in. Amen.

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### CHRIST’S INTERCESSION

*By Thomas Watson (c. 1620-1686)*

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“Who also maketh intercession for us” (Rom 8. 34).

When Aaron entered into the holy place, his bells gave a sound; so Christ having entered heaven, His intercession makes a melodious sound in the ears of God. Though Christ be exalted to glory, He has not laid aside His bowels of compassion, but is still mindful of His mystic body, as Joseph was mindful of his father and brethren when he was exalted to the court. “Who also maketh intercession for us.” To intercede is to make request in behalf of another. Christ is the great Master of requests in heaven.

*What are the qualifications of our Intercessor?*

1. *He is holy.* “For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, undefiled, separate from sinners.” “Christ knew no sin.” He knew sin

in its weight, not in the act. It was requisite that He, who was to do away the sins of others, should Himself be without sin. Holiness is one of the precious stones which shine on the breastplate of our High Priest.

2. *He is faithful.* “It behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a faithful High Priest.” Moses was faithful as a servant, Christ as a Son. He does not forget any cause He has to plead, nor does He use any deceit in pleading. An ordinary attorney may leave out some word which might make for the client, or put in a word against him, having received a fee on both sides, but Christ is true to the cause He pleads. We may leave our matters with Him; we may trust our lives and souls in His hand.

3. *He never dies.* While the office of the priests under the law lived, they themselves died. “They were not suffered to continue, by reason of death.” But, “Christ ever lives to make intercession.” He has no succession in His priesthood.

*For whom does Christ intercede?*

Not for all promiscuously, but for the elect (John 17. 9). The efficacy of Christ’s prayer reaches no further than the efficacy of His blood; but His blood was shed only for the elect, therefore His prayers reach them only. The high priest went into the sanctuary with the names of the twelve tribes only upon his breast: so Christ goes into heaven with the names of the elect only upon His breast. Christ intercedes for the weakest believers, and for all the sins of believers (John 17. 20). In the law there were some sins for which the high priest was neither to offer sacrifice nor prayer. “The soul that doeth ought presumptuously ... shall be cut off” (Num. 15. 30). The priest might offer up prayers for sins of ignorance, but not of presumption; but Christ’s intercession extends to all the sins of the elect. Of what a bloody colour was David’s sin, yet it did not exclude him from Christ’s intercession.

*What does Christ in the work of intercession?*

Three things.

1. He presents the merit of His blood to His Father and, in the virtue of that price paid, pleads for mercy. The high priest was herein a lively type of Christ. Aaron was to do four things: kill the beasts; enter with the blood into the holy of holies; sprinkle the mercy-seat with the blood; kindle the incense, and with the smoke of it cause a cloud to arise over the mercy-seat; and thus atonement was made (Lev. 16. 11-16). Christ our High Priest exactly answered to this type. He was offered up in sacrifice, which answers to the priest’s killing the bullock; and He is gone up into heaven, which answers to the priest’s going into the holy of holies; and He spreads His blood before His Father, which answers to the priest’s sprinkling the blood upon the mercy-seat; and He prays to His Father that for His blood’s sake He would be propitious to sinners, which

answers to the cloud of incense going up; and through His intercession God is pacified, which answers to the priest's making atonement.

2. Christ by His intercession answers all bills of indictment brought in against the elect. Do what they can, sin and then Satan accuse believers to God, and conscience accuses them to themselves, but Christ, by His intercession, answers all these accusations. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is Christ that maketh intercession for us." When Esculus was accused for some impiety, his brother stood up for him and showed the magistrates how he had lost his hand in the service of the state, and so obtained his pardon. Thus when Satan accuses the saints, or when the justice of God lays anything to their charge, Christ shows His own wounds, and by virtue of His bloody sufferings answers all the demands and challenges of the law, and counterworks Satan's accusations.

3. Christ by His intercession calls for acquittance. Lord, He says, let the sinner be absolved from guilt; and in this sense He is called an Advocate (1 John 2. 1). He requires that the sinner be set free in the court. An advocate differs much from an orator; an orator uses rhetoric to persuade and entreat the judge to show mercy to another, but an advocate tells the judge what is law. Thus Christ appears in heaven as an Advocate; He represents what is law. When God's justice opens the debt book, Christ opens the law book. Lord, says He, Thou art a just God, and wilt not be pacified without blood; lo, here the blood is shed, therefore in justice give Me a discharge for these distressed creatures. The law being satisfied, the sinner should be acquitted. Upon Christ's plea, God sets His hand to the sinner's pardon.

*In what manner does Christ intercede?*

1. *Freely.* He pleads our cause in heaven, and takes no fee. An ordinary lawyer will have his fee, and sometimes a bribe too, but Christ is not mercenary. How many causes does He plead every day in heaven, and will take nothing! As Christ laid down His life freely, so He intercedes freely (John 10. 15, 18).

2. *Feelingly.* He is as sensible of our condition as His own. "We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmity." As a tender-hearted mother would plead with a judge for a child ready to be condemned, O how would her bowels work! how would her tears trickle down! what weeping rhetoric would she use to the judge for mercy! So the Lord Jesus is full of sympathy and tenderness, that He might be a merciful High Priest. Though He has left His passion, yet not His compassion. An ordinary lawyer is not affected with the cause he pleads, nor does he care which way it goes; it is profit that makes him plead, not affection. But Christ intercedes feelingly, and that which makes Him intercede with affection is, it is His own cause which He

pleads. He has shed His blood for the life and salvation of the elect, and if they should not be saved, He would lose His purchase.

3. *Efficaciously*. It is a prevailing intercession. Christ never lost any cause He pleaded; He was never non-suited. Christ's intercession must needs be effectual, if we consider:

i. *The excellency of His Person*. If the prayer of a saint be so prevalent with God, as Moses' prayer bound God's hand, "Let me alone" (Exod. 32. 10); and Jacob, as a prince, prevailed with God (Gen. 32. 28); and Elijah by prayer opened and shut heaven (James 5. 17), then what is Christ's prayer? He is the Son of God, the Son in whom He is well pleased. What will not a father grant a son? "I know that Thou hearest Me always." If God could forget that Christ were a Priest, He could not forget that He is a Son.

ii. *Christ prays for nothing but what His Father has a mind to grant*. There is but one will between Christ and His Father. Christ prays, "Sanctify them through Thy truth"; and, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." So then, if Christ prays for nothing but what God the Father has a mind to grant, then He is like to succeed.

iii. *Christ prays for nothing but what He has power to give*. What He prays for as He is Man, that He has power to give as He is God. "Father, I will," He prays as a Man; He gives as God. It is a great comfort to a believer, when his prayer is weak and he can hardly pray for himself, that Christ's prayer in heaven is mighty and powerful. Though God may refuse prayer as it comes from us, yet He will not as it comes from Christ.

iv. *Christ's intercession is always ready at hand*. The people of God have sins of daily occurrence, and besides these, they sometimes lapse into great sins, and God is provoked, and His justice is ready to break forth upon them; but Christ's intercession is ready at hand. He daily makes up the breaches between God and them; He presents the merits of His blood to His Father to pacify Him. When the wrath of God began to break out upon Israel, Aaron presently stepped in with his censer, and offered incense, and so the plague was stayed (Num. 16. 47, 48). So no sooner does a child of God offend, and God begin to be angry, but immediately Christ steps in and intercedes. Father, He says, it is My child that has offended; though he has forgotten his duty, Thou hast not lost Thy bowels. O pity him, and let Thy anger be turned away from him. Christ's intercession is ready at hand, and upon the least failings of the godly, He stands up and makes request for them in heaven.

*What are the fruits of Christ's intercession?*

1. *Justification*. In justification there are two things. Guilt is remitted and righteousness is imputed. "The Lord our righteousness." We are reputed not only righteous as the angels, but as Christ having His



robes put upon us (2 Cor. 5. 21). But whence is it that we are justified? It is from Christ's intercession (Rom. 8. 33, 34). Lord, says Christ, these are the persons I have died for; look upon them as if they had not sinned, and repute them righteous.

2. *The unction of the Spirit.* "Ye have an unction from the Holy One." This unction or anointing is nothing else but the work of sanctification in the heart, whereby the Spirit makes us partakers of the divine nature. Such as speak of the philosopher's stone suppose it to have such a property that when it touches the metal, it turns it into gold. Such a property has the Spirit of God upon the soul; when it touches the soul, it puts into it a divine nature; it makes it to be holy and to resemble God. The sanctifying work of the Spirit is the fruit of Christ's intercession. "The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." Christ being glorified, and in heaven, He prays the Father, and the Father sends the Spirit, who pours out the holy anointing upon the elect.

3. *The purification of our holy things.* It is Christ's work in heaven not only to present His own prayers to His Father, but He prays our prayers over again. "Another Angel came ... having a golden censer; and there was given unto Him much incense, that He should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar" (Rev. 8. 3). This Angel was Christ; He takes the golden censer of His merits, and puts our prayers into this censer, and with the incense of His intercession makes our prayers go up as a sweet perfume in heaven. It is observable in Leviticus 16. 16: "Aaron shall make atonement for the holy place." This was typical, to show that our holy duties need to have atonement made for them. Our best services, as they come from us, are mixed with corruption, as wine that tastes of the cask. "They are filthy rags." But Christ purifies and sweetens these services, mixing the sweet odours of His intercession with them, and then God accepts and crowns them. What would become of our duties without a High Priest? Christ's intercession is to our prayers as the fan to the chaff. It winnows it from the corn; so Christ winnows out the chaff which intermixes with our prayers.

4. *Access with boldness unto the throne of grace.* We have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens; let us come boldly to the throne of grace. We have a Friend at court that speaks a good word for us, and is following our cause in heaven; let this animate and encourage us in prayer. Do we think it too much boldness for such sinners as we to come for pardon, and that we shall be denied? Surely this is a sinful modesty. Did we indeed come in our own name in prayer, it were presumption, but Christ intercedes for us in the force and efficacy of His blood. To be afraid to come to God in prayer is a dishonour to Christ's intercession.

5. *Sending the Comforter.* “I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter.” The comfort of the Spirit is distinct from the anointing. Here is sweet comfort, sweeter than the honey-drops from the comb; it is the manna in the golden pot. A drop of this heavenly comfort is enough to sweeten a sea of worldly sorrow. It is called the “earnest of the Spirit.” An earnest assures us of the whole sum (2 Cor. 1. 22). The Spirit gives us an earnest of heaven in our hand. Whence is this comforting work of the Spirit? Thank Christ’s intercession for it. “I will pray the Father, and He shall give the Comforter.”

6. *Perseverance in grace.* “Keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me.” It is not our prayer, or watchfulness, or grace that keeps us, but it is God’s care and maintenance; He holds us, that we do not fall away. Whence is it that God preserves us? It is from Christ’s intercession. “Father, keep them.” The prayer of Christ for Peter: “I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not,” is the copy of His prayer now in heaven. Peter’s faith did fail in some degree when he denied Christ, but Christ prayed that it might not totally fail. The saints persevere in believing because Christ perseveres in praying.

7. *Absolution at the day of judgment.* Christ shall judge the world. “God has committed all judgment to the Son.” Those for whom Christ has so prayed, He will absolve when He sits upon the bench of judicature. Will Christ condemn those for whom He prays? Believers are His spouse, and will He condemn His own spouse?

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### A NEEDFUL PRAYER

*By James Fergusson (1621-1667), minister at Kilwinning, Scotland*

“And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ” (2 Thess. 3. 5).

While he prayeth the Lord to “direct their hearts,” or make them straight, he doth also indirectly incite them to the exercise of two graces which are chief parts of, and have special influence upon the obedience formerly pressed. First, by “the love of God,” understand that whereby we love God, under which is contained love to our neighbour, as a stream flowing from that fountain (Matt. 22. 37-39), although the sense and feeling of God’s love to us spoken of (Rom. 5. 5) needeth not to be excluded. Secondly, “patient waiting for Christ,” or (as the word is in the original) patience of Christ. It implieth patience with expectation, even such a patient enduring of hardships in the way of our duty for Christ’s sake, as is joined with, and floweth from a well-grounded expectation of good things to be received from Christ, especially at His second coming.

*Doctrines*

1. As the hearts of men are in the hand of the Lord, who alone can powerfully incline, direct, and turn them wherever He will (Prov. 21. 1), so it concerneth us highly to see to the heart that it be rightly inclined, seeing wheresoever it goeth it doth powerfully draw the whole man with it, for Paul doth pray, "The Lord direct your hearts."

2. That Christians do continue constant in the course of begun obedience, there is of necessity required a continual supply of influence from God, together with some fervour of love to Him, and patient expectation of good things to be received from Him, which may serve as cords to draw us forward in the way of duty, against all temptations and discouragements which will be otherwise prevalent to retard and draw us backward (2 Cor. 5. 14, Psa. 27. 13), for as a mean of their continuing to do what he commanded them, he prayeth the Lord to "direct their hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ."

3. As the heart of man is by nature crooked and perverse, so it is in a special manner averse from the love of God, whom, though He be the chief good, yet every man by nature doth hate, though not as He is Creator and Preserver of the world, yet as He is a just Judge, armed with vengeance against evil doers. Yea, and there are dregs of this averseness even in the truly godly, who have a law in their members rebelling against the law of God written in their mind and renewed part (Rom. 7. 23), for this crookedness and averseness from love to God is implied, while he prayeth the Lord "to direct," or make straight, "their hearts into the love of God."

4. The hearts of men by nature are also averse from undergoing a suffering lot for Christ, and from taking that comfort under the cross which ariseth from the hope of a promised out-gate and reward, as being unwilling to give any further trust to the precious promises than they see of present performance (2 Pet. 3. 4). Yea, and there are dregs of this averseness also in the truly regenerate (though not allowed of by themselves, Psa. 42. 9), as appeareth from their desire to shift a cleanly cross (Matt. 16. 22), and therefore small courage oftentimes under it (Heb. 12. 13), or hopes of an outgate from it (1 Sam. 27. 1). For averseness is also implied while he prayeth the Lord to "direct their hearts into the patient waiting for Christ."

5. How averse soever the hearts of men in nature, or of men renewed, are from the exercise of those or other graces, yet there is omnipotency in God to make them straight when He will, and to incline them powerfully to love where they hate; to take up a cross for Christ contentedly, and to hope for what they see not confidently. For while the apostle prayeth that the Lord would direct them to love and patience, he doth suppose that God had power so to direct them.

6. The graces of love to God, of patience under a suffering lot, and of well-grounded hope, do well together, in so far as where love to God is rooted in the heart, together with a firm expectation of all those good things contained in the promise to be received from Him, there can be nothing too hard to be undergone and suffered for Him (Rom. 8. 35, 2 Cor. 4. 16, with 5); for Paul doth pray for all those jointly, even the “love of God and patient waiting for Christ.”

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### **ENOUGH IN CHRIST FOR THE WORST TIMES**

*By William Bridge (1600-1670)*

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It is said of Christ, “In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2. 9), and there is enough in God to supply all our wants. As there is enough in heaven to pay for all at the last, so there is enough in God to supply all at the present. He is too covetous whom the great God of heaven cannot suffice. When David was in the greatest strait that ever he met with in his life, his wives and goods taken and carried away by the enemy, and his own men and soldiers mutinied and ready to stone him, how did he comfort himself but in God? “David encouraged himself in the Lord his God” (1 Sam. 30. 6). There is enough in God to comfort in all conditions, and the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily in Christ. Therefore there is that in Christ which may afford sufficient comfort and relief in the worst of times and conditions.

If you look into Scripture you shall find that the promises and prophecies of Christ are calculated and given out for the worst of times. It was usual with the prophets to prophesy of Christ, but mark how their prophecies were calculated for the worst of times. In Jeremiah 23. 6, you have a prophecy of Christ: “In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” Well, what time doth this prophecy relate to? A very evil time: “Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture” (verse 1). “Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed My people; Ye have scattered My flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them” (verse 2); and then comes in the prophecy of Christ.

So in Isaiah 28. 16, you have a great prophecy of Christ: “Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation” – a plain prophecy of Christ. Well, but how comes this in? Why it was calculated for an evil time. Verse 14: “Hear the word of the Lord ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall

pass through.... Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone.... Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand” – a prophecy concerning Christ calculated for the worst of times.

So in Ezekiel 34. 23 you have another prophecy of Christ: “And I will set up one shepherd over them, and He shall feed them, even My servant David: He shall feed them, and He shall be their shepherd” – plainly speaking of Christ. Well, but when doth he speak this prophecy of Christ? Look into the beginning of the chapter, verse 2: “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe ye with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock.” Now in this time comes out the prophecy of Christ. You make mention of *aquavitae* at other times, but when there is special mention made of *aquavitae* [water of life], and the *aquavitae* bottle in a fainting and dying time, what doth this argue but there is a cordiality in it?

The first time that ever Christ was prophesied of, what time was it? Adam fell, and all the children of men were in a most sad condition, what cordial was then brought forth but this? The seed of the woman shall break the serpent’s head (Gen. 3. 15), and this is ordinary [usual]; the promises and prophecies of Christ are calculated for the worst of times. Why? but to teach us that there is enough in Christ to comfort, succour and relieve in the worst of times.

If there was enough in the types of Christ to comfort and relieve the saints and people of God under the Old Testament in the worst of their times, then there must needs be enough in Christ Himself to relieve and comfort the saints and people of God now in New Testament times, in the worst of our times. Now so it was, in the times of the Old Testament, in case they had sinned, what relief had they? A sacrifice to make an atonement (Lev. 4. 20), and so a type of Christ the great sacrifice (Heb. 9. 26). In case they were in the wilderness and wanted bread, what relief had they? They had there manna, a type of Christ, the true bread that came down from heaven (John 6. 50, 51). In case they wanted water, what relief had they? The Rock opened, and “that Rock was Christ” (1 Cor. 10. 4). The Rock “followed them: and the Rock was Christ.” In case they were stung with the fiery serpents, what relief had they? They had the brazen serpent, and that was a type of Christ (John 3. 14, 15). Now, I say, if the people of God in Old Testament times had relief in the

types of Christ, surely there is relief enough for us now, in New Testament times, in Christ Himself.

If all the promises of good things made to us were originated in Christ, and if all the promises that were made unto Christ of good things to come, do descend and run down upon us, more or less, then surely there is enough in Christ to relieve and succour in the worst of times. For what are the promises but divine conveyances? Now all the promises of good things that are made to us, they flow from Christ, for all the promises are yea and amen in Christ (2 Cor. 1. 20). Yea, that is affirmed; amen, that is confirmed: all the promises made to us are affirmed and confirmed by Christ. And on the other side, all the promises that are made to Christ do descend upon us. Look into Psalm 2, there is a great promise made to Christ at verse 8: "Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" – a promise plainly given to Christ, and see how it descends and falls upon us. "He that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of My Father" (Rev. 2. 26, 27). "Even as I received of My Father" – look what promise I have received of My Father; the same doth descend and fall down upon you. Now then, if all the promises of good things made to us were originated in Christ, and if all the promises that are made unto Christ of good things to come do descend and run down upon us, surely there is enough in Christ to succour and relieve in the worst of times.

One thing more. If that all our want of comfort and satisfaction doth arise from the want of a sight of Christ's fulness and excellency, and all our satisfaction and comfort doth arise from the sight of Christ's fulness and excellency, then this doctrine must needs be true. Now look into Revelation 5, and see how John weeps, and upon what account: "I saw," says John, "in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals." And at verse 2, "I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book." Then at verse 4, says he, "I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon." What stilled him? what quieted him? The sight of Christ at verse 5: "And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book." So he goes on opening the excellency and the fulness of Christ, and John weeps no more. So that, I say, all our want of comfort doth arise from our want of a sight of the

fulness and excellency that is in Christ. Therefore certainly there is enough in Christ to comfort, succour and relieve in the worst of times.

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### A CALL TO PREACH

*From the sermon preached by Jesse Delves at Clapham  
at his recognition services on June 10th, 1935*

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I have some hope – and I pray that I may not be ashamed of that hope – that the Lord has sent me to speak in His name. This exercise really commenced at the time of my baptism, when with the love of Christ in my soul, there was a bubbling up of desire to speak to others of His goodness, and I remember that when I was baptized I felt at the moment I could have faced the people and told them what the Lord had done for me. This exercise (in relating which I must be very brief) lived in my soul, more or less, from about 1916 to 1929, and I had much labour in secret with respect to the matter. Sometimes it was very heavy upon me, at other times it seemed comparatively dormant, then it would return with renewed activity.

One day when the matter was pressing heavily, and I felt I could continue no longer, this word, as I felt, was applied with some considerable power: “For the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph. 4. 12). On that evening there was a church meeting at Galeed, and the pastor took up these words, and spoke of them in a way that filled me with solemn awe, and my very being seemed possessed with a sacred, solemn feeling that I should have to speak in the Lord’s name. And yet I often tried to turn it aside and banish it from me.

In March, 1929, I was requested to come before the church at Galeed, and give some account of what I had felt in relation to the ministry. I did so, and was enabled to relate a few things with which I believed the Lord had exercised me, which were received and accepted by the church. Very soon, I was in great trouble about the matter, and brought into a severe trial. I was asked to speak at Galeed on the following Lord’s day evening, owing to our pastor’s sudden illness, and during those two or three days I was plunged into deep distress. The Lord alone knows what I went through from Friday to Sunday evening. I seemed as one plunged into deep waters, everything swept away, no religion left; I could not go forward and could not turn backward. That Friday night was a night of terror, trial, testing of the whole thing. The pains of hell gat hold upon me; I found trouble and sorrow. Everything seemed to be called into question; sometimes I felt I had been presumptuous.

But in the morning, I believe the Lord gave me some relief in that terrible fire: it was as though He gently whispered in my ear, "I will strengthen thee." On the Lord's day evening, very weak physically, with much fear and trembling I ventured to speak for the first time in public in the name of God, and I have some reason to hope He helped me through that time, a time I shall never forget. For many years I was exercised in this great matter, and the Lord thus brought me in His providence into it, and so I commenced. From that time doors were opened for me in many places.

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### USEFUL CHURCH MEMBERS

*An address give at Westoning nearly thirty years ago,  
published by special request*

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Now the subject which I have been asked to speak on is this: What part is to be played by members of the church – for want of a better word, the private members of the church; those who are not pastors, or preachers, or deacons, or Sabbath School teachers, or the secretary, or the treasurer, or appointed to any special position or work? Now does Scripture have anything to say about them? What is the role of the private members? Is there any way in which they are called to serve the Lord, called to serve the church? What about the lady members? What about the young people in the church?

Now occasionally I am asked to give an address on some subjects and I shrink from them. But this is a subject which warms my heart, a subject which I am delighted that I was asked to speak on, and a subject upon which I feel very strongly. So the various things I will say will not be based so much on individual scriptures but the whole analogy of the New Testament. If the church is the body of Christ, if the various members are compared to the ear, to the tongue, the hand, or the foot, then there is some work for every church member in the church. The analogy of Scripture is that no part of the body is useless, however much it may seem to be so. Paul himself speaks of those members which are despised (1 Cor. 12. 23), and says that they are all necessary for the well being of the church.

There is a word which Paul uses on one occasion (it is not my intention to define just what he was meaning specifically there), but he used this word: *helps* (1 Cor. 12. 28). It seems that this was perhaps some special order at the time, but in its more general sense every church member is called to be a help: a help to the pastor, a help to the other members in the church. Now you know what the opposite of a help is:



it is a hindrance. It is a very solemn thing when church members, instead of being a help, prove only to be hindrances.

I do feel that there is one Scriptural expression which in our chapels we tend to use wrongly, and that is the words *God's servants*. If you were to ask most people in our congregations what they understand by "one of God's servants," they would quite innocently immediately remark, "The preacher." Well of course, that is true; a God-sent minister is God's servant in a special way. But as I read the New Testament, the expression is not to be limited just to a preacher. All God's people are His servants. "His servants shall serve Him" – not just preachers, every sinner saved by grace. "His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads."

I feel on this point, although it is an Old Testament chapter, Nehemiah chapter 3 is very apposite: the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. How were the walls of Jerusalem rebuilt? Every person repaired a little piece close to his own house. We read that some were so zealous that when they had finished their own they did another piece. We read that some of them were wealthy people, they were the goldsmiths, and they did their piece. Then we read that some of them were women, and they did their piece. But then we have a little solemn verse that comes in: "But the nobles put not their necks to the work of the Lord." The way in which the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt was through each inhabitant of Jerusalem repairing his little piece. Of course, in gospel phraseology we are all familiar with this expression of the building of the walls of Jerusalem.

Well, I want to address you specially on this important subject in a way of illustration. The scriptural principle seems so clear: the need for each member of the church to honour and glorify God; the royal law of love, love to one another in the church, "that golden tie that binds those happy souls above," the many commandments to seek the good of others, and to "do good to all men especially to the household of faith," and especially this analogy of the body in which every single part is both necessary and useful.

I think it is right for a pastor when he receives a new member into the church to encourage that new member to seek to be useful, not to be a useless member. At one time in our chapels, there almost seemed to be a spirit that once a person had been blessed with a sweet assurance of faith and had been baptized and united in church membership, that was the end; as if the goal had been reached and as if they had attained. In one sense being united in church membership is a beginning. It is right that each church member should seek to be useful and especially to that particular church in which they stand in membership. It is not the purpose of God that there should be any useless members, and of course,

there is that wonderful diversity. What a blessing it is when a church, sweetly constrained by the love of Christ, walks together in love, and each member old or young is made useful! I feel that if you are a member of the church, you should be burdened before God as to what special way you may be useful to that church, what special gift you have, what special way you can glorify God in the church in which you are a member. It may well be that it is not the purpose of God that you should hold any public position, but yet, you see, there are so many ways in which you can glorify the Lord.

Now I said that I was going to address you rather by way of illustration. The first person that I ever baptized was an elderly lady in her seventies. Her name was Ruth Heap. She was a lady who was not very well in health. She was also a person who naturally was of a hard spirit. Now her membership was short; after she had been a member for six years she died. Now what could an old lady with no particular gift, of rather poor health, do to make herself useful? Well, this may almost make you smile, but knowing my propensity to suffer at times from weakness of voice, she saw that I was never without a packet of "Fisherman's Friends," without throat lozenges. Now there was love in that. There was something that lay beneath it. Also her seat was at the back of the chapel. She was not able to visit people – she lived a few miles out of the town where she worshipped – but sitting at the back of the chapel she always made a mental note of which people were absent. At the end of the service she would enquire, and if it were sickness, or if it were trouble, then on the Monday a lovely little greetings card seeking the Lord's blessing, wishing them well, a text inside it, would be sent.

My mind also goes to another old lady, a member of one of our Lancashire churches. She was one of the roughest-looking old ladies I have ever seen in any place of worship. After I had preached at this chapel on one occasion, during the days that followed a letter arrived from this lady, a very gracious letter, a very spiritual letter, and a letter of wonderful ability, almost reminiscent of the letters of William Huntington. Not only that but she said, "I am going to write to you every week." Well, I thought this was perhaps a rather rash promise, but in fact she did write to me every week for quite a number of years; not until the day of her death, but until she suffered from failure of her mind. She also told me this, that back in the 1930s the church of which she was a member lost a dearly-loved pastor. She said from that day she was very burdened about the gospel ministry, and it was laid on her spirit: was there anything she could do in any way? And she felt this was revealed to her, that she should write these letters. She did not write them to everyone, but when back in the 1930s her own church sent a young man

out to preach [P.W. Isherwood], she felt that she should encourage him, hold up his arms not only in prayer, but by a weekly letter. I believe that for about the period of forty years that minister each Friday received one of these very beautiful, very gracious and very encouraging letters.

Now, you see, those are just two examples, and I would say that they were two ladies that naturally would have little or no ability at all. How long is it since you last wrote an encouraging word? Not everyone has much ability in writing, but everyone can speak a kind word. And, you know, young people are not exempt. There is one word that I have liked for many years. This is the great Apostle Paul, and he says, "God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus." Now Paul was an eminent apostle, but Titus was only a young man. Yet the time came when Paul, the great apostle, stood in need of comfort, and this young man visited him. What he said, what he did not say, we do not know, but the result of that visit, under the blessing of the Lord, was that it was a real comfort to the apostle. And our carnal, logical minds say, Could not God have comforted the mind of the Apostle Paul without sending a young man? Well, of course He could, but He did not choose to do so. He uses means.

I do not think that sufficiently we go out of our way to speak a kind word. Some years ago there was a godly pastor who had been away from home preaching, and he was suffering from depression. When he came back home, he felt that he was hardly able to continue. He went along to chapel for his first service at home and what did he find when he got in his vestry? A note written by the caretaker: "Welcome back, Pastor." He said that broke the snare. The Lord used it, and it broke the snare. It was only three words on a bit of paper, but under the blessing of God it was like balm in Gilead to the pastor.

Now I do feel that in former days many church members were blessed with the gift of speaking a loving word of reproof. It did so much good and was made so much a blessing. Perhaps a young member of the church acting wrongly, or another going astray, or another one in a wrong spirit, and one of these gracious church members would tap them on their shoulder and just whisper a word in their ear, perhaps quote some scripture. That was all that was needed – not having to bring people before the church, not having to deal with them. It never got to that stage. It was really like the analogy the Puritans used: if a spark flies out of the fire on the carpet before you, put your foot on it straight away. There is no need for calling fire brigades or things like that. It seems to me this is a weakness in the church of God today. May the burden fall upon some of you, that ability to speak a word in season. The wise man says it is "like apples of gold in pictures of silver," both a word of encouragement and a word of rebuke.

Now some people feel that they cannot either write or speak. I remember when I first went out to preach going to a little chapel high up in the Yorkshire Pennines. I arrived at the station late on the Saturday evening. It was a very dark, cold, wintry night, and to find the place where I was staying I had to walk about two miles through dark streets and lanes. Now the next morning there was an old man who came up and spoke to me. I gathered afterwards that nobody liked him or could say anything good about him. He spoke to me quite roughly, and asked, "Did you come on the train last night?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Did anyone meet you?" I said, "No!" He said, "Next time I will be waiting at the station." It was months later when I went again, and there, with a thick muffler, and a stick, and a cloth cap, this rough old man was waiting at the station as he promised. He walked with me to where I was staying, not saying much all the way, and then he just said, "Good night," and went. And that happened as long as he lived. Now at the place where he attended nobody could say anything good about the man. When he died, if not outwardly, I shed a few inward tears. I felt that this poor man, in his own way had made himself useful to the cause of God.

I feel that the golden rule is the sweet constraining of the love of Christ. Now if the sweet constraining of the love of Christ is there, then all these things will fall into their rightful place. There is a word, a very oft-used word, and a very simple word, which I do think is vital, and that is *thoughtfulness*. May all our church members be thoughtful church members. You see, so often there is something which should have been done, which could have been done, which ought to have been done. Some people say, "I did not really think." Let me say this very plainly: thoughtlessness in Scripture is not an excuse; thoughtlessness is a sin. There is no excuse for a church member saying that, "I forgot" or, "I did not think." May there be that thoughtfulness. Sometimes it will be something very menial. Who is going to clear the snow away from the chapel front door when there has been a heavy snowfall?

Then sometimes there may be a special burden or exercise laid on your heart. I have thought about things like this: perhaps a person writing to the paper about something, perhaps a person going round to houses and handing some tract to the people there. Now the point is this: is there an exercise, a burden if it is from the Lord? If we just do things because we feel, Well, it would be a good thing, it might be a good thing, or if we just do things because we want to do something, then that will not be a good thing. If we are graciously led, and burdened, and sweetly constrained by the love of Christ to do something, however strange it may seem, then God's blessing will rest upon it. You know there is an old expression in our chapels about being *exercised*. They expect the preacher to be exercised. Now may all our church members be exercised about these various things.

Now if thoughtfulness is one word, another word is *kindness*. The Lord Jesus was wonderfully faithful, but He was never unkind. There is no excuse for any church member being unkind, speaking unkindly, or acting unkindly. Rather church members should be a blessed example: "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." There will be acts of kindness as well as thoughts of kindness, kindness to the pastor, kindness to other members. Some people are blessed with much wealth, and there are a thousand ways in which they can show kindness. There are other people who are not blessed with any wealth at all, but they are blessed with plenty of spare time; that also can be used to the honour and glory of God. Of course, the term that the Scripture uses is "giving a cup of cold water," that simple thing, but an act of kindness that glorifies God and does so much good and God's blessing is upon it. How long is it since you last gave someone "a cup of cold water" for Christ's sake?

Think of the story at the time of the Reformation. As I remember it, Luther was at the Diet of Worms, exhausted and weary, as well as tempest-tossed by Satan. A liveried servant came up to him and brought him a cool, refreshing drink in a beautiful, silver goblet. Luther enquired from whence it had come. I rather think the servant said it had come from his master, the aged Duke of Brunswick, a man who had always been a Romanist, but towards the end of his life the Lord had begun to work in his heart, and very dimly he was moving towards the truth. That kind gift overwhelmed Luther. It was only a cool drink, but he drank deeply of it, and he said, "God grant that your aged master be refreshed on his dying bed." Very shortly afterwards that aged duke died, and Luther's prayer for him was answered. That is the story as I remember it. Now do not forget that cup of cold water for Jesus' sake.

As I have said, I was going to address you largely in a way of illustration, but in coming towards the close there are three vital points.

1. The first perhaps you expected me to begin with, that is *prayer*. Every church member should be, must be, a praying church member, and may it not just be formal prayer, but may it be wrestling, prevailing prayer. An eminent minister in the last century, before he accepted his pastorate, said that he would do so on one condition: that the church members undertook to remember him at the mercy seat in all their public and private prayers. Prayer for the pastor, prayer for the other members of the church, prayer for those outside. I believe it was not far from here that years ago an old woman almost boastfully said to a minister, "I have been a member here over fifty years." The minister's reply was, "And how many people have you prayed into the church during those years?" Praying members are such a blessing to a church

2. Then secondly, *loyalty* – loyalty to the pastor, loyalty to the whole church. The Lord Jesus on one occasion was overwhelmed with loyalty. So many were forsaking Him, so many were despising Him, and His heart overflowed with love towards His own little band of followers, and He said this: “Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptation. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father has appointed unto Me.” Now seek to be a praying member; seek to be a loyal member, and loyal to that church where the Lord Himself has placed you. Some godly people are enthusiastic for every cause there is, and they seem to forget the place where the Lord Himself has placed them as a member.

We think of a poor, aged, deaf woman who Sabbath after Sabbath struggled to the house of God, and she could not hear a single word that was spoken. Why did she go? Well, she said, “I am the oldest member and I think I should set a good example.” And she said, “I love to be amongst the church where the Lord has placed me, and whilst I sit there, although I cannot hear anything, I can pray for my pastor, and I can pray for the congregation.”

3. Thirdly, and lastly, but certainly not least, *the life and the witness* of the individual members in the church. You know, no man liveth to himself. We cannot help influencing others. Whenever we come to a service we bring an influence with us, an influence for good or an influence for bad. The New Testament speaks of being “pillars.” Seek to be a pillar. What is a pillar? In a building it has two uses: one is ornament; the other is to bear its share of the weight of the building. Now God appoints His people to be pillars in the church. Seek to be a pillar, a wonderful ornament to adorn the gospel of Christ in all things, to bear your share of the weight of the building. A pillar must be completely upright, completely straight, and it must stand solid on the foundation, and then it bears its share of the weight of the building. The pillars are not the foundation, but when a pillar is taken away the building is much the weaker. Blessed be God, “Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure.” O that the Lord would make more and more of our church members pillars in the church of God.

So I give you the text at the end of the address instead of the beginning. What role is open to each private member of the church? Ephesians 4. 16: “From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”

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### AN AMAZING PROVISION

*One of the best-known ministers in our denomination was John Kemp (senior) who was greatly blessed as pastor at Biddenden, Kent, from 1880 to 1932. We have never read of a case like his—a new chapel built, without a congregation, and he invited to be pastor there.*

For about sixteen months after I began to preach, I continued to work for Mr. Hoadley as one of his leading men. Consequently he wanted me at my post as much as possible, but did by no means oppose my preaching, for he said he expected I should preach. He would drive me to chapel when I preached at Flimwell, and otherwise allow me to go and come as most suitable to me, nor did we quarrel upon that point. Yet being now mostly preaching three times on the Sunday, and sometimes in the week, it was difficult for me to fill my post under him without being overtaxed with working and preaching combined. I longed for more time to search God's Word, and for meditation and prayer, for often I was now feeling quite worn down in body and mind, feeling I could not go on long thus. This matter gave me many an errand to the throne of grace for direction. My mind was not to give up preaching, nor to give up work and lead an idle life, so what to choose I knew not, unless it was a small business of some kind that would allow me more time for study and rest. For this I was now on the alert, but nothing turned up.

One day when in the field, my soul wrestled with the Lord for direction and leading, for then my heart did cry in earnest, and the clay seemed to fall into the great Potter's hand in a special way, for Him to mould it according to His will. Methinks the spirit of prayer was poured down from heaven upon me on purpose for my heart to go up and bring a blessing down from His throne, for then did I embrace something in anticipation in the near future, though *what* He intended for me I knew not, nor where. From that hour my expectation was from God – I believed He would soon place me elsewhere, but could scarcely entertain a thought of settling over a people, through feeling quite unfit for a pastor. Just after this, a man whom I knew came past where I was filling a cart from a dung mixen, and said, "Ah, you will have something different from cart-filling soon." It made me ponder the thing afresh in my heart, for the man knew nothing of the secret between the Lord and me – for it was a secret none knew.

These things took place late in 1879, or early in 1880; I am not sure which. That was like a strengthening-cordial to my fainting heart, and it once more endeared the Lord to me as a God of grace and providence too, for my burden became lighter thereby.

During my exercise mentioned in the last section, a new chapel was being built at Biddenden, but I knew not of the existence of such a place

as Biddenden, much less of the chapel being then in the course of building.

Mr. James Hickmott of Lashenden, Frittenden, Kent, and a member and deacon of the Strict Baptist church at Smarden, Kent (under the pastorate of Mr. Mann), having some property, had long (for fifty years) intended building a chapel upon a portion of his farm lying just in the borders of Biddenden parish, near his own dwelling-place. This he desired to do for the glory of God, and not through any division at Smarden or elsewhere, nor for his own benefit, for his intention was still to attend Smarden, which he did mostly when able. Biddenden had no chapel, but there was a room at the village where they had occasional preaching on Sunday evenings, the ministers coming from Tenterden after supplying there during the day. Mr. Hickmott therefore built the chapel (having built in connection therewith a minister's house the previous year), a stable, and coach-house, and gave it entire, with about an acre of land attached to the chapel for burying purposes, and about a quarter of an acre attached to the house for a garden, investing the whole in Trust as a Particular Baptist cause upon Strict Communion principles. He intended it not for constant services, but only once a month, or oftener as required, and for no one minister in particular.

Now having been thus brought on in the ministry as well as in secular things, I looked on with wonder. First, at that grace which came to me and raised me up from my original state. Secondly, at what the Lord had done in making me a minister by giving me a measure of both gifts and grace for the work, for what natural learning was needed He had supplied; also He had given me ministerial boldness, ability and utterance – which was not natural to me, and had enabled me to speak out of my heart with a measure of grace, authority and power, in a way that the people received my testimony, so that I could not keep pace with the various invitations to preach. Feeling so much unfitness, and lack of grace for so great a work, made me wonder at that grace and power which had sustained me thus far. Moreover, that I, who had such a low origin, should now find a warm reception in the hearts and houses of many who were by far my superiors in temporal and, as I thought, spiritual attainments, made me bow down in thankfulness, wondering at what had taken place, and what might yet take place, for now the Lord's past dealings raised my future expectations. For what could He not do who had done so much? Here I “thanked God and took courage” (Acts 28. 15).

It was, I think, on the second Sabbath that I supplied at Tenterden, one of the friends (Mr. Ramsden) felt so comfortable in hearing, and believing I was the right one to become their pastor, he (to his regret afterwards) spoke out whilst I was preaching to this effect: “This is he,



arise, and anoint him.” In this he seems to have expressed the general feeling of the church and congregation, for many expressed the same to me, and early in the year 1880, I was told, the church had decided to invite me on probation. But my mind was not to settle there, though feeling a strong union of spirit to the people, and being much helped in speaking among them. A sense of my unfitness to settle over that people after such a man as Mr. Vinden hindered me from entertaining the idea. But, thought I, “What can my exercise in the field (before mentioned) mean?”

About this time Mr. Stapley engaged me, and took me home with him from Tenterden to speak in the room at Biddenden village one Sunday evening. On March 10th, 1880, Mr. Samson, who attended Tenterden chapel, wrote me for Mr. Hickmott (who had then nearly completed his new chapel at Biddenden, and had also given the Frittenden chapel to those who worshipped there, though still retaining some power and interest in it), asking me to supply one week evening at Frittenden. This was that Mr. Hickmott might hear me before inviting me to Biddenden’s new chapel, but I knew it not. Accordingly on March 28th, after speaking at Tenterden, I returned with Mr. Samson to his abode at Standen, Biddenden, and stayed the night. Here an acquaintance was formed with him and Mrs. Samson (of blessed memory) and her two daughters (the offspring by her former husband, Mr. C. Day), which I bless the Lord for – these having been some of my chief friends now for many years. Mrs. Samson was a close and constant friend till the time of her death in June 1886. My heart softens and my eyes overflow whilst writing this, and remembering my miserable shortcomings amidst such kindness. Next morning I, in company with Mr. Samson, visited the chapel for the first time (route, via Monks Hill and the Fir Plat). It was nearly completed, except the seats, and was very different from the building of Solomon’s temple in regard to the noise of the workmen’s hammers, etc. (1 Kings 6. 7).

In the evening (Monday, March 29th) I spoke at Frittenden from 1 John 3. 1, 2, with some liberty, being quite ignorant of Mr. Hickmott’s motive in hearing me, only Mrs. Samson had told me in the morning, she hoped I should like the new chapel and also settle down there, and if I did so, she would sow “honesty” all round the house. I returned with them to Standen, stayed the night, walked to Headcorn for the first time next morning, and so took the early train home, pondering these things in my heart, and wondering what the next unfolding of God’s providence would reveal; for now I seemed to be nearing some great change, and felt I should shortly have to walk some path I had not gone heretofore. “But what can it be?” thought I. “What means all my inward exercises, combined with these outward indications of a change? Ah, I must wait

for further light upon my path.” Now was I quite unsettled and tossed about in my mind, and my heart looked up to the Lord to act the Pilot’s part and manage the whole thing and all concerned therein – whether at Tenterden, Biddenden or elsewhere. Today, I look back upon how He *has* worked it out, but *then*, O how different, for I knew not what He would do, and not feeling equal to taking a pastorate, what else could I expect?

On April 2nd, 1880 (four days after I saw the new chapel and also preached at Frittenden), Mr. Samson wrote informing me of Mr. Hickmott’s desire for me to become the minister of the new chapel which was to be opened in the following month, and asking me to have an interview with Mr. Hickmott respecting it. Mr. Samson, Mr. James Pearson of Smarden, and others, had heard me approvingly at Tenterden, and mentioned me to Mr. Hickmott, and this was the connecting link, and the means employed by the Lord to bring me away from settling at Tenterden, to Biddenden. I saw Mr. Hickmott therefore, and he asked me to come and settle down in the chapel house as minister of the chapel, if I could see the Lord’s leading hither, to live in the house free of rent, and to receive whatever the people might voluntarily put into the box, but to have no other collections at the door, nor seat-renting, and he promised to employ me on his farm as often as I desired employment.

I promised to consider the matter – laying it before the Lord in prayer – and to let him know in due course what decision I arrived at. Now did I feel to have a big matter to pray over and decide upon. The bigness of it caused me and my wife much anxiety, for to go from our county, and from our old friends at Shovers Green and neighbourhood, and live among comparative strangers elsewhere, and above all, to become pastor of a people, made it appear a large concern to meddle with. Now did I toss it over and over in my mind thus – “It is a *new* chapel, and there is *no* congregation, and but few people about the neighbourhood; where can they come from? Shall I gather a people by my poor preaching? No; I fear not. Will my preaching wear well, so as to hold a people together? Or, will those who now invite me prove stable friends? If I get but few people there, and consequently but little support, and have to work generally, how shall that yoke be lighter than that under which I have been groaning and praying?”

Then would I look on the other side thus – “Is this the leading of the Lord’s providence? What meant that special exercise in the field at Cottenden, when the Lord gave me a persuasion of something being provided elsewhere? Did I not then, by the prayer of faith, handle the thing in the distance? *If* it be right for me to go, and *if* He lead me there, then there will be a people – few or many – gathered, and He will supply my needs, either through voluntary contributions, or my labour, or both

combined, for He will not send me there for nought.” *Now* were all the first-named arguments against going swallowed up in this one desire, “Lord, make known to me Thy will in the matter, O make it plain; *then* can I leave all the rest in Thy hand, to work it as seemeth Thee good.” Now methinks I dropped into Paul’s line of things: “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Phil. 4. 6).

How I longed for a word of decision dropped into my heart from His own mouth, but nothing came like that, yet the more I prayed, the more my mind seemed fixed on Biddenden, and in prayer the Lord seemed to favour me with a good conscience, and His approbation upon my request; moreover my late experience in the field would, as it were, hinge on to Biddenden when I prayed. So at last, without any direct word from the Lord, I decided to go there, but with the desire for Him to prevent it, if not right in His sight. By this time I had cast anchor in the Lord’s mercy, power and faithfulness respecting my support at Biddenden, and could leave that with Him. If ever I dropped (through given grace) as clay into the great Potter’s hand, willing to do His will and to be what He might see fit to make me, surely I did while asking Him to decide the thing for me. Everything within and without pointed that way. Towards the end of April, I wrote saying, I would (D.v.) go to Biddenden as requested, and make it my home, for I felt sure the Lord had directed my steps to that place.

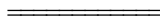
Mr. James Hickmott and others had already engaged ministers to preach at the opening services which were fixed for May 5th, 1880. A good number of my Wadhurst friends, including my old pastor, Mr. Jones, and my wife, accompanied me there on that day. Mr. Vine of The Dicker preached in the morning from 1 Corinthians 15. 11: “So we preach, and so ye believed,” and in the afternoon from Matthew 22. 42: “What think ye of Christ? whose Son is He?” I had heard him but once before, and from that time had felt so prejudiced against him as not to desire another hearing, but could do no other than go at that time, and O how sweetly my prejudice was brought down as the good man so blessedly set forth those truths which he had tasted and handled! Sweet tears did I shed at that time, and truly the new chapel was consecrated to me, which helped me in my new field of labour into which I was now entering. Also it formed a sweet bond of union between me and Mr. Vine, which continued till his death, and also he continued to visit us yearly when able. But I was now ashamed of my prejudice against him, for it was my sin before the Lord. Mr. William Mann, of Smarden, preached in the evening from Psalm 87. 1, 2.

During my exercise about going to Biddenden, I often thought of what had been told me, viz. that the church at Tenterden had decided to

invite me for three months, but not feeling my mind that way, and not hearing direct from the church, it caused me no great exercise of mind, though the thing seemed conflicting. On June 8th, however, one of the members wrote to say it was the unanimous request of the church that I be invited to supply the first three months in 1881. I replied that I had already accepted the Biddenden invite, when another letter from him stated that they were ignorant of that fact. Now, whatever was the cause of their delay in writing, I saw God's hand in it, for He intended me to go to Biddenden, and also that my mind should be comparatively free to act in that direction. How good He is! and how wise and sure are His leadings, nor can anything upset His purposes and works. Seest thou not the reins of every heart and circumstance in His hand?

Now after the opening services on May 5th, 1880, the chapel was closed till Sunday the 30th of the same month, when I commenced my labours there, and afterwards preached there one Sabbath in each month during the rest of the year (withdrawing those Sabbaths from Burwash for that purpose), beside week evenings. The chapel was filled with people from the first, and for many Sundays the aisles and vestries were occupied, and at times some were outside of the chapel, for it seemed as if the people had been waiting for a chapel to be built for them – some of them had attended no place of worship previously, whilst others came from other chapels about the neighbourhood, especially from Tenterden and Smarden. Several of these had been attending the General Baptist Chapel, Smarden, and either their eyes had begun to be previously opened, or they were *now* opened to “see out of obscurity, and out of darkness” (Isa. 29. 18). Several of them have testified how my ministry was useful to them at that time for their further enlightenment, so that they became bound to the new chapel and minister, and have continued unto this day (December 19th, 1905). But as time went on many dropped off, even after attending for some years regularly, and went back into the world. Yet a good number of the first attendants have worn well, and continue to cleave close to the place, the truth and the pastor – for which I would be thankful; for what am I, to have friends clinging about me year after year for twenty-five years?

Mr. Kemp's Jubilee Services in 1930 were a remarkable occasion when a large marquee was erected with the services relayed. In the chapel and marquee over a thousand people were present – so greatly was John Kemp loved.



Self-emptiness prepares for spiritual fulness.

*Richard Sibbes*

## BOOK REVIEW

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**The Excellent Benjamin Keach**, by Austin Walker (Second Revised Edition); large paperback; 449 pages; price not known yet in this country; published by Joshua Press, Ontario, Canada, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

We are pleased to see that a second edition of this important work, first published in 2004, has been called for. This second edition corrects typographical errors, adds an index, and makes a few substantial changes to the text.

Benjamin Keach (1640-1704) is an extremely important figure, and under God one of the “founders” of the Particular Baptist denomination in this country. He deserves to be much better known. We wrote a lengthy review, February *Gospel Standard* 2005, page 62. In it we wrote:

“We are delighted that Keach has been rediscovered, and we wholeheartedly agree with the title of the book, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach* (a quotation from Ivimey)... So *The Excellent Benjamin Keach* is exceedingly welcome – and (shall we say?) long overdue. The author has researched the work exceedingly thoroughly and well.”

Another writer comments on the book:

“Austin Walker writes in a fluent and interesting style and sets before us a fascinating portrait, ‘warts and all,’ of this brave, passionate and committed minister.”

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## OBITUARY

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**Ruby Kezia Chivers** died in hospital on July 21st, 2014, aged 83, having suffered from cancer for three years. She was a granddaughter of George Buck, a well-known minister in the early 1900s. She wrote the following account of her early days when she was about 60 years old:

“My earliest recollections of the things of God began when I was about four years old. One night I had a dream or a vision of a man standing by my bed watching over me which I felt sure was Jesus. My three sisters and I went to a General Baptist chapel until I was about twelve. We could not travel and there was no Strict Baptist chapel near. I had some understanding of right and wrong, so that I refused to join in the singing of songs at school as I felt they were not true, which of course got me into trouble.

“As we got older, one of my sisters suggested that we went to Colnbrook Strict Baptist Chapel which was about seven miles away, our Mother being willing to go with us there. So we did, but after about two years the sister which I felt was more deeply taught died. This was the means of bringing me to a real concern about my own soul, and I began to seek more earnestly.

“In 1946 when I was about fifteen years old I was able to attend Gower Street Chapel for a short time with another of my sisters. On one occasion the minister spoke in the Bible Class of the plumbline mentioned in Amos 7. 7, 8. This made a lasting impression upon me as I felt I was the one to whom he directed his remarks and I felt condemned. I was greatly troubled for many months till being laid aside with a bilious attack a text from Deuteronomy 33. 27: ‘The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms,’ was applied to me with power, and I felt that the Lord’s arms were under me. I had several good hearings at that time which caused me to believe the Lord had a favour towards me and my heart went out in love to Him. I felt I had meat to eat the world could not give me. In those days I did vow I would follow the Lord in baptism, but afterwards I held back.

“Some years later I went through a very painful path in providence, the Lord preventing me from doing what I greatly desired, with the words, ‘Thus far thou shalt go, and no further.’ I thought the Lord’s hand was against me because I had not kept my vow, but afterwards was thankful I was not left to go my own way.

“I had never spoken to anyone about spiritual things or my pathway in life, but Mr. J.S. Green in his ministry was often led right into my path and I was greatly encouraged and helped. I longed to cast in my lot with the Lord’s people and the time came when I felt the mountains had been removed. When going to the Gospel Standard Meetings in 1957, I was just getting off a rush hour train in London when the hymn 741 dropped into my soul so sweetly:

‘I no more at Mary wonder,  
Dropping tears upon the grave,  
Earnest asking all around her,  
“Where is He that died to save?”

I believe I could say there and then, ‘My Lord and my God.’ I went before the church at Gower Street and was baptized by Mr. Green on August 27th, 1957.

“Once when cycling home from work, in meditation and thinking of my end, the hymn 1022 came to my mind: ‘Could I but climb where Moses stood and view the landscape o’er,’ etc. I felt that was just where I was and that it would be well with me.

“I once had another blessed time hearing Mr. L.R. Broome one Lord’s day at Whitechapel in the afternoon and Brixton in the evening, speaking of the disciples on the road to Emmaus, how the Lord drew near and went with them. I felt my heart burn within me while Mr. Broome spoke of these precious things.

“I have had from time to time many helps by the way but for the most part it has been a few crumbs here and there.”

Her husband writes: I attended the Strict Baptist chapel at New Barnet from when I was born, and commenced going to a service at Gower Street Memorial Chapel on Tuesday evenings when I was working in central London. After several years I met Ruby there and we soon fell in love and were married by Mr. John Green in March 1970. By this time Ruby had been a member of the church for thirteen years. We then lived at New Barnet and attended the chapel there, but continued to go to Gower Street Chapel in the week. Ruby also went there first Sunday evenings.

We had many good hearing times and some of our greatest blessings under Mr. Green's ministry. He baptized me in October 1982 at New Barnet with two others, so the church was reconstituted. Ruby and another friend transferred their membership to us.

Ruby always put the cause of truth first and never missed a service unless she was unwell. She loved the old paths, having been brought away from the lighter element when young and noted the difference.

We had a few good times over the years and a few encouragements, but many sorrows and disappointments as we expect in a vale of tears. Older friends passed away and the cause got very low. When Mr. T.J. Pocock began to come and preach at New Barnet we both felt this was a ministry that suited us and we looked forward to his visits. Eventually we began to ask the Lord to make a way for us to go to South Moreton, if it was His will. But we had to wait for seven years before it came to pass and we transferred our membership in 2008 to the church at South Moreton.

Ruby was brought to a deep concern for the welfare of her soul at an early age, so she was not enticed by worldly pleasures and had never been in a cinema or other places of worldly entertainment. But she solemnly realised we are all born in sin and shapen in iniquity and mourned her felt lack of spiritual life and exercise oftentimes. She always found it very difficult to speak to others of spiritual experience; having a tender conscience and a contrite heart she so quickly broke down. In recent years Ruby kept a diary and recorded in it when the gospel was made especially sweet and precious to her soul.

July 5th, 2009: Mr. T. Pocock preached from Jeremiah 3. 14. Felt she had a blessing from the Lord and that she was one of His people.

January 11th, 2010: Awoke early with the words: "Thou shalt see My glory soon, when the work of grace is done."

January 30th, 2011: Mr. T Pocock. Psalm 50. 14, 15: "Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay Thy vows unto the Most High: call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me." She felt it good in her soul.

"September 4th, 2011: Mr. T.J. Pocock. 1 Samuel I. 19: 'The Lord remembered her.' The preaching was very sweet to me; so was the last

hymn 992. I wish I could leave all my future pathway with the Lord. Later at home I read a sermon by Mr. J.K. Popham in this month's *Gospel Standard*. I felt it carried on. It was very sweet to me, as I do not know what may lie before me."

Hymn 967 was the language of her heart: "God of my life, to Thee I call."

"June 29th, 2012: Hymn 766. The words, 'Once in Him, in Him for ever,' came to me with such power. I believe it was from the Lord."

During the last thirty years she had many afflictions, some very painful, numerous visits to hospitals, three major operations, but I do not remember ever hearing her complain. She felt it was the path the Lord had ordained for her.

The day before Ruby died was a Sunday. I saw her for about twenty minutes and read Psalm 27. Her last words when I said goodbye were, "Pray for me." The next morning the hospital phoned advising me to come. As she saw me her face lit up and she looked so happy and it was obvious she was anxious to tell me something. She was wearing an oxygen mask, so I could not hear what she said. I was then asked to leave as they were going to try to extract the fluid from her lungs. When I was called in again Ruby was unconscious, and she died about nine hours later.

Surely there is only one thing that could make a dying believer happy.

A.J.C.

*Note by her Pastor:*

Ruby was a loyal and honourable member of the church at South Moreton for the last five years of her life. Her place is now empty and she is missed. I well remember an occasion when I visited New Barnet for a Lord's day evening in 2004. In conversation at the tea table before the service, she spoke of the blessing she received as she travelled to the Gospel Standard Meetings in 1957. The savour with which she spoke left me with the persuasion that she was one of the Lord's redeemed people, unto whom He had revealed Himself.

The marriage bond between her and her husband was very close. The deep love was very clear to all who saw them walking the path of tribulation together to the end of her life. May the Lord graciously comfort her bereaved husband in his great loss.

T.J.P.

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Nature would do anything to be saved, rather than go to Christ, or close with Christ, and owe all to Him.

*Thomas Wilcox*



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
APRIL 2015

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

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**THE FIVE THIEVES**

*Address given at Bethel Chapel, Luton, on Monday, 14th April, 2014,  
the Monday before Good Friday*

**Reading:** Mark 15. 1-38

We meet this evening to meditate upon the sin-atonng sufferings of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

“What He endured no tongue can tell,  
To save our souls from death and hell.”

And so we remember Calvary, and the crown of thorns, and the cruel spear, and the nails and especially the love, that “having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.”

Over the years on this occasion – and there have been some very sacred occasions at this time – I seem to have been led into different things, and perhaps some of you may feel that this is a strange subject for the week before Good Friday. So I have not got a text for you, but you remember it was recorded of the Lord Jesus that “He was numbered with the transgressors,” and there were some solemn things around the cross, and though it may seem a strange subject to you, I hope it is as led by the Spirit of God and I hope it will be profitable and also a solemn warning, and that is this: *the five thieves*.

The first of them, Judas Iscariot, and the Word of God tells us he was a thief (John 12. 6). It is one of the mysteries in the Word of God that the Lord Jesus should ever have chosen Judas Iscariot for one of His disciples, one who tonight is in hell, who perished in his sins. But it teaches us how close a person can come, and yet be eternally lost. It seems very clear that none of the disciples could see that he was any different from them. When the Lord Jesus solemnly warned them that one of them would betray Him, they each said, “Is it I?”

I do not know much about art, but I believe there is one of the most famous paintings by Leonardo da Vinci of the Last Supper with twelve sitting there at the Passover, and one of them, supposed to be Judas Iscariot, has a most evil face. I do not think he did have an evil face. He was just like the others, and he must have performed miracles, and he must have been a faithful preacher of righteousness, otherwise the disciples would have realised that something was amiss. And yet he

betrayed our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And let us be clear, that was one of the deep sorrows of our Lord Jesus in His spotless, sacred humanity, because He was a real Man and He treated Judas as a friend. “Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?” This was one of those strokes that broke the Saviour’s heart.

But do not think that Judas Iscariot was some sincere man and in the end he was tried and tempted and left to stumble and fall. The Word of God makes it clear that all through he was an evil character, because you remember when the Lord was anointed with that costly ointment – it is a most beautiful account, the outpouring of love – but Judas could not understand it at all. On that occasion he did show himself. He said, Should it not have been sold and the money given to the poor? And even there he was going to take the money for himself. “This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief.” But how far can a person go, and how close can a person get, and yet be eternally lost! In the case of Judas Iscariot, there is one of those awful, solemn, beacon lights which stand there warning us. “He that endureth to the end shall be saved,” and only he that endureth to the end. Didn’t Judas Iscariot seem to make a fair show and yet at last he perished in his sins!

Now I know some of the Lord’s dear children are sorely tempted lest they should be another Judas Iscariot and in the trying hour they should deny Him and give up all. I wonder if you have noticed one thing. There was another Judas among the disciples, and whenever he is mentioned, or the other Judas mentioned, the Word of God seems to go out of its way to make clear the distinction between the two. Two with the same name, one eternally right and one eternally wrong. But we read of the other Judas, and in brackets the Holy Ghost has included this: “not Iscariot.”

Years ago in my early days of preaching I was going to preach one Lord’s day evening. I had been preaching morning and afternoon and I had a long way to travel before the evening service, and I just had those two words on my mind for a text: “Not Iscariot.” As I went along, I prayed the Lord if He would give me one thing to show to the people what was a mark of a person who was *not Iscariot*. And as I was reading the chapter, we came to this: “From that time he [Judas Iscariot] sought opportunity to betray Him.” I said that is one thing a child of God will never, never do. Left to himself like Peter he may betray his Lord and Master, but no child of God will ever seek an opportunity to betray Him. Well then, that is the first thief that we have in these last chapters of each of the gospels, these things surrounding the Lord Jesus as He went to the cross.

Now the next thief is Barabbas. We are told, “Now Barabbas was a robber.” You all know the circumstance. Pilate came forth and he thought this was the opportunity for him to escape. He said, “Ye have

a custom, that I should release unto you one at the Passover.” And he took out the worst character lying in prison and condemned to death, Barabbas who was a robber, and as well as a robber he was a murderer, and Pilate thought the people would certainly say, Not Barabbas. And the enormity of it. O it is part of this dark background to the sufferings of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. You think of it, the holy, immaculate Son of God as He stood there before Pilate and as He stood before the people, and Pilate brought Him forth wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, and the people cried, “Not this Man, but Barabbas.”

But beloved friends, that is what human nature is. It is the same now as it was then. The world today still cries out, “Not this Man, but Barabbas.” You can see it in the things you hear, in the things you read, in the newspapers, the things that are taking place: the carnal heart prefers the worst of sinners to the holy Lamb of God. We are not going to stop there; you and I have got it in our hearts left to ourselves, and it is a mercy if we have been made to differ. “Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?” Our sinful hearts would have crucified the Lord of life and glory.

It must have been an amazing thing for Barabbas. Whether it affected him or not, we are not told. What happened to him afterwards, we are not told; we know nothing of his afterlife. But the preachers have spoken of him – that dark cell and this cruel thief, this cruel robber waiting for his execution, waiting for the day of his crucifixion to arrive, and he hears the doors being opened, he sees the soldiers coming in and he prepares for the worst. He can hardly believe what he is told: that he is not going to be put to death after all; he is not going to be crucified. And he is told why. There is another Man, and He is going to be crucified instead of you. He is going to take your place, and you are going to go free.

Well, how it affected Barabbas, we do not know; we are not told; we do not know anything that happened to him afterwards. But many have seen in that just a little emblem of what really takes place in the substitutionary work of the Saviour, because you and I by nature are like Barabbas, condemned to death, and guilty, and awaiting the sentence, and deserving the sentence. And what is it? What does the gospel declare? That the sentence is not going to be passed upon us. It has been passed upon Another, and we are not going to die. Another has died in our place. And because He died, we are eternally set free. Well, we do not know what Barabbas felt about it, but we do know what lost, ruined, guilty sinners feel about it when the tidings come to them and when by faith they “Behold a scene of matchless grace, ’tis Jesus in the sinner’s place” – His suffering suretyship. Some of the old preachers used to use that word *vicarious*. Mr. Tyler of the Dicker constantly used that word

*vicarious* suffering. Well, simply it means one in the place of another; He instead of me. Well, that is the second thief.

Now the third thief. This is really a group of thieves, and I am thinking of when our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was hanging, bleeding, dying on the cross, and one of His sorrows – not one of His greatest sorrows, one of His least sorrows – He saw those cruel soldiers and they had stolen the few possessions that He had. “They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture did they cast lots.” It was part of the humiliation of the incarnate Son of God as He hung and suffered there. But amazingly in the twenty-second Psalm those hundreds of years before, this had been foretold to the very detail. One of the remarkable things about holy Scripture and the truth of holy Scripture is its infallibility. Those prophecies concerning the Lord Jesus, there were so many and they were absolutely fulfilled to the detail, and one in the twenty-second Psalm: “They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture did they cast lots.” That was really fulfilled at Calvary, part of the Saviour’s humiliation.

Mr. Oliver Pack of Irthlingborough on one or two occasions was either burgled or robbed, and he was sorely tried and tempted by Satan why this should have taken place. I think on one occasion it was actually while he was preaching, and the Lord led him into this, and it calmed his thoughts, that when the Lord Jesus was hanging on the cross, making atonement for the sins of all His people and enduring such agonies, there were those cruel soldiers who in their callousness were both mocking Him and stealing His garments and gambling over them. “Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.”

But when Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost, it was only a very few weeks later, and the sin he charged on the people especially was their part in the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. It has always been believed that among the three thousand who were saved by grace on the Day of Pentecost there were some of those whose hands were literally red with the blood of Christ, who literally had a part and lot in His crucifixion. It seems that that was true, so it would seem that perhaps even some of these cruel soldiers who when our Lord and Saviour was suffering were acting as thieves, it seems that even some of those may have been among the three thousand who on the Day of Pentecost were pricked in their hearts and had to fall down under that deep conviction of this dreadful sin, crucifying the Lord of life and glory. Well, that is the third thief, the third group of thieves.

And now the fourth thief, the well-known thief, the dying thief who “rejoiced to see that fountain in his day.” But do not forget, at the beginning there were two thieves suffering there, and we are told that both of them reviled Jesus. So here was a thief, a robber, who spent his

whole life in wickedness, and he had come not just to the last day of his life, but to the last moments, and it seems that as he was dying, in mocking and reviling the Lord Jesus his heart was still hard as iron. And then the miracle took place, and what can you say about it but sovereign, electing love! He was one who was given to the Saviour in the covenant of grace. He was one of these lost sheep, and it almost seemed that for the first time one of the Lord's chosen was going to be lost, because he was sinking into eternity, dead in trespasses and sins. And then the miracle took place, and you can see written across it all: "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

"One of the malefactors which were hanged railed on Him, saying, If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him." O the miracle of free grace, the grace of God in his heart, and what a clear testimony he was able to give, both in his words and in his life! He rebuked his fellow thief. He could not bear to hear him speaking like that. O there is the fear of the Lord here! There is a tender conscience here! What! In this callous, hard-hearted thief? O what wonders grace has done! "He rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God" – it is very clear that the saved thief did fear God and the fear of the Lord was the beginning of wisdom with him – "seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly." Now that is grace. He has not got any complaint. He has not got any extenuating circumstances. He does not say he does not deserve to be there. He does not even complain over that cruel death, because he must have been in agonies at the time.

"We indeed justly." Who taught the dying thief that? What can we say concerning the mystery of divine sovereignty and the freeness of grace? "We receive the due reward of our deeds: but this Man hath done nothing amiss." How did the dying thief know that? He had a good religion. Of course it was by divine revelation, but he must have believed some of those sacred words which fell from the dying Saviour's lips. "Never man spake like this Man." "This Man hath done nothing amiss."

And then he prayed, and what a prayer! Who taught the dying thief to pray? "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." Who taught the dying thief that Jesus was Lord? Who taught him that He was a King? Who taught him that He had a kingdom? And how many a sinner taught by grace has prayed that same prayer, "Remember me, O Lord"! Well, it took the dying thief to heaven, for,

"The dying thief rejoiced to see  
That fountain in his day;  
And there may I, as vile as he,  
Wash all my sins away."

“Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with Me in paradise.” He took the dying thief to heaven with Him as a token of that finished redemption, the firstfruits of it. “To day shalt thou be with Me in paradise.”

And so our Lord and Saviour was specially honoured, abundantly honoured at His birth and at His death. At His birth, when the wise men entered into that poor house and saw a poor man and a poor woman and a helpless Child, they fell down and worshipped Him as true, almighty God. And here right at the end this dying thief, as he saw a poor Man who though innocent has been condemned to die as a criminal, and yet when Peter and James and John had fled, the Lord would not leave Himself without witnesses. Well, that is the fourth thief.

And finally the fifth thief. Do not forget that there were two thieves, and one was saved and one was lost. There used to be an old saying, and how true: that *one* of the thieves was saved that no sinner might ever despair, but *only one*, that no sinner might ever presume.

So these five thieves, and what a solemn warning there is as we think of them, and yet what mercy we see reigning! Perhaps the best conclusion today is holy and lasting and eternal gratitude for our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, what He did, what He suffered, what He accomplished, that

“The vilest sinner out of hell,  
Who lives to feel his need,  
Is welcome to a throne of grace,  
The Saviour’s blood to plead.”

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### THE ONLY SACRIFICE

*From a sermon by Benjamin Beddome (1717-1798)*

*The death of Christ is the only sacrifice for sin.*

“Sacrifice and offering,” says He, “Thou wouldest not; but a body hast Thou prepared Me.” Other sacrifices and offerings had been made, but the Lord could find no pleasure in them, for they could not take away sin. It was a reasonable enquiry that was made of old: “Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God?” Or, as it is in the original, How shall I prevent or anticipate the Lord? “Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgressions, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” All this the awakened sinner would do, if he thought it available, when guilt lies heavy upon his soul and wrath

follows hard after him, but these things can never come up to the requirements of God's holy law, nor answer the demands of divine justice.

The only way of acceptance is by the blood of the cross, and this is it that God hath consecrated for us. There is no other sacrifice for sin but Christ, who was delivered for our offences and rose again for our justification. No one could mediate between God and man but He who was Himself both God and Man. "I have laid help," saith the Lord, "upon One that is mighty," and upon One only. As the high priest under the law was alone permitted to enter in the holy of holies, and that not without blood, so Jesus only could offer a sacrifice for us, and enter into the holiest of all with His own blood. When He purged our sins, it was "by Himself," and not another, and He is now sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

There is but one Advocate, but one propitiation, and there needs no other. The payment was equal to the debt, and the oblation as noble as sin was vile. "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." The law in effect says, I am contented; justice says, I am satisfied; and the great God, as moral Governor and Judge, says, I am well pleased. Hence that triumph of the apostle: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." At the bar of human prejudice and vulgar report, many things may be laid to their charge that are not true, and at the bar of conscience many things may be brought against them that are true, but at the divine tribunal who shall dare to become an accuser where God is the Judge, or to condemn those whom He will justify?

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### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESURRECTION

*From F.W. Krummacher (1796-1868)*

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The resurrection of the Lord is but seldom estimated nowadays by Christians as of this high importance, although God's Word distinctly attaches to it the very greatest weight. Paul, for example, when he triumphantly exclaims, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died," then immediately adds with great emphasis, "*yea rather, that is risen again.*" And it will no longer appear enigmatical to us why he so specially reposes his consciousness of not being obnoxious to condemnation upon Christ's resurrection. The acquittance, if I may so speak, which the Almighty granted by the resurrection to the Son as to the debts discharged by Him was placed to the credit of the apostle, as it likewise was to that of all those who through faith should become one

with the Son, this second Adam. The payment itself, indeed, was made upon the cross, but the actual declaration that it was acknowledged as perfectly valid and accepted by the Most High, this was first shown to a sinful world on Easter day. It is said in Scripture that “Christ died for our sins, and rose again for our justification” – (that is to say, as a proof that God has acquitted us of our debt, and beholds us as righteous in Him.)

O let not then this strong consolation of the resurrection be to any one of us like a treasure hidden in a field, as is, alas, the case with so many at this time, and seems likely to continue so. The way to the attainment of the incomparable, peace-inspiring treasure, is the same which Peter trod. In the first place, we tread that way when we get a thorough knowledge of our natural alienation from God; we tread that way when we absolutely condemn self; we tread that way when we feel utterly ashamed of all our self-righteousness. If we once travel on that road which leads to utter repudiation of self, then a mere general notion that we may reckon on God’s grace, exhibited for Christ’s sake, will prove insufficient to give us peace. We enquire upon what grounds the expectation rests, and shall most certainly not declare ourselves satisfied until we have both document and seal to show that our heavenly Advocate has triumphantly carried our suit before that throne whose foundations are justice and judgment.

But His glorious resurrection gives us this guarantee. The apostle says, “If Christ be not raised, ye are yet in your sins.” What is deducible from this? Nothing less than that since He *is* risen, we, provided we may assume that we are numbered amongst His people, are, with reference to the tribunal of God, free, and discharged from our sins. What a disclosure is this! The Lord give it a living and clear echo in our hearts, and help us with the whole heart to unite in the old Easter song of the church:

“Christ the Lord is risen again!  
 Christ hath broken every chain!  
 Hark! the angels shout for joy,  
 Singing evermore on high,  
 Hallelujah!”

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The three tongues that were written upon the cross – Greek, Latin and Hebrew – to witness Christ to be the King of the Jews, do each of them, in their several idioms, avouch this singular axiom, that Christ is an all-sufficient Saviour; and a threefold cord is not easily broken.

*Thomas Brooks*



## PEACE AND JOY IN BELIEVING

*A letter to a friend on hearing she had found peace and joy in the Lord. William Brown, pastor at Godmanchester, was a very close friend of J.C. Philpot*

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My dear Friend,

The good news came that you had found rest and peace in the Lord Jesus. Truly there is no other resting-place for a poor sinner, and as long as the world lasts this word shall be fulfilled: "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out." This was the word, as you have more than once heard me say, which first brought peace and joy into my poor, troubled soul. And I am still living on it, or rather on Christ Himself, who said it, coming, as I did at the first, a poor, vile, helpless, guilty, hell-deserving sinner, and casting myself at His feet, His blood and righteousness being all I have to look to and rest upon.

O how sweet is the thought that nothing is required at our hands as a condition, that all, all is free, sovereign grace! The covenant was made for sinners, and the Holy Ghost reveals this full and free salvation to poor, lost sinners. This is the treasure hid in the field. While thousands are rambling over the field, and admiring its beauties and gathering its flowers, how few there are who care for the possession of what is alone worth seeking after. All else is vanity, and this, my dear friend, you have found. Whatever may be the way the Lord has led us, however rough, crooked, thorny and mysterious, yet if we have been thus brought to Christ, surely it has been a right way, and we have abundant cause to bless the Lord who has made all things work together for our good, and now we feel to love Him, and we have the promise given us to rest upon through all the changing scenes of life and death. "All the promises are yours," saith Paul. For if Christ Himself be yours, your Lord and Saviour and Advocate with the Father, in one word, if He be your All in all, in thus having Christ you have all things. Well may the apostle say, "We have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us," and here we are safe as long as the High Priest lives (Num. 35). Bless the Lord, our glorious High Priest does live: "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore"; "And because I live, ye shall live also."

We must be emptied of everything, and kept empty too, that we may live on Christ's fulness, and that we may receive all as poor and needy sinners, dependent entirely on the God of all grace. If Christ is ours, we need fear nothing. He has promised to be with us even to the end, and, "Faithful is He that hath called you, who also will do it." He "hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light by the gospel."

When Israel passed over Jordan, the ark of the covenant went before them, and though it was the time of harvest, when the water usually overflowed the banks, yet the whole of the Israelites passed over on dry ground. So may you find it; so you will find it, if you have the presence of the dear Lord. And has He not promised His presence? Blessed are they that know the joyful sound (of the gospel); they shall walk in the light of His countenance. And again: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee." How I should like to sit by you and talk over these things with you, but the Lord knows what is best, and is leading us by a right way to a city of habitation where there is no more pain, nor sin, nor sickness, nor sorrow. We shall then see, what we now believe, that all has been ordered for our good.

May the Lord enable you to leave your dear husband and your dear children in his hands, without an over-anxious thought. He can manage all far better than you could, even if you were with them to watch over them with the fond affection of a wife and mother. You may safely trust your best of all friends to take charge of them. He has bid you leave them in His hands. The Lord abundantly bless you, and lift upon you the light of His countenance, and enable you to cleave unto Him always, and thus to quench the fiery darts of Satan. Remember, there is nothing but Christ's precious blood and righteousness to rest upon. Come what will, this shall never fail.

My dear wife and Mary join me in love to you and Mr.—, not forgetting your two dear boys.

Your sincere and affectionate friend and brother in the Lord Jesus,  
William Brown

Brighton, May 1866

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## THOUGHTS ON THE SONG OF SOLOMON

*By Grey Hazlerigg of Leicester (1818-1912)*

*(A previous portion of these remarks appeared in the Gospel Standard 2000. We are surprised this excellent "commentary" is not better known.)*

### CHAPTER 2

*Verse 8. "The voice of my Beloved! behold, He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills."* What is this voice? How does Jesus speak? "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." It is not an audible voice reaching the outward ear, nor some imaginary sound of words, apart from something else, but a voice of love and power reaching the heart, or in other words, the motion of the Holy Spirit in Christ upon the soul of a child of God. This may be with a word of

Scripture or without it. It may accompany the sound of words in the outward ear, and such an impression even upon the imagination as above, or not. The essence of it is a holy, gracious influence upon, and operation in, the heart, which moves and melts and draws to Jesus. Augustine, at his conversion, imagined he heard a voice, saying, "Take up and read; take up and read." This did not convert him, but he was led by it to take up the Bible, and he did read what the Spirit accompanied with light, life, love and power: "Not in chambering and drunkenness." "But put ye on the Lord Jesus, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." His friend, Alypius, at the same time read the next verses, and Jesus spoke in them by His Spirit to his soul; and the two friends thus, at the same time, in different words, heard the voice of the Beloved.

Many outwardly heard the voice of Jesus when upon earth, but few heard Him speaking to their hearts by the motions of His Spirit, and therefore died in their sins. "Who hath believed our report?" Those to whom the arm of the Lord, a precious Jesus, is revealed by the inward operation and power of the Holy Ghost. We take up then our Bibles and read. Our hearts remain cold, stupid, unaffected; but by and by a change begins to take place. The Spirit begins to work in and by the Word; the mind is arrested; the heart moves. "This is the voice of our Beloved." We read a hymn, and at first, perhaps, get nothing, but at length the needed influence of a gracious power is bestowed; the words become sweet – "the voice of our Beloved." We hear a preacher; all seems lifeless and insipid to us until at length some word comes with this soft, secret, quickening power. At once the soul's attention is commanded as with Lydia of old – "the voice of our Beloved." We go on our knees and attempt to pray; our hearts are hard, minds dark, spirits very full of bondage. We are about to rise, but at once the heart begins to feel its insensibility, stupidity and hardness departing. We now can pray. "The voice of our Beloved" in the Spirit's operation, has reached us.

So it is in all holy things. The voice of the Beloved is what we stand in need of. The sheep hear this peculiar voice; it rouses up the slumbering faculties of the soul. "My heart is in my ears," as Berridge writes. O this special, peculiar operation of the Spirit upon the heart, whether with a word or without it, but never contrary to the revealed mind of God, is a thing unknown except by the dear children of God.

"Jesus speaks, and speaks to thee;  
Say, poor sinner, lovest thou Me?"

This operation of the Holy Ghost upon the heart is, in respect of its more powerful, soul-ravishing influences, excellently described in this Song: "I went down into the garden of nuts." Simply, that is to say,

sought the Lord in means. At length the Lord spoke; the Spirit worked upon my heart with His gracious, soul-enlivening influence: “Or ever I was aware, my soul made me as the chariots of Amminadib” – “as the chariots of a willing people”; all ear, all heart for Jesus Christ. “Arise, My love, My fair one, and come away.”

Now we see what this voice is – in its essence a secret, sweet operation of the Holy Spirit as a spirit of life, love and grace in Jesus upon the heart. O have we heard it? Do we know anything about it? Has it made us, with Elijah, wrap indeed our faces in our mantle, as it were, yet come forth to Jesus? If so, we know something of the meaning of the spouse’s words. And do we now feel these light and life and grace-giving communications upon our hearts? Then can we say, “It is the voice of my Beloved.”

Sometimes this voice speaks to us of one thing, sometimes of another. “He shall guide you into all truth” – by degrees, as He sees proper and expedient. “I have many things,” says Christ, “to say unto you; but ye cannot bear them now.” He does not drive His people, but tells them of things as they stand in need and are able to bear them.

“So in the soul that’s born anew  
He keeps a gradual pace.”

Sometimes He will speak in a word of gracious reproof, sometimes of warning. Sometimes He speaks in a promise or an invitation. Sometimes He will speak more fully sweetly of love and blood; sometimes of His own love, sometimes of the Father’s: “The Father Himself loveth you”; sometimes of the equal love of the Three co-equal, co-eternal Persons in the Godhead – Father, Son and Holy Ghost; sometimes of election; sometimes more peculiarly of the cross and dying love; sometimes of final perseverance in His grace; and sometimes of a whole heaven of life and love to be enjoyed to eternity. “And they shall go no more out”; “And there is no night there.” Then the soul enjoys a sort of spiritual translation, though still in the body. The gates of New Jerusalem are opened; the eye spiritually sees the King in His beauty; a little heaven is felt even now within, and an eternal heaven is longed for.

“I long to lay me down and die,  
And find eternal rest.”

Such, such is the power, the sweetness, at times, of this voice: “It is the voice of my Beloved.” Where the voice of Jesus is, there He Himself is likewise. His voice is grace, because He is grace: “Full of grace are Thy lips.” His voice is love, for He is love: “O how He loves!” His voice is power, for He is the Mighty One of Israel.

“Hark! the voice of love and mercy  
Sounds aloud from Calvary.”

This is power; for there were horns coming out of His hands (Hab. 3. 4); or, if we take the marginal reading, rays coming out of His side; for there was the hiding of His power: "Thomas, reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side; and be not faithless, but believing." The voice is heard, and Thomas cries, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus, then, is in this voice; the voice is Jesus. Paul, in another way, well represents this when he says that God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, in the old creation, hath shined, Himself hath shined, into the heart in the new. So in the law there is the voice of words, but in the gospel the presence of the Lord and His love (1 Kings 19). God is love in Christ, and when He speaks in Christ He comes in love, in the degrees of it, into the sinner's heart. In the gospel God gives Himself; and when He speaks by His Word and Spirit to the heart, then He comes Himself into that heart: "I will come to you." "The voice of my Beloved."

"Behold, He cometh." O wonder of wonders! O the sweetness, beyond all sweetness! O life, O bliss, O honour beyond expression! I hear His voice; He speaks to me; He moves in my heart; He comes unto me to dwell with such a worthless one as I am. Salvation is come even to my house: "It is the voice of my Beloved. Behold, He cometh."

But someone may say, Why this *Behold*? What so great a wonder is this? Do we not all call Him our Saviour? Is He not always with His people? Ah, says the soul, I had got beyond the region of theories, notions and mere general views of Jesus. I was in the dark valleys, surrounded by hills and mountains. They seemed to me to rise to heaven and to be everlasting. O these perpetual hills! But Jesus made them bow when He came leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. This is the cause of my wonder, that He should come to me, and so easily, and so sweetly, so un-upbraidingly, "leaping," "skipping." I did not go leaping, skipping to Him; He came to me. There were mountains and hills of sins great and small, corruptions apparently invincible, immovable difficulties, obstacles, perplexities of all sorts and kinds. If I seemed to get over one, some higher mountain peak only rose in view. How to get over these mountains I knew not; and truly my very efforts and desires almost seemed to have come to an end; but then it was He came, and this is the cause of my wonder, that then He should come leaping, skipping unto me, as if He was the one to be gladdened, not myself. It was as the day of His espousals, and the day of the gladness of His heart.

And then so easily; such an almighty easiness in His coming. Mountains and hills were all as nothing to Him. He stood and measured the earth; He beheld and drove asunder the nations; and the seemingly-everlasting hills were scattered, and the perpetual hills did bow. His ways, I see, alone are everlasting. I thought if ever He came to me it

would be with such efforts, as it were, and bit by bit; one hill now got over, then another, then a mountain hardly surmounted. Thus I had planned it if He were to come at all. Then surely it would be with rods and scourges, or at least some bitter upbraidings for my wandering, follies and unbelief, which got me into these deep, dark places. My conscience told me how I had played the fool, and wandered from the fold; how basely I had sinned against such love as He had even already shown me; and then, behold, in the spite of all, He comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills, and kills me, not with terrors, but a kiss.

*Verse 9. "My Beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold, He standeth behind our wall, He looketh forth at the windows, showing Himself through the lattice."* The gracious, almightily easy way in which Jesus comes to a soul, when He so pleases, in spite of all difficulties, is now represented by a similitude: "My Beloved," in these His comings more especially, "is like a roe or a young hart." The allusion is to the extreme gracefulness and agility of the hart or roe. As, then, the hart leaps with the utmost ease from rock to rock, so the Lord Jesus comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. But further: this verse gives, in three figures, three representations of the presence of Christ with the soul, but in very different degrees.

1. Sometimes He is present, and yet to sense He is absent. So it was to the soul when mountains of division seemed between it and Christ. Zion sometimes cries, "My Lord" – Jesus – "has forsaken me." The two disciples, when Jesus was with them, knew Him not till their eyes were opened: "We had thought that it had been He who should have redeemed Israel." O how often the promise is with us, even its fulfilment, and yet we want eyes to see that in these very things God is performing it to us. But here the soul is led to ponder and reflect, and comes to the just conclusion: "He standeth behind our wall." I see it now. Even when walls of sin and legality, so far as sense goes, are between Him and us, He stands just behind these walls, which may well be called "*our wall*," ready either to break them down, or come leaping over them. He seemed so very, very distant. The wall appeared high, indeed, and immovable; but He came to me, and now I perceive, and would have you, my friends, see it holily with me, that even, when apparently so far off, He stands behind our wall, ready in the greatness of His love to remove, or come over it.

2. This truth is further proved by His looking forth from time to time at the windows, showing Himself through the lattice; or, as in the margin, "flourishing" through the lattice. He gives the soul during times of much distance and desertion, and previous to His coming leaping and

skipping, some intimations of His love. He looks for a moment through the windows or lattice of a promise, or word of grace. It may be but a glimpse, and then He seems to have gone; but surely this indicates that He is behind our wall, still close to us, and still the same in love. Thus, under the old covenant dispensation, there were the windows and lattices of many sweet and precious gospel words, through which Christ looked into His waiting people's hearts, though the law, as yet being unfulfilled, remained as a dispensation. Some of these words are clearer, some less so, open windows or lattices, giving fuller gospel views or less so. Through these Christ looked; at these, from time to time, He flourished, casting in the sweet savour of His name, whereby His people learnt to love Him. But, then,

3. There are times not only of a sort of absent presence, and momentary glimpses; sunbeams through the clouds, but of fuller, sweeter visits, and completer deliverances; as in the first words, when He is like a roe or a young hart in the manifestations of His grace, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills; breaking down, or passing easily over our walls, and coming sweetly into our souls with a voice of love and power. "Behold, He cometh."

*Verse 10.* "My Beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away." We have already seen that the Word the Lord Jesus accompanied by the movements and operations of His Holy Spirit upon the soul is the Word in and by which He speaks really and effectually to us. Where a gracious communication is entirely wanting, there is no such speaking of the Beloved. Many are like Paul's companions, who heard a voice, but not *the* voice of Him who spake to Paul (Acts 9. 7; 22. 9.). When Christ comes in His true, Christ-like character to the soul, it is as a grace and life communicator: "I am come that they might have life, and might have it more abundantly." Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Now then, the spouse, the child of God, goes on to describe the real tenor of Christ's speech and the effects of it upon the heart:

"He speaks. Obedient to His call,  
Our willing hearts must move;  
Did He but smile alike on all,  
Then all alike would love."

But this He does not; the best wine of His free grace is for His beloved.

Now let us consider these effects, as here described; of course remembering this, that they will be in proportion to the degree of grace communicated, other things being equal.

"My Beloved spake, and said" – by His speech – "unto me, Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away." The heart, then, is called away

from something, and to something. The voice, as it were, contains three things:

1. A command of grace to *rise*;
2. To *leave* something;
3. To *go* somewhere.

1. A command to *rise*: “Rise up.” Sometimes the soul is on the bed of indolence, as we see in a future part of the Song; but here it more indicates that the soul is lying down in sorrow; prostrate in the dust; unable to stir itself up or lay hold of Jesus. “Why art thou cast down, O my soul?” says the psalmist. And again: “O my God, my soul is cast down within me.” Sin hath cast it down; Satan hath cast it down; sorrow hath cast it down; doubts, fears, perplexities have cast it down. “My soul lies grovelling in the dust.” Now then comes the sweet voice: “Rise up, My love, My fair one.” Still thou art My love, still all fair in My comeliness put upon thee. “Arise, shake thyself from the dust, O prostrate daughter of Zion.” “Behold, it is I.”

2. Again, the voice says, *leave* something. The soul is, at times, not only cast down, but grievously entangled. It cannot break through the snares of the world and sin which surround it:

“We may let idols in;  
We cannot get them out.”

We may of ourselves get into the snare of the fowler; we cannot release ourselves. If God permissively brings us into the net of error, sin or temptation, our own wills and wits are too feeble to release us. Yea, both understanding and will are in the captivity, but the voice comes, “Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away.”

“The world now drops its charms,  
My idols all depart.”

The mind and the will are both strengthened. We not only have a conscience of what is wrong and injurious, but a will and power to break through the thralldom. The soul escapes from the nets as a bird from the snares of the fowler.

3. But, then, it is also called to *go* somewhither. There must be a more powerful attraction than that of world, or sin, or anything else to call the heart from creature things. “I, if I be lifted up,” says Christ, “will draw all men unto Me.” So it is here. A crucified, risen Christ is the attraction. He reveals His love. To this carcase the eagles gather (Matt. 24. 28). They fly as the doves to these windows, the love, the blood, the glories of Jesus. It is not, then, merely, “Come away.” This is said; but, “Come to *Me*.” This is signified. The heart obeys: it runs up the sweet, shining path of His own discovery of Himself into His presence; yea,



perhaps, His bosom, and the sweet enjoyments of His love. The nature, then, of the speech is a communication of the Spirit of God to the soul, moving upon the face of those waters; calling light out of darkness, order out of a kind of chaos. The character of the voice is grace and love: "My love, My fair one." The true speech of the voice is, "Rise up, and come away." And the command is self-fulfilling, being the voice of grace, and therefore the soul listens and obeys, and if through the still-opposing flesh the soul is feelingly hindered, it cries, Lord, speak yet again, and speak still louder.

"Attract us with the cords of love,  
And we will not delay."

*(To be continued)*

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### CHOSEN TO DRAW NEAR TO GOD

*Morning reading by James Bourne, January 16th, 1841*

"It shall be that the man whom the Lord doth choose, he shall be holy" (Num. 16. 7).

This choice of God is a most wonderful privilege and blessing, and is made manifest by our having power to draw nigh unto Him in Christ Jesus. So Moses spake to Korah and his company saying, "Even to-morrow the Lord will shew who are His, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto Him: even him whom He hath chosen will He cause to come near unto Him" (ver. 5). Such are holy because God has put His Holy Spirit within them; this is what makes men holy.

Now do not let this astonishing mercy seem a light thing to you. "Seemeth it to you a light thing to be a king's son in law?" as David said. David was to present to Saul in return a hundred foreskins of the Philistines (1 Sam. 18. 23-25). So also if we are found among those whom the Lord has chosen and makes holy, we shall present to Him the foreskins of our hearts; every idol, every corruption shall be given up and cut off, if it cost us our lives.

Now Balaam had his eyes opened to see the truth of this religion, but no heart to it! So many have light to see naturally the beauty of Christ, but not having this Holy Spirit to cause them to draw near, walk with unbroken hearts. Such cannot bear reproof, but rise up against it, though given in the kindest way possible by those to whom God has given the rightful authority. For if we will be faithful to God, we shall have all opposers our enemies, because we speak the truth. But if we have really this Holy Spirit, we shall show it by not being able to contend, but falling under every charge.

For this broken heart, he whom the Lord doth choose, is manifested by this token – a *trembling at the judgments of God, and yet not going to the world for help*. It is said, “There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth” (Num. 24. 17). This Lord Jesus Christ shall smite your corruptions and mine. Your enemies and mine, with all His enemies, shall He break in pieces, seeing that He is the Almighty God who took our nature upon Him, and was made a curse for your sin and mine; for “cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” And now He is exalted at the right hand of God, and made unto us the Resurrection and the Life. And this is applied with divine power to our hearts by the Holy Spirit, which causes us to draw nigh unto Him, and makes it manifest that we are chosen to be His.

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### AN OLD MINISTER’S MEMORIES

*From an address given by John Kershaw at Hope Chapel, Rochdale, on the occasion of his 50th anniversary as pastor, March 3rd, 1867*

My dear and esteemed friends, You are aware that it is now fifty years since I became the pastor of the church of Jesus Christ worshipping within these walls. Though so long ago, I have a lively remembrance of all the circumstances of importance connected with that memorable day. The text the Lord laid upon my mind to preach from on that occasion was a prayer of David’s and it was also my earnest, fervent desire, as recorded in Psalm 118. 25: “O Lord, I beseech Thee, send now prosperity.” When I look back at the past, I have abundant reason, with David, to say, “I love the Lord, because He hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because He hath inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live.” Bless the Lord, peace and prosperity have attended us, both temporally and spiritually, of which I hope to speak more particularly on another occasion.

The Lord, before whom I now stand in this large and attentive congregation, is witness that I have many times upon my knees, in the course of my ministry, read the chapter from whence my text is taken (Acts 20), especially from verse 17 to the end, begging and beseeching the Lord that I might follow the example of Paul and all the apostles so far as they followed Him, who has given us an example that we should follow His steps. My desire has long been that I might not only preach the gospel, but live as it becometh the gospel, crying daily to the Lord, “Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe”; “Keep Thou me by Thy power, and I shall be kept.” The prayer of David in Psalm 17. 5 has often been pleaded by me before the Lord: “Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that

my footsteps slip not." Also the last clause of the prayer of Jabez: "And keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me," wound the minds of the brethren, and open the mouths of the enemies of God and truth, causing them to blaspheme. The Lord knows that I have many times told Him that I would rather die than bring a reproach upon His cause. The late William Tiptaft used to say, "It is a good thing to be well laid in the grave," which is a sentence full of meaning and importance. He always used to pray that we might not sin cheaply.

When I am led to look back and call to remembrance the way the Lord has led me in the wilderness, not only forty years, but sixty years – for it is now that time since He put His fear into my heart – the expression of my soul is, "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day." The language of John Newton is often on my mind:

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

How seasonable is the exhortation: "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." The advice given in 1 Kings 20. 11 is good: "Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off."

I am now in my seventy-fifth year, and in the fifty-fourth of my ministry, and by the grace of God which has been given me have stood upon the walls of Zion with an unblemished reputation, often calling to mind the exhortation: "Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord" (Isa. 52. 11). I know that the Lord has given me favour in the eyes and hearts of many who love the doctrines of sovereign, discriminating grace which I have long preached, and which many say lead to sin, but bless the Lord, they have thus far led me *from* sin and to desire holiness. But I would rejoice with trembling, knowing that if left to myself, through the evils of my heart, the allurements of the world and the temptations of Satan, I might in an unguarded hour do that which would be as the dead fly in the apothecary's ointment – cause my name to stink, instead of being, as the wise man said, "better than precious ointment." I would be daily looking to the Lord for the fulfilment of that precious promise that I am often pleading before Him: "He will keep the feet of His saints." The words of Paul to Timothy: "And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen" (2 Tim. 4. 18), have been a great comfort to me of late.

In my younger days I did not think so much of the prayer of David in Psalm 71. 9 as I do now: "Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth," so that, as the outward man

perisheth, I may be renewed by the grace of God in the inner man day by day, bring forth the fruits of righteousness, that my last days may be my best days, and that, like Paul, I may finish my course with joy, and hear the Lord say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant ... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. 25. 21). That Paul finished his course with the felt joy of God's salvation in his soul is evident from his own words to Timothy: "For 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 blessed anticipation of these things made him ready and willing to lay down his life for the sake of Him who loved him and had done such great things for him, to show forth His honour and glory and His faithfulness and ability to succour and support in the time of trial for the comfort of others who might live after him, and the confounding of the enemies of God and truth. He believed that Jesus Christ, who had loved him and given Himself for him, would grant him grace to enable him to endure to the end, and that when absent from the body he would be present with the Lord.

Whatever joy a sinner may have in the prospect of death and eternity, if it does not arise from a view by faith, which is the gift of God, of his interest in the Person, work and finished salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ, it will be like the hope of the hypocrite spoken of in the Book of Job. It will perish at the giving up of the ghost. Beloved, how needful it is to examine ourselves as to the ground and foundation of our joy and rejoicing. Is Christ our "All and in all," in His glorious Person, as the God-man Mediator in the perfection of His obedience, as our law-fulfilling righteousness, in His great atoning sacrifice for our sins upon the cross, by which the curse of the law is for ever removed? Our blessed Jesus, having abolished death and brought life and immortality to light by the gospel, swallowed up death in victory, which caused the apostle triumphantly to say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 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."

The desire of my soul is to die rejoicing that God's just and holy law, broken by me in thought, word and deed, has been fulfilled for me by my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The language of Paul on this subject has long been sweet and precious to my soul. Writing to the Corinthians, he says, "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that ... he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." It also

rejoices my heart to feel and see that all my sins were removed by Christ our spiritual scapegoat, so that when they are sought for they can never be found.

How desirable in the prospect of death to have the testimony of the Holy Spirit in our soul that we are delivered from the curse and condemnation of the law. I hope never to forget the time of my deliverance out of bondage, and being brought into the liberty wherewith Christ has made me free, the following portion of God's Word being blessedly applied: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." I could then rejoice that my name was written in heaven in the Lamb's book of life, and say with Job, "My record is on high," and, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." It was Paul's joy that he knew in whom he had believed, and he had the happy persuasion that Jesus, in whom he believed to the saving of his soul, was able to keep that which he had committed into His hand against that day. I have often said amongst you that this blessed portion of the Word of God enters into the vitality of true religion in the soul of a sinner. All my hope and trust are in the Lord, into whose hands, by the grace of God, I have committed my cause. I cannot find language to describe the comfort and support I have enjoyed from these words:

"If I am found in Jesus' hands,  
My soul can ne'er be lost."

I know that I lay dead in trespasses and sins, and that the Lord quickened my soul, which is an evidence of eternal life. He has solemnly declared that none to whom He gives eternal life shall ever perish, neither shall they be plucked from His hands. Paul not only rejoiced in the ability of Christ to save to the uttermost all that come to God by Him, but in His ever living to make intercession for them. Is it not our joy that we sinners have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous? The following lines have often dropped into my soul with great power and sweetness:

"He lives! He lives! and sits above,  
For ever interceding there;  
Who shall divide us from His love,  
Or what shall tempt us to despair?"

It is for our comfort the Lord has said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." It is a great blessing to know we are "dead to the law," and that our spiritual "life is hid with Christ in God."

Whilst in this time state we look, by faith, in the glass of God's Word, and see our Lord Jesus Christ enthroned in glory, with all power

both in heaven and earth in His hands, as Head over all things to His body the church. His ministers, whose feet are “beautiful upon the mountains” of His precious truth, are to say unto Zion, “Thy God reigneth,” and that He will see that all things shall work together for His honour and the good of all who love Him and are the called according to His purpose. These lines are the joy and comfort of my soul:

“Jesus, the King of glory, reigns  
On Zion’s heavenly hill;  
Looks like a lamb that has been slain,  
And wears His priesthood still.

“He ever lives to intercede  
Before His Father’s face.  
Give Him, my soul, thy cause to plead,  
Nor doubt the Father’s grace.”

How many of you, my hearers, feel a response in your souls to the last two lines just cited? Had I as many souls to be saved as there are stars in the firmament, I would commit them all into my Redeemer’s hands, who has engaged to present me faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. I would not cast away the confidence I have in Him for a thousand worlds. In Him I have everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, which is as the anchor of my soul, sure and steadfast, which enters within the veil, where Christ the Forerunner is for us entered. Having, like Paul, committed the cause of my soul’s salvation into Jesus’ hands, I earnestly desire to finish my course with honour to His name, and that an abundant entrance may be ministered unto me into His everlasting kingdom.

My dear hearers, are you satisfied with the form of religion, a regular attendance upon the means of grace, a knowledge of the truth in the theory, without feeling any influence on your souls? I am greatly concerned about many of you who have been brought up amongst us and are traditionally attached to me as a minister and the people that meet to worship the Lord in this place. My soul longs to see the Word preached confirmed in your hearts by the power of the Holy Ghost, with signs following, such as a heartfelt, godly sorrow for sin, and a spiritual hungering and thirsting after Christ and His righteousness. Where there is no spiritual mourning over sin and longing for Christ and His salvation, there is no spiritual life in the soul.

The grace of God planted in the heart is a well of living water, springing up into everlasting life. Bless the Lord, I have long felt the springing up of this living water within me, and well know it is His gift, as He said to the woman at Jacob’s well (John 4. 14). I long to see it in others, and the love of Christ constraining them to say with David,

“Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul.” I have reason to be thankful that the Lord has in some measure honoured His own truth spoken by me to the conversion of sinners to Himself, turning them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, as many of you can testify who are now present, and who, by the grace of God, have given yourselves to us as a church in the fear of the Lord. We have experienced many refreshing times at our church meetings in hearing sinners give a reason of the hope within them, with meekness and fear, and seeing, as Barnabas did, the grace of God in them (Acts 11. 23); and, like him, we have been glad. My soul has often been encouraged when portions of the Word of God have been spoken of that I have preached from, which have been honoured of God, in convincing of sin, stripping and humbling the sinner, in comforting and encouraging the fearing, timid, doubting soul, the delivering of them out of bondage into the liberty of the gospel by an application of the precious blood of Christ by the power of the Spirit, and in establishing them in the truth as it is in Jesus.

We can also call to remembrance the many blessed, refreshing seasons we have enjoyed while attending to the ordinances of the Lord's house – baptism and the supper of the Lord, when we have sung with melody in our hearts:

“With pleasure we behold  
Immanuel's offspring come;  
As sheep are gathered to the fold,  
And left no more to roam,”

and while sitting around the table of the Lord in commemoration of the solemn sufferings and awful death of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom our hope for heaven rests. Many times have we been greatly blessed while singing the hymn after supper:

“How sweet and awful is the place,  
With Christ within the doors,”

especially verses 3, 4 and 5:

“While all our hearts and all our songs  
Join to admire the feast,  
Each of us cry, with thankful tongues,  
'Lord, why was I a guest?’

“‘Why was I made to hear Thy voice,  
And enter while there's room,  
When thousands make a wretched choice,  
And rather starve than come?’”

While singing these lines, my soul has often said with great humility and thankfulness, “Ah, Lord, if it had not been for Thy almighty, efficacious, all-conquering, discriminating grace, I should rather have starved than come.” With great joy, therefore, have I joined in singing the next verse:

“’Twas the same love that spread the feast,  
That sweetly forced us in;  
Else we had still refused to taste,  
And perished in our sin.”

While I am speaking to you of these seasons, I think of many that have joined with us on these occasions who have been removed by death, who were very near and dear to us in the bonds of the gospel. They have finished their course with joy, and are now uniting with the spirits of just men made perfect in singing the everlasting song: “Salvation to God and the Lamb.” My soul is ready to say,

“When shall the day, dear Lord, appear,  
When I shall mount to dwell above,  
And stand and bow amongst them there,  
And view Thy face, and sing Thy love?”

We have been spared many years together, and the Lord has done great things for us, whereof we are glad. According to the course of nature, my stay amongst you below cannot be very long, but my prayer is often to the Lord that you may be preserved faithful to the truth and the ordinances as they have been delivered unto us, and that when I have finished my course as a minister and under-shepherd amongst you, the great Head of the church will raise up one to go in and out amongst you of His own fitting and qualifying, of good report, and able to trace out the footsteps of the flock, setting before you the things that he himself has seen, and looked upon, and handled of the Word of life.

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If Jesus loves the gospel-poor,  
That broken-hearted be,  
A mourner waiteth at Thy door,  
Who wants a sight of Thee.

Look from the windows of Thy grace,  
And cheer a drooping heart;  
A single smile from Thy sweet face  
Will bid my griefs depart.

*J. Berridge*



## BOOK REVIEWS

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**All of Grace, Wattisham Baptist Chapel, 1763-2013**, by Janet Lovell; paperback, well illustrated; 171 pages; price £4 plus £1.70 postage; published by Polstead Press and obtainable from Mrs. Janet Lovell, 8 Windermere Road, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 1LD.

Wattisham is one of the oldest Strict Baptist chapels in the country, having been founded in 1763. It is interesting and profitable to read the account of the rise and progress of a chapel that had nothing to do with the ministry and witness of Gadsby, Kershaw and Philpot, and yet has been kept faithful over the years to the doctrines of grace, the principle of strict communion and the Authorised Version of holy Scripture. There is no hint that at the time of the eternal sonship controversy there was any denial of the truth. In recent years, Mr. Gordon Hawkins, who was exceedingly sympathetic to the *Gospel Standard*, was the well-known pastor there.

It is gratifying to learn that whilst so many of the old Suffolk chapels have changed so much from their original foundations, Wattisham has remained faithful to the old truths.

**Rehoboth Strict Baptist Chapel, Sible Hedingham**; 16 page booklet; well illustrated; obtainable from Mr. J.J. Wiffen, 56 Abbots Road, Haverhill, CB9 0DQ.

This is an interesting little account of the 150th anniversary, again of a chapel that had no connection in its beginnings with Gadsby, Kershaw and Philpot, but identified with the *Gospel Standard* in 1948.

Apart from J.W. Wren who went to Bedford in 1876, the best-known minister connected with Sible Hedingham was Mr. Percy Laver, who joined the church there in 1931, and later was for many years pastor at Rotherfield.

We welcome these little histories of the churches.

**Confessing the Faith**, by Chad Van Dixhoorn; hardback; 484 pages; price £17.50; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

In 1643, one-hundred-and-twenty-one Puritan clergymen met in Westminster Abbey for the purpose of preparing documents that would serve to reform the Church of England, or rather to “reform the Reformation itself.” The meeting was set up following intense pressure on the House of Commons from prominent pastor Edmund Calamy. The result was *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, an extended, systematic summary of Reformed doctrine. The Confession was issued in 1646 and has been adopted by the Presbyterian churches of Scotland, Ireland, America and Australia, and remains a standard text for the Church of England and the Church of Scotland (with some reservations).

Dr. Van Dixhoorn is an acknowledged expert on the Westminster Assembly. The book is stated to be “A reader’s guide to the Westminster Confession of Faith,” and is a Biblical discussion of the thirty-three doctrinal statements contained in the Confession. The foreword tells us it is the fruit of immense and intense study – learned but accessible. The original text of the Confession is produced together with, in a parallel column, the *Modern English Study Version* published in 1993. After each paragraph follow two or three pages of commentary. Over 2,500 proof Scriptural texts are appended.

The Westminster Confession of Faith is itself a commentary on the doctrines of Holy Scripture, and so, in effect, this book is a commentary on a commentary. In these days of lax doctrinal standards in many churches throughout the world we hope it may be useful in establishing many in the fundamental truths of the Bible. We cannot, of course, agree with all parts of the Confession, particularly those relating to infant baptism and the resulting errors of covenant theology, but this we have to leave.

Trevor Scott, Harpenden

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### THE PLAN OF SALVATION

*From the poem "Redemption" (over 140 small pages)  
by Joseph Swain (1761-1796)*

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High in the heaven of heavens Jehovah sat,  
 With all His plan of justice, love and grace,  
 At once before His eye. Man's shameful fall  
 He marked; and heard the voice of rectitude,  
 That called for vengeance on the rebel's head.  
 He heard, and owned the justice of the claim;  
 But, casting back a retrospective glance  
 On His eternal counsels, in the book  
 Of His decrees unalterable, the names  
 Of millions of the human race appeared,  
 Chosen by sovereign love to be redeemed,  
 And called, and purified, and set apart  
 To magnify on earth His holy name;  
 Till He to glory should receive them up,  
 To be for ever with and like Himself.  
 Their names He read in everlasting lines  
 Of sovereign love, deep on His heart engraved,  
 And written on the palms of both His hands  
 In living characters; from which His eye  
 He turns not once, in all the various scenes  
 Of joy and sorrow, soul-expanding hope,  
 And heart-depressing fear, sickness and health,  
 Through which on earth He causes them to pass;  
 But still remembers they were every one,  
 Before the morning stars together sang,  
 Or yet angelic harp was heard in heaven,  
 "Predestinated from eternity,  
 To be to all eternity conformed

To the bright image of His equal Son.”  
 This many a happy saint since then hath seen  
 Clear as a sunbeam in the sacred page,  
 With holy love and admiration filled,  
 With eyes fast flowing, and a melting heart.  
 All these of His own will, not their desert,  
 Were to Himself united close by love  
 Immutable: all these, but not all men.  
 And though by sin, His image from the hearts  
 Of His elect was every feature lost,  
 And those He loved were plunged as deep in guilt  
 As others were, with whom alike they fell;  
 And though as strong propensity they feel  
 As others to infringe the law of God;  
 Jehovah’s own eternal, equal Son,  
 Pure as His Father, and with Him alike  
 Almighty to create or to destroy;  
 By covenant-engagement undertook  
 Their ransom from the slavish chains of sin,  
 And front the curse of God’s avenging law.

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## OBITUARY

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**Jabez Walter Buss**, a faithful minister of the gospel for over sixty years, died in the Lord on January 2nd, 2015, aged 93 years.

Father was the fifth son of George and Annie Buss, born on April 4th, 1921. His parents lost their fourth son in infancy, so he only knew his three elder brothers. His parents were members at Union Chapel, Bethersden, Kent. They sat under the ministry of the late and highly esteemed pastor, Herbert Dawson (pastor at Union Chapel for fifty-four years).

At only four years of age, father was miraculously preserved from drowning, at which time, and in the subsequent years of early childhood, the Lord fastened upon his soul the solemnity of eternity and the necessity of being prepared to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. His first encouragement came under a sermon preached by his pastor on the words, “Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved” (Psa. 55. 22). And the next Lord’s day, when he had prayed the previous week for the salvation of his soul, the pastor seemed to look straight at him as he quoted the words, “Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth” (Luke 15. 7).

Leaving school and entering into the world of work put all of these exercises to a severe test as to their reality, and this brought on a period of nervous exhaustion which laid him aside for some while. Nervous tension was to be a cross that father carried for most of his life. On his returning to the Lord's house for the first time after his illness, Mr. Dawson preached from the words, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isa. 55. 1). Although this gave some encouragement, he did not experience the full deliverance that he felt was needed. Being asked to read in the Sabbath School, "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21. 27), he felt completely condemned and was tempted to give everything up. However the words, "Who can tell?" (Jonah 3. 9) kept a secret hope that the Lord would appear, so he continued attending the house of God.

It was at a prayer meeting, when one of the older members in expressing his own case before the Lord so entered into father's case that he felt knit to the Lord's people with a love which only those born of the Spirit know. The address that evening was on the words, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3. 14). The pastor unfolded the text by speaking of the way that the brethren were enabled to look for salvation in Christ alone. Now the "door of hope" was opened to father and love to Christ as the sinner's Friend flowed into his heart. He knew that he had "passed from death unto life."

Not long after this, the Second World War started and in 1941, father was called up for National Service, serving in the Royal Air Force as a Ground Sergeant, maintaining aircraft such as spitfires and hurricanes. In April 1942 he married, our mother, Mercy, the fifth child of Herbert and Elsie Dawson. She lovingly and patiently supported him through the many trials and difficulties they were called to pass through as the Lord's purposes for him unfolded. During those years the Lord deepened the work, and at the same time brought upon him the exercise of believers' baptism, as being Christ's command for those who have "passed from death unto life." On returning home on leave, he was enabled to testify before the church at Bethersden of his hope in Christ, the words, "Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord" (Isa. 43. 10), being powerfully applied to calm his many fears.

His baptism was a time of great favour in his soul, but very soon after, returning to his duties in the Air Force, he came into great temptation, during which time the Lord graciously used the ministry at Newcastle, where he was stationed, to confirm that he was tasting just a

little of the sufferings of Christ, which he was enabled to count as a privilege. Being greatly searched more deeply as to the foundation of his hope, he received a precious blessing from a read sermon by Mr. Dickens on the words, "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God" (Isa. 50. 10). Being laid low again, whilst hearing Romans 7 read at a reading service, father found the apostle's experience exactly matched his own, and then reading on into Romans 8 he had a sacred view of the way in which the three Persons of the undivided Godhead all united to save his soul. What love flowed into his heart to those three Persons! Especially he was taken up with love to the dear Son of God who laid down His life for sinners such as him.

It was at this time that the exercise of the ministry became a burden from which he could not escape. Being naturally shy and nervous, he had many misgivings, but the words of the Lord to Moses fastened on his spirit more than once: "Who hath made man's mouth?" (Exod. 4. 11). Also the words to Jeremiah, "Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak" (Jer. 1. 7). During the time of blessing from Romans 8, he had said to the Lord that there was nothing too much the Lord should expect from him after having done so much for his poor soul. Immediately with great power the Lord spoke the words, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16. 15). As he tried to push them away, the Lord spoke them again with even greater power. Without divulging any of his exercises about the ministry, he confided in his pastor the great blessing he had received from Romans 8, to which Mr. Dawson replied, looking straight at him, "Ye shall go in the strength of that meat forty days." Although his pastor had no knowledge of his exercises, father nonetheless felt that this was a word from the Lord for his future labours in the ministry.

At this time the Lord remarkably confirmed his exercises through three separate sermons preached by three comparative strangers to him. Mr. J Kemp of Luton preached at Biddenden on Hebrews 13. 20; Mr. John Raven at Tenterden on 2 Corinthians 5. 14; Mr. F.L Rowell also at Tenterden on Micah 7. 18. All three preached pardon to his soul and confirmed what the Lord had done for him. Many years later in hearing Mr. John Green at Stotfold on Ephesians 1. 13, 14, the sealing of the Spirit being the burden of his sermon, he felt wonderfully confirmed again that these had been the Lord's messengers to his soul, and thus received a word in season at a trying time in his pathway.

After speaking to Mr. Dawson about the blessing previously referred to in 1951, the words of Isaiah 40. 1 came with great power:

“Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God.” This he felt to be his commission from the great Head of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ, to preach His everlasting gospel. He then confided in his pastor about his exercises about the ministry, who lovingly advised caution, and waiting only on the Lord, watching His hand in making a way in due season. Great temptations and fears followed him, but the Lord allayed these with the words, “Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find” (John 21. 6). Turning to the Scriptures, promise after promise flowed into his soul confirming this word. Upon this came the words: “If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it” (Isa. 1. 19, 20). Three times at this juncture he was given sweet meditation on texts, from which the pastor then preached, opening them up in the pulpit in the same way. This was a confirmation that he was receiving light from the Lord on His Word, so necessary for the ministry.

For a whole week, the words of John 14. 15 lay with great weight upon him: “If ye love Me, keep My commandments.” Mr. E.S. Hickmott of East Peckham was preaching at Bethersden the next Lord’s day. In the morning he read John 14 and when he came to verse 14 he said, “We will leave the reading there.” That 14th verse was a speaking voice to father and he felt able to fall into the Lord’s hands unreservedly in the matter. During the interval the devil tempted him severely to hold back. Mr. Hickmott preached again in the afternoon, but such a terrible thunderstorm came on that the service had to be stopped prematurely. He felt he was like Jonah. Father made his way round to the chapel house, called “Claremont,” hearing the Lord’s voice in every clap of thunder. All of a sudden the rebellion and unbelief dispersed as the Lord spoke the words of the hymnwriter (slightly altered from their original):

“The God that rules on high,  
And thunders when He please;  
That rides upon the stormy sky,  
And manages the seas;

“This awful God is ours,  
Our Father and our Friend.”

And then the words followed: “Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.”

On the pastor’s return from his away engagements, father felt he must relate all this to him. Hearing this, Mr. Dawson felt the time had come to move in this solemn matter. At the subsequent church meeting it was agreed that father should take the next weeknight service. This he did, preaching from the words, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are

heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (Matt. 11. 28-30). He felt a surprising sweetness and liberty, feeling the word was a personal word to himself as well as a word for the people. The church then (in 1951) gave him the authority to go forth in the Lord's name and preach the gospel wherever a door was opened to him of the Lord.

At this time he felt so favoured in his soul that he told the Lord that he was sure that nothing could take from him the blessings he had received. The Lord soon put this to a severe test. Not many months after he had been sent to preach he had a complete nervous breakdown, which necessitated a long stay in hospital away from his loved ones. Whilst there one of the consultants said that they would follow a course of treatment which when completed would wipe all his religion out of his head so that he could make a fresh start in life. How this tried him. Would his religion really stand this test? When at last the treatment was over, and he was lying on his hospital bed, the Lord graciously drew near and confirmed to his soul those precious promises in which he had earlier rejoiced. He now knew that he had a religion which, like Mary's, could not be taken away from him (Luke 10. 42). Through the mercy of his God, he was never permitted to sink so low again after this in all the years that followed.

Until 1962 father laboured mostly among the Kent and Sussex churches. However, in November 1962, needing a larger home for their family of eight children, after much exercise of heart they moved to Chapel House, Southill, Bedfordshire and attended the cause there. At that time there were only a handful of friends attending, no church, and many thought that it should close. One senior minister spoke to father and warned him that he felt that he was going to a dead cause. How this tried him, until the words of the Lord Jesus Christ concerning Lazarus as he lay in the tomb came with gracious application: "Nevertheless let us go unto him" (John 11. 15). This reassuring word was an anchor to his soul as he and mother walked out this appointed path for them. It was, however, some while before mother felt the Lord finally confirmed to her soul that the move was of Him, in the words: "But when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23. 10). This came some while after the move to Southill. Now father's field of ministry changed and he laboured with gracious acceptance among the churches of Bedfordshire, East Anglia and further afield. For ten years he held the pastorate at Southill, and to his end retained a burden for its spiritual prosperity. It was remarkable to see how his prayers for the cause were so graciously answered in his later years.

In April 1986, his beloved wife suddenly passed to her eternal rest, and the following year the Lord provided an able helpmeet for him in Ruth who was graciously enabled to give him loving support and care to the end. Ruth and mother had been close spiritual companions for many years. She was the first one father baptized at Southill, and walked in close church fellowship with father and mother in the church.

His last days, though very limited in health, were his best days. Like a shock of corn fully ripe he came to his end. His gracious conversation, counsel and evident waiting like Simeon of old, to see his salvation, will be remembered by the many friends who enjoyed fellowship with him. He was mercifully given a clear mind to the end, and gained and gave great pleasure in relating the Lord's immense goodness to him over his long pilgrimage.

On December 31st he was admitted to Bedford Hospital, where it was evident that his end was fast approaching. He spoke to his family of the blessing that the words, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil" (Psa. 23. 4) were to him. Speaking to one of his sons he said he felt to be sheltering under the blood of Christ, and that the hymnwriter's words expressed his soul's anchor.

"When called the vale of death to tread,  
Then to this Rock may I be led.  
Nor fear to cross that gloomy sea,  
Since Thou hast tasted death for me."

At 3.00 a.m. on January 2nd he told the nursing staff who were attending him, "You can leave me now; I am going to sleep." When they went back a few minutes later they found that the Lord had taken him. Truly he slept in Jesus.

At his request, Mr. B.A. Ramsbottom took his funeral service at Southill among a large gathering of family and friends. The address was based on words given by the Lord to Mr. Ramsbottom concerning this occasion many years before, and were a most suitable recollection of father's quiet, faithful, humble labours among the churches: "John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this Man were true" (John 10. 41). He was laid to rest with mother, "in sure and certain hope of resurrection to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Looking back over these many years, it is good to trace the unerring hand of our faithful God in bringing him safely through the troubles of this life to his desired haven.

"Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace" (Psa. 37. 37).

G.D.B.



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD

MAY 2015

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

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**JEHOIAKIM'S PENKNIFE**

“Now the king sat in the winterhouse in the ninth month: and there was a fire on the hearth burning before him. And it came to pass, that when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife, and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth” (Jer. 36. 22, 23).

Perhaps we should call it “the devil’s penknife”! You know what the circumstances were here. By divine inspiration, Jeremiah had pronounced the Lord’s judgment on that ungodly king Jehoiakim and on ungodly Judah. And when Baruch had written it down on the scroll, he read it to the people, the princes, and it seems there was some consternation. They said the king must hear it. So it was taken to the king and he listened as it was read, and when it came to the place where he was condemned, he was going to be destroyed, Judah was going to be destroyed, and the King of Babylon was going to triumph, he was angry and took a penknife and tore the pages out and threw them on the fire, and so they burned.

The point is this: *the Word of God is indestructible*. If every single Bible in the world today could be destroyed, “For ever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven.” It did not matter that the page was burning to ashes on the bonfire; that word that God had spoken about the king and about Judah was still fulfilled. Not only so, at the end of the chapter, Jeremiah repeated it, and once again it was written on another roll.

God’s Word can never be destroyed. Yet Satan right from the foundation of the world has sought to destroy the Word of God. Satan knows that he can never destroy God Himself, so his enmity is aimed against the Word of God. So as soon as man was created, you see the devil with the penknife. When he appeared to Eve and said, “Hath God said?” – the Lord had spoken His Word and Satan immediately sought to destroy it. “Hath God said?” And though Satan could not destroy the Word of God, he destroyed Eve and in her he destroyed the whole human race.

Right down the ages, and even today, there is that desire to take the penknife and to destroy the Word of God. Look at the Middle Ages. Look at the Roman Catholic church. That was the devil’s penknife, keeping the Word of God from the people, forbidding them to read it.

Even today, the church of Rome seeks to keep the people from the Word of God.

At the time when the holy Word of God in its purity first began to be brought into our country, as Tyndale on the continent piece by piece was translating the Word of God and it was being smuggled into our country, there literally *was* a bonfire. There was a decree by the Bishop of London that every Bible that came into this country, every one of Tyndale's translations, should be burned. Yet the more the copies of God's Word were burned, the more came into this country. Not only that: the glorious effect of those Bibles coming into this country that could not be destroyed was the Reformation in this land. It was not so much the effect of a person like Luther in Germany or Calvin in Switzerland; it was the effect of the holy Word of God. It was even said in later years, the very spot where the Bishop of London was holding his bonfires, burning the Bibles, there was a printing press printing copies of the Word of God. But right down the ages there has always been this Jehoiakim's penknife, seeking to destroy the Word of God.

Of course, in more recent times, Darwin's book, *The Origin of Species*, was part of Satan's work with the penknife to destroy the Word of God. It seems up till then most people in England believed that the Bible was true, but now the Book of Genesis, the account of Creation, was being cut out and it was being burned on the bonfire. The sad thing was that this began to creep into the churches, and that is where the church of God always needs to beware. It seems there were numbers of men who preached the truth, yet they were influenced by all this, and the penknife got in the churches: "you can still believe the truth, the new birth, the atonement, salvation by grace, but you have no need to believe in Creation. You have no need to believe in the Flood. You have no need to believe in some of the miracles" – and you see how these things have been going on.

You find it in high places in Parliament. There are plenty of these Jehoiakim's penknives about today. What about these terrible laws? The Word of God is forgotten; the Word of God is despised. What about these same-sex "marriages"? What about all the changes? It is this penknife. It is seeking to cut away from the Word of God. May we ever be kept firm and may we ever be kept faithful.

You have it on every hand today. At one time people generally believed in the ten commandments. Now the penknife is cutting them out. Only a few weeks ago the Church of England has issued a decree that in some of the services the name of the devil has never to be mentioned. They say people do not believe in the devil today. It is the penknife; it is cutting it out. Women bishops? The piece in the Word of God, "I suffer not a woman to teach" – well, the penknife has cut this out. *But the Word of God can never be destroyed.*

There is the story of a little boy going down into the blacksmith's forge and watching what was happening, and he could see one or two broken hammers lying on the floor. Getting quite friendly with the blacksmith, he asked, "How many anvils have you broken?" "No, my boy," he said, "the anvil does not break. I have always had the same anvil, but many of these hammers over the years have been broken on it." That is where we stand today. There is the anvil of eternal truth, and all the hammers of sin and Satan, and all the penknives can never destroy it.

May we be well established in this: God's holy, inspired, infallible, inerrant Word.

"If aught there dark appear,  
Bewail thy want of sight."

There is the story of a famous preacher. As a young minister he had been affected by the German rationalism, higher criticism, and often in his preaching he said they had no need to believe this or something else. One day he went to visit a godly woman who was a simple-minded woman, and she was in trouble. He asked for her Bible to read from before he went. She brought him a Bible, and it had been mutilated. Amazed, he said, "What is this?" She said, "Well, I do not understand, but when you have told us any part of the Bible isn't sure or not true, when I have got home I have got the scissors and cut it out and thrown it away." It was such a terrible shock to the minister to see the effect of his preaching – that a poor, simple, godly woman had a Bible that was almost torn in pieces. The Lord sanctified that to him as an awful, solemn reproof of his wickedness and sin. The Lord delivered him and made him an eminent preacher of the truth.

Jehoiakim's penknife, Satan's penknife, these attempts to destroy the Word of God, to overthrow the truth of God, but the Word of God can never be destroyed. It is indestructible.

Coming closer, the Word of God can never be destroyed in the heart and life of a believer. A burdened sinner will prove that not all the power of hell can destroy that word: "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." Not all the power of hell can destroy that word: "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." The glorious truths of the gospel can never be overthrown by sin or by Satan or by the world. "Remember the word unto Thy servant, upon which Thou hast caused me to hope" – that word that a sinner's hope is built on, or that word that has been fastened in his heart. Satan can never destroy it. There is no penknife can reach into the heart of a sinner saved by grace to destroy the Word of God there.

So the work of grace in the heart is indestructible. That foundation which has been laid in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus is

indestructible. It is a wonderful truth! The precious promises can never be destroyed.

“Engraved as in eternal brass,  
The mighty promise shines;  
Nor can the powers of darkness rase  
Those everlasting lines.”

Never forget, the very last page of the Bible and almost the very last words of holy Scripture deal with this point of Jehoiakim’s penknife and the awfulness of those who fight against the Word of God, or those who seek to destroy it. “If any man shall take away from the words of the Book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this Book. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly” (Rev. 22. 19). O how we should tremble concerning our attitude to the Word of God!

So there you have Jehoiakim’s penknife. There you have all these dreadful assaults down the ages to overthrow the Word of God. There you have Satan assailing. There in the believer’s own heart and life, you have this glorious truth, the indestructibility of the holy Word of God, because the Word can never be destroyed.

That is not the end. Do we shock you? Do you know that every one of us in our evil, carnal heart carries about with us Jehoiakim’s penknife? We each have one. What do we mean? There are some parts of the Word of God our carnal hearts do not like. There are some parts of the Word of God we do not read. There are some parts of the Word of God we do not obey. It is one thing to speak about sin and Satan and evil men, but this comes very close to ourselves. Every one of us in our carnal, wicked, unbelieving heart carries around with us Jehoiakim’s penknife.

If we do not read the Word of God together in our home and families day by day, then we are using Jehoiakim’s penknife. If we are not spending time privately with God’s holy Word, then we are using Jehoiakim’s penknife. It is said there are some people who would fight to the death for the holy, inspired Word of God, but never read it. It is the sin of Jehoiakim.

Again, if we are honest, there are some parts of the Word of God we never read. How long is it since, for instance, we read the Book of the prophet Obadiah? We tend to read our favourite pieces. We tend to read the pieces that comfort our hearts. There are some parts of the Word of God we do not look at very much. We are all guilty of these things.

But bringing it closer still, what about those who are true believers on the Son of God and there is a word which speaks to them about an open profession, but we have the penknife in our heart? What about

those chapters which speak about the mortification of our flesh, and the crucifying of the flesh, and the denying of the world, and the denying of ungodliness, and taking up the cross? We do not like those passages so much as some of the other comforting passages. All of us in greater or less measure are guilty on this point. We are very partial in reading the Word of God. O to be led by the Spirit of God to fall before God's holy Word!

When William Romaine at the time of the Evangelical Revival was preaching through the Epistle to the Romans, large crowds came to hear him. But when he reached the practical part, chapters 12 and 13 and 14 on how a Christian should live, his congregation dwindled badly. They had loved it when he was on Romans 8 and "no separation from the love of Christ," and "no condemnation," and the glorious truths of salvation by grace. He had a packed auditorium. But when he came to the precepts and how a believer should live, the penknife was out.

So it is one thing to talk about the indestructibility of the Word of God, and all these dreadful people in their opposition to God's Word, but we need to watch our own case and our own attitude as we come to the Word of God!

What is the opposite of us using Jehoiakim's penknife which does not like some parts of the Word of God too much, which prefers some parts of the Word of God to others? What should be our attitude to the Word of God? The Lord speaks of it in this way, and this is the very opposite of Jehoiakim and his penknife. The Lord speaks of *those who tremble at His Word* (Isa. 66. 2). If our religion is real, and if our hearts are kept tender in the fear of God, we shall be amongst them. Now let us be clear: that does not mean we are frightened of God's Word. It does not mean that at all. What does it mean to tremble at God's Word? First, to have an awe and a reverence for it, and secondly to seek that the whole of our lives might be subject to it and governed by it. In other words, to acknowledge the lordship of Christ in and through His holy Word.

"Those that tremble at My Word," says the Lord – the very opposite of Jehoiakim in Jeremiah chapter 36.

1. We shall tremble at His Word as we read the solemn warnings, as we hear those solemn warnings that we are sinful, we have to die, there is the judgment day, there is an account. We will not be like Jehoiakim. Led by the Spirit of God, we shall tremble at that word, and our great concern will be, "Let God be true, but every man a liar." If this is what the Lord says,

"What shall I do, or whither flee,  
To escape the vengeance due to me?"

O Lord, make me right; keep me right; have mercy on my soul.

2. We shall tremble at God's Word in another sense. That is the glorious gospel of the grace of God. We shall tremble at it in holy gratitude, in thanksgiving, seeing such a suitability in it, that the great God of heaven should condescend in His holy Word to set out the plan of salvation in which God is both "just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus," and where there is hope for sinners entirely on the ground of God's grace through the obedience and blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

3. To come to the Word of God revering it, seeking that the whole of our lives might be ordered and governed by the Word of God. It is not making a god of the Word; it is not making an idol of the Word; but it is Almighty God making Himself and His will known in the Word, both law and gospel, and the life of faith, the life of obedience. Well might our hymnwriter say,

"Order my footsteps by Thy Word,  
And make my heart sincere;  
Let sin have no dominion, Lord,  
But keep my conscience clear."

May the Lord establish us in these great points. First of all, that His Word can never, never be destroyed, in the world in general or in our own heart and life and experience. But then to be brought in reverence before it and to tremble at the Word of God. What a wonderful mercy that Almighty God has condescended to make Himself known to us in a way of grace, in a way of salvation in His Word. May the Lord bless His holy Word to us.

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### **SIN CHARGED UPON THE SURETY** *Part of a sermon by John Newton (1725-1807)*

"The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53. 6).

Where sin abounded, grace has much more abounded. Man sinned, and Messiah suffered. "The Lord hath laid," or caused to meet upon Him, "the iniquity of us all," that is, the punishment due to them. The evils we had deserved were in pursuit of us, but Jesus interposed, and they all seized upon Him, and He endured them that we might be spared. Do we ask upon what grounds? It was on the ground of His voluntary substitution for sinners, as their covenant Head and Representative.

So much, correspondent to this appointment, obtains amongst men, as may show that the idea accords with our notion of justice. If a man be unable to pay a debt, and the creditor should exact the payment from a third person who was no way concerned, it would, with reason, be

deemed a very oppressive action. But if it be known that this person became freely bound and responsible for the debtor, he is allowed to be justly liable. But in the present case I make no appeal to human customs. It is a divine appointment, and therefore is and must be right. It was a great design, the triumph of infinite wisdom, the highest effect of the love of God. It is revealed, not to be submitted to our discussion, or that we may sit in judgment upon the propriety of the measure, but it demands our highest admiration and praise, and like the sun, brings with it that light by which the whole system of our knowledge is illuminated. For till we know this great truth, and are able to see its influence upon everything we are related to, whatever attainments we may boast, we are, in fact, encompassed with thick darkness, with darkness which may be felt. For the accomplishment of this design, the Son of God was so manifested in the nature of man, that He, and they who believe in Him, participate in a real though mystical union, and are considered as one; He their living Head; they His body, consisting of many members, each of them represented by Him, accepted in Him, and deriving from His fulness their life, their light, their strength and their joy.

1. He was thus appointed and constituted before the world began, according to the holy counsel and covenant settled from everlasting for the redemption of sinners. For the fall of man, which rendered His interposition necessary, was not an unexpected contingency, but was foreseen and provided for before man was created upon the earth, yea, before the foundations of the earth were laid.

2. After man had sinned, this glorious Head and Surety made known the certainty and benefit of His mediation and engagement on the behalf of sinners, according to the good pleasure of His wisdom, and as the case required; otherwise, upon the entrance of sin, the full execution of the sentence of the law denounced against the offenders might perhaps have immediately followed, but He revealed Himself. He showed mercy to Adam, covenanted with Noah, walked with Abraham, conversed with Moses, dwelt with His church in the wilderness, and was known by the name of the "Holy One of Israel." David ascribes to the Shepherd of Israel the name of Jehovah, and Isaiah declares that the Lord of Hosts is the Husband of the church. These characters of Shepherd, and Bridegroom, and Husband, are appropriated to Messiah in the New Testament. He therefore is Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts, whom Abraham, David and Isaiah, worshipped, or His appearance upon earth would be evidently to the disadvantage of those who believe in Him. If He were not God, He would be a creature, for there is no medium; and consequently our Shepherd would be infinitely inferior to the Almighty Shepherd, who was the refuge, the trust and the salvation of His people before Messiah was manifested in the flesh.

3. In the fulness of time He veiled His glory. He who was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made of a woman, made under the law. Then the union between Him and the people whom He came into the world to save was completed; because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He likewise took part of the same. The Word, who in the beginning was God, and was with God, was made flesh. And in our nature, though He knew no sin, He was treated as a sinner for us, to declare the righteousness of God in His forbearance and goodness to all who had been saved in former ages, and in the forgiveness and salvation of all who should trust in Him to the end of time. He suffered once, once for all, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God. And now God is revealed not only as merciful, but as just, in justifying him which believeth in Jesus. God is well pleased in Him, and for His sake, with all who believe in Him. Their sins are expiated by His sufferings, and His perfect righteousness, the whole of His obedience unto death, is the consideration or ground on which they are accounted righteous.

By virtue of this union likewise He is their life. They receive of His fulness, as the branches derive their life and fruitfulness from the tree whereon they grow. Therefore the apostle said, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." This is the great mystery of Christianity, which words alone cannot explain: it is a divine appointment, hidden from those who are wise and prudent in their own sight, but revealed to all who, with the simplicity of children, are desirous of being taught of God, and wait patiently upon Him, in the use of His prescribed means, for the light and influence of His Holy Spirit.

From this subject, the substitution of Messiah for sinners, we may learn,

1. *How to estimate the evil of sin.* That sin is a great evil is evident by its effects. It deprived Adam of the life and presence of God, and brought death and all natural evil into the world. It caused the destruction of the old world by water. It is the source of all the misery with which the earth is now filled; it will kindle the last great conflagration; yea, it has already kindled that fire which shall never be quenched. But in no view does the sinfulness of sin appear so striking as in this wonderful effect – the suffering and death of Messiah; that notwithstanding the dignity of His Person, and the perfection of His obedience to the law, and that though He prayed in His agonies that if it were possible the cup might pass from Him, yet if sinners were to be saved, it was indispensably necessary that He should drink it. This shows the evil of sin in the strongest light and in this light it is viewed by all who derive life from His death and healing from His wounds. We may be afraid of the consequences of sin from other considerations, but



it is only by looking to Him who was pierced for our transgressions that we can learn to hate it.

2. *The complete justification of those who believe in Him.* They are delivered from all condemnation. Every charge against them is overruled by this plea, that Christ has died and is risen on their behalf, "and ever liveth to make intercession for them." And though they are still in a state of discipline, for the mortification of sin yet remaining in them, and though for the trial, exercise and growth of their faith it is still needful that they pass through many tribulations, yet none of these are strictly and properly penal. They are not the tokens of God's displeasure, but fatherly chastisements and tokens of His love, designed to promote the work of grace in their hearts, and to make them partakers of His holiness. Though necessary at present, they will not be necessary long; and therefore the hour is at hand when all tears shall be wiped away from their eyes, and they shall weep no more. His true servants, in the midst of the storms by which they are tossed on the tempestuous sea of this life, are no less safe, and notwithstanding their imperfections, are no less beloved, than those who have already escaped out of the reach of every evil and are now before the throne.

3. *The reason why believers are not wearied, nor overpowered, by all the difficulties of their service, nor by all the arts and efforts of their enemies.* They are one with Christ. He who has all power in heaven and in earth is engaged for their support. When they faint, He revives them; when they are wounded, He heals them; when their foot slippeth, He upholdeth them. He has said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." Therefore, who can prevail against them, when their life is hidden with Christ in God? And farther, the knowledge of their Saviour's love, and of the holy, awful, yet amiable and endearing character of God displayed in His mediation, is the source of their love, gratitude and cheerful obedience. It is this makes hard things easy and bitter things sweet. "The love of Christ constraineth them." They look to Him and are enlightened. And when they consider who He is, in what way and at what a price He redeemed them, and what He has prepared for them; when they attend to His gracious word, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer ... be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life," they out of weakness are made strong; they are inspired with fresh courage; they take up their cross with cheerfulness, and can adopt the language of the apostle: "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear ... so that I might finish my course with joy."

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God's mercy can drown great sins as the sea covers great rocks.

*Thomas Watson*

## CHRIST'S GLORY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

*By John Owen*

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It is said of our Lord Jesus Christ that "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24. 27). It is therefore manifest that Moses and the prophets, and all the Scriptures, do give testimony unto Him and His glory. This is the line of life and light, which runs through the whole Old Testament; without the conduct whereof we can understand nothing aright therein, and the neglect hereof is that which makes many as blind in reading the books of it as are the Jews, the veil being upon their minds. It is faith alone, discovering the glory of Christ, that can remove that veil of darkness which covers the minds of men in reading the Old Testament, as the apostle declares (2 Cor. 3. 14-16). I shall therefore consider briefly some of those ways and means whereby the glory of Christ was represented unto believers under the Old Testament.

1. It was so in the institution of the beautiful worship of the law, with all the means of it. Herein have they the advantage above all the splendid ceremonies that men can invent in the outward worship of God; they were designed and framed in divine wisdom to represent the glory of Christ in His Person and His office. This nothing of human invention can do, or once pretend unto. Men cannot create mysteries, nor can give unto anything natural in itself a mystical signification. But so it was in the old divine institutions.

What were the tabernacle and temple? What was the holy place with the utensils of it? What was the oracle, the ark, the cherubims, the mercy-seat placed therein? What was the high priest in all his vestments and administrations? What were the sacrifices and annual sprinkling of blood in the most holy place? What was the most whole system of their religious worship? Were they anything but representations of Christ in the glory of His Person and His office? They were a shadow, and the body represented by that shadow was Christ. If any would see how the Lord Christ was in particular foresignified and represented in them, he may peruse our exposition on the ninth chapter of the Epistle unto the Hebrews.

The sum is, Moses was faithful in all the house of God, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken afterward (Heb. 3. 5). All that Moses did in the erection of the tabernacle, and the institution of all its services, was but to give an antecedent testimony by way of representation unto the things of Christ that were afterward to be revealed. And that also was the substance of the ministry of the prophets (1 Pet. 1. 11, 12). The dark apprehensions of the glory of Christ, which by these means they obtained, were the life of the church of old.

2. It was represented in the mystical account which is given us of His communion with His church in love and grace. As this is intimated in many places of Scripture, so there is one entire Book designed unto its declaration. This is the divine Song of Solomon, who was a type of Christ, and a penman of the Holy Ghost therein. A gracious record it is of the divine communications of Christ in love and grace unto His church, with their returns of love unto Him and delight in Him. And then may a man judge himself to have somewhat profited in the experience of the mystery of a blessed intercourse and communion with Christ, when the expressions of them in that holy dialogue do give light and life unto his mind, and efficaciously communicate unto him an experience of their power.

But because these things are little understood by many, the Book itself is much neglected if not despised. Yea, to such impudence have some arrived, in foaming out their own shame, as that they have ridiculed the expressions of it; but we are foretold of such mockers in the last days that should walk after their own ungodly lusts. They are not of our present consideration.

The former instance of the representations of the glory of Christ in their institutions of outward worship, with this record of the inward communion they had with Christ in grace, faith and love, gives us the substance of that view which they had of His glory. What holy strains of delight and admiration, what raptures of joy, what solemn and divine complacency, what ardency of affection, and diligence in attendance unto the means of enjoying communion with Him, this discovery of the glory of Christ wrought in the souls of them that did believe is emphatically expressed in that discourse. A few days, a few hours spent in the frame characterised in it is a blessedness excelling all the treasures of the earth; and if we, whose revelations of the same glory do far exceed theirs, should be found to come short of them in ardency of affection unto Christ and continual holy admiration of His excellencies, we shall one day be judged unworthy to have received them.

3. It was so represented and made known under the Old Testament in His personal appearances on various occasions unto several eminent persons, leaders of the church in their generations. This He did as a *prælude* to His incarnation. He was as yet God only, but appeared in the assumed shape of a man to signify what He would be. He did not create a human nature and unite it unto Himself for such a season; only by His divine power He acted the shape of a man composed of what ethereal substance He pleased, immediately to be dissolved. So He appeared to Abraham, to Jacob, to Moses, to Joshua and others.

And hereon also, because He was the divine Person who dwelt in and dwelt with the church under the Old Testament from first to last, in so doing He constantly assumes unto Himself human affections, to

intimate that a season would come when He would immediately act in that nature. And, indeed, after the Fall there is nothing spoken of God in the Old Testament, nothing of His institutions, nothing of the way and manner of dealing with the church, but what hath respect unto the future incarnation of Christ. And it had been absurd to bring in God under perpetual anthropopathies [speaking of God as if He had human parts], as grieving, repenting, being angry, well pleased, and the like, were it not but that the divine Person intended was to take on Him the nature wherein such affections do dwell.

4. It was represented in prophetic visions. So the apostle affirms that the vision which Isaiah had of Him was when he saw His glory (John 12. 41). And it was a blessed representation thereof. For His divine Person being exalted on a throne of glory, "His train filled the temple." The whole train of His glorious grace filled the temple of His body. This is the true tabernacle which God pitched, and not man. The temple which was destroyed, and which He raised again in three days, wherein dwelt the fulness of the Godhead (Col. 2. 9). This glory was now presented unto the view of Isaiah, chapter 6. 1-3, which filled him with dread and astonishment. But from thence he was relieved by an act of the ministry of that glorious One, taking away his iniquity by a coal from the altar, which typified the purifying efficacy of His sacrifice. This was food for the souls of believers. In these and on the like occasions did the whole church lift up their voice in that holy cry: "Make haste, our Beloved, and be Thou like to a roe or to a young hart on the mountain of spices."

Of the same nature was His glorious appearance on Mount Sinai at the giving of the law (Exod. 19). For the description thereof by the psalmist (Psa. 68. 17, 18) is applied by the apostle unto the ascension of Christ after His resurrection (Eph. 4. 8-11). Only as it was then full of outward terror, because of the giving of the fiery law, it was referred unto by the psalmist as full of mercy with respect unto His accomplishment of the same law. His giving of it was as death unto them concerned, because of its holiness, and the severity of the curse wherewith it was attended; His fulfilling of it was life, by the pardon and righteousness which issued from thence.

5. The doctrine of His incarnation, whereby He became the subject of all that glory which we enquire after, was revealed, although not so clearly as by the gospel after the actual accomplishment of the thing itself. In many places this is done in the Old Testament. One instance shall here suffice, and this is that of the prophet Isaiah, chapter 9. 6, 7: "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." This one testimony is sufficient to confound all Jews, Socinians, and other enemies of the glory of Christ.

I do acknowledge that notwithstanding this declaration of the glory of Christ in His future incarnation and rule, there remained much darkness in the minds of them unto whom it was then made. For although they might and did acquiesce in the truth of the revelation, yet they could frame to themselves no notions of the way or manner of its accomplishment. But now, when every word of it is explained, declared, and its mystical sense visibly laid open unto us in the gospel, and by the accomplishment exactly answering every expression in it, it is judicial blindness not to receive it. Nothing but the satanical pride of the hearts of men, which will admit of no effects of infinite wisdom but what they suppose they can comprehend, can shut their eyes against the light of this truth.

6. Promises, prophecies, predictions concerning His Person, His coming, His office, His kingdom and His glory in them all, with the wisdom, grace and love of God to the church in Him, are the line of life which runs through all the writings of the Old Testament, and takes up a great portion of them. Those were the things which He expounded unto His disciples out of Moses and all the prophets. Concerning these things He appealed to the Scriptures against all His adversaries: "Search the Scriptures, for they are they that testify of Me." And if we find them not, if we discern them not therein, it is because a veil of blindness is over our minds. Nor can we read, study or meditate on the writings of the Old Testament unto any advantage unless we design to find out and behold the glory of Christ declared and represented in them. For want hereof they are a sealed book to many unto this day.

7. It is usual in the Old Testament to set out the glory of Christ under metaphorical expressions; yea, it aboundeth therein. For such allusions are exceedingly suited to let in a sense into our minds of those things which we cannot distinctly comprehend. And there is an infinite condescension of divine wisdom in their way of instruction, representing unto us the power of things spiritual, in what we naturally discern. Instances of this kind in calling the Lord Christ by the names of those creatures, which unto our senses represent that excellency which is spiritually in Him, are innumerable. So He is called the Rose, for the sweet savour of His love, grace and obedience; the Lily, for His gracious beauty and amiableness; the Pearl of price, for His worth, for to them that believe He is precious; the Vine, for His fruitfulness; the Lion, for His power; the Lamb, for His meekness and fitness for sacrifice; with other things of the like kind almost innumerable.

These things have I mentioned, not with any design to search into the depth of this treasury of those divine truths concerning the glory of Christ, but only to give a little light unto the words of the evangelist, that He "opened unto His disciples out of Moses and all the prophets the things which concerned Himself," and to stir up our own souls unto a contemplation of them as contained therein.

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## CHRIST'S KINGLY OFFICE

*By Thomas Watson (c.1620-1686)*

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*How does Christ execute the office of a king?*

*Answer:* In subduing us to Himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all His and our enemies.

Let us consider now Christ's regal office. "And He hath on His vesture, and on His thigh, a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords" (Rev. 19. 16).

Jesus Christ is of mighty renown; He is a King.

1. He has a kingly title. "High and lofty" (Isa. 57. 15).

2. He has His *insignia regalia*, His ensigns of royalty; *corona est insigne regæ potestatis* [a crown is the symbol of royal power]. He has His crown (Rev. 6. 2); His sword, "Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh" (Psa. 45. 3); His sceptre, "A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom" (Heb. 1. 8).

3. He has His *escutcheon*, or coat of armour; He inserts the lion in His coat of arms. "The lion of the tribe of Juda" (Rev. 5. 5). The text says, "He is King of kings." He has a pre-eminence of all other kings, and is called "the Prince of the kings of the earth" (Rev. 1. 5). He must needs be so, for "by Him kings reign" (Prov. 8. 15). They hold their crowns by immediate tenure from this great King. Christ infinitely outvies all other princes; He has the highest throne, the largest dominions, and the longest possession. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever" (Heb. 1. 8). He has many heirs, but no successors. Well may He be called "King of kings," for He has an unlimited power. The power of other kings is limited, but Christ's power is unlimited. "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He in heaven, and in earth, and in the seas" (Psa. 135. 6). Christ's power is as large as His will. The angels take the oath of allegiance to Him. "Let all the angels of God worship Him" (Heb. 1. 6).

*How came Christ to be King?*

Not by usurpation, but legally. He holds His crown by immediate tenure from heaven. God the Father has decreed Him to be King. "I

have set My King upon My holy hill... I will declare the decree" (Psa. 2. 6, 7). God has anointed and sealed Him to His regal office. "Him hath God the Father sealed" (John 6. 27). God has set the crown upon His head.

*In what sense is Christ King? Two ways.*

I. *In reference to His people*, and, II. *In reference to His enemies.*

I. *In reference to His people.*

1. To govern them. It was prophesied of Christ before He was born, "And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule My people Israel" (Matt. 2. 6). It is a vain thing for a king to have a crown on his head unless he have a sceptre in his hand to rule.

*Where does Christ rule as King?*

His kingdom is spiritual. He rules in the hearts of men. He sets up His throne where no other king does; He rules the will and affections, His power binds the conscience; He subdues men's lusts. "He will subdue our iniquities" (Mic. 7. 19).

*What does Christ rule by?*

*By law, and by love.*

i. He rules by law. It is one of *the jura regalia*, the flowers of the crown to enact laws. Christ as a King makes laws, and by His laws He rules; as the law of faith: "Believe in the Lord Jesus," and the law of sanctity: "Be ye holy in all manner of conversation" (1 Pet. 1. 15). Many would admit Christ to be their Advocate to plead for them, but not their King to rule over them.

ii. He rules by love. He is a King full of mercy and clemency; as He has a sceptre in His hand, so an olive branch of peace in His mouth. Though He be the Lion of the tribe of Judah for majesty, yet He is the Lamb of God for meekness. His regal rod has honey at the end of it. He sheds abroad His love into the hearts of His subjects; He rules them with promises as well as precepts. This makes all His subjects become volunteers; they are willing to pay their allegiance to Him. "Thy people" shall be a willing people (Psa. 110. 3).

2. Christ is a King to defend His people. As Christ has a sceptre to rule them, so He has a shield to defend them. "Thou, O Lord, art a shield for me" (Psa. 3. 3). When Antiochus raged furiously against the Jews, took away the vessels of the Lord's house, and set up an idol in the temple, this great king, called Michael, stood up for them to defend them (Dan. 12. 1). Christ preserves His church as a spark in the ocean, as a flock of sheep among wolves. That the sea should be higher than the

earth, and yet not drown it, is a wonder; so, that the wicked should be so much higher than the church in power and not devour it is because Christ has this inscription on His vesture and His thigh: King of kings. "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side ... they had swallowed us up" (Psa. 124. 2, 3). They say, lions are *insomnes*; they have little or no sleep. It is true of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, He never slumbers or sleeps, but watches over His church to defend it. "Sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. I the Lord do keep it ... lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day" (Isa. 27. 2, 3). If the enemies destroy the church, it must be at a time when it is neither night nor day, for Christ keeps it day and night. Christ is said to carry His church, as the eagle her young ones upon her wings (Exod. 19. 4). The arrow must first hit the eagle before it can hurt the young ones, and shoot through her wings: the enemies must first strike through Christ before they can destroy His church. Let the wind and storms be up and the church almost covered with waves, yet Christ is in the ship of the church, and there is no danger of shipwreck. Nor will Christ defend His church only, as He is King, but deliver it. "I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion" *viz.* Nero (2 Tim. 4. 17). "The Lord saved them by a great deliverance" (1 Chron. 11. 14). Sometimes Christ is said to command deliverance (Psa. 44. 4); sometimes to create deliverance (Isa. 45. 8). Christ as a King commands deliverance, and as a God creates it. And deliverance shall come in His time. "I the Lord will hasten it in His time" (Isa. 60. 22).

*When is the time that this King will deliver His people?*

When the hearts of His people are most humble, when their prayers are most fervent, when their faith is strongest, when their forces are weakest, when their enemies are highest – then is the usual time that Christ puts forth His kingly power for their deliverance (Isa. 33. 2, 8, 9).

3. Christ is a King to reward His people. There is nothing lost by serving this King. He rewards His subjects in this life. He gives them inward peace and joy, a bunch of grapes by the way, and oftentimes riches and honour. Godliness hath the promise of this life (1 Tim. 4. 8). These are, as it were, the saints' veils. But the great reward is to come: an "eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4. 17). Christ makes all His subjects kings. "I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2. 10). This crown will be full of jewels, and it will never fade (1 Pet. 5. 4).

II. *Christ is a King in reference to His enemies, in subduing and conquering them.* He pulls down their pride, befools their policy, restrains their malice. That stone cut out of the mountain without hands, which smote the image, was an emblem, says Augustine, of Christ's monarchical power, conquering and triumphing over His enemies (Dan 2. 34). Christ will make His enemies His footstool (Psa. 110. 1). He can



destroy them with ease. "Lord, it is nothing with Thee to help" (2 Chron. 14. 11). He can do it with weak means and without means. He can make the enemies destroy themselves. He set the Persians against the Grecians, and the children of Ammon helped to destroy one another (2 Chron. 20. 23). Thus Christ is King in vanquishing the enemies of His church.

It is a great ground of comfort to the church of God, in the midst of all the combinations of the enemy, that "Christ is King," and He can not only bound the enemies' power, but break it. The church has more with her than against her; she has Emmanuel on her side, even that great King to whom all knees must bend.

Christ is called "a Man of war" (Exod. 15. 3). He understands all the policy of chivalry; He is described with seven eyes and seven horns (Rev. 5. 6). The seven eyes are to discern the conspiracies of His enemies, and the seven horns are to push and vex His enemies.

Christ is described with a crown and a bow. "He that sat upon the white horse had a bow; and a crown was given unto Him: and He went forth conquering, and to conquer" (Rev. 6. 2). The crown is an ensign of His kingly office, and the bow is to shoot His enemies to death.

Christ is described with a vesture dipped in blood (Rev. 19. 13). He has a golden sceptre to rule His people, but an iron rod to break His enemies. "The ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings.... These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them... for He is King of kings" (Rev. 17. 12, 14). The enemies may set up their standard, but Christ will set up His trophies at last. "And the angel ... gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden ... and blood came out of the winepress" (Rev. 14. 19, 20). The enemies of Christ shall be but as so many clusters of ripe grapes, to be cast into the great winepress of the wrath of God, and to be trodden by Christ till their blood come out. Christ will at last come off Victor, and all His enemies shall be put under His feet. *Gaudeo quod Christus Dominus est, alioque desperassem*; "I am glad Christ reigns, else I should have despaired," said Myconius in an epistle to Calvin.

*Use one:* 1. It is no disparagement to serve Christ; He is a King, and it is no dishonour to be employed in a king's service. Some are apt to reproach the saints for their piety, but they serve the Lord Christ, He who has this inscription upon His vesture: King of kings. Theodosius thought it a greater honour to be a servant of Christ than the head of an empire. Christ's servants are called vessels of honour (2 Tim. 2. 21), and a royal priesthood, an holy nation (1 Pet. 2. 9). Serving Christ ennobles us with dignity; it is a greater honour to serve Christ than to have kings serve us.

2. If Christ be King, it informs us that all matters of fact must one day be brought before Him. Christ has *Jus vitæ et necis*, the power of life and death in His hand. "The Father ... hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5. 22). He who once hung upon the cross shall sit upon the bench of judicature; kings must come before Him to be judged; they who once sat upon the throne must appear at the bar. God has committed all judgment to the Son, and Christ's is the highest court of judicature. If this King once condemns men, there is no appeal to any other court.

3. When we are foiled by corruption we must go to Christ, for He is King; desire Him by His kingly power to subdue our corruptions, to bind these kings with chains (Psa. 149. 8). We are apt to say of our sins, "These sons of Zeruiah will be too strong for us"; we shall never overcome this pride and infidelity. Ay, but go to Christ; He is King. Though our lusts are too strong for us, they are not for Christ to conquer, for by His Spirit He can break the power of sin. When Joshua had conquered five kings, he caused his servants to set their feet on the necks of those kings; so Christ can and will set His feet on the necks of our lusts.

*Use two:* Is Christ King of kings? Let all these great ones take heed how they employ their power against Him. He gives them their power, and if this power shall be made use of for suppressing His kingdom and ordinances, their account will be heavy. God has laid the key of government upon Christ's shoulders (Isa. 9. 6), and to oppose Christ in His kingly office is as if the thorns should set themselves in battle array against the fire, or a child fight with an archangel. Christ's sword on His thigh is able to avenge all His quarrels. It is not good to stir a lion: let no man provoke the Lion of the tribe of Judah, whose eyes are a lamp of fire, and "the rocks are thrown down by him" (Nah. 1. 6). "He shall cut off the spirit of princes" (Psa. 76. 12).

*Use three:* If Christ be a great King, submit to Him. Say not, as those Jews, "We have no king but Cæsar," no king but our lusts. This is to choose the bramble to rule over you, and out of the bramble will come forth a fire (Judg. 9. 15). Submit to Christ willingly. All the devils in hell submit to Christ, but it is against their will. They are His slaves, not His subjects. Submit cheerfully to Christ's Person and His laws. Many would have Christ their Saviour, but not their Prince; such as will not have Christ to be their King to rule over them shall never have His blood to save them. Obey all Christ's princely commands; if He commands love, humility, good works, be as the needle that points which way soever the loadstone draws.

*Use four:* Let those admire God's free grace who were once under the power and tyranny of Satan, and now of slaves Christ has made them

to become the subjects of His kingdom. Christ did not need subjects; He has legions of angels ministering to Him; but in His love He has honoured you to make you His subjects. O how long was it ere Christ could prevail with you to come under His banner! How much opposition did He meet with ere you would wear this Prince's colours! At last omnipotent grace overcame you. When Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, an angel came and beat off his chains (Acts 12. 7); so, when thou wast sleeping in the devil's arms, Christ by His Spirit smote thy heart, and caused the chains of sin to fall off, and made thee a subject of His kingdom. O admire free grace, thou who art a subject of Christ, and art sure to reign with Him for ever!

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### WILLIAM GADSBY ON THE RESURRECTION

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“So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power” (1 Cor. 15. 42, 43)

This chapter clearly shows the resurrection of the dead, and arguments are brought forward to prove it which are of the greatest force. Paul brings forward the objections that an unbelieving mind would make against it; such, for instance, as, “How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?” His answer is, “Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die.” All the ear is not sown, but merely a bare grain that dies, and then it is quickened, and brings forth fruit according to its nature.

There are some who assert that in heaven the saints of God will differ from each other in glory as the stars, but there is no passage in Scripture to prove such a statement. Our bodies are sown in corruption, they shall be raised in incorruption; and thus the body raised in incorruption will differ in glory from what it was when sown in corruption, as the dimmest star differs from the brightest planet. God shall change it, and fashion it like unto His glorious body; the brightest minister will not shine one whit brighter than the humblest hearer. Hence we read, “They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.” Thus it does not appear that the ministers of the gospel, who have been the means of turning many to righteousness, will outshine those that be wise, or those whom they may have been the means, in the hand of God, of turning to righteousness. For these shall shine as the *brightness* of the firmament, not as the *dark* firmament which needs the stars to light it; but as when the sun is up in his meridian splendour, emitting its beams of light on the firmament, and causing it to shine with a glorious brightness.

Again, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3. 2). And if all who die in Christ, all who are raised in incorruption, raised to glory, will be like Christ, there can be no difference; for Christ hath not many likenesses. Some people say there are large souls and small souls. Now just notice a babe; it grows and gradually increases in knowledge. Its intellectual faculties become enlarged, but its soul is no greater, otherwise when it gets old it droops with the body, and becomes as the soul of a little child once more. I believe that the soul of every child which dies in its infancy will shine as bright and be as great as that of Paul or any of the apostles. I believe also that William Gadsby, vile and base as he is, will shine as bright as Paul too.

All men are in nature, of nature, and by nature corrupt. "Their throat is an open sepulchre." Now, a sepulchre is a place in which to deposit the dead, and is generally filled with a stench, proceeding from the corrupt bodies, and when it is opened it emits that horrid stench. So are we all by nature. O what wickedness proceeds from our bodies! Our tongues – what evil have they spoken! Our eyes – what lustful, proud and sinful acts have they committed! Let the glass tell what they have done! Our hands – how have they been laid on that which is unholy, unclean! Our feet – how have they run in the way of evil! And after all, our bodies must moulder away in the earth, be food for worms, and become a stench, a nuisance to the living.

But now let us look at the new man, which is Christ in us, and at the old man, which is sin in us. Both live in us. There is a difference between you living in sin, and sin living in you. Sin lives in a child of God, and plagues and harasses him continually, but he does not live in it. He hates it and abhors it. This body, which is by nature corrupt, is actually the seat of all the inventions of Satan. And O how many there are who spend their whole time in washing, dressing and adorning it. They little think that at one time it will be raised, not in glory, but to their shame and confusion. The wrath of God shall come upon them, if grace prevent not, and they shall burn with unquenchable fire.

Again, "It is sown in dishonour." Our bodies are sown in sin. They are vile and polluted; but if changed by the regenerating grace of God through Christ Jesus, we shall be raised in glory. And that glory who can describe?

We cannot describe the glory which the disciples beheld on the Mount of Transfiguration; which glory was so great that the disciples fell at Christ's feet as dead. How can we then describe the glory that shall hereafter be when our bodies are raised, when God Himself will be our glory?

## THOUGHTS ON THE SONG OF SOLOMON

By Grey Hazlerigg of Leicester (1818-1912)

(Continued from page 113)

*Verses 11-13. "For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, My love, My fair one, and come away."* These words are an enforcement of the previous invitation. As it is in nature, so in grace. Whilst it is cold, dreary winter and the wintry showers remain, there is little inducement to go forth into the fields and gardens, but when the sun shines warmly and the spring returns, then it is very different.

We may consider these words as either referring to the old and new dispensations, or to what goes on in the individual soul. Whilst the law remained in force as a dispensation, it was a cold and comfortless period, like a wintry, inclement season to the church of God, but when the Lord Jesus came, and abolished the law by His obedience and death, then the spring time of the children of God came on. Mercies and blessings, as contained in the everlasting covenant, were, during the old dispensation, like underground flowers. The roots might be found in the words of even Moses, but the spring time of the gospel dispensation was required to make them spring up and the flowers appear on the earth.

Then, too, there was so much of the revelation of the divine displeasure against sin, and even sinners, so many showers of wrath, that there could be little of the singing of birds heard, and the sweet voice of love was much absent from the land. A distant God in the law and legal threatenings made all so very comfortless that it was as a very cold, wintry season, with showers of rain, hail and snow in the land; but the advent of the Lord Jesus, His birth, death and resurrection, made a wondrous change. It was as spring and summer to the church. The showers passed away and disappeared, for He abolished the handwriting of ordinances against the church, and took it quite out of the way. In Him is no sin; therefore in Him is no condemnation, no curse, no wrath. The voice of love is there, and so the birds can sing, and the flowers appear in all their beauty, the fig tree put forth its figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a goodly smell. Therefore the voice of the dispensation is, "Arise, My love, My fair one, and come away."

But what is thus fulfilled in a dispensational sense to the whole church goes on in an experimental one in the individual soul. Thus there is to that soul a time of the law when the soul views God as dealing with it according to a covenant of works. Then it becomes a dreary, winter season to that soul. God is distant and appears angry; the voice of

displeasure, not of love, sounds in the conscience. Then the heart sighs instead of sings; barrenness, not fertility, is present; gospel faith and hope and love are in the heart as roots and seeds are underground in the winter; and the soul is comfortless and shut up in a sense of sin, guilt and misery. But now the Lord Jesus comes in with the visits of His love. Grace and mercy are appearing; the sweet promises and words of mercy in the gospel look forth; faith, hope and love, in desires after Jesus, appear in the soul; the gospel assures the heart that Christ has wrought for His people a full and free salvation, that all is finished; that the winter is past, the rain over and even gone, every cloud of wrath dispersed; that all now is love and mercy, through precious blood and glorious righteousness.

Now then, says Christ, the Spirit enforcing these sweet truths upon the heart with an argument of discovery and power, "Arise, My love, My fair one, and come away." One has addressed the rose very poetically in some such strains as Christ here addresses the soul, calling upon that lovely flower, with similar arguments, to blossom. The lines are pretty, and, spiritually applied, even sweet:

"Child of the summer, charming rose,  
No longer in confinement lie;  
Arise to light, thy form disclose,  
Rival the spangles of the sky.

"The rains are gone, the storms are o'er,  
Winter retires to make thee way;  
Come, then, thou sweetly-blushing flower;  
Come, lovely stranger, come away."

We see, then, the force of the argument used in these verses. The Lord in the gospel calls His people forth from other things to Himself, to walk in His ways and do His pleasure; not by legal arguments, but those suitable to the new covenant arguments of grace and love.

The law dispensation is the wintry season of a distant God, so far as the warmth and power of manifested love go. It is the season of the cold, wintry showers: "And ye, O great hailstones, shall fall." The gospel is the dispensation of grace, free grace and full. This drives away the winter and disperses the storms. In it God appears as love; Christ looks forth as full of grace, as having finished a work of salvation for His people, poor, lost sinners. The Spirit breathes now as the south wind. "Come, thou south wind," says the Lord; and the soul repeats it. Then all is changed. The heavens wear a new aspect. God is no longer distant to our apprehensions, but very near; the earth is full of His praise. The Bible puts on a new face. Precious promises and words of love spring forth everywhere to the astonished gaze. All becomes new. Christ is seen from Genesis to Revelation in the sweetness, fulness of His grace

and love. The flowers appear on that earth; the means of grace are full of a new beauty and life; the heart itself feels the transforming influence. Where all was cold, dreary and sad, appear flowers of faith and hope, of love and peace and joy. Christ is precious. The fig tree puts forth its green figs, with a true promise of yet greater fruitfulness; the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Bondage gives place to liberty, death to life, sadness and sorrow unto singing and the voice of melody, and the heart gladly responds to the sweet call of Jesus: "Arise, My love, My fair one, and come away."

*(To be continued)*

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### THE CARES OF THE MINISTRY

*From a sermon by J.K. Popham, 1897*

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People have different cares – temporal cares and spiritual cares; and there are ministerial cares. You may depend upon it when God makes a man a minister, He puts care upon him. People generally in the church have no idea of this weight, no conception of it. God puts the ministry upon a man so he cannot shake it off; there is a power upon him, what is he to do, such a contracted, helpless creature? To think of fighting heaven's battles, of standing up between God and men and speaking with authority, how is he to do it? He has a gift. According to the marginal reading, Psalm 55. 22, says, "Cast thy gift upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee." When a minister cannot do that, he has enough to break him to pieces.

We wonder what hearers will think of us, especially in our early days. Later in his ministry, a man though not without feeling about what friends and people generally may think of his ministry, and as to whether it will be useful, his main concern is, will God speak by me? If He will, what an honour! If you are brought under such a man's ministry, you will say, "What an honour for me to have been brought under the teaching of God the Holy Ghost through that man's ministry!"

O pray for your minister if you can. If a minister has a feeble body, is in poor health, he needs special help; and for that the people should cry to God for him. Pray for your minister, because God has laid the ministry on him, and he has a burden to carry. Be careful to put no other burdens on him; he has enough to carry. Do all you can to relieve him, because he has a heavy load. A pastor has a double load to carry: the care of that particular church over which the Lord has placed him.

Sometimes when you are asleep your minister may be awake in great anxiety, distress and care for your immortal souls. If he sees you walking

carelessly or in some way not right, you cannot think what care it will become to him, because he watches for your souls as one who must give an account, and he desires to do so with joy and not with grief, for that would not be profitable for you (Heb. 13. 17).

Now, this minister sometimes has power given to him, when the Lord appears and says, "I have not sent you to this warfare at your own charges"; "I will all your burdens bear, I will all your needs supply." "I have plenty of strength, a fulness of My Spirit wherewith to furnish you for that warfare and work to which I have called you; fulfil your ministry by My grace." But while speaking of ministers in this way, I have to leave the people.

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### THE BULKINGTON BOXER

*The account of William Sage of Bulkington, written by  
Charles Mountfort of Walsall*

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At Bulkington, near Bedworth, on March 15th, 1865, William Sage, aged 62, departed this life. He was for twenty years a member of the church at Bedworth, and ten years clerk [the one who announced the hymns] and deacon. He was warmly attached to the late Mr. Congreve\*, a fellow-deacon. Being taught by the same Spirit, having one faith, with one mind they strove together for the faith of the gospel.

As an honest, simple-minded Christian, he was much esteemed and beloved by the members of the church and the ministers visiting us. His excellent choice of experimental and savoury hymns has been remarked on by the supplies [visiting ministers] which have sometimes preached to them first. He will be long remembered when some of Hart's and Berridge's hymns, of which he was particularly fond, are sung.

By birth illegitimate, and his mother being very poor, he was at an early age placed in the workhouse [a public institution for paupers]; but after a time he became weary of the work he was put to there, and resolved to leave it, though he knew not where to go nor what to do for a living. Here the Lord in His providence interposed, for as he wandered from the place, a person met him, to whom he told his case. He took him and taught him the trade of ribbon-weaving.

As he grew up, he became outwardly immoral and openly profane. Having no natural guardians to restrain him, he indulged his passions to an unusual degree. His companions and associates were of the baser sort, and he prided himself in pugilistic encounters [fights], for which he

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\* George Thomas Congreve (1791-1861), "physician and apothecary." A volume of his letters was published after his death. "Congreve's Balsamic Elixir" was a well-known cough remedy, professedly a cure for consumption.



appeared favourably set and framed, and in them, it is said, he was desperate.

But the set time drew near when the Lord designed to deliver him from the power of darkness and translate him into the kingdom of His dear Son, to make this proud champion a trembling sinner, and this man of might a little child. After his last battle, Satan, as though afraid of his prey, was hurrying him on and exciting him to proceed. He said to a companion, "I am determined to have my fill this year," although he had a hell in his conscience, as he afterwards said, after he had fought. "A man's heart deviseth his way; but the Lord directeth his steps."

Shortly after this, as he sat at work at his loom, the Lord shot an arrow of conviction into his soul with these words: "Who among us shall dwell with devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" Alarmed and conscience-stricken, he inwardly trembled, though he endeavoured to put it off. Pride struggled against it, but in vain. He would hide it, but the Lord would not let him. One night, in the corner of a garden where he thought himself hidden, and no one near, he was making confession to the Lord and imploring mercy, when a man on the other side of the hedge heard all he said, and went and told the people of the place he had heard Bill Sage "a praying," which set them wondering.

He would sometimes go to the prayer meeting at Bulkington chapel, but had no ease or relief. He was burdened and dejected, when one day passing the place where he had said, "I will have my fill this year," suddenly a light broke in upon him, and he felt a softening and a sense of divine compassion, which raised a hope in his soul and encouraged him to wait. "Though a great sinner, who can tell but I may escape and be forgiven?" But this did not last long. He sank again very low. The burden of his sins became great and his hope gave way to distressing fears; his sins seemed of so black a nature and his case almost hopeless. But one day, while in his house, two lines of Swain's hymn were brought with great power:

"See yonder rolls a stream of blood  
That bears the curse away,"

and he had such a revelation of Jesus Christ, as bearing the curse for him, that his burden fell, his load of guilt was removed, he had gladness and joy in his soul and sweet peace in believing. This was a hill Mizar from which he remembered the Lord in after years, and spoke of it with much feeling.

Some time after this, he heard Mr. Gadsby a time or two at Attleborough, and desired to be baptized and walk in the ordinances of the Lord. He was baptized in the year 1826 at Wolvey, though at this time he was a member of the Independent church at Bulkington.

On one occasion, when his family had increased and trade was bad, at the end of the week they were without food or money to provide it, which had, no doubt, sent him to the Lord. At night, while he was away, someone came and placed a joint of meat on the table and went away, and another brought him half a sovereign. This kind providence of God in a time of such need filled him with admiration and gratitude to the Father of mercies.

As his inward exercises and outward trials increased, he became more dissatisfied with the preaching at Bulkington and went to hear where he could profit and find a living ministry. On one occasion he walked to Leicester (eighteen miles) to hear Mr. Gadsby, and was so wearied with the journey that, when he sat down in the chapel, he fell asleep, and did not awake till the last hymn was being sung.

In 1845 he joined the church at Bedworth. As the Lord had prospered him and he had got a little forward in his circumstances, his children growing up and able to work, he began to manufacture ribbons on his own account, but having no education, he was exposed in a variety of ways to injustice and wrong, and was much in the hands of others, some of whom appear to have taken advantage of him. What little he had saved wasted, and he failed. On this occasion the Lord's providence was conspicuous, and he told me he was more affected with this than anything else he could remember. Having made known to his creditors his circumstances, and frankly surrendered all he possessed, one favourite piece of furniture he was urged to except and keep back, but he said, "No; I am determined to give all up." The valuation was made. The creditors met, consulted together, were moved to pity, sympathised with him in his adversity, believing he was an honest man and would not willingly do wrong, and mutually agreed to forego their claims and forgive him the debts. Each gave him a receipt in full and, moreover, offered to supply him with goods to begin again. He was so overwhelmed with the goodness of the Lord that he wept and blessed the Lord who had delivered him out of his distress, and in such an unexpected way. Grace had made him honest and willing to give up all, and grace had now freely restored all, but he (perhaps prudently) declined the kind offer of his creditors to begin business again, and now began to work for Coventry houses. The Lord blessed his labours, and he was enabled to provide comfortably for his family.

But fresh trials awaited him. His youngest son, who was most useful to him in his business, was taken ill of consumption and died in 1862. His wife also died of the same disease the following year. A married daughter came to live with him and keep his house, and it was not long before the same disease showed itself in her also, and she died in 1864. These trials of a long sick-house and death succeeding death,

added to his daily labours, soul conflicts and loss of rest, weighed heavily upon him, and it was evident his health began to decline. But God, who comforteth those who are cast down, left him not comfortless, for he had hope in the end of both his wife and children. Therefore his sorrow was not as others which have no hope. His soul was fed under the Word sweetly at times, and some hymns were made a means of much comfort and consolation. His conversation was generally spiritual and savoury, and the life of his spirit in these things was manifest, for though in his wife's illness, especially the latter part, he was chief nurse, yet he was generally able to attend the means of grace, and was always anxious to be there at the stated times, and it has done me good sometimes to see his heart and eyes both full.

In May 1864, he married again. His wife was a judicious, God-fearing woman, who was a comfort to him the few remaining days of his life, and a valuable nurse in his affliction. He was able to carry on his business and to attend the Bedworth services up to December, the second Lord's day of which month was the last time he was there. The day following he was taken very ill, and his friends were apprehensive his end was near. But he rallied again, and in a little time left his room and came downstairs, and sometimes seemed to think he might recover, but this was not the Lord's will, and he soon had other thoughts himself. His appetite was failing, his strength declining, and his flesh wasting. His disease was diabetes and ulcerated inside. He said, "I have prayed for the recovery of my children, but I cannot for my own"; and (quoting an expression of dear Mr. Tiptaft's) said, "'What a mercy to have a religion of the right sort!' I have no fear of death." He desired to see the friends at Bedworth, for he said he did not know he loved them so much before. Most of them, if not all, that were able, at times visited him and found it good to be there. Though the outward man was decaying, yet the inward man was renewed day by day.

He was subject to violent attacks of sickness sometimes when he took any food, which so exhausted him that he could not speak for some time, but afterwards would say what a support and comfort he found portions of the Word to him. At one time the following was very sweet to him: "And thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." Once, after much darkness felt, and his affliction heavy, the following verse greatly relieved and comforted him:

"He sees me often overcome,  
And pities my distress;  
And bids affliction drive me home,  
To anchor on His grace,"

and he said, "He might have left me justly to perish in my sin, but, bless His precious name, He has not."

The first time I saw him in his illness was on January 9th, having received a letter from him, desiring to see me. In this letter he says, "I am very ill, and doubt whether I shall go to Bedworth any more. I feel I have a disease upon me which I fear will bring me to my journey's end, but I would say, The Lord's will be done. I wish to feel resigned to His dear will, for He is a faithful, unchangeable Friend. It is good at His Word to be here; it is better indeed to be gone. As friend Tiptaft said, 'It is a mercy to be made right and kept right, and to be well laid in the grave.'" This being the first intimation I had of his illness, I felt it much, for I loved him much in the Lord, and (perhaps somewhat peevishly) said, "The Lord is taking away the best from among us."

I was struck with his serenity and composure, neither much elated nor depressed, but firmly fixed on that Foundation laid in Zion, on which in holy faith he was built up, and by which he could

"survey with joy  
The change before it come;  
And say, Let death this house destroy;  
I have a heavenly home."

I remarked to him, "You now feel the blessedness of having a religion that holds you up in the prospect of death, that has outlived the storms of your past life and overcome the world." He spoke sweetly of the Lord's grace and goodness in having taught him first to pray, and heard and answered his prayers, who had been with him to support, to defend and to deliver him in all his temptations, afflictions and distresses. In answer to my questions, he spoke with much humility of his early life and sinful habits. I left him, well persuaded the Lord would be with him, living and dying.

Some of his pains were exceedingly severe, and he feared their return, being almost intolerable. At one time, while suffering much from them, he said, "Lord, take it away," and, turning to his wife, he said, "It's gone."

A few weeks before his death, Mr. S., a fellow-member, went to see him. Asking him how he felt, he said, "Sit down," and bursting into tears, he said, "I am as full of the love of God as I can hold! O what can heaven be?" Mr. S. repeated the last verse of hymn 472:

"If such the sweetness of the streams,  
What must the fountain be,  
Where saints and angels draw their bliss,  
Immediately from Thee?"

He appeared overcome with bliss, and exclaimed, "O grace!" After a while he said, "I feel it withdrawing." Mr. S. replied, "There is no man that hath power over the Spirit to retain the Spirit." He said, "No."

On Lord's day, March 5th, his son, living at Coventry, came over to see him. Mrs. Sage went to get a little rest while he was with him. His son left the room for a little while, and in his absence he got up and dressed, went downstairs, and to their great surprise was sitting in his armchair. When they were getting him back to his room, he turned and looked round, saying, "Goodbye, house; I shall never cross you any more."

The next day his throat was very sore and began to swell. The doctor said an abscess had formed there, and ordered a linseed-meal poultice. His throat was in extreme pain and in a few days was greatly swollen, affecting his speech so that he could scarcely articulate a sentence. His sufferings at times were great, but it was evident inward peace greatly abounded. He appeared full of matter, but could not relieve himself by utterance.

On Lord's day the 12th, being at Bedworth, I went to see him between the services. Once or twice in the course of the day he appeared unconscious, but he was quite himself then, and knew those present. I shall not soon forget the love he evidently was filled with, and longed to show and express, nor that I felt. He drew me towards him, and tried to speak. I could hear him say, "Sing, sing!" and "Grace, grace!" I said, "Your heart is full of grace, and you want a mouth for it." He said, "Yes." He laboured to make us understand the hymn he wished us to sing, and to me it was painful I could not more quickly comprehend his wish and relieve him of the effort, which must have been painful for him to use, as at this time his throat was nearly closed. The abscess having formed inside, he could not pass anything, and all they could give him for relief or support was a little moisture with a feather. At length the hymn was found, which I read: "Hark! how the blood-bought hosts above." Whilst reading the hymn, he in the most animated way said, "That's it! That's it!" convincing us that he had the substance of it in his soul, which was sweetly sustained by grace and love, composing his dying bed.

Commending him to the Lord, and feeling that I not only could, but that I could not forbear, to bless him, I did so in the name of the Lord.

In the evening and following day, Monday, he was restless, and tried by motions and gestures to make them understand, but without effect.

On Tuesday he was quite unconscious, and remained so up to three o'clock on Wednesday morning, March 15th, when he quietly breathed his last, and his happy spirit fled to the rest remaining to the people of God.

His ingenuousness of manner and unrefined plainness of speech to some were not pleasing at times, but I think whoever had his acquaintance, and feared God, esteemed him highly, and the more so the better he was known. He was tender to the weak, generous to the poor

and needy, and sympathising to the afflicted. He highly esteemed the Lord's servants, and used to say, "Such a one has a place in my heart." When some wondered he could hear such of them as are learned so well, he would reply, "I can do with them, learned or unlearned, if there is life and unction."

*The following postscript was added by J.C. Philpot*

I knew William Sage well as he was in the habit for many years of coming over to Leicester to hear me when I preached there, and I have had at times much conversation with him. I never knew a more sincere, upright, honest man, both in word and action. He was somewhat rough and uncultivated in manner and free-spoken expression, but neither forward nor unpleasant, neither contentious nor assuming. He was very clear and firm in the truth, and fearless in contending for it, and a dear lover not only of truth in its purity, but of truth in its power.

I have always looked upon him as a remarkable instance of the power of grace, for you could see at a glance, or find as soon as he opened his lips, that one of nature's rough-cast sons was before you, and though not of powerful make or athletic build, one possessed of that courage and determination, and that thickset frame, which made his former pugilistic propensities very credible. But his pugilism [the old word for "boxing"], when I knew him, was to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, and his fighting, not as one that beateth the air, but to beat down error with one fist and letter preaching with the other.

With all his roughness, he had a tender, childlike spirit, and with all his bluntness, he had a fine ear and delicate appetite, counting no preaching worth hearing but such as was attended with power, and no provision palatable that was not seasoned with salt and savour. Being generally kept on low ground, and unable to get anything that was not given, his speech and conversation were that of a tried, exercised man, and as he had no good works to boast of in nature, and was not favoured with great things in grace, he was preserved both from boasting and spiritual pride in profession.

I had not heard any particulars of his death until I read the above, and it rejoiced my heart to find that he made so good an end. Though favoured with a good hope through grace, I never heard him speak with much confidence of his state. Here, then, is another proof that "at evening time it shall be light," and that sooner or later the Lord puts a new song into the mouth of all whom He has taught to fear His great name, to believe His dear Son, and call upon Him in spirit and in truth.

## BOOK REVIEWS

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**William Gadsby: His Life and Ministry**, by G.J. Miller; **Alicia Bonne Hoblyn: High Calvinism and the Evangelical Imperative**, by J.E. North; 26 page booklets; each £1.95 plus 54p postage; published by The Huntingtonian press, and obtainable from 72a Upper Northam Road, Hedge End, Southampton, Hampshire, SO30 4EB (Tel. 01489 786260).

Both these booklets consist of talks given at Sovereign Grace Union meetings, that on Gadsby not carefully edited but given as spoken. Most of the Gadsby's facts are well known, but not those of Mrs. Hoblyn.

Alicia Bonne Hoblyn (1812-1876) was a prolific writer of tracts and booklets, which at one time were well known (especially *Nothing to Pay*) and which were greatly used of God. Mr. North emphasises the fact that she was a High Calvinist, extremely strong on the sinner's utter inability, yet equally strong that the gospel is to be preached to every creature. A most remarkable woman!

These are nice booklets with excellent portraits on the front of Gadsby and Mrs. Hoblyn.

**The Gospel of Sovereign Grace: Sermons and Addresses by Henry Atherton**; large paperback; 162 pages; price £6.90 plus postage; published by the Sovereign Grace Union, and obtainable from 43 Warwick Road, Rayleigh, Essex, SS6 8PQ.

Henry Atherton (1875-1933) was a Lancashire man, who came down to be pastor at Grove Chapel, Camberwell – a successor of Joseph Irons and Thomas Bradbury, and very much in the spirit of them both.

During the barren years between the two world wars, the name of Henry Atherton was well-known as a champion of the doctrines of free and sovereign grace. This book contains an excellent, interesting, short biography of him.

*The Gospel of Sovereign Grace* has been issued to commemorate the centenary of the Sovereign Grace Union, of which Atherton was virtually the founder. In his day, the Union was very active, with three or four day conferences held each year (and some excellent speakers), but also it was almost the sole publisher of Calvinistic literature (e.g. Parks on the Five Points, Elisha Coles on the Sovereignty of God).

The addresses given in this book were mainly delivered at these annual conferences, and contain subjects such as Grace: Its Activities; Redemption: Its Nature; The High Priesthood of Christ; Earnestly Contending.

Of Henry Atherton the witness can truly be borne: he "contended earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints."

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## SONG IN THE DAY OF THE EAST WIND

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Is God for me? I fear not, though all against me rise;  
 When I call on Christ my Saviour, the host of evil flies.  
 My Friend, the Lord Almighty, and He who loves me, God;  
 What enemy shall harm me, though coming as a flood?

I know it – I believe it – I say it fearlessly,  
 That God, the Highest, Mightiest, for ever loveth me.

At all times, in all places, He standeth at my side;  
He rules the battle fury, the tempest and the tide.

A Rock that stands for ever is Christ my Righteousness,  
And there I stand unfearing in everlasting bliss;  
No earthly thing is needful to this my life from heaven,  
And nought of love is worthy, save that which Christ has given –

Christ, all my praise and glory, my light most sweet and fair;  
The ship in which He saileth is scatheless everywhere;  
In Him I dare be joyful as a hero in the war,  
The judgment of the sinner affrighteth me no more.

There is no condemnation – there is no hell for me;  
The torment and the fire my eyes shall never see;  
For me there is no sentence – for me death has no sting,  
Because the Lord who loves me shall shield me with His wing.

Above my soul's dark waters His Spirit hovers still;  
He guards me from all sorrows, from terror and from ill.  
In me He works, and blesses the life-seed He has sown;  
From Him I learn the ABBA, that prayer of faith alone.

And if in lonely places, a fearful child, I shrink,  
He prays the prayers within me I cannot ask or think;  
The deep, unspoken language, known only to that love  
Who fathoms the heart's mystery from the throne of light above.

His Spirit to my spirit sweet words of comfort saith,  
How God the weak one strengthens, who leans on Him in faith;  
How He hath built a city of love, and light and song,  
Where the eye at last beholdeth what the heart had loved so long.

And there is mine inheritance – my kingly palace-home;  
The leaf may fall and perish – not less the spring will come;  
Like wind and rain of winter, our earthly sighs and tears,  
Till the golden summer dawneth of the endless year of years.

The world may pass and perish – Thou, God, wilt not remove,  
No hatred of all devils can part me from Thy love;  
No hungering nor thirsting, no poverty nor care,  
No wrath of mighty princes can reach my shelter there.

No angel and no devil, no throne, nor power, nor might;  
No love – no tribulation – no danger, fear, nor fight;  
No height – no depth – no creature that has been, or can be,  
Can drive me from Thy bosom – can sever me from Thee.

My heart in joy uleapeth, grief cannot linger there,  
She singeth high in glory, amid the sunshine fair;  
The Sun that shines upon me is Jesus and His love;  
The fountain of my singing is deep in heaven above.



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
JUNE 2015

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

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**A HIDING PLACE IN THE DAY OF INDIGNATION**

*Sermon preached at Clifton Chapel on Friday evening,  
April 10th, 2015, on the occasion of the Gospel Standard Society  
Annual Meetings*

**Text:** “Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast” (Isa. 26. 20).

The Lord in love and mercy has always provided a refuge for His beloved people in times of darkness and sorrow, or as the word is here, *indignation*. That was a very solemn day of indignation when the Lord drowned the world in righteousness, His anger against the sin of the whole human race, and yet in love and mercy He provided a refuge, and all pointing forward to that glorious refuge that the gospel makes known that is found in the merits of Jesus alone.

“Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers.” This is more or less the same as what the Lord so lovingly said to Noah. He said, “Come thou and all thy house into the ark.” It was a wonderful word. The Lord did not say, *Go* thou and all thy house into the ark. He said to Noah and his family, “*Come*,” and if words mean anything at all, that means that the Lord was already there in the ark, and Noah was going to know His gracious presence all through those days of indignation, till at last the Lord brought him safely forth.

“Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers.” And then again that solemn Passover night when the destroying angel went through the land of Egypt. That was a time of indignation, the Lord’s anger against Pharaoh and against the Egyptians. But the Lord in love and mercy provided a refuge for His people, and again looking forward to Christ. “Come, My people, enter into thy chambers.” And the Israelites literally had to enter into their chambers. But the vital thing about their chambers was this: they had the sprinkled blood upon them, and that is why it was a refuge, and that is why the indignation could not touch them, and that is where their safety was, their security. It was sheltering beneath the blood. Now these were the chambers.

“Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers.” It was to show that Israel by nature was no more deserving than Egypt, but a lamb without blemish and without spot had to be taken, it had to be slain, and

then the blood had to be sprinkled on the lintels and door posts of the house. The chambers had to be sprinkled with blood, and there was safety there and there alone. "The blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt." That was deliverance in the day of the Lord's indignation.

And so we have it here. This was a time of sadness in Israel. The Lord's judgments had gone forth. We read that the Lord was going "out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity." So that is why it was a day of indignation. But the Lord ever had His little remnant. He did then; He does now. And His loving eye was on them in tenderness and in affection, and when these judgments were coming upon the earth, there was a refuge appointed for them.

"Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself" – the sinner's hiding place – "hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." Now beloved friends, I am sure all of us in this chapel this evening realise that today is a day of the Lord's indignation, against our own country and against the earth. Surely this is being fulfilled: the Lord coming "out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity." When you think of the dreadful things happening in the earth, the cruel massacres of Christians even recently in the Middle East, the awful disasters there have been; then in our own country, the immorality, the evil things in high places, truth fallen in the streets, good laws being abolished, evil laws being brought in – and not only in politics in high places, but in the professing church of God, the despising of God's holy, sacred Word. "God is not in all their thoughts." So what wisdom is there among them? And then when we come to our own churches and our own congregations, what a need for humble confession, and what a need for repentance, and what a need to search our ways. Then as we think of the unknown way, and our children growing up, and the little ones born in this sinful world, and we wonder what lies before them, we wonder what will be. Truly this is a day of the Lord's indignation, a day when the Lord has gone "out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity."

And yet still the Lord has His remnant who sigh and cry because of the abominations done in the midst, and the Lord's loving, watchful eye is upon them and to them in this evil day; and in what lies before them, and in their personal sorrows, He kindly says, "Come, My people." O what a word of affection that is! Mine by eternal choice; Mine, loved with an everlasting love; Mine, the purchase of My sufferings and death; Mine by calling; Mine eternally. And here is the safety, the security of

the people of God. It is all in Christ. What a loving word this is in this dark and evil day, this day of indignation: "Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast."

I have been thinking of some of these chambers. I would like to mention one or two of them to you this evening. One is *the chamber of prayer*. "Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers," and literally, according to the word of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, "shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment." The sinner's safe and sure retreat, the mercy seat sprinkled with blood, the throne of grace, the promise of mercy, grace to help in time of need, and especially that loving, tender sympathy in the time of deep need and deep sorrow. "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" – what? – "Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers." "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace."

"Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers." Then there are the chambers of *the promises*. O how often the Lord's people, when down and tried and when this indignation is abroad in the earth, have been sweetly enabled not just to look at the promises or plead the promises or even rest on the promises, but enter into the promises. Chambers of refuge. O things like this: "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 there are so many promises, all confirmed with the solemn oath of God, all sealed with the blood of Christ, all sure, secure to the people of God. But for the Holy Spirit to lead us right into them, in the day of indignation to find a refuge there.

"Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers." And then there are the chambers of *the Lord's presence*. O what a wonderful chamber of refuge that is, not only of safety, but of comfort, of sweet consolation! The twenty-seventh Psalm very beautifully explains to us what the chambers of His presence are. "In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion." Now the Lord has a pavilion, and it is a chamber of refuge, appointed for the time of trouble. "The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him."

But this pavilion, what is it? In ancient warfare when a battle was taking place, the king when he went into battle always had his pavilion. It was a little way distant from the battlefield, and there was every comfort there, and it was surrounded by armed guards. It was a place of safety as well as comfort. Here is a poor warrior in trouble. He is sorely wounded; he is in pain; but he is lovingly carried from the battlefield into

the king's pavilion, and often the king himself is there, and in the king's pavilion he is safe. The battle is raging; it is not far away; but he is safe, he is secure, he has every comfort there. What a beautiful picture this is of these chambers of the Lord's gracious presence when you can enter into them, and like Gideon, with all his trouble in the day of indignation with Midian, hear Him say, "Surely I will be with thee." Or like Moses with all his indignation, the difficulties with Pharaoh, hear Him say, "Certainly I will be with thee."

"Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers." But of course all these things, so many different things we could mention, they all centre in Christ, the Person and finished work of Christ. So we have the chambers of *the everlasting gospel*, to these sinners who feel it to be a day of indignation because of the Lord's anger against their sin, and led by faith, led by the Holy Spirit, they are enabled to enter into these chambers, and sometimes to flee for refuge into these chambers. The urgency of it! O but there to find the peace and the joy in believing. This entering into the chambers of the gospel, everlasting love, a glorious righteousness, precious blood, all-prevailing intercession in heaven, a Saviour almighty to save. And the point that the gospel emphasises: that this is for the lost, the ruined, the guilty, the unworthy, and it is all of grace, and it is without money, it is without price, and it is completely undeserved, completely unmerited.

"Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers." But in all its fulness, its glorious fulness, to see it in *the Person of Christ Himself*, once crucified and buried, but now risen, exalted and glorified, the sinner's hiding place. If your religion and mine is real, whatever else we need or do not need, we shall need a hiding place, and because of this very point: the day of indignation, the Lord's indignation against sin as a holy, righteous God, to those who have disobeyed His holy, righteous law. We need a hiding place. We need to be sheltered from this indignation which one day will be poured out to all eternity on those who perish in their sins. And when we think of the Lord coming "out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity," then where can I find a hiding place? Then the dear Saviour Himself says, "Come, My people." Mind you, usually they do not come under the sweet assurance that they *are* His people, but they come knowing they need Him, that they are sinful, and knowing that such are lovingly invited.

Some of you have perhaps heard that story from the Middle Ages. There was a nobleman who dearly loved his king, and the delight of his life was when the noblemen each evening were allowed to go and sit at the table with their king and banquet with him, and hear his conversation, and commune with him. Now one day something happened to that nobleman: the royal garments he had to wear when he went in were all

stained and defiled, or torn, or something like that. He was in distress. He just could not go. It was just unthinkable that anyone could go with their garments torn and dirty. In his deep sorrow, he suddenly remembered that in the same room, though in a corner, the king had a table for beggars, and any beggar was welcome there, and at the end of the meal the king went and he used to commune kindly and friendly with the beggars. "Ah," said the nobleman, "I can't go as a nobleman, but I can go as a beggar, and I will be just as welcome. I will still see the king's face, and I shall still hear his voice."

Now that is it. Perhaps this frightens some of you this evening, beloved friends. He says, "Come, My people." O you say, but if I knew I was one of them I could come! Well, if you cannot go as a saint, if you cannot go as a child of God, can you go as a beggar? Can you go as one of these of whom Gadsby sings:

"Sinners are freely welcome still  
To Christ, the sinner's Friend"?

Then, "Come, My people," and if you cannot come as His dear people, come as these unworthy, guilty sinners to whom He says, "Come unto Me." "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

"Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." Now this comes close, when we come to these chambers as Christ Himself. What is it?

"Within the clefts of His dear side,  
There all His saints in safety dwell."

The Rock of Ages smitten, the clefts in the rock, the hiding place there. He says, "O My dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs." And you know that weary dove, pursued by a fierce bird of prey, or else fleeing from a thunderstorm, once inside the cleft of the rock, that bird of prey cannot touch it, and the thunderstorm spends itself on the rock and it does not touch the poor little dove who shelters in the rock. It is a wonderful truth, the Rock of Ages smitten for sinners, that sinners, conscious of sin and guilt, fleeing for refuge to Christ, find a hiding place there. O what a word that is: "Your life is hid with Christ in God."

"Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." So this is a word to our churches and our congregations, to our families, to aged ones, to our young people, to those who have your various calamities and sorrows, to those who are

burdened with your sins. “Come, My people.” O may we be sweetly led by the Spirit of God, graciously drawn, enabled by faith to enter into these chambers and find the peace and the rest there, peace made by the blood of His cross.

“Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers.” I have thought of one person in Scripture who specially proved this, and that is David. Just briefly as we come to a conclusion this evening, I want to mention how David was helped to walk this out in three different ways. First of all, that was a day of dreadful indignation for David when he was hunted by Saul and when he felt that one day he would perish. There was but a step between himself and death. It was a day of bitter indignation for him, but he knew this voice: “Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers.” Well, literally he had to find a few caves. He hid himself in Cave Adullam. But he knew something better than that: “A sovereign Protector, unseen, yet for ever at hand.” And if you were to ask David what his feelings were during that day of indignation, he tells us: “Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in Thee: yea, in the shadow of Thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.” You read the eighteenth Psalm. It is a glorious Psalm, and at the beginning David tells us that he wrote that Psalm in the day when his calamities were overpast. You have your calamities. They are not overpast yet, are they? One day they will be, but *until then*, “in the shadow of Thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.”

“Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers.” The second time in David’s life: the day of terrible indignation when he committed that awful sin, that sin of adultery, that sin of murder. It was a day of indignation, and the Lord made David feel that it was a day of indignation. The Lord made him know that He was displeased with him. The Lord told him He was going to chastise him for his sin. Yet we read how in the fifty-first Psalm he was able to enter into his chambers. “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to ... the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.” And there David as led by the Spirit in the day of the Lord’s indignation was able to enter into those chambers of unchanging love, divine forgiveness, cleansing in the blood of Christ. “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”

“Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers.” And the third time: David was dying, and it was a day of indignation. He looked around in his kingdom – there was so much wrong. He looked in his own family – it was a disgrace; he had failed completely as a father. And then he looked back over his life and he saw it marred with sin. He was a dying man and it was a day of indignation, and the Lord sweetly enabled him to enter into his chambers. “Although my house be not so

with God” – it is a day of indignation, deserved indignation. It is not so as I would have it; it is not so as it should be; it is not so as it ought to be in Thy sight. And then this wonderful *yet* – “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.” He entered into the chamber of peace. The day of indignation was ended. He hid himself for a little moment. He died with a felt interest in covenant love and blood. Don’t we love how John Kent sings:

“She views the covenant sure;  
Her hopes all centre there;  
And on His bosom leans secure,  
Whose temples bled for her.”

O beloved friends, these are the chambers, all of grace, all of mercy, all in Christ. And then at last there are the chambers of the grave, and the Lord leads His people there, not in anger, in love.

“’Tis but the voice that Jesus sends,  
To call them to His arms.”

And there they are hidden in the grave for a season till the resurrection day, taken from the evil to come.

“Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.”

It was a pleasure to see such a number present (well over 300), including many young people and children.

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## THE GOSPEL STANDARD SOCIETY

*Report of the Annual Meetings of the Gospel Standard Aid and Poor Relief Society held on Friday, April 10th, 2015, at Clifton, Bedfordshire*

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### PRAYER MEETING

Mr. B.E. Izzard (Pastor, Fenstanton) opened the meeting by reading Psalm 100 before giving out the first hymn. He then read 2 Kings 12. 1-15, commenting after verse 3 that it is our mercy and may it be a cause of thanksgiving that the Lord will never take away the dear, covenant Head from His church, and that it is much cause of thanksgiving that the Lord reigneth. He spoke as follows from the fourteenth verse of the second Book of Kings in chapter 2: “And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah? And when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.”

The words have been on my mind for many, many weeks and my desire is to speak from these words both in a way of edification and especially instruction in righteousness. Really, it is how much we may speak of Christ the glorious Head of grace.

The Lord is never short of a man. Here we have the account of the following on of Elisha closely bound by love unto his master, his earthly master Elijah. In the Prophecy of Isaiah chapter 9 verse 6 we read of the “government upon His shoulder.” Also, we read in verse 7, “Of the increase of His government” – that is the continuation of the Lord’s purposes and especially in the gospel dispensation. We have been reminded of the scripture “after Easter,” and in the Word of God we read of the further blessing of the souls that God will bless in the gospel dispensation, the increase, the bringing in of the Gentiles.

But my thoughts go especially to the way in which God will be enquired of and bless His church. Sometimes the Lord’s people, like Elijah, are brought very low. Elisha “took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him.” It was appointed that he should continue. He “smote the waters, and said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah?” That is where we want to come for a few moments. There may be many hearts perhaps that are burdened, concerned over the state of Zion and the need for the Lord to bless and prosper again His sacred Word and truth as in days gone by, if it please the Lord. In the increase of His government there is the government upon His shoulder, I am sure. May we sweetly know it personally and in the churches for the great blessing of the Lord upon His people. There is a need, friends, to make it ever so clear how the Lord is pleased to remember His dear people although “minished and brought low” – we read – “through oppression, affliction, and sorrow,” and that is by His Spirit and His Word. We have the younger ones and we hope and desire that they may by God’s grace be a seed to follow on to know the Lord. There may be many, many things in their hearts and many questions: What is the true blessing of God, and real reviving?

Friends, my mind has gone to Elijah and his mantle, and then to speak of Elisha too. Going back a little further in the first of Kings, we read these words: “Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow Him,” and we need it by the blessed Spirit of Truth. Just a little further in speaking of Elijah, we read of the Lord being with Elijah, and he had his mantle. He carried it with him; he was known by it. Believers are known by the mantle of living faith, and also there is a bearing upon the true preaching of the everlasting gospel.

My thoughts go very quickly to the government being upon His shoulder, in God’s own Word. Elijah had the mantle (of a true prophet) but he was full of trouble. But “Go forth, and stand upon the mount



before the Lord.” What would the Lord do? He passed before Elijah who still had his mantle. “The Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake.” Now friends, this is where I believe there is much sweet instruction. It was the still small voice that deeply affected Elijah. What did he do? He had his mantle, and everything concerning him and his burdens and concerns. It is a good word to those who are appointed of God to preach the everlasting gospel. It is this mantle. It is when the Lord spoke and revealed Himself inwardly, sweetly. It is that government indeed, isn’t it?

“And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and ... he wrapped his face in his mantle.” Now that is true repentance, godly sorrow, the Lord’s appearing, and the government all upon His shoulder for Elijah. What a reviving! He could then go onward in his journey. And so we read of the Lord’s appointing of Elisha, a vital principle. It is not strictly by the law of God, but when the Lord fulfils it in the sweet knowledge of Immanuel – God with us. “Not by might, nor by power but by my Spirit.” We do need this in all our needs and in much fear sometimes with many downsittings, but to have a little of this sweet truth belonging to the mantle of Elijah for us. We then read it fell from him and he was taken to glory in a very wonderful way indeed.

It leads me very quickly to my thought here regarding the supplicating of the Lord even at this time. It is the mantle. It is the same gospel, the same truth of it, the power we need, the leading of God, the government upon His shoulder for His poor, afflicted, tried church. Friends, it is exactly what God will do. Let us be still and know by His grace that the government is upon His shoulder. “Be still, and know that I am God.” It is a time of much waiting upon Him and to be kept very close to the sacred truth of God with the effect of the Word deep in the heart, lives renewed, souls humbled, and God glorified. But may we “be patient and steady, and wait on Him still.”

I was speaking to one person that I know not over well and I was asking how they were getting on. The reply was, “Well, we have had some talkers but we want more real preachers.” Well, God still grant the sending forth of those servants of God that are anointed. It is the mantle that God is pleased to grant by the appointing of the Holy Spirit of God.

Much could be said, but lastly my thoughts go to Elisha, and that mantle being a type of the faith of God of which we need the increase. We need the same sweet principle of it in every burden, every care, and every great trial and in many, many downsittings, and especially for sin. O for the Lord to grant us this mantle in the ministry to smite the waters! I was thinking of that word personally:

“Should conscience accuse us, as oft-times it may  
Here’s blood that can take its defilement away.”

That is a little sweet to me. As we speak of these things, our conscience accuses us because we come so short, but we would seek a little of that sweet increase of the spirit of living faith, God-given, especially in the gospel dispensation, and the government indeed to be increased and to be all upon His shoulder. Friends, it is Christ from first to last, the only hope of poor sinners, and yet a triune God is revealed in all the purposes of Jehovah.

And very lastly, it is a word very applicable to those who are brought to know the Lord. O for this increase of faith when often this cry is known: “Where is the Lord God of Elijah?” Friends, He is in heaven. He fills immensity, and the angels veil their faces. May our approaches unto Him be in reverence and godly fear. There is a need to maintain and hold fast very surely to the old paths, wherein is the good way. Some may say, “Why do you speak like that?” Friends, when I was young the Lord delivered me, but I was left to myself. I began to despise the old paths, and found fault with J.C. Philpot to my absolute folly. But that was my own heart – legal, full of the old nature, and God put His finger on it and brought me down, and He still brings me down. We have to maintain the truths that humble souls to nothing, that God may be exalted in that day.

And then there is a continuance. It is continuing as dear Elisha did. He took up the mantle and smote the waters, and they parted hither and thither. O for that increase of living faith. “And Elisha went over.” I do not intend at all to prolong my comments. We discharge that which seems to be resting upon us.

Hymns 726, 233 and 10 were sung during the prayer meeting. The following prayed: Dr. S.P. Rosier (Maidstone), Dr. M.J. Hyde (Tenterden), Mr. P. Dadswell (Blackboys), Mr. P. Hill (Manchester), Mr. R.P. Collar (Mount Bures), Mr. J.P. Sayers (Blunsdon Hill). Mr. Izzard closed with prayer and the benediction.

#### AFTERNOON MEETING

After the singing of hymn 1139, the Chairman of the Society, Mr. G.D. Buss, called on Mr. A.W. Chapman (Ashwell) to seek the Lord’s blessing on the meeting.

The Chairman then read Psalm 40.

CHAIRMAN: Beloved friends, as we gather for this Annual Meeting, seeking the Lord’s help and blessing upon us, in verse 17 of Psalm 40 there are four things which stand out which are relevant to our gathering both collectively and personally.

First of all there is *confession*: “But I am poor and needy.” It is not just lip confession; the psalmist truly felt the poverty of his nature, no good thing in it by nature in those things that are required for salvation: faith and repentance, hope and love. He felt an impotence concerning them, and yet a necessity for them, and thus we have his personal confession. It is also, dear friends, the collective confession of the church of Christ in our and every generation. We are poor and we are needy, and where those two things come together under the Spirit’s teaching, from it come forth desires, exercises, longings, hopings that the Lord will relieve our poverty and supply our need. So the first thing is confession.

The second thing is *consolation*. Despite our poverty, and it is very great, despite our need, and that is very great, “Yet the Lord thinketh upon me.” And the Lord’s thoughts toward His church are no less in days of declension than they are in days of prosperity. We must not think that the love of Christ waxes and wanes with the prosperity and the declension of the church here below. It is from everlasting to everlasting. It is a love that knows no bounds, and blessed be God for it. Even though we live in a day of small things, and we mourn over it, and we are concerned about it, yet we must never think there is a diminishing in the love of Christ for His church, nor the love of the Trinity. The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost love the church as much today as in any generation.

“Thy thoughts of peace to Israel’s race,  
From everlasting flowed;  
And when Thou hid’st Thy lovely face  
Thou still art Israel’s God.”

If there is one here this afternoon who might feel the Lord has hidden His lovely face and that the unbelief of your heart and the devil are both suggesting that there is a diminishing of God’s love, there certainly is not. God’s love toward His chosen people is immutable, unchangeable. “I know the thoughts that I think toward you ... thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget” – nature may come short, often does, always does – “yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands; thy walls are continually before Me.” So, dear friends, in our low estate may we have a high view of our God; low views of ourselves, as low as we can get, but as high a view as possible, as God may give us the grace to enter into it, of our unchanging, unchangeable God. “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.”

The third thing we have here is a blessed *confidence*. “Thou art my help and my Deliverer.” O bless God for these words! Whatever trouble

comes upon the church of Christ, whatever sins may beset His individual members, whatever temptations may assail, whatever fires may burn, whatever deep waters may have to be waded through, here is an answer that meets every possible dispensation the church may come into: "Thou art my help and my Deliverer." And the very Word *Deliverer* implies God's people will come through their troubles, out of their deep waters, through their fires. There is a way the Lord makes for them. "Thou art my help and my Deliverer." Here is a blessed confidence for the church of Christ; here is an arm to lean on; here is a word to plead; here is a God to go to; here is one who is faithful, blessed be God.

Fourthly, finally, we have the church's *concern* for the Lord to appear: "Make no tarrying, O my God." It does not grieve the Holy Spirit when we pray like that. In fact, it is one of the blessed marks of His work when the church is longing for His appearing. It is not a good sign, dear friends, when we are not longing for it. O listen to some of the petitions of the former generations in God's Word: "Oh that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at Thy presence!" "O when wilt Thou come unto me?" And such desires like that are the expressions of the living church of God in these times. "Make no tarrying, O my God."

Surely the psalmist sums it up, and perhaps it is a word for one here this afternoon: "It is time for Thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void Thy law." That is certainly true nationally. The law of God has been made void by legislators in our Parliament, over this last Parliament and other Parliaments too. They have cast scorn upon God's Word. They have cast it out as a thing of nought. They have called evil good, and good evil. Lord, it is time for Thee to work. It is time for the Lord to work in the churches, is it not? O that Thou wouldest "revive us again: that Thy people may rejoice in Thee." "Make no tarrying, O my God."

So we have those four things: confession, consolation, confidence, concern. May God write those things in your heart and mine, we beg for His name's sake.

The Chairman welcomed all present to the 133rd Annual General Meeting of the Society, and spoke of the Committee's desire to be faithful in serving the churches.

A resolution was put to the Meeting that the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on April 11th, 2014 be approved. This was proposed by Mr. G.E. Hadley (Pastor, Hope, Stotfold), seconded by Mr. B.P. Mercer (Pastor, Eastbourne) 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, 2014.

MR. CHRISTIAN: Dear Chairman, subscribers and friends, It is with thankfulness to the Lord that we come to the 133rd Annual General Meeting of the Society. We mentioned last year that the Aid Society and later the Poor Relief Society were established to assist ministers, ministers' widows and others who were in need. The first accounts for July 1872 to June 1873 show that the amount paid to recipients was £75 and seven shillings. I am sure our forefathers would not have imagined that in 2014 the grants we made would amount to £110,883, and so we have much cause for gratitude. The grants to individuals were raised in December by a minimum of 30% and at the last Committee meeting it was decided to raise the chapel grants in June this year. Regular quarterly grants are made to individuals, and also to chapels to assist in the payment of ministers. Other grants are made when the need arises, and during 2014 three ministers were helped to replace their cars. Grants are made from the Gadsby Memorial Christmas Fund, mainly in December, but occasional grants are made at other times. Subscribers are welcome to bring to the notice of the Committee any friends who regularly attend our chapels and who may be in need. Similarly we would be pleased to give help to any of our chapels that are having difficulty in adequately paying the ministers.

Staying with financial matters, the year ended with a combined surplus of £96,576, with the Aid and Poor Relief Fund and the Gadsby Memorial Christmas Fund having surpluses of £17,938 and £81,478 respectively and the Magazine Fund a deficit of £2,840. The surplus was really due to two items. In January a legacy of £91,605 was received from the estate of the late Miss Mercy Tinworth who passed away several years ago in the Bethesda Home at Brighton. The money had been left in trust for her brother until he passed away. The other amount arose from the closure and sale of Zion Chapel, Prestwood, and the Aid and Poor Relief Fund benefited to the amount of £82,336. Without these two items there would have been a deficit of £77,365. It is always sad when the funds come from chapel closures, and how wonderful it would be if the Lord granted a revival amongst us and chapels were opened again. Interestingly, the family builders and undertakers who built the chapel at Prestwood have purchased it to use as a chapel of rest. There is a burial ground opposite, on the site of the old chapel which was burned down, and £150,000 of the proceeds have been set aside to provide an income to maintain the burial ground.

The circulation of our magazines has remained fairly stable, and at present we are sending out about 1,390 *Gospel Standards*, 1,200 *Friendly Companions* and 410 copies of *Perception*. We give thanks to the Lord for upholding our three Editors, Mr. Ramsbottom, Mr. Buss and Mr. Scott, and we thank them for all their labours. They alone know how much time and effort is needed as each month or quarter comes round. May we be enabled to hold up their arms in prayer. Thanks are also due to those who so willingly assist in the preparation and proof reading month by month and to Mr. and Mrs. Cooper who do so much to prepare the wrapper. To assist Mr. Ramsbottom, the Committee appointed Mr. John Cottington as Sub-editor with responsibility for the wrapper of the *Gospel Standard*.

The Annual Meetings remind us of the passing of time. Another year has gone and some who met with us in past years are no longer with us. Sometimes the warning is short, so may we each be prepared and through grace be enabled to answer the questions in the hymn:

“How stands the case, my soul, with thee?  
 For heaven are thy credentials clear?  
 Is Jesus’ blood thy only plea?  
 Is He thy great Forerunner there?”

During 2014 three of our ministers passed to their eternal rest, Mr. Peter Cottingham suddenly in July, Mr. Peter Dawson in August, and Mr. Raymond Woodhams in December. Since the end of the year Mr. Jabez Buss has also been called home. We extend our sympathy to their widows and families and also pray that the Lord will raise up others to fill the breaches and bless the labours of those He has sent into His vineyard. No ministers have been added to the Gospel Standard list, and we again remind our deacons and church members that the Committee would be pleased to consider those ministers who are members of Gospel Standard churches and whose ministry is in the power and authority of the Holy Spirit.

There have, of necessity, been several changes to the Committee. Mr. John Ashby retired at the last Annual Meeting, Mr. Cottingham passed away suddenly in July, and Mr. Woodhams resigned a few weeks before he also passed away. Dr. Stephen Rosier, who had been invited to join the Committee while a deacon, was subsequently called to preach. To avoid any conflict of interest when a minister’s name is proposed for inclusion on the list, the Committee decided that in cases where a Committee member later went into the ministry, they should retire at the next Annual General Meeting, and so Dr. Rosier retires at this meeting. After prayerful consideration, Mr. Timothy Rosier, pastor at Maidstone and a previous member of the Committee, was asked if he would consider returning and he kindly agreed. Mr. Andrew Collins, deacon at Lamberhurst, was also invited to serve and he too has agreed. The Committee do have difficult issues to deal with and they seek an interest in your prayers that they might be guided in all their decisions.

We live in a day when Christian values and beliefs are under attack from many quarters. In our own land we have seen the use of equality legislation to discriminate against those who hold to their principles and some have suffered because they would not go against their consciences. The Committee does write to those in authority about these matters, but sadly receives little comfort from the replies. During the past year letters have been written to the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary, the Health Secretary and the Education Secretary. We deplore the increasing secularisation of our society, but may we be enabled to see, in the words of the Apostle Paul to the Hebrews, “But Thou remainest,” and that all things are at Thy control.

Included in the Annual Report and Accounts booklet for the first time are the Report and Accounts of the Gospel Standard Library. This is a very valuable resource and many of the books are available to borrow free of charge, while others may be viewed at the Library in the grounds of the Brighton Bethesda Home. We thank our Librarians for all the work they do. From time to time they prepare a newsletter, and those interested may contact them to receive copies.

Looking ahead we hope, if the Lord will, to hold a ministers’ prayer meeting here at Clifton on Friday, November 6th, to which all ministers who are members of Gospel Standard churches are welcome.

Next year Easter falls very early, and some schools are still open in the week of Easter Monday, and so the Annual General meeting is arranged, subject to the Lord’s will, for Friday, April 8th.

We are very grateful for the use of the chapel here for our meetings and especial thanks go to Mr. Lawson and his family for all the arrangements they make for us.

In conclusion we seek the Lord's blessing upon the churches and we echo the words of Isaiah, "Oh that Thou wouldst rend the heavens, that Thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at Thy presence!"

Brethren, pray for us.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Christian for his report, and 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. B.J. Northern (Ashwell) and seconded by Mr. J.P. Sayers (Blunsdon Hill) and carried *nem con*. The Chairman thanked Mr. Christian for all he does at the meeting and behind the scenes, and said that we do appreciate it.

The Secretary announced the result of the election of the three members who were retiring at this meeting and eligible for re-election. 254 ballot papers were sent out, of which 175 were returned. All three members received over 90% of the votes cast, and therefore Messrs. B.E. Izzard, D.W. Kerley and B.P. Mercer are elected to serve for a period of three years. During the year, Mr. A.J. Collins and Mr. T.J. Rosier had been co-opted on to the Committee, and they also received over 90%, and so are elected to serve for a period of three years.

Mr. B.P. Mercer then expressed thanks on behalf of the re-elected members of the Committee.

CHAIRMAN: I would just remind you that the charity is supported by subscribers, and I do hope that those of you who are not subscribers who support the Articles of Faith and are regular attenders or members of our churches will feel able to add your names to the list of subscribers. We have 254 subscribers. We are thankful for the ones we do have, but there could be substantially more if friends felt at liberty to add their name to it. We hope you would do that prayerfully and not automatically, but in the event of a serious diversion of doctrine that might come – we hope there never does, but if it did – then the subscribers would have the vote on it, and if there were not enough subscribers to carry a motion in favour of the doctrines we stand for, we could be in serious difficulties.

The Chairman mentioned that this is the thirty-ninth consecutive time that Mr. Ramsbottom has preached the annual sermon, and that this marks the 180th year of the *Gospel Standard* magazine. He said that written greetings had been received from Mr. Seymour in Australia, and Mr. G. TenBroeke on behalf of the churches in America and Canada. In addition, phone calls expressing their good wishes were received from Mr. J.K. Stehouwer of Grand Rapids and Mr. M.T. Pickett of Choteau, U.S.A., and also Mr. P. Dekker of Chilliwack, Canada. The Chairman mentioned that our overseas churches had greatly appreciated the visits in recent months of Mr. Hart and Mr. Hadley. Our friends Mr. T.J. Rosier and Mr. J.R. Rutt hope to go U.S.A and Canada respectively, if the Lord will and we wish them the Lord's blessing.

The Chairman recommended two free books from the Gospel Standard Trust: *Justification*, by John Gill, and Mr. Haddow's book on *Our Inheritance*. He said the Trust have recently issued a book called *Pastoral Counsels* by the

late Mr. George Rose, which are the monthly addresses written to the church at Tamworth Road while he was pastor, and which make very profitable reading.

Mr. Peter Hill was thanked for leading the singing.

Hymn 374 was then sung.

*The 8th Meeting of the Gospel Standard Bethesda Fund then followed (see later).*

After hymn 481 was sung, Mr. G.W. Hyde (Pastor, Tenterden) addressed the Meeting. He spoke as follows:

Dear friends, ministers of the gospel, members of churches, adherents to our varying causes of truth, and also any that have joined us, I seek to speak to you upon a subject that has been upon my mind which may indeed be considered with two words, and they are: *ministering* and *hearing*. Ministering may be perhaps beyond just the preaching of the Word, but it is that particular ministering that I wish to seek the Lord's help in speaking to you about this afternoon. As you will clearly see that where there is the ministering, the preaching of the gospel, there must also be the hearing of it, for there is no point in the preaching unless there are those to hear, and if there are those to hear, how much we need those to preach.

We live in solemn times where there is a famine of the hearing of the Word, and there is also a dearth of ministry, and we need indeed the Lord graciously to exercise us and to travail that He will revive it in this day in which we live. Nevertheless the Lord never leaves us without a man, never leaves us without a people. There will be those raised up to minister in the gospel down to the end of time. They may have to suffer for their work, as our forefathers did when they ministered the Word. So some of them knew persecution.

We have lived in times where the Lord has granted us much peace, and we would be thankful for it, but one thing that is solemnly evident is this: that though we have had much peace, we have seen the emptying of our churches, our chapels. The seats are being vacated, largely because of those who have died and passed away, and also regrettably and sadly there are those who have gone away. We can only pray that the Lord in His infinite mercy will cause those prodigals to return, or those perhaps after several generations may in reading the testimony of their forefathers, should it come into their hands, then to be convinced of the need of what their forefathers knew of vital godliness, and so to be stirred up to seek out again the Father's house. Also that we may see those wrought upon by the Spirit to be convinced of their sin and wretchedness and the emptiness of life which they may be living, and to seek where they can find true and real blessing and comfort for their aching and needy souls.



Well now, first of all, I wish to say a few words upon ministering and ministers of the gospel. There is a particular beauty in the ministry as the Prophet Isaiah states, and then it is also mentioned by the apostle in the Epistle to the Romans: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings!" And therefore there is a beauty in the ministry of the Word. First of all, as it was with those two men Elijah and Elisha, they had the spirit, and Elisha desired a double portion of the spirit of Elijah so that he may be an able prophet in the room of Elijah. And how we do need the gracious Holy Spirit!

There is nothing perhaps more beautiful and blessed than for one to preach with the Holy Spirit's unction and power, and it has been known, and may it be known again amongst us. How we do need the Spirit to be in the Word so that it may not be in word only, but be in power and in demonstration of the Holy Ghost. How we need therefore the Lord graciously to grant this divine influence and that the preaching of the Word may also be with discretion, to be with that due consideration of the spiritual realities that are set before us in the Word of God. It is the Word of God that is to be preached. "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord," and how we do need that to be emphasised.

But when we consider one going forth, and going forth in the hope that what they preach may be a word for the people, how every minister of the gospel needs to consider his calling. For if we are not sent, then how shall we preach? The essential calling to the work. We do not wish to labour this point greatly, because time will not allow us to do so, but we make it in passing. Undoubtedly Elijah and Elisha [the subject at the prayer meeting] received a calling and an anointing.

We read this morning in our personal reading concerning Gideon. Gideon was there hidden from the Midianites who sought to destroy the harvests that were being reaped, and there in the hidden place which perhaps no man would know except those of the family where Gideon was, but the Angel of the Lord knew where he was and the Angel of the Lord came, stood under the oak, and there Gideon was to receive the commission to go and to fight against the Midianites. Of course, we fight not in that literal sense, but we do fight against principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places. "And who is sufficient for these things?" unless we be sent and receive the grace and the strength and the wisdom to stand in the name of our God, to be a messenger in God's message, and if we are not that, then we need the grace to stand down, and to leave it to those who are truly called.

Now as the Lord's servants may be given the grace to stand before the people, so there is a second point, and that is that they have walked in the things that they may speak of. We have it put in a little different way, with these words that are often commonly spoken: to handle, to

taste of the Word of life. If we have not handled and tasted those things, if we have not walked in that path of which we are speaking, then surely we cannot speak sincerely. I know there are those things which we can only speak of because the Word itself declares it, and who can rightly experience the mysteries of the Godhead? or who can fully comprehend the Trinity? or who can speak of heaven itself? Surely until we get there we can only speak as seeing through a glass darkly. But for much of the ministering of the Word, there does need to be the beauty seen in the fact that we have walked in those things.

“How beautiful ... are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings!” And if we have not so walked in those things, then what beauty can there be in the declaring of them? To declare but in a clinical or theoretical manner will never feed the soul. It might feed the brain. But ministers of the gospel – I am sure it is so with you brethren here – realise that you are feeding the souls of the Lord’s people. It may be that one has entered in and hears the blessed gospel for the first time, the quickening work of the Spirit being felt and known in their souls. They want therefore the Word to come to them, and that Word may be so by the goodness of the Holy Spirit to come to such, as well as to feed those who may have walked in the way for many years. So we seek to feed the lambs, to feed the sheep, to feed the sheep, as our Lord commissioned Peter, and so often we need the grace to be given so that we may rightly teach, teach lambs, teach sheep, and again we say, “Who is sufficient for these things?”

With regard to the ministering of the Word, there must be a gracious balance in the work of the ministry, and this exercises me much. It exercises me with regard to my own ministry, which has many failings. But I believe if we consider it rightly, there will be five things that must be found in a balanced ministry.

First of all, a ministering of the gospel will have the ingredient of doctrine, that doctrine which is Christ. It is the very foundation, or it is the very structure of the truth of God. Without doctrine, then, we have no substance. It is vital that we have that which may be food and drink, and the precious doctrines are food and drink to the Lord’s people. Jeremiah said, “Thy words were found” – undoubtedly those words of divine truth and doctrine, and they were “to me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.” I have heard it said by some, “Well, the doctrine, I do not understand it; it goes over my head.” Some have said, “We want a simple ministry.” Well, doctrine needs to be put forth simply, it is true, but doctrine is the depths of truth. It is profound. The Apostle John in those things that he wrote both in the gospel and in the epistles, a few simple words, yet what a profoundness there is in those words.

We may take the simple words: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Have you got to the bottom of those things? Do you understand all that that means? Well, we strive and seek that we may grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as well as growing in that needed grace, but it is the grace of Christ. It was mentioned in one of the prayers concerning Jesus: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich." Well, there are depths there that we need an understanding for, to know that doctrine which may distil as the dew and fall as the rain upon our souls. Never despise true, blessed doctrine. It may be presented by professors, or by those who are not sent into the ministry, in a dry and unfeeling manner, but let us not shun the real and blessed substance of the doctrine of Christ.

Well then the second thing which one would desire to mention is this: that in the Word of the ministry there must be the warning. We are walking in this world, snares on every side, an enemy to try and draw us away, things which are traps and snares. There are those things which may sound well, but we need warning of them, and therefore it is the work of the gospel minister to warn the people. We are heading to an eternity, and how solemn it is if going in life's pathway there is nothing to give us heed. The Lord's servants are watchmen, and they must declare those evils which may come and the things which may devour, devour the matters which are held so dearly, things that are undermined. O then may there be the warnings.

But then there is the exhortation. How needful it is that we have the blessed exhortations of the Word of God! These exhortations will set before us the blessings that God has purposed for poor, needy, helpless, hell-deserving sinners. When the children of Israel were serpent-bitten, so Moses was commanded to set up upon a pole that brazen serpent and to exhort the people to look. We find those words throughout the Scripture which set before us the needy characters and the exhortation, what shall a poor, helpless and outcast soul do without this being set before them, Christ pointed out as the sinner's only hope? "Look unto Me ... all the ends of the earth." The psalmist says, "From the end of the earth will I cry unto Thee ... lead me to the rock that is higher than I." And if that is the cry from your soul, then what a sweet exhortation may sound upon your ears, entering into the house of God to hear that word ministered: "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God." There is the labouring, the labouring under sin, the labouring against the evils of this world, the labouring against the old flesh which we wrestle with, and then when we are so wearied, we know not what to do, we need a ministry that will set before us our Lord's words: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Well, we may make many examples. We must leave it with that.

But then to keep the balance of that ministry, we need something which is very dear to us denominationally. I trust, though, that we have not over-emphasised it at the cost of leaving out those things already mentioned. That is experience. In the preaching of experience, I have heard it described like this: that when we preach *experience* we do not preach *experiences* as such, though we may use them to illustrate certain things, but it is the experience of that which we have already mentioned: the experience of the truth and of doctrine. When we have experienced those things, then we can preach upon them.

But the preaching of experience will also include the things which are for our sanctification. You see, we need the separating work of the Spirit, and it is the preacher who may set forth those things which the Lord uses to separate us, and there are the afflictions, the furnaces that we have to pass through, that which will consume the dross, painful as it is. These are things to be experienced. But then there is the experience of the sweetness of the gospel when Christ is made precious, and the experience of those things is to be set before you. What a blessing it is to know that experimental ministry! But if I may be permitted just to mention a few well-known names among us, if you should look back over the sermons of J.C. Philpot, J.K. Popham and others, there you will find they have a balance, this balance of which we have been speaking.

There is one other aspect that we must mention, and that is the preceptive part of the gospel, or the practic part, that there are those things wherein the ministry may search out our hearts with regard to how we live before the Lord. There must be the coming out from among them and being separate and touching not the unclean thing. There must be the desire to live our lives as are honouring to God. That is practically as well as spiritually. There is that wherein we need to heed the precepts and our heart to follow those things. But also we need it to be seen in our lives. Shall it be preached concerning the gracious gift, the unspeakable gift who is our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and that not touch our hearts to give even as we have received, to receive therefore those things of the gospel and yet our pocket never to be touched? There is the need for the preaching of these things.

The preacher of the gospel will also be one who will sow beside all waters, desiring to sow wherever there are the needy people of God. There may be those who are walking in paths which are unknown to the world, but there the Lord's servant will sow, sow the seeds of comfort, consolation, instruction, direction. There in the desert place, a thirsty soul seeking water and finding an oasis, because there are the Lord's servants sowing beside all waters. We may come to the Elim and find there are those threescore and ten palm trees. To sow therefore to the

sick, amongst the sick, literally perhaps, but spiritually sick, the soul-sick. Well this is the work, and what a work it is! It is beyond what human capacity may have, but we do not go in our own strength. We go in the strength of the Lord God, to make mention of His righteousness, even of His only, to make mention of those things whereby poor sinners may find they are clothed, not with any righteousness of their own, but through the justifying work and merits of the Lord Jesus Christ; that they may be clothed upon, knowing that mortality must be swallowed up of life, and though we die daily, yet to be renewed day by day.

Well now *hearing*. How important hearing is! How do you hear? First of all, do you hear prayerfully? Do you come and hold up in prayer the hands of those who minister? They are weak in themselves; they are but poor creatures. Remember that. You may rightly respect the office, and therefore may show the utmost loyalty to the Lord's servants, but they are but men. But ah, may it be found that by your prayers you draw them out so that there is the word acceptable to your soul. Do you hear for your own soul's good? I am not saying that we may not hear sometimes for others. If you are burdened with one of the dear children of God, they are the subject of your prayers, you may hear for them if they are in the congregation, but it is to hear for your own soul. That is what first and foremost needs to be fed. You have a soul to receive food.

Then with regard to the spiritual food that you may seek after, we may again ask, How do you hear? Do you hear and receive the word that may be a word of correction or rebuke, or is that for somebody else, and you therefore cast it away? Do you hear those words of instruction in righteousness, seeking that you may be built up on your most holy faith? Or again, do you cast it to one side and say, Well, we want something which is to satisfy our own situation; that which was preached has not just come into the life where I am at the moment? "All scripture is given by inspiration ... and is profitable."

And in a very much lesser sense, for we cannot put the *preaching* of the Word on the level of the Scripture, which is inspired, but nonetheless that which is preached in fear, godly fear, ministered to you, how it needs to be taken, received as that Word which may build you up. Is there then the word which will direct you in the way that you may take? Here there may be a particular personal application. You come in desiring that the Lord will guide you. You need the guidance. The Lord's servant may be graciously directed to speak of those things relative to your need, and now what if it should be that it goes contrary to your own carnal wishes? What if it should be a word which would restrict or prevent you? Then do you heed it? Well, we need to take heed therefore how we hear.

But my time is running away. Just one more consideration, and that is this: the churches of Asia to whom were written those letters, solemn

letters. Each letter ended with a similar ending and this is it: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." We have spoken of the Word being heard personally for ourselves, but remember that the Word is ministered to the church of God, and therefore in that sense it may affect us all in our particular gatherings and churches, and also when we come and gather together in this manner, though many churches are represented, yet is there not that word: what does the Spirit say unto the churches? Well, I must leave these things for your consideration.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Hyde for his address and desired that the Lord may seal home to our hearts the exhortation we have heard this afternoon.

Hymn 500 was sung, and the Chairman closed the Meeting with prayer and the benediction.

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**GOSPEL STANDARD BETHESDA FUND**  
8th ANNUAL MEETING

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MR. H. MERCER (Chairman, Bethesda Fund): Subscribers, supporters and friends, we welcome you to the eighth Annual General Meeting of the Gospel Standard Bethesda Fund and present the seventieth Annual Report and Accounts which are for 2014. We think this year of those who were constrained in 1944 to begin Bethesda, which has been a wonderful provision for the Lord's people since then. We have again much cause for thanksgiving to the Lord for the many mercies He has granted during this time, and for guiding and directing those who during these seventy years have had the responsibility of management. We remember also many godly souls whom Bethesda has had the privilege of caring for in their last days, and especially the testimony of many who have been taken home to glory.

There are many differences now compared to the earlier days in the way in which the Bethesda Homes are run, arising from legislation and a multitude of regulations. Bethesda remains compliant with these changes and the burden of compliance ever increases. We are grateful to the General Manager and to the staff for all they continually have to do to meet the requirements of the Care Quality Commission. We do not always get it right, and where there are minor failings these are dealt with promptly. This is reflected in the satisfactory inspection reports we receive.

The financial position of the Fund is sound and there are adequate resources to service our operations. Clearly the Committee is seriously concerned about the vacancies in the Homes and particularly at Harpenden. We do not have the same demand on our services as formerly, and the trustees seek that our friends will recognise the excellent facilities Bethesda offers and be led to take advantage of them. We are a shrinking denomination and realise the implications of this. The

Committee would stress that these Homes are our denominational Homes and welcome further applications from those of our friends who feel it prudent to apply for their names to be added to the waiting list.

Our budgets for the current year indicate a very substantial shortfall of income, which is likely to be in the region of £400,000 as things are at the present time, but this depends on occupancy levels. Whilst legacies are treated in the accounts as income and are very gratefully received, in terms of financial management of the Homes they are not taken as part of the income when reviewing performance. Legacies which are often designated for the benefit of a particular Home do however provide welcome resources to pay for specific improvements or refurbishment in the Homes.

Our General Manager is not able to be with us today in view of his present trial [the loss of a baby son], and we extend to him and his wife our heartfelt sympathy and prayerful desires for the continuance of the gracious support that the Lord has granted to them.

We are very thankful that Mr. Scott has willingly consented to take the General Manager's place today, and he will introduce the Annual Report and Financial Statements.

A resolution was then put to the Meeting that the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on April 11th, 2014, be approved. This was proposed by Mr. P. Barnard (Bodle Street), seconded by Mr. T.J. Rosier (Pastor, Maidstone) and carried *nem con*.

The Chairman then asked Mr. Scott to present the Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2014.

MR. SCOTT: Mr. Topping substantially prepared this Report two or three weeks ago and I have just updated it slightly and added one or two things. So I will now read his report.

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 already have had a copy, and those of you who do not are invited to help yourselves from the box in the entrance lobby. My main purpose this afternoon is to report on matters of particular importance and to bridge the gap between the end of the year and now.

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. The aim of Bethesda has always been to break even, an objective which has been maintained by successive Committees, although not always possible to achieve. This year it has been felt necessary to increase the ordinary care rate by 1.7% to £563.50 per week, with higher increases in the intermediate, higher and advanced care rates.

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 its name suggests, this was specifically to assist residents who were unable to pay the full cost of the fees. This in practice usually means people who are assisted by local authorities which do not meet the

full Bethesda fee, so have the shortfall made up from this fund. In some instances the underfunding can be as much as £250 per week. In addition, where a local authority denies a resident funding, the “underfunded residents’ fund” provides the finance to allow them to come into a Bethesda Home.

This fund is likely to be exhausted before the end of this year, and as the need for financial support is as great as ever, it has been agreed to continue this fund. It is proposed that all private donations and chapel collections will from now on, unless specified otherwise, be deposited in this fund and used specifically to assist residents who cannot meet the full costs of their care. Until now, all donations have been placed in the General Fund unless requested otherwise. We hope this proposal will meet with the continued approval of our many loyal supporters, but if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at the General Office.

Since the end of the year, occupancy in the Brighton Home has remained stable, and occupancy at the Studley Home has increased by two. Sadly, however, the Harpenden Home has continued to see a decline in occupancy, which now stands at eleven residents. The Homes have historically seen an ongoing cycle of higher and lower occupancy, but this is the greatest continuing reduction in occupancy that any of the Homes have seen to date. The current lack of demand for our services, which is particularly marked at this time at the Harpenden Home, is no doubt an outcome of a range of factors, all of which have been mentioned in the written report, but the main cause must be the reducing number of elderly people who now attend our chapels. Each of the Homes continues to have short-stay residents, and this is encouraged as it can be a great help to families after, for example, a spell in hospital.

The reduced occupancy and loss of income that this gives rise to, places a significant burden on our financial reserves, which, whilst currently strong, are finite, so the Committee and management teams are concentrating on reducing expenditure as far as is practical without compromising safety or the standard of service Bethesda provides.

There have been no Care Quality Commission inspections since the end of the year. When they do occur, the inspectors will be using the new inspection regime that I spoke about in last year’s report. They will be looking for a good quality of care in five key areas. These are: that the Homes are safe, that they are effective in providing a good quality of life, that they are caring in the way help is given, that they are responsive to people’s needs, and are well-led. We fully expect all the Homes to do well when the inspections take place.

A very important aspect of our Homes is our Christian ethos and the provision of a place to live based on Christian principles in accordance with the biblical teachings set out in the Gospel Standard Articles of Faith. This is the very reason for the existence of the Bethesda Homes. The Committee remains committed to maintaining our unique position through upholding our existing rules of admission and by ensuring that all staff are fully aware of, and live up to, the high standards of conduct required. The life of the three Homes is centred around morning and evening worship and the services from a local Gospel Standard chapel. For residents unable to attend chapel, the services are relayed to the Homes and are listened to in the lounge or individual rooms. The staff are encouraged to join with the residents at these times when able.

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. Our Home



Managers have very great responsibilities, and we are thankful for the appointment of Mrs. Debbie Scott in November as Manager of the Harpenden Home. We wish to thank as well the Home Support Groups and other volunteers that give so much support to the Homes in many different ways.

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. Scott for the report and for all that he continues to do for Bethesda. He asked if there were any questions. Dr. R.W. Woodhams (Pastor, Jireh, Haywards Heath) asked the following question:

DR. WOODHAMS: Mr. Chairman, my question relates to the objectives of the Charity, and as has been referred to in the report regarding the low occupancy of the Homes. Recently a member of our church had cause to apply for entering the Bethesda Homes and she could not be accepted. She was in hospital and the hospital could not discharge her safely to return to her own home. Her only infirmity is dementia. Now she is in another home where there is a long list of things that she cannot enjoy, which you have referred to as the excellent facilities, and Mr. Scott has referred to as the Christian ethos. So things she cannot enjoy now: she does not have the opportunity easily to attend one of our chapels; she does not have the opportunity to receive the services by relay; she does not have the daily readings of a minister or members of our chapels with their prayers; she does not have the regular visitors of churches of the same faith and order who regularly come into the Homes day by day, and usually pop round and see various residents; she does not have round her amongst the staff and other residents faces and names and people that she recognises; and if she was in Bethesda she would have those around her with whom she has had communion in our chapels over the years. And there are other things. Given that from now and in future those wishing to enter our Bethesda Homes are increasingly likely to have a diagnosis of dementia, a question in two parts.

Firstly, in the short term what can the Committee do, what measures can they put in place, what extra resources can they provide for the Home Managers so that they do not have to refuse entry to the Homes of our needy older brothers and sisters?

Secondly, in the medium to long term, what are the Committee considering to ensure that with the increasing incidence of dementia, the objectives of the Society will still be met in that most if not all of our needy, aged saints will be cared for appropriately in an appropriate setting which I fully support is Bethesda?

MR. MERCER: That is a complex question, Dr. Woodhams. Our staff do undergo regular training in dementia, but we do have to remember that the Homes are set up as care homes and we have historically only been able to provide a certain amount of care. I think the issue that you have raised is before the Committee from time to time and we will very seriously consider what you have said, bearing in mind the trend you see.

MR. SCOTT: It would be true to say that many – perhaps not most – but many of our residents have a measure of dementia eventually towards the end of their life. I think the care of dementia is very much one of extent. Bethesda in the past has taken a number of residents who would be diagnosed as having

dementia, but it is in a very early stage and they have not become aggressive, which sometimes this develops into. Although I do not know very much about the particular case that Dr. Woodhams referred to, I believe that her dementia had come on quite rapidly and was rapidly getting worse, and perhaps that was the reason why our General Manager decided that it was not appropriate for her to come into a Bethesda Home.

If a home takes residents with more advanced dementia, it does need to be specially registered to do that, and of course the staff do need to be trained, as our Chairman has said. We do need to remember they need to live with other residents, and anyone with very advanced dementia, it could be very difficult to incorporate them into a Bethesda Home which is not specifically geared up to that level of care. It is one thing for a resident in a Bethesda Home to increase in dementia – that is expected to some degree – but to bring someone into a Bethesda Home while they already have fairly advanced dementia is another matter entirely and something which the CQC would not look favourably on.

But it is an important question. I think Bethesda residents on the whole are coming into Bethesda later than they once did, so we must expect more residents who have various stages of dementia, and I think it is something the Committee must once again give attention to and see if there is anything we can do. Obviously we never like to turn away any resident and there must have been a good reason why that was done.

A further question was asked by Mr. A.W. Rayner (Bethel, Luton).

MR. RAYNER: I would like to ask a question as a friend of Bethesda. Given the unsustainable nature of the finances, I would like to ask if the Committee would be prepared to set up a small working party, perhaps of independent people, to take a fresh look to see if there are any different bases for the financial model, and in particular perhaps how can Bethesda be made more attractive to people that are not so bad that they need 100% care as is offered in such an excellent way by the Homes at present, but people that can perhaps buy in to different levels of care and can perhaps start off independently living in a flat and then move on to different stages of care. So the question really is: would the Committee be prepared to set up a little working party, perhaps give them a period to come back with some optional recommendations to see how Bethesda can be made more sustainable, and I would also suggest that the consultations would be carried out amongst, perhaps around the three Homes, and anybody connected with those Homes so that any ideas could be put forward.

MR. MERCER: We are always very receptive to any suggestions you may wish to make. We must remember the structure and the way the Homes are operated as care homes. This highlights really the over-capacity we have at the moment and the Committee have very much in mind the fact that we have this spare capacity and to what best use it should be put. The future demand for places is not likely to increase, and I think we shall have to consider in due time whether there can be some new arrangement whereby we have something like the Pilgrim Homes have where there is warden care. But it is a major step, a major reconstruction which obviously will involve huge financial outlay and complete reorganisation, but we will certainly keep this under review.

There were no further questions, and it was then proposed by Mr. T.J. Parish (Bethel, Luton) and seconded by Mr. D.J. Lawson (Clifton) that the Report and Accounts of the Gospel Standard Bethesda Fund for 2014 be approved and adopted. This was carried *nem con*.

The Chairman then stated that the retiring members of Committee, Mr. M.G. Bailey, Mr. T.H.W. Scott and Mr. M.O. Wiltshire had offered themselves for re-election. Mr. Scott announced that 236 ballot papers were issued to subscribers, of which 180 were returned. All three members had received at least 89% of the votes cast, and had therefore been re-elected for a further three years.

MR. MERCER: The confidence and support of our subscribers and friends is much appreciated. You have the Committee's assurance that they will, with the Lord's help, seek to fulfil the duties and responsibilities they carry by virtue of their office. I am sure that it is well recognised that the Committee has to deal with commercial pressures and demands of the present day in the light of our denominational responsibilities and the principles upon which Bethesda is founded. They seek an interest in your prayers for much needed wisdom, grace and understanding in the present situation.

Thank you very much for your attendance. This brings to the conclusion the Annual General Meeting this year.



*The following has been supplied since the Meeting by the Bethesda Chairman, Mr. H. Mercer*

The questions put at the Annual General Meeting were not anticipated and it is hoped that the following statement will supplement the replies given.

Our Bethesda Homes are regulated by the Care Quality Commission and are registered as residential care homes. When an applicant wishes to come into Bethesda, they are assessed to ensure that Bethesda is able to provide completely for all of their needs. Nobody is refused unless their needs are beyond the parameters of the facilities that Bethesda provides, which are governed by our registration as care homes. Bethesda is not able to help in cases of severe dementia under its present registration, but the Committee has considered and will look again into the possibility of extending Bethesda's registration.

With regard to supervised living, the Bethesda Homes are not in their present form suitable to provide this facility, and any change would involve substantial capital cost and redevelopment of the buildings. Our constitution provides for the care of the sick and infirm of our denomination, and all our activities must fall within Bethesda's objectives. The Committee is seriously concerned about the spare capacity, particularly at Harpenden, and will examine any options that fall within those objectives.

## THOUGHTS ON THE SONG OF SOLOMON

*By Grey Hazlerigg*  
(Continued from page 151)

*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.” There is sometimes a difficulty in deciding whether in particular parts of this Song the Lord Jesus speaks to the church or the church to Him. This has led to some diversity of interpretation; but where the analogy of faith is observed, though unity of opinion, even in these points, is desirable, it is not of such vital importance that God’s people need quarrel with one another. Surely in these matters a due consideration of our exceeding liability to mistakes and our many infirmities should free us from a proud, positive or scornful spirit.

Some persons may be inclined to consider the words of the text as spoken by the church to the Lord Jesus, and though the writer disagrees with them, because unable to see that they so readily admit of that interpretation as of the one he himself inclines to, he would desire to pay every respect to this view, which seems to have been in Mr. Toplady’s mind when he wrote those sweet words:

“Speak, Saviour; for sweet is Thy voice;  
Thy presence is fair to behold.  
I thirst for Thy Spirit with cries  
And groanings that cannot be told.”

For our own part, as an interpretation, we prefer to look upon the words as the address of the Lord Jesus to the church, and designed to encourage the poor, diffident, trembling child of God to look unto Him and be saved, to pray unto Him and be happy. The text, in fact, seems a continuation of the previous address, and appears to indicate that the former, sweetly-encouraging expressions had failed thoroughly to assure the poor believer’s heart. Hence the needs-be of further words of sweetness.

“O My dove, that art in the clefts of the rock.” In examining the verse we find four prominent things:

1. The *emblem used* to characterise the person spoken to.
2. The *situation of the child of God*, as indicated by the expressions: “clefts of the rock”; “secret places of the stairs.”

3. *The sweet invitation*: “Let Me hear thy voice.”

4. *The encouragement*: “For sweet is thy voice” etc.

1. The *emblem used*: “O My dove.” The dove was one of the clean birds, according to the law of Moses, and so is designed to represent here the believer’s purity as in Christ, and by His Spirit. The child of God is

seen first of all by God the Father in the Person of Christ, and hence is perfectly fair in His fairness, comely in His comeliness: "Thou art all fair, My love." Also the new creature formed in the soul by the Holy Spirit is altogether fair and spotless in the likeness of Christ. Hence we see the fitness of the emblem of a dove.

But again. Here we have an indication of the oneness of the child of God with Christ, inasmuch as the dove, under the law, was evidently used in the sacrifices as a type of Christ; so unity to Christ, resemblance unto Christ, and purity in Christ are all set forth in this emblem. But here the tried, exercised heart may give way to despondency, because conscious of so much inward impurity. "'Can ever God dwell here?' What of dove-like purity is in such a heart as mine?" The fact is, a sighing under a sense of impurity within is a good sign of a principle of purity, but we can seldom take very great consolation from these negative signs.

So to proceed. The dove being one of the fowls of the air may show us that there is a something in the child of God which at least flutters heavenward. Grace is a heaven-born and to-heaven-returning principle. Nature is of the earth, earthy; grace is from above and heavenly. Hence the poet sings:

"I was a grovelling creature once,  
And basely cleaved to earth;  
I wanted spirit to renounce  
The clod that gave me birth.

"But God has breathed upon a worm,  
And given him from above  
Wings such as clothe an angel's form,  
The wings of joy and love."

Here there is the wing of the dove according to the promise: "Though ye have lien among the pots" – been slaves in Egypt – "Yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold." A sweet word! God's people with wings given to their souls by the Spirit, and with the Sun of an eternal righteousness adorning them as with feathers of gold, shall mount up in spirit unto God.

But here, again, the child of God may, through a want of spiritual judgment, wrongly conceive of his state and, because conscious of a sad, earthward tendency in the old nature, overlook the contrary workings of the new, and say, "Ah! There is nothing of this emblem about me. Earthly, sensual, devilish, where in me is the wing of a dove?" The heart flutters with desire, and mounts up on favourable occasions, but is often borne down with opposite tendencies. Hence the deeply-burdened groan and sad discouragement.

But come; the emblem shows something more. It indicates danger. Many are the fierce enemies of the dove which seek to make a prey of it, and many indeed are the foes of the child of God, and of the life of God, the dove-like principle, which is in him. Satan and all the powers of darkness, those fowls of the air, those eagles and hawks, hunt for the precious life. The world and the things thereof, acted upon by the powers of darkness, do the same, for the whole world lieth in the wicked one, and the whole fashion thereof is against the life of God. Hence the precept: "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed." Inbred corruptions are perpetually, as sins which do most easily beset us, warring against the divine new creature in the soul. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit." There is a perpetual opposition. The carnal principle incessantly aims at the life of the new man of grace in the soul.

Well then, in respect of innumerable foes and dangers, the child of God is well represented by the emblem of a dove. O it is a miracle that we are kept alive from day to day, and preserved to the heavenly kingdom, especially when we consider another thing denoted by the emblem, helplessness, weakness, defencelessness, so far as the poor dove goes. What can a feeble dove do against hawks, eagles and nets of the fowler? What can a poor child of God do against sin, and world, and Satan? He feels his own weakness, and hence, if he loses sight of the strength of Israel, he falls a prey to innumerable fears, and trembles like a dove "out of the land of Assyria." Here, then, we see how the emblem comes down to our weakness and fears; how the Lord Jesus, in the use of it, condescends to our low estate, speaks home to our fearful feelings, and cheers our hearts with a word of sweet affection when He cries, "O My dove."

But dwell a moment on the word, "My." It is as though He took the poor, trembling creature into His bosom, and claimed it as His own to love, and defend, and provide for. O sweet grace, inimitable tenderness in the Redeemer!

We may, perhaps, illustrate this by the sweet anecdote of the heathen, into whose bosom a poor dove, pursued by a hawk, fled, and trembling forgot its fear of man whilst driven by a greater terror, its deadly enemy. And how did the heathen deal with his poor captive, or rather, poor petitioner? "O," said he, "think not that I will betray thy confidence, poor bird! Live with me; thou shalt be safe; my house thy home, and thy enemy mine." Could a heathen thus deal with a poor bird, and shall Jesus betray those poor souls who seek a refuge in Him from sin, world and Satan, those dreadful enemies? O never let it be thought, never let it enter the imagination of the poor, trembling seeker unto Jesus that the God of love and truth and tenderness will be a betrayer of his confidence.

Besides, the word “My” is designed to be a most assuring word. It is as though the Lord answered the great question of the heart: “But am I His? All is well if Christ is mine and I am His.” This the Lord Jesus answers by a word of appropriation: “Thou art Mine, ‘My dove.’” The soul that seeks Jesus truthfully is really His, even when unable to realise this blessedness. The poor sinner, flying for refuge to Jesus, belongs to Christ as much as the most assured believer; but then there is not in the one case the same joy of salvation as in the other.

Now, to meet with the joy and peace-destroying fears of the weak believer, Christ says, and He must be true and should be credited, “My dove.” Lord, enable us to listen to Thy voice, and turn away our ears from listening to the voices of unbelief and Satan. In this very petition, too, we are met by the wording of the text, as though Christ, considering and pitying our spiritual deafness, and determining to make us hear, cried, with a mingled voice of tenderness and power, “O My dove!” Are not, then, these words, containing the emblem used to represent the child of God, full of a wonderful and most suitable sweetness?

*(To be continued)*

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### BOOK REVIEW

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**Forty Years in the Wilderness**, by John Chandler; hardback; 288 pages including colour photos; price £12; published by Gospel Standard Trust Publications, and obtainable from the Harpenden bookroom and agents, and from Christian bookshops.

This is a new and complete edition of a book long out of print. As a young man John Chandler emigrated to Australia with his parents and a group of members from a Strict Baptist chapel in Brighton. In a characteristically-honest and interesting account, he goes on to tell of his life as a pioneer in the state of Victoria from the 1850s onwards. We have a rare first-hand description of the life of an “ordinary” settler, his hardships and extraordinary fortitude, all written in a delightfully artless fashion.

Footnotes, newly supplied in this edition (and extensive to a fault), do a good job of supplying the geographical or historical background to some passages otherwise unclear to an English reader. It is to be desired, however, that somewhat more of the contemporary Particular Baptist context were provided instead of some of the secular historical detail. Chandler was connected with the beginnings of Zion Chapel, Hawthorn (Melbourne), and the doctrine which remains represented today also at Ebenezer Chapel, Ryde (Sydney). His own account of the Lord’s inward teaching is fully given, and some sobering lessons drawn from observations of church life.

The old adage that truth is stranger than fiction is exemplified by this book, and Chandler’s remarkable experiences may be read with profit and pleasure by all ages from teenage years upwards.

Jeremy Roe, Ossett

## CURIOSITY *VERSUS* THE ONE THING NEEDFUL

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Inquire not what I think of this,  
 Or that, which some pretend to show;  
 But, what's my hope of future bliss –  
 The all-important thing to know?

Of what avail, could I unfold  
 The number saved from endless woe,  
 Then find at last I'm not enrolled,  
 But that I never cared to know.

Could I to carnal minds explain  
 (What God has not seen fit to do) –  
 Why moral evil tainted man,  
 And nothing safer aim to know –

And could I all the mysteries solve  
 Of providence, as seen below;  
 What good to me would that involve,  
 If God in Christ I've yet to know?

Or could my penetration scan  
 All heights above and depths below,  
 But still unchanged the inner man –  
 'Twere better even not to know.

I'd rather sit at Jesus' feet,  
 And in His lovely image grow;  
 To His divine command submit,  
 And seek His gracious will to know.

Then gaze on His mysterious cross,  
 Till flames of pure devotion glow;  
 My fond acquirements count but loss  
 The *one thing needful* Christ to know.

Be this my theme in life and death,  
 All else I safely may let go –  
 To sing with my last dying breath –  
 I'm saved! That's all I need to know.

J. Lingley, 1876

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Ah souls, if your knowledge does not put the world under your feet, it will never put a crown of glory upon your heads. The church that is clothed with the sun, and has a crown of stars upon her head, has the moon under her feet (Rev. 12. 1).

*Thomas Brooks*



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
JULY 2015

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

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THE OLD PATHS? OR THE STATUS QUO?

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The *Gospel Standard* has always contended for the old paths, wherein is the good way, and walking therein (Jer. 6. 16). But we have begun to discern a confusion between this (a gracious exercise) and a desire just to maintain everything as it is: the status quo.\* There is a difference – just as there is a difference, a vital difference, between predestination and fatalism.

Are we then contending for change? Most certainly not. “Meddle not with them that are given to change” (Prov. 24. 21). But we can see a danger. What do we mean? A bad habit can come in, almost unobtrusively, unnoticed. Perhaps during the last days of a godly pastor or deacon, in his weakness, things have become lax. Or a long-standing minister, who has become a close friend of the congregation, has changed his views, and a measure of error is creeping in. A loved member, who has turned away, has never been lovingly visited, corrected and, if needed, disciplined. But things must always go on as before. People must not be offended. The equilibrium must not be upset. This is what we mean by merely maintaining the status quo. A clear example is the important matter of pastors. Many are not concerned about having one simply because they have never had one.

Sometimes it can be in pride. Sometimes people do not want to be contradicted; they want their own way. Sometimes it is even condoning error.

Of course, there have even been absurd situations where a church has refused to improve its facilities, even quoting, “Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.”

We ourselves have occasionally been amazed in finding some most gracious and seemingly well-ordered church having a “blind spot” – but in no way willing to change. The ark has not to be set on a new cart! This is the very point which J.C. Philpot writes on (*G.S.* 2014, page 312) in a letter to his brother-in-law, G.S.B. Isbell. Isbell was burdened about putting something right in his church, but Philpot warned him it would not be easy!

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\* Status quo = keeping everything exactly as it is, unchanged.

As Matthew Henry once wrote: “We are apt to be governed very much by precedent.”

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Having written all this, it may come as a surprise when we say that our desire is that the status quo of the *Gospel Standard* should be maintained. (Of course, in its vital principles – not its mechanical details!) In fairness, we believe that there was a marked change that took place in the spirit of this magazine when J.K. Popham became Editor in 1905. There had even been accusations of fatalism in the 1890s – but Mr. Popham established the *Gospel Standard* as a Christ-exalting magazine in which in all things He must have the pre-eminence. This was lovingly followed by Mr. Gosden. We have been honoured to be the Editor for a quarter of its 180 years’ existence, and have humbly sought to follow in their steps. It must always be essentially a *spiritual* magazine to reach the souls of the living family of God.

So we hope this status quo *can* be maintained! Why? Because we believe *our status quo and asking for the old paths are one and the same thing*. But what are the old paths, wherein is the good way?

1. The glorious doctrines of free and sovereign grace as displayed in the gospel.
2. The Person and finished work of Christ as the one thing needful.
3. The vital necessity for the Holy Spirit’s work in a personal, saving knowledge of the truth.
4. The necessity of a life, walk and conversation worthy of the gospel and separate from the world; no lowering of the standard.

To God be the glory for ever and ever.

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### “COME UNTO ME”

*By J.K. Popham, 1924*

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

There are many apparently good reasons why we should not come, rising from what would appear to be humility, and a justifying of God, but they are not good reasons. The fact is, it is not true humility. No. And when we think and feel that we are too vile to come, we set up something against the Lord Jesus, who has said, “Come”; not, “Come, if this or that is found within you,” but, “*Come burdened with sin and guilt; come labouring for nought, wearying yourself in the fire; come.*”

It would also be good for us if we could consider *the love that issued this invitation*, infinite love. No depths of guilt in us, no

wickedness done by us, no height of sin, no wanderings here and there, can ever be a hindrance to the Lord’s goodness and mercy. His love is infinite in its depths, in its height, in its length, in its breadth, higher infinitely than all our sinfulness and deeper than all our depravity, wider and longer than all our gaddings and wanderings.

And it were good, if the Spirit should help us to do it, to consider what this love is, to consider, too, the wisdom that is in this invitation. The Lord knew, as He says by Isaiah, what we should be and what we should do from our very birth, that we should go “astray from the womb, speaking lies,” that we should “deal very treacherously,” that we should show ourselves infinitely unworthy. He knew all – that we should have brows of brass, impudent faces, incapable of shame; yet, notwithstanding He wisely took it all in, He said, “Come to Me.”

Consider, too, the *condescension* of this invitation. Will He consort with sinners? Yes, or He will consort with no human being. Many were offended with Him in the days of His flesh, and said, “This Man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them,” but what was an offence to them is salvation to us. He receiveth sinners, He desires, and will have, the society of sinners. So He says to these poor people, “Come to Me. Notwithstanding all you have of sin, all you feel of guilt; notwithstanding all the wickedness of your hearts and all the fears that distract you, come to Me, and I will give you rest.”

Consider, too, the *faithfulness* of this Inviter. He does not repent of issuing this invitation. He “is not a man that He should lie, neither the son of man, that He should repent.” Having said this, He will stand to it; He will never go back from it. What a mercy if we can, through the Holy Ghost, believe this, that the dear Redeemer so speaks: “Come unto Me. O hunger-bitten sinner, O guilty creature, come unto Me, and what you need I will give to you; I promise it, I will give you rest.”

This coming is a venture. “Venturing hard,” sometimes we can say, “to Him we come.” Notwithstanding all that we feel of sin and hindrance, we venture hard to get, if we may, unto Him, get to His footstool. And I believe it is one of those struggles, those labours of faith, that Christ so approves of, of which the Apostle Paul speaks, saying, “God is not unrighteous to forget your work of faith.” Ah, it is a work of faith to credit Christ, when everything in us contradicts Him; a work of faith to go in the face of sense and reason, to fly against every feeling of our hearts, against everything within us, against the voice of a guilty conscience and the leanings and workings of a legal mind; to go against the temptation of the enemy, and venture hard on Him who says, “Come to Me.”

It is a work of faith, a great work too, a blessed work. It is one of those things that God is pleased with: “This is the work of God, that ye

believe on Him whom He hath sent.” A child of God sometimes perceives a little of the greatness of Christ, the greatness of His love in dying: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends”; and the greatness of His pity for poor people: “The poor have the gospel preached to them”; the greatness of His atonement, sufficient for the guiltiest; the greatness of His righteousness, sufficient to justify the ungodly that believeth in Jesus; the greatness of His power, the power of His resurrection, sufficient to raise a sinner from the grave, to take him out of the dust, lift him off the dunghill, and set him with princes; and the greatness of His compassion, when a sinner, seeking to come, stumbles, and falls, and fears. Faith now and again will get a view of Him, and encourage a sinner mightily against all opposition. “Come to Me, come to the great and living God incarnate. Come to Me whose love brought Me from My throne to the cross, to the shame and the ignominy of death. Come to Me now seated on My Father’s throne,” the glorious, high throne which from the beginning has been “the place of our sanctuary.” Does not our faith see this blessed One sometimes? If it is so, then we do of a sweet necessity come to Christ; we cannot keep away from Him.

Consider for a moment what the *attraction* of Christ is. I am fond of that word *attraction*, as it is applied to the Lord Jesus. Attraction is a force, greater, in this particular case, than all the forces of opposition that can be brought to bear upon a sinner. Attraction is a drawing influence, like a threefold cord cast around a sinner: “I drew them with cords of a Man, with bands of love.” The “cords of a Man” are the suitableness of the Man Christ Jesus; the “bands of love” are the bands of His eternal love to sinners for whom He gave Himself. “I drew them.” Notwithstanding all our hesitation and fear, reasoning and sinking, is there not sometimes an attraction of Christ in His suitableness, in His greatness, in His graciousness, in His compassion, in His intercession, in His precious blood? Is there not something that says in your heart, “Go as you are. If you tarry till you are better, you will never go at all”? that says, “Christ is greater than sin, His blood is greater than guilt, His grace is greater than all your depravity. Come needy, come loathsome, come guilty; come as you are, poor and wretched”?

There is an attraction in Christ; may we feel it. He is suitable to us. If bread is suitable to hunger, if water is suitable to thirst, restoration to a sick person, strength to a weak person, then Christ is suitable to us. Yes, in every regard He is suitable to us. “I am come,” says He respecting His sheep, “that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”

It is to be observed that He is great in all these His sayings, that He means them, that they contain more than we can apprehend, that they

come from Him who is “the God of all grace” and goodness and truth. “Consider Him,” says the apostle, “lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.” “Consider Him” who came from heaven to earth, who went to the cross and into the grave; consider His love, consider His merit, His power, His goodness; consider Him. Consider how suitable He is, how great He is. Consider that He has the keys of hell and of death, that He lives for evermore “after the power of an endless life.” And then, when we consider by faith these truths concerning Him, let us put ourselves before ourselves, so to speak, and consider our own cases. Our sins are finite; our wants are countable to Him, though we cannot count them; our transgressions are not as much as His obedience; our ignorance is not as much as His wisdom, and our weakness is nothing to His power. “Consider Him.” What a Christ we have! Could we but know Him!

“O could we but with clearer eyes  
 His excellencies trace,  
 Could we His Person learn to prize,  
 We more should prize His grace.”

All that a good, wise, loving God could give, all that infinite wisdom could contrive, all that a determination, a decree, of the I AM THAT I AM could be on the side of a sinner, is in the Lord Jesus. Everything – “the fulness of the Godhead bodily,” the good pleasure of God, “the goodwill of Him that dwelt in the bush” – everything is in the Person of Jesus Christ. And He stands, as it were, in the midst of His disciples. He looks on them and says, “Come to Me, bring your cases to Me, fall before Me, make known to Me your wants. Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.” Brethren, why entertain, as we do, the unbelief of our nature, rather than seek to walk according to the hymn:

“Yield not, then, to unbelief;  
 Courage, soul, there yet is room;  
 Though of sinners thou art chief,  
 Come, thou burdened sinner, come”?

A great Object is before us. I love an objective religion the more, the older I grow. We must have an Object for faith, a ground to stand on, a God to go to, a supply to draw from. An objective religion is the one the Scripture teaches. “Come to Me. I AM THAT I AM, I am the God of grace.”

This objective religion also brings a subjective experience, and I would a little trace this out in the promise that is in the text: “*And I will give you rest.*” Rest is a beautiful thing naturally. A mind at rest is one of the greatest of feasts. Contentment with such things as we have in the providence of God is a continual feast. “Be content with such things as ye have.” Contentment in your home, in the bosom of your family, how

beautiful it is! Now if it is so sweet to have natural rest, what is it to have rest in the soul, rest in the conscience, rest respecting your interest, rest in the Lord?

I would notice, first of all, *rest in the conscience*. Conscience is a faculty given us in our creation. When quickened by the Holy Ghost, it moves Godward; its life is Godward. It is God's friend, for it speaks for Him. It says in us, "He is right, and you are wrong; His judgments are right, your ways are wicked." It is our friend. It tells us that if we die without pardon, we must be lost. O listen to conscience! It will disturb us when it is burdened with guilt, when we have committed sin in the heart, if in no other way; it will disturb us when we nourish any iniquity, any base thought, any proud project, any wrong way. When we neglect this Book, it will tell us of it; when we neglect prayer, it will tell us of it; when we hate a fellow creature, it will tell us that is murder; when we hate God, it will tell us that we are guilty of Deicide to the utmost of our power. So conscience is a very disturbing thing where the life of God is.

How can this conscience, active towards God, justifying Him, active toward ourselves, condemning ourselves, have rest? Why, *by the precious blood of Jesus Christ*. Turn to that beautiful passage: "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Now I do not think it possible for a sinner to have a sweeter rest in his soul than the forgiveness of all sin made known to him. "Having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us ... nailing it to His cross." O this is blessed rest that Christ gives! Conscience says it is well when the blood of Jesus speaks peace. All shed blood has a voice. The shed blood of Abel cried for vengeance; the blood of Christ "speaketh better things than that of Abel." The blood of Christ speaks pardon to the guilty, and cleanses the polluted; conscience loses its burden, ceases all labour to remove guilt; it perceives guilt is gone. The blood of Christ, the Son of God, cleanses from all sin.

"I will give you this rest," says the Lord Jesus. Poor seeker, have you waited long for it? Wait on. I know there is no case to be found on earth, and never will be, of a sinner seeking through grace the forgiveness of his sins, and missing, and dying without it. It cannot be. "Seek, and ye shall find," is the great word of Christ. And when the soul gets this forgiveness, it has sweet contentment. God is the sinner's Friend, and the sinner is the friend of God. God is his end; God is his delight. He answers to that word, "Delight thyself also in the Lord."

And in this rest there is thankfulness. Who can bless God enough for a purified conscience? Who can bless the Lord enough when he feels his sins are put away? Though he searches for them, he cannot find them, for the Lord has cast them all into the depths of the sea.

Perhaps some are saying, “We wish we knew this.” Well, I can say this to you, as a poor, unworthy minister of the Lord Jesus, that if this is the great object of your search, you will not go out of the world until you have found it. God has said it: “He that seeketh findeth.” Press on.

“Urge thy claim through all unfitness,  
Sue it out.”

The Lord help you to press your case, confess your sins, deplore your condition, wait at His footstool, and He will one day say, “Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.” Blessed be God for the forgiveness of sins, as it is preached in the Scriptures.

There is, then, *rest for the affections*. We must have an object, a centre. If we are right, God is that Object, that Centre: “I am the Lord thy God.” The church says, “My Beloved is mine,” and so dear was He to her, so precious was His presence when she had it, that she charged the daughters of Jerusalem not to awake Him nor stir Him up. Their language is in heart, “Disturb not my peace; let me enjoy Him while I have Him.” What an Object for our affections to rest on! Christ is first and last, “Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending,” saith He Himself.

“I will give you *rest*” in your troubles, and that is expressed by the psalmist: though the earth be removed, though the mountains are moving away from us, though there are disturbances of every kind, we will not fear. Now says the Lord, “Be still, and know that I am God – that I am a sovereign God. I have your interests at heart; I have your things at My disposal; all things are in My hand. Be still.” And “when He giveth quiet, who then can make trouble?” When the Lord gives us power to commit everything into His hand, who can disturb us for the time being? The devil may say, “You will never get this tangle put straight; the Lord is against you.” But while the power of God is upon us, we can say, “I am in His hand; I have committed my case to Him. He has taken it up, and I shall not be confounded.”

And here are one or two points that are very observable and sweet when felt. One is the *blessed submission* of our hearts to the will of God in our present circumstances. It is great to submit to God. I would be glad some days to submit. I know the sweetness of it, when there is no will but God’s that we choose. It is not the destruction of our will; it is the subjugation of it, suppling it sweetly with grace, giving us to realise that the will of God is the best will, and we choose it; we choose to walk

in the way He has appointed for us, though it be rough, difficult, and in some ways apparently impossible. That is rest, sweet rest in trouble.

“Be still, my heart, these anxious cares  
To thee are burdens, thorns and snares.”

But when we can say, “My heart is still, it is fixed, God’s will is my choice, God’s way is the best, His disposal of me is the best. I should destroy myself if I were left to myself” – and so be still, this is rest in the Lord. May the Lord give it us.

Circumstances are painful often. Outwardly things may be worse with us than they are; but there is a point of rest, a Centre, a Shelter, a Hiding-place. There is a will divine, straight, wonderful, and good for the saints of the Most High. And He who is that only One to the Lord’s people, who loves them and cares for them, says, “Come, My people, come to Me, and I will give you rest, rest in Myself.” He gives rest in trouble. Submission to the holy will of God is a great thing.

He will give rest to your faith *with respect to the future*, and faith then will speak in our hearts and prophesy good concerning us. It is a great thing for faith to rest in her only Object and Centre and End, to say, “It will be well with me whatever comes; whatever temporal changes and troubles and necessities come upon me and press me, it will be well with me.” This is set forth in the Scripture where faith says, “This God is our God for ever and ever, and He will be our Guide even unto death.” And again, “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.”

Ah, faith has a direct look again and again to this blessed One, the Lord Jesus. This God Incarnate, “*This* God is our God for ever and ever, and He will be our Guide even unto death.” What a wonder! Who overcame death? Christ. Who follow Him as overcoming death? His people. Says Paul, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” If we get hold of this in the power of the eternal Spirit, it will strengthen our hearts greatly, so that we shall not fear tomorrow, although we do not know what tomorrow will bring forth. We shall be enabled to say, “If the Lord will, we shall live, and we will do this or that.” We shall not be too much disturbed; we shall be enabled to follow this scripture: “Be careful for nothing, but in everything 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.” Isaiah has the same thing: “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee.” And He can do it, because with Him is everlasting strength.

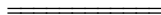


“I will give you rest.” What it cost Christ to give this rest we shall never fully know. It has in it everything that we can need. “I will give you rest in Myself, rest in My blood, rest in My righteousness, rest in My promise, rest for ever and ever.” Now the dear Saviour speaks to us who seek His face in this gracious word: “Come unto Me” – I will have your society, I will have your case, I will take your burden; I will carry it, and I will carry you to the very end. I will give you rest.

And one word more. This rest runs *through time into eternity*. It is not only for a few days here, but in itself it is unchangeable, and it runs into eternity, a boundless ocean. And although we can only see a little, as God opens it to us, of the land which is very far off, only a little of the infinite extension, the infinite fulness of the Lord Jesus, the King in His beauty, yet faith now and again gets that glimpse that is promised, and sees an eternity of bliss, an eternity of rest. “For 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” (Rev. 7. 17). And when a poor, guilty wretch is led by the Holy Ghost to the Lord Jesus, and receives from Him the promised rest of the gospel in pardon, in justification and sanctification, rest in respect of providence, rest in the holy will of God, rest so as that there is sweet contentment and satisfaction, that is a forerunner of what is to come; and that which is to come is better than all, though it is not something different.

Peace in the conscience by the blood of Christ is that which we shall have for ever and ever, not something different, only that same peace extended like a river, ever full and ever flowing. This is to run into eternity. And I have thought, that the “living fountains” are glorious emanations from God Himself, that will eternally satiate every soul there, that will fill the whole of the redeemed with unspeakable bliss, and that they will see, and never tire of seeing, the Lamb; that they will serve God in the temple not made with hands, in the light of the Sun that never sets; that they will find God and the Lamb to be both the Temple and the Light of the Sun and everything that is desirable. Every coming of Christ to a sinner brings heaven as to substance; it is in the heart, and it will never die from that heart.

“Come unto Me.” May the blessed Spirit of Christ powerfully enable us to do this, and give us an experience of the promise: “I will give you rest.”



The Physician did die that the patient might live.

John Boys

## THE NECESSITY OF SECRET THOUGHTS OF CHRIST

*By John Owen (1616-1683)*

Let your occasional thoughts of Christ be many, and multiplied every day. He is not far from us; we may make a speedy address unto Him at any time. So the apostle informs us, "Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart" (Rom. 10. 6-8). The things that Christ did were done at a distance from us, and they are long since past. But saith the apostle, "The Word" of the gospel wherein these things are revealed and whereby an application is made of them unto our souls, "is nigh unto us, even in our hearts." That is, if we are true believers, and have mixed the Word with faith; and so it exhibiteth Christ and all the benefits of His mediation unto us. If, therefore, this Word is in our hearts, Christ is nigh unto us. If we turn at any time into ourselves to converse with the Word that abideth in us, there we shall find Him ready to receive us into communion with Himself; that is, in the light of the knowledge of Christ which we have by the Word, we may have sudden, occasional thoughts of Him continually; and where our minds and affections are so filled with other things, that we are not ready for converse with Him who is thus nigh unto us by the Word, we are spiritually indisposed.

So to manifest how nigh He is unto us, it is said that He stands at the door and knocks (Rev. 3. 20) in the continual tender that He makes of Himself and His grace unto our souls. For He is always accompanied with the glorious train of His graces, and if they are not received, He Himself is not so. It is to no purpose to boast of Christ if we have not an evidence of His graces in our hearts and lives. But unto whom He is the hope of future glory, unto them He is the life of present grace.

Sometimes it may be that He is withdrawn from us, so as that we cannot hear His voice, nor behold His countenance, nor obtain any sense of His love, though we seek Him with diligence. In this state, all our thoughts and meditations concerning Him will be barren and fruitless, bringing in no spiritual refreshment into our souls. And if we learn to be content with such lifeless, inaffecting thoughts of Him, as bring in no experience of His love, nor give us a real view of the glory of His Person, we shall wither away as unto all the power of religion.

What is our duty in this case is so fully expressed by the spouse in the Canticles, as represents it plainly unto the minds of believers who have any experience of these things: "By night on my bed I sought Him whom my soul loveth: I sought Him, but I found Him not. I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek Him whom my soul loveth: I sought Him, but I found Him not. The

watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth? It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found Him whom my soul loveth: I held Him, and would not let Him go” (Song 3. 1-4). The like account she gives of herself, and of her behaviour on the like occasion (Song 5. 2-8).

This is the substance of what by this example we are instructed unto. The Lord Christ is pleased sometimes to withdraw Himself from the spiritual experience of believers, as unto any refreshing sense of His love or the fresh communications of consolatory graces. Those who never had experience of any such thing, who never had any refreshing communion with Him, cannot be sensible of His absence; they never were so of His presence. But those whom He hath visited, to whom He hath given of His loves, with whom He hath made His abode, whom He hath refreshed, relieved and comforted, in whom He hath lived in the power of His grace, they know what it is to be forsaken by Him, though but for a moment. And their trouble is increased when they seek Him with diligence in the wonted ways of obtaining His presence and cannot find Him. Our duty in this case is to persevere in our enquiries after Him in prayer, meditation, mourning, reading and hearing of the Word, in all ordinances of divine worship, private and public, in diligent obedience, until we find Him, or He return unto us, as in former days.

It were well if all churches and professors now would manifest the same diligence herein, as did the church of old in this example. Many of them, if they are not hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, cannot but be sensible that the Lord Christ is variously withdrawn from them, if ever they had experience of the power of His presence. Yet are the generality of them far from the frame of heart here described in the spouse, for they are slothful, careless, negligent, and stir not up themselves to enquire after Him or His return unto their souls. So was it with Laodicea of old, so was it with Sardis, and so it is to be feared that it is with many at present. But to return.

Generally, Christ is nigh unto believers, and of a ready access, and the principal actings of the life of faith consist in the frequency of our thoughts concerning Him. For hereby Christ liveth in us, as He is said to do (Gal. 2. 20). This we cannot do unless we have frequent thoughts of Him and converse with Him. It is often said among men that one lives in another; this cannot be but where the affections of one are so engaged unto another that night and day he thinks of him, and is thereby, as it were, present with him. So ought it to be between Christ and believers.

He dwells in them by faith, but the actings of this life in them (as wherever life is, it will be in act and exercise) are proportionable unto their thoughts of Him and delight in Him. If, therefore, we would behold the glory of Christ, the present direction is that on all occasions, and frequently when there are no occasions for it by the performance of other

duties, we would abound in thoughts of Him and His glory. I intend not at present fixed and stated meditations, which were spoken unto before, but such thoughts as are more transient, according as our opportunities are. And a great rebuke it ought to be unto us when Christ hath at any time in a day been long out of our minds. The spouse affirms that ere she was aware, her soul made her as the chariots of Amminadib (Song 6. 12). It so fell out that when she had no thoughts, no design or purpose for attendance on communion with Christ, that she was surprised into a readiness and willingness unto it. So it will be with them that love Him in sincerity. Their own souls, without previous designs or outward occasions, will frequently engage them in holy thoughts of Him, which is the most eminent character of a truly spiritual Christian.

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### **CHRIST'S RESURRECTION THE EVIDENCE THAT GOD IS SATISFIED**

*By Thomas Goodwin (1600-1680). See Review, page 217*

No news would or could be more welcome to sinners than to have a certain and infallible evidence given that their Surety were well come off, and had quitted all, to satisfaction.

Now then to evidence this serveth His resurrection. "Christ is risen." Nothing so sure. Therefore certainly the debt is discharged, and He hath paid it to the full, and so is now without our sin, and fully got clear of it. For God having once arrested Christ, and cast Him into prison, and begun a trial against Him, and had Him to judgment, He could not come forth till He had paid the very utmost farthing. And there is the greatest reason for it, to ascertain us, that can be. For He was under those bonds and bolts, which if it had been possible, would have detained Him in the grave, as Acts 2. 24. The strength of sin, and God's wrath, and the curse against sin (thou shalt die the death) did as cords hold Him, as the psalmist's phrase is. Other debtors may possibly break their prisons, but Christ could not have broke through this, for the wrath of the all-powerful God was this prison, from which there was no escaping, no bail; nothing would be taken to let Him go out but full satisfaction.

And therefore to hear that Christ is risen, and so is come out of prison, is an evidence that God is satisfied, and that Christ is discharged by God Himself, and so is now "without sin" [His people's sin laid on Him], walking abroad again at liberty. And therefore the apostle proclaims a mighty victory, obtained by Christ's resurrection, over death, the grave, the strength of sin, the law (1 Cor. 15. 55, 56), and cries out, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (verse 57). You may now rest secure indeed: "Christ is risen; who therefore shall condemn?"

## THOUGHTS ON LORD'S DAY OBSERVANCE

*By George Rose (1873-1965). See Review, page 215*

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God, in His wisdom and mercy, has granted us one day in seven as a needful rest from the labours of the week, and since New Testament times the people of God have observed the first day of the week – the day that the Lord Jesus rose from the dead – as the one to devote to His worship and service. That man should rest one day in seven is the merciful provision of the beneficent Creator; and, if observed as prescribed in God's Word, is an inestimable blessing, while all infringement of His commandment is detrimental.

The Lord's day should be devoted as far as possible to His worship. "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together" is the precept binding upon all who fear God, and have opportunity to do so. When gracious obedience is rendered to it, and the Lord's presence and blessing are realised, it enables one to say, "For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Psa. 84. 10). A right observance of the Lord's service is very needful, and I wish in love to point out a few things which, if practised, will mar the service of God, grieve the Holy Spirit, and make the worship of God more or less profitless; and I hope you may have grace bestowed to give these few thoughts your serious attention. If we know what is right, very little good will result if it is not reduced to practice.

Never leave work for Sunday that can be done on Saturday. The day does not belong to us, and should not be encroached upon with secular things which, by foresight and method, can be done on another day. Works of necessity and mercy may be done. The Lord Jesus went about doing good on the Sabbath days as well as at other times, and He said, "It is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days" (Matt. 12. 12). All work which can be done with tender conscience and in the fear of God can be done.

As far as in your power, attend the house of God on His day, to worship Him with prayer, praise and attendance on the preaching of the gospel. It is our highest privilege to come where Jesus has promised to be: "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18. 20). Six days are lawfully given to the affairs of this life, to provide for the body, but the things that pertain to God, and the welfare of the soul, are much more important. The things of time pass away, and perish with the using, but the things of God are permanent, and will never pass away. If we worship God in spirit and in truth here, we shall worship Him in heaven for ever. If we have grace here, we shall be received into glory hereafter. The soul that is

quickened by the Holy Spirit wants to feed upon Jesus Christ as the bread of God. The Lord in mercy has said, speaking of His house: "I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread. I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy" (Psa. 132. 15, 16).

Never gossip in the house of God. We should not talk about people or worldly business, on the way to, or in, the house of God, or when going away from the service. This is a fruitful cause of barrenness of soul, because it is grieving to the Holy Spirit. "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few" (Eccles. 5. 1, 2).

We should seek to have our mind instantly centred upon the solemn fact that we are before Him of whom it is written, "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him" (Psa. 89. 7).

As far as possible avoid being late for the opening part of the service. A little perseverance, rising in good time, and method in the domestic arrangements, will prevent the greater part of late coming. We do not know what part of the service will be blessed, and for our own sake, as well as not to disturb the devotions of other worshippers, this should be an incentive to early attendance. It is better to arrive a little time previous to the commencement of the service, so that, if favoured with a spirit of prayer for yourself, for the congregation and the minister, you may seek that the "Word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified," and that, being detached from earthly things, you may be prepared to worship God in the beauty of holiness. After the service, retire quietly to your homes to meditate on what you have heard, and examine your state before God, in the light of the scriptural truth you have heard from the Word of God.

Do not look about the congregation to see who are there, and how they are dressed. Our business should be with God and our own heart, and to that we should attend. Look rather to the cross of Christ, and seek to be clothed with humility, that we may be ready in all things to glorify God. We cannot be devotional unless our minds are fixed upon the Object of our worship; we cannot attend to God when gazing about the congregation. Let us remember what by our presence we profess to be doing, and act accordingly.

Make no visits for pleasure, and give no invitations except such as where conversation and time may be occupied to the glory of God and the edification of our souls.

If in this way, so briefly outlined, we spend the Lord's day, with His blessing it will be a weekly preparation for that blessed eternal Sabbath of rest from sin, and of heavenly, holy service. "And His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads" (Rev. 22. 3, 4).

I hope that you will receive these few lines in the spirit in which they are written.

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## THOUGHTS ON THE SONG OF SOLOMON

*By Grey Hazlerigg*  
(Continued from page 191)

*"O My dove, that art in the clefts of the rock" (chapter 2, verse 14).*

But, 2. We have the *situation*, the locality of the child of God set forth. Here we have two figures used, but no doubt both sweetly harmonising: "The clefts of the rock"; "The secret places of the stairs."

Before we consider these in order, let us just remember the design of the whole address, which is evidently to encourage the poor, trembling and diffident heart, and assure it before the Lord. To bring it sweetly to look and pray to Christ, and that this may be the case, to persuade it of its interest in His love and blood, and that it has even already a part and lot in the Redeemer. These things will help us to enter more sweetly into the figures:

i. *Art in the clefts of the rock.* We know that a rock is the scriptural emblem of Christ. Moses says, "He is the Rock." The psalmist constantly calls the Lord his Rock; and that we may clearly understand that it is the Lord Jesus, or God in Christ, Paul tells us "they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was" – or represented – "Christ." So, then, Christ is the Rock of our text; a rock for firmness as a foundation, and for unchangeableness; therefore the Rock of Ages; a rock of delight, whence the sweet honey of grace flows, whence reviving waters issue, and where the believer stands and sees both his own security and the blessed land afar off which is his eternal inheritance.

But our text speaks of something more; it leads our minds to the "clefts of the rock." Surely the blessed Spirit, who knows how sweet the dying love of Christ is to a believer's heart, designs to lead our minds to Christ's wounds and death when He uses this expression: "The clefts of the rock." One of our poets has blessedly expressed the desires of his brethren's hearts in these words:

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me;  
Let me hide myself in Thee."

And it is indeed in Christ, not merely as He is God, not merely as incarnate, not merely as living a holy, spotless life under the law, but as dying a bitter, violent, accursed death for sinners, that a poor, God-taught sinner finds a refuge.

The dove, then, is in the clefts of the Rock, hidden in Christ's wounded side, finding a refuge in a bleeding Jesus. "But," says the poor, weak believer, "this is the very thing I am principally tried about. It has never been said to me, 'I died for thee'; and I have not been able sweetly to say, 'The Saviour died for me.' True, I think I can say, especially at times, that my whole soul goes forth in longing for this blessedness, nor can I rest satisfied without it, but still I am far from assurance. How can I, who seem so far off, be in the clefts of the Rock?" Poor, trembling one, God help you to listen to Christ. You are, in your soul's desire, as a poor sinner seeking for refuge in Him. You dare not trust to anything but Him. Since your righteousnesses are as filthy rags to you, your only hope must be in Jesus. Nothing but a dying Christ will satisfy your heart and quiet your fears.

Now He in these words tells you where He sees you to be. Whilst you are, through diffidence, which springs from ignorance as to His immense grace, hiding from Him, and almost cutting yourself off, He sees you where your little bit of faith puts you as in His sight, and that is in Him, in the clefts of the Rock. O that you could see yourself where He sees you. Then not only would you be safe as *in*, but happy as knowing yourself to *be in* the clefts of the Rock. The Lord help thee to understand and believe.

ii. "*The secret places of the stairs.*" As to the exactly correct translation of Solomon's words, there may be differences of opinion. We are content to go by the translation as in our Bibles, strongly suspecting that if it does not give the most literal translation, it gives the sense and answers to the design of the Lord in the passage. Some would render it precipices instead of stairs; but then is not the thought the same – precipices, or rock rising above rock, height above height, unto heaven, and stairs?

Here, again, we seem to be led to Christ as the only true and proper way unto the Father and unto heaven. If He is a rock for firmness, He is the stairs for access from earth to heaven. In Jacob's dream He was represented as a ladder from earth to heaven; a ladder whose foot is wherever there is upon earth a poor, tried child of God, a burdened and a praying believer; a ladder whose top is in the highest heavens, the holy of holies, reaching to the midst of the throne of God. In the words of our text we seem to have the same idea – Christ in His Person, incarnation, life, death, in His ascension, grace, offices, in all He is, all He has done, all He has, the way, the sweet way, the only way to God.



And how exactly this harmonises with the views and feelings of even the weak, trembling child of God. That Christ is the only way he does not doubt. He never dreams of getting to God or heaven but by Jesus; by Him he knows his prayers must ascend to God; through Him his blessings must come from God. He has some true faith in the Redeemer, though he often has very many fears to oppose his confidence in himself as in the Redeemer. He fears he may yet be out of the secret of God, that something pertaining to true, vital, saving religion may be wanting in him. He believes, in other words, firmly in the stairs; knows, too, there is a secret of the Lord which is with them that fear Him, longs to be in Christ, and prays to be assured that he is so; yet, contrary to this witness of the Spirit of God within him and the Word of Scripture answering to it, questions his state and condition, and wonders if he is in God.

Now here, then, again the words of our text come sweetly in. They meet his case, answer his fears: "That *art*." So I see thee. This is thy real condition. I am the Yea and Amen, the faithful and true Witness. Let unbelief, men, Satan, say what they will to the contrary, My word shall stand; they shall be found liars, trembling one that *art* in the clefts of the Rock, in the secret places of the stairs.

I think, then, without entering into any nice criticisms, for which we should feel ourselves very unequal, and which perhaps our poorer readers would find very puzzling and unprofitable, we seem to have got at the mind of the Lord in these words, and whilst extracting a little of the honey from them have done no violence to the honeycomb, or wrested from their signification the words we have considered.

3. We now come, in the third place, to notice the *invitation*, or gracious command: "*Let Me see thy countenance, let Me hear thy voice.*" It is perfectly clear that the child of God is supposed to be in too diffident a state of mind, and this is very nearly as hurtful to the soul as an undue degree of confidence. Bunyan, in his *Pilgrim's Progress*, makes Madam Diffidence the wife of Giant Despair, and their dwelling-place is Doubting Castle. This discovers Bunyan's sound, experimental knowledge of divine things, for it is very clear that if we through diffidence stand at a distance from Christ, our souls cannot be in a thriving state, and despondency and despair must be close at hand. If persons are not deeply convinced of sin, and have not some adequate ideas of the majesty, justice and holiness of God, presumption is their danger; but when thus convinced of the infinite glory of God and their own vileness, they are very liable to the other extreme of undue diffidence.

The Lord, then, in the words, "Let Me see thy countenance," encourages the poor, trembling, diffident soul to come unto Him. It is as though He kindly expostulated with the poor, trembling one, and said,

“Why do you hide yourself and keep away from Me? Is not My name full of grace and love? Where can you get supplies but from Me? Where can you hide but in Me? Why shouldst thou be afraid to approach Me? Did I not bear the sins of such as thou art, that thus I might draw all men unto Me? Come, then, poor soul, cast off thy diffidence.” “Look up, O trembling soul, and live.”

There are various veils whereby the countenance of a child of God in a spiritual sense may be covered. The veil of humility. This should never be put off. A child of God should always draw near to the Lord with the sweetest, deepest humility. A sense of unworthiness, of the infinite distance between an incarnate God and a lost man, and of the wonderful condescension of God in allowing a worm of the dust sweet, familiar intercourse with the Holy One, must always be becoming, and the countenance of grace looks loveliest from under such a veil as this. Thus Rebecca veiled herself when she approached to Isaac, and thus Job veiled himself in his near approach to God: “Behold, I am vile”; “I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” So it was with Abraham, the friend of God, and so it ever will be with the saint when duly approaching the divine Majesty.

But then, there is a veil of legality and a veil of undue diffidence, which hide the features of grace, and these are to be cast aside, as Jesus says, “Let Me see thy countenance.” The psalmist David has a word of sweet encouragement in this matter when he writes, “They looked unto Him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.” So it was, so it ever will be, with the humble lookers unto Jesus.

But as the Lord in the one part of the invitation calls the soul out of darkness into His light, out of all hidings from Him to a sweet hiding and taking refuge in Him, so He sweetly invites to prayer: “Let Me hear thy voice.” Many times the soul is pressed down with cares and pregnant with desires, but cannot give utterance to them. The inward sigh, the restless workings of the mind, the groan, being burdened, are the best expressions. There is no power of giving vent to the feelings, and unbosoming the man’s very self to the Lord: “I sigh, but dare not talk.”

So, then, here the Lord encourages to this sweet expression of the feelings in words before Him: “Take with you words, and turn to the Lord.”

“He calls thee to a throne of grace,  
To spread thy sorrows there.”

To tell the Lord our wants, humbly to confess our sins, to show Him the inmost recesses of our souls, as it were, and point out to Him what we feel amiss; to say, “Lord, I feel a most rebellious will; I cannot be Thine so completely as I should and would be. Lord, my heart is entangled in

this snare; these corrupt affections perplex and pain, as well as mislead me." These foxes, small and great, spoil the vines of spiritual life and peace, which have tender grapes. Also to praise Him for all that is good, as well as deplore before Him what is wrong; beseech Him for His free mercy and full forgiveness, and cast ourselves upon His all-sufficient grace. This is a little of the sweet intercourse at times held between the exercised, living soul and God. But it is often hindered and intercepted, not only by other sins, but principally by unbelief and undue diffidence in the exercised soul, and to this in its sweetness the Lord invites: "Let Me hear thy voice."

In the last place, the Lord enforces all this invitation by words of sweet, overpowering encouragement, and when all this is backed by His own almighty power, what can keep the child of God from Jesus, and prevent communion?

4. Then we have these words of *encouragement*: "*For sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.*" At first, the poor child of God, made (under divine teachings) conscious of his infirmities, might say, "This cannot be addressed to me. How can the Lord say, 'Sweet is thy voice,' when I am conscious that this is so far from being the case that my very prayers and praises want sprinkling with Christ's precious blood to gain any acceptance?"

We must, then, briefly consider this. And first, it is to be remembered that the weakest believer is not under the law but under grace; therefore his prayers and praises are not viewed in a legal light, or weighed in legal scales. To satisfy law and justice he must always look to Christ; Christ's prayers, Christ's praises, the bells of the High Priest's garment. There and there only he must expect to find perfection. In Jesus, law, holiness, justice, are perfectly and eternally satisfied. Now then, in respect to the poor, defective believer, only grace reigns. It is grace's estimate, love's valuation, which he has to do with, and here is love's verdict: "Sweet is thy voice." That which to thyself is a mere croaking sound, to Me has the music of heaven about it.

We all know something in natural things of the estimate of love. What parent does not prize the sound of the voice of his own child beyond the most musical voices of others? What lover's heart does not beat at the voice of the object of sincere and pure affection? So it is here. God hears more music in the voices of His own children than in all the other sounds in creation. Jesus' heart is more pleased with the poor utterances of His black yet comely spouse than with the man-admired voices of the finest orators, or the self-delighting prayers of the gayest religionists.

I recollect Bernard [of Clairvaux (1090-1153)] describes himself as, in his own feelings, when he approached to a holy God, like a filthy,

croaking toad creeping out of a stagnant pool. There is much justice in the description, but then this poor, filthy toad, if a child of God, is comely in Christ's comeliness, and has a most sweet voice in the ears of the God that loved him. The fact is, Christ presents the prayers and praises of His poor saints to the Father, as well as inspires them by His Spirit; and therefore, all that is merely of the child of God and the old nature is as though it were not, and only that which is immediately of the Holy Spirit is heard and regarded. Hence, that which, though pure in its origin from the Spirit, becomes polluted as it proceeds from us, returns purified unto God the Father through the blood, righteousness and sweet mediation of the Eternal Intercessor.

This will explain the other branch of the encouragement, so we need not multiply words. As the voice of the spouse is sweet to Christ, so the countenance is comely. Only the visage, as it were, of grace, is seen in the gracious, humbled, believing soul. For acceptance there is always Christ; in Him the child of God is altogether lovely, fairer than angels are; as is said of Moses, fair to God, or divinely fair. In himself there is still the black, unlovely face of nature, but also the fair face of grace; that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, like its Author. Now love sees the latter, and hides its eyes from the former; views to correct indeed and subdue, but sees not to loathe on account of; and, therefore, seeing only the fair face of grace, cries, "Thy countenance is comely."

*(To be continued)*

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### THE LORD'S SACRED HUMANITY

*From J.C. Ryle (1816-1900) on John 4. 6: Jesus weary on the well.*

We should observe in this passage what is said about *our Lord's human nature*. We read that Jesus was "wearied with His journey."

We learn from this, as well as many other expressions in the gospels, that our Lord had a body exactly like our own. When "the Word became flesh," He took on Him a nature like our own in all things, sin only excepted. Like ourselves, He grew from infancy to youth, and from youth to man's estate. Like ourselves, He hungered, thirsted, felt pain and needed sleep. He was liable to every sinless infirmity to which we are liable. In all things His body was framed like our own.

The truth before us is full of comfort for all who are true Christians. He to whom sinners are bid to come for pardon and peace is One who is Man as well as God. He had a real, human nature when He was upon earth. He took a real, human nature with Him when He ascended up into heaven. We have at the right hand of God a High Priest who can be

touched with the feeling of our infirmities, because He has suffered Himself being tempted. When we cry to Him in the hour of bodily pain and weakness, He knows well what we mean. When our prayers and praises are feeble through bodily weariness, He can understand our condition. He knows our frame. He has learned by experience what it is to be a Man. To say that the virgin Mary, or anyone else, can feel more sympathy for us than Christ is ignorance no less than blasphemy. The Man Christ Jesus can enter fully into everything that belongs to man's condition. The poor, the sick and the suffering have in heaven One who is not only an almighty Saviour, but a most feeling Friend.

The servant of Christ should grasp firmly this great truth, that there are two perfect and complete natures in the one Person whom he serves. The Lord Jesus, in whom the gospel bids us believe, is without doubt almighty God – equal to the Father in all things, and able to save to the uttermost all those that come unto God by Him. But that same Jesus is no less certainly perfect Man – able to sympathise with man in all his bodily sufferings, and acquainted by experience with all that man's body has to endure. Power and sympathy are marvellously combined in Him who died for us on the cross. Because He is God, we may repose the weight of our souls upon Him with unhesitating confidence. He is mighty to save. Because He is Man, we may speak to Him with freedom about the many trials to which flesh is heir. He knows the heart of a man. Here is rest for the weary. Here is good news. Our Redeemer is Man as well as God, and God as well as Man. He that believeth on Him has everything that a child of Adam can possibly require, either for safety or for peace.

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### THE OVERRULING HAND OF GOD

*A remarkable episode in the life of Thomas Clough, "The Collier"  
(1817-1879), written by David Smith of Siddal*

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I remember Mr. Clough telling me some years ago of his having to go and preach at some place in the north. The distance from his home was about fifteen miles. He had only three halfpence in his pocket, and therefore had to walk all the way. After he had left home a snowstorm set in, and by the time he had got about seven miles on the road, the evening shades drew on, and the storm was so heavy that it was impossible to get through without being lost in the snow. He therefore made for a farmhouse near some village that lay before him.

He went into the house, and asked for shelter until the storm abated. The good woman of the house, the farmer's wife, said, "Yes; come in

and sit down.” He did so, and after being seated a short time felt faint, and asked the woman if she would sell him a pennyworth of milk. She said, “With pleasure,” and brought it to him in a basin. He then asked her if she would also sell him a half-pennyworth of bread. This was all that remained of his travelling money for the entire journey, but he was to retain so much for the next day, as the good woman said, “I will give you a piece of bread, and you may keep your halfpenny in your pocket.”

“For when the Lord’s people have need,  
His goodness will find out a way.”

When Mr. C. had got his milk and his bread together, he asked the Lord to bless it to the strengthening of his poor body, and the woman looked on with surprise at her guest. When he had eaten it, he looked out at the door of the house, and the storm was still blowing and the snow increasing. He returned to the hearth, and sat down again on his seat, which was a large, old-fashioned piece of furniture like a sofa, or what the Yorkshire people call a “longsettle,” and he said to the farmer’s wife, “Perhaps you would allow me to sit on this couch all night if the storm continues.” She said, “That I cannot promise you at present, but my husband will be in soon, and I will ask him.” Her husband had gone out into the barn to milk his cows and fodder his cattle for the night, but, as his wife said, he soon came in with his milk-cans.

After putting the milk into bowls in the cellar, he came and washed himself, and put on his better clothes, and came and sat down by the fire. His wife then said, “Here is a stranger come in out of the storm for shelter, and he has been asking if he may stay and lodge with us tonight, as it is not fit for anyone to travel in the snow and storm.” Her husband looked at Mr. Clough, and said, “Well, you shall stay with us tonight, for I think you will do us no harm by the look of you.” Afterwards he said to Mr. C., “Will you go with me to our chapel, as we have preaching there this evening?” Mr. C. said, “O yes! I will go with you, with pleasure; but what sort of man is going to preach tonight?” The farmer said, “He is a stranger, coming from a distance, but he is what I call a *milk-and-water* sort of preacher, if you know what that means.” Mr. C. said, “I think I understand what you mean.”

They both went to the chapel and, although a stormy night, the little chapel was full of people to hear the stranger that should have come, but he, as well as Mr. Clough, had been prevented by the storm and the snow. So there was a chapel full of people, but no minister to preach to them. The farmer turned round to Mr. Clough, and said, “Would you have any objection, my friend, to giving out a hymn and praying for us? We are put to the lock.” Mr. C. said, “I will try and do what I can.” So he went into the pulpit, gave out a hymn, and prayed; and then gave out

another hymn; and when that was sung he read a text, and preached from these words: "Ye must be born again." Only a few of the people knew that Mr. Clough was not the man who was appointed to preach; but the thing doubtless was of God. The Lord blessed that preaching to the soul-profit of the people, and to one man in particular, as Mr. Clough told me.

About nine years afterwards, Mr. C. was engaged to go and preach an anniversary sermon about sixty miles away from the same place, and when the service was over in the evening, a poor, thin-looking woman, worn down with labour from attending to a brother of hers who had been confined on a bed of affliction for many months, said, "Will you come with me and see my brother, who is very ill?" Mr. C. went, and as soon as he entered the sick man's chamber, the poor man said, "That's the man! That's the man!" Mr. C. said, "What do you mean, my friend?" The sick man, who had not been able during six months to turn himself in bed, raised himself up in his bed, and said, "You are the man who preached in such a village one stormy night about nine years ago, and that was the time God saved my soul." Mr. Clough and the man wept together, and rejoiced together. "Wonders of grace to God belong." "He must needs go through Samaria."

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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**Pastoral Counsel**, by George Rose, paperback; 145 pages; price £5.00 plus £1.19 postage; published by Gospel Standard Trust Publications, and obtainable from the bookroom or from agents.

George Rose, whose autobiography has recently been republished (see review in the December 2014 *G. S.*), was pastor at Croydon (Tamworth Road) in the years leading up to the Second World War. From 1933 a *Monthly Circular* was issued, primarily for the benefit of the congregation, in which the pastor wrote a message to his flock, and it is these articles which have been gathered together by Mr. James North and republished in this book.

The articles are short (two to three pages), simple and cover a wide variety of subjects. Some are doctrinal, (e.g. The Doctrine of the Eternal Sonship of Christ, God's Sovereignty and Man's Accountability), some are practical (e.g. Thoughts on Lord's Day Observance, [see page 205] The Christian's Holiday), some are topical (e.g. The Christian's Attitude in a National Difficulty). All show the deep concern of a pastor for those under his charge and make a clear stand for the truth. They are not theological treatises, but were written to be a help at a difficult time nationally, and especially set a gracious standard of Christian behaviour.

As each article is independent, the book is one that can be "dipped into" rather than read through.

John A. Kingham, Luton

**Unity in Diversity:** The Sovereign Grace Union, 1914-1939, by Matthew J. Hyde; paperback; 44 pages; price £2.45 plus 74p postage; published by The Huntingtonian Press, and obtainable from 72A Upper Northam Road, Hedge End, Southampton, SO30 4EB.

Years ago we had much to do with the Sovereign Grace Union, first hearing some of their excellent speakers in the late 1940s and speaking regularly for the Union in the 1950s. This well-written, interesting book takes us till just before that, the year 1939.

The Sovereign Grace Union did a remarkable work between the two wars, publishing godly literature, and arranging very profitable conferences. It was responsible for producing the three classic works on the free will controversy: Parks on the *Five Points of Calvinism*; Christopher Ness: *Antidote to Arminianism*; and, Elisha Coles on *The Sovereignty of God*. It united godly men in the Church of England, the Independents and the Strict Baptists.

The annual conferences (lasting two days) produced some excellent addresses by some most gracious ministers. Mr. J.K. Popham preached the annual conference sermon on a number of occasions. These conference sermons by J.K. Popham need no recommendation and have just been published by The Huntingtonian Press (£2.95 plus £1.19 postage). Perhaps the best known Sovereign Grace Union speaker was the well-known A.W. Light. On one occasion we heard him give a remarkable address for the Union on "The Book of Esther."

One great feature of the work of the Sovereign Grace Union was the point of union it provided for Independent chapels, which otherwise had no connection. We ourselves spoke for the Sovereign Grace Union at Fecitt Brow, Blackburn; Wycliffe Chapel, Sheffield; Cave-Browne Church, Ashton-in-Makerfield; Rehoboth Chapel, Pemberton – all Independent chapels (not like the Sussex Independents, but little groups that had been compelled to separate from the Church of England when a godly minister was succeeded by a modernist or a ritualist).

The important point about Dr. Hyde's book is the clear answer he gives to the modern assertion and impression that is quite widely held – that there was little or no standing for Calvinistic truth (the doctrines of grace) during the period between the Wars, and that this was only rectified when The Banner of Truth magazine appeared in 1957. We have been saddened by this contention. There was a wonderful (and extensive) witness by the Sovereign Grace Union. C.J. Farncombe might also be mentioned as the publisher and distributor of free grace literature, and there were many Strict Baptist chapels, who remained faithful to the truth throughout this period, with quite a number with several hundred in their congregations (e.g. Brighton, Luton (Ebenezer), Birmingham, Manchester, and several in the Black Country).

**Faith Seeking Understanding,** by Iain D. Campbell; paperback; 32 pages; price £1.50; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

This little pamphlet is really an exposition of Psalm 73. It deals with the problem of when everything seems to be going right with the wicked and everything going wrong for the child of God. The Psalm answers the problem: "till I went into the sanctuary."



We were rather surprised that a Free Church minister on the Isle of Lewis should not use the Authorised Version – especially that the metrical version of the Psalms at the end should be from *Sing Psalms* version, and not the well-known Scottish psalmody. Somewhat different is that wonderful life of Kenneth Macrae (minister at Stornoway), published by Banner of Truth, and edited by Iain Murray.

**Amy Carmichael**, by Iain Murray; paperback; 174 pages; price £6.50; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

One normally expects a book by Iain Murray to be about someone like Jonathan Edwards – so this is very different. However, we found it profitable, edifying, interesting and humbling.

Amy Carmichael (1867-1951) was a missionary who spent over fifty years in South India, caring mainly for low caste girls and boys.

Amy was an example of the best kind of the old evangelicalism. The great point was devotion to the Saviour and an absolute separation from any kind of worldliness. She was marked by humility, and would never usurp the position of a man.

When there was a tremendous need of help, they were all cheered up by the arrival of a wonderful “evangelical” family. The son was a brilliant young man, a graduate of Cambridge University, and it would seem an ideal helper. But Amy sensed that he was not committed to the full inspiration of Scripture, believing that some of the historical passages need not be accepted as true. This she just would not countenance, and at great cost had to take a stand. (This brilliant young man later became a Bishop.) Amy herself was criticised as bigoted, separatist, etc.

At the end of the book Iain Murray does paint a sad picture. By the 1920s missionary societies began no longer to insist on commitment to inspiration and infallibility, contending that this is a hindrance to evangelism!

Different – but very profitable.

**Christ Set Forth**, by Thomas Goodwin; paperback; 242 pages; price £5.75; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

Thomas Goodwin (1600-1680) was one of the leading Puritan divines. (He is not to be confused with Thomas Godwin of Godmanchester.) He often preached before Parliament, was a prominent member of the Westminster Assembly, Oliver Cromwell’s chaplain and President of Magdalen College, Oxford. Goodwin was J.C. Philpot’s favourite Puritan, esteeming him even above Dr. Owen.

How comes it then that Thomas Goodwin is so little known today? The introduction hints at the answer. The Nichol series of Puritan reprints (from which this work is taken) was a wonderful venture, but the close print and setting out of the text do not make it attractive to modern readers. We must confess that, personally, this is the reason why we have never read much Goodwin.

This lovely paperback with such clear print, small chapter divisions, clear headings and sub-headings, a summary of each chapter at the beginning, remedies all this. This is an outstanding work. First published in 1642, the full title is “Christ Set Forth in His Death, Resurrection, Sitting at God’s Right Hand, and

Intercession as the Cause of Justification, and as the Object of Justifying Faith.” The Discourse is based on Romans 8. 34: “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

This is not an abridgement or modernisation, but all the more valuable as a faithful reproduction of the original text.

The whole stress of this book is the necessity to keep looking to Jesus in dependence for everything, but especially Goodwin in his thesis limits himself to the vital point of looking to Jesus for justification.

We were specially interested in two points:

1. There has been much controversy over the years as to *when* a person is actually justified. Some have called it antinomianism to believe a sinner is justified *before* believing. But Dr. Goodwin is very insistent (especially, for instance, pages 90 ff, 96 ff, 100 ff) that all the elect were justified *when Christ rose from the dead*. He explains the intimate connection between this and justification by faith that follows.

2. Dr. Goodwin, in expounding Romans chapter 6, speaks of baptism as a burial and representation of Christ’s death, burial and resurrection (page 102). He seems to take completely the Baptist position, which is surprising as almost all the Puritans believed in infant sprinkling.

This is a beautiful book with many sacred truths concerning the Lord Jesus – so is very soul-refreshing and profitable.

We wish that many more people would read the godly Puritans, especially our young people. Many say the Puritans are difficult, but Goodwin’s style is quite simple and plain, though he delves into great theological depths. But, as Joseph Hart rightly says, “Join prayer with each inspection!”

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## OBITUARY

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**John Brian Perks** (known as Brian) passed away in hospital on Friday, January 9th, 2015 aged 87 years, after contracting pneumonia a few weeks earlier. He held the office of deacon at Mount Zion Chapel, Watford, from 1963 until its closure in 1991. He and his wife Olive then moved to Lakenheath, where he was a member until 2001. A further move in providence brought them to live in Letchworth Garden City, where they attended Hope Chapel, Stotfold, and to where they transferred church membership. Here Brian was appointed deacon in 2005, an office he faithfully performed until his death.

His own writings record the following:

“I was born into this world of sin on September 6th, 1927 at 49 Priory Park Road in the borough of Kilburn, London. When about two months old, my parents moved to the village of Radlett in Hertfordshire. Here I grew up through childhood, content with the things around me. I was taken by my godly mother to the house of God at Bethel Chapel, St. Albans, and then in 1932 to Mount Zion Chapel,

Watford. I was totally ignorant of the solemn truth, feelingly and savingly, that I was born in sin and shapen in iniquity. I knew these things in my head, being instructed by my dear mother and also in the Sabbath school; but head knowledge will never save a soul.

“Between the ages of twelve and fifteen the Lord left me to go into base sins. If He had dealt with me then I would have been cut off for ever. O the wretchedness and vileness of the human heart – it loves sin, wants not God; is without Him and without hope in the world. I venture to say this: if we are not included in the election of God, and therefore not called out of nature’s darkness and ignorance, we shall never, never get out ourselves, or ever have the least desire to, but will drop into hell at last where hope and mercy can never, never come.

“I left school when nearly fourteen years old and commenced work in the engineering trade. England was then at war with Germany and our work consisted of the manufacture of anti-aircraft gun sights. During this time I was preserved from entering into a gross sin, though I knew it not at the time. I was about the age of seventeen when a young woman of twenty-one sought to entice me into sin, but something prevented me from consenting. The temptation was great but the power of God greater. There was another young woman also employed at this place who sought very persistently to persuade me to go to that den of Satan, the cinema. Although very strong in her persuasion, I would not go, not because I feared God, but I knew it would grieve my mother; and also because, ‘Determined to save *He* watched o’er my path, while Satan’s blind slave I sported with death.’

“I continued going to the house of God on the Lord’s days and sometimes in the week. I was always naturally attentive and held the Lord’s servants in high esteem, sometimes feeling the effect of God’s Word in its truth and reality upon my mind, but nothing in the heart. About one month after my eighteenth birthday, I went to a Wednesday evening service at Mount Zion, Watford, when the Lord’s servant Mr. J. Tomkins spoke of God’s sovereign election of a people. I cannot say there was anything in the service for my soul, but as I walked alone to get the bus home a friend drew near to me and asked if I was seeking after heavenly things, mentioning a few matters in regard to the sermon. I do not remember what I said in reply, but there was no real effect on my heart. We parted company and I boarded the bus. What that journey meant for this poor sinner!

“This blessed Holy Spirit, whose work it is to convince of sin, sent the arrow of conviction deep into my very soul. The journey took half an hour on the bus and then a quarter of an hour walk, and throughout that time my poor, stricken heart could only cry out again and again before that holy heart-searching God, ‘Lord I am a sinner, black and vile. What shall I do, what shall I do! Whither shall I flee to escape the

vengeance due to me?’ I groaned all night before the Lord owing to my dreadful state, begging for mercy, if such there could be for one so base and vile. O the groanings of, ‘Lord, have mercy upon me a sinner.’ I had heard from God’s dear servants of a way of mercy, a door of hope, but feared it was not for me. I continued in this state for some weeks, but the Lord was then pleased partly to lift the burden, although not with any direct word.

“After about one month I was called into the armed forces. O what a state of mind and soul exercise I was in, being called to leave home and the house of God where I now longed to be, if haply I might find something for my soul. I knew not how long I might be away in a hostile land or where I might be called to go, or what company I might be compelled to keep. I was not by nature one to mix with others, and now wanted not the company of the ungodly, nor yet felt fit to mix with God’s dear people.

The day before I left home, the pastor at Mount Zion, Watford (Mr. James Hill), came to our home in the evening. Before he left he read a few verses from God’s Word and then gave the Bible to me to keep. How I remember the walk to the bus as he went home! I felt such a deep union to him. My soul and its eternal welfare lay with a deep and solemn weight upon my mind and spirit, and how valueless the whole world appeared. As we took our leave of each other, I remember saying with much deep feeling, ‘I will come back, and to chapel,’ not knowing where I would go or what trials I should come into. My spirits were low after entering upon that period of my life.

“After being in the Royal Air Force for about two months, I was moved to Lincolnshire with a man from my initial posting in Berkshire. This man sought to draw me into sinful pleasures of the world, but the Lord preserved me from going, although I felt my weakness and the need of the keeping power of God. I was given leave to go home for a weekend. The pastor’s text was, ‘If ye love Me, keep My commandments’ (John 14. 15). His commandments are to flee from sin and to have no other gods before Him. He enabled me, I trust, to keep His word to the cutting down of the flesh. On returning to my unit I was strengthened to stand against the temptations of the prince of this world.

“At this time I went to a service at Lincoln chapel. There were six people there and no minister, but the Lord came down into the place and blessed my soul through the read sermon. During the course of the sermon these words were read: ‘If there is one here teased by the world, feeling all against him and has much of the world to contend with, let that one look to the Lord.’ The Lord came where I was. I proved that I could not even look unto Him unless He enabled me.

“I was moved from that place to Halton in Buckinghamshire to attend a medical course. After a time, through being successful on the

course, I applied for a move. I was sent to Manchester where, whenever possible, I attended Rochdale Road chapel. There I heard some gracious servants of God whose ministry had a solemn effect upon my spirit. Two months later I was sent to the 'Black Country,' near Wolverhampton, to attend a flight mechanics course and stayed there about one year. Here I was able to attend the little chapel at Moden Hill, Sedgley, which under the Lord's blessing was made a real and true Bethel to my soul. On one occasion, there being no minister, a sermon was read from the text Isaiah 50. 10: 'Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him ... stay upon his God.' This was a favoured time to my soul. I felt the first words spoke to me, for I believed I feared the Lord, though often felt to be a poor wretch and so unlike His people. I did walk in darkness and did not have that light which my soul longed for. Then the Word said, 'Let him stay upon his God.' What sweet encouragement this gave to a poor, unworthy, weary traveller.

But I still longed for more. I needed to know my sins were pardoned and that the everlasting love of God was towards my soul. One dear saint of God there was made a real blessing to me. She was about forty years my senior, but we walked together in the things of God. Her conversation was the means of a very weighty consideration on my part concerning God, and of my soul's eternal welfare.

"Although I was moved to a place near Rugby I still went at weekends to Moden Hill. Then six months later I was told I was to receive promotion and be sent to the Far East. My spirits sank; no chapel, no people of God, no friends! But the Lord determined otherwise. After three days all was changed, and I was posted to Henlow in Bedfordshire. My spirit revived as I thought of Clifton Chapel, only two miles away. I went there every weeknight service and home to Watford at weekends.

"I had been exercised in measure concerning making a public profession of the dear Lord's name, but could not venture in a light and easy way. 'O that the Lord would help me, show me His way, break down every mountain, natural and spiritual, and give me strength to do His will.' I went to Clifton Chapel one week evening, at which service a minister was engaged who had not been there before, and he knew not how to bring the Word he had before the people. It was 'Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee' (Luke 8. 39). He seemed to point right at me and shouted, 'If there is one here, you go! you go! Tell them all He has done.' I shook in my seat under the power of these words to my soul. I said with tears, 'Lord, I will follow Thee, only Thou my leader be.' I was baptized at Mount Zion Chapel, Watford, by the pastor, Mr. J. Hill on October 27th, 1947, and received into the church the first Lord's day of November.

“The following January I was moved to East Drifffield, near Beverly in Yorkshire, and attended Leeds Chapel, fifty miles away. One Lord’s day hymn 289 was given out and I knew what it was to sing from my heart with the understanding. Every word was the real language of my soul. Here I also heard a minister preach on the solemn, sacred, awful, yet precious death of the dear Son of God. I wept for Him and said,

‘Was it for crimes that I had done  
He groaned upon the tree?  
Amazing pity! Grace unknown!  
And love beyond degree.’

“I was released from the R.A.F. on March 24th, 1948, and returned home to attend the house of God to which I was now joined. I was asked to take part in teaching in the Sunday School, but felt very inadequate and not in my right place. I continued until I was married to my dear wife with whom I had been in friendship since 1951. During our years together before we were married we suffered difficult things, but we were knit together in sweet and blessed union in the things of God. On one occasion we heard Mr. F.L. Gosden preach at Prestwood chapel from, ‘What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?’ (Rom. 8. 31). This was a time of united favour and blessing and we proved that the Lord comes in a time of trial and need. On another occasion when in tribulation we heard with profit Mr. R.J. Morris preach from Psalm 60. 3: ‘Thou hast shewed Thy people hard things: Thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.’ The Lord helped us through and we were married on September 10th, 1956 at Providence Chapel, Kensal Green, London, by Mr. E.J. Woodcraft, much loved by us both.

“We experienced many trials in church and family, but were brought through them. I was appointed deacon at Mount Zion Chapel in 1963 and was constrained to take up the office of church secretary, the previous secretary having moved away in providence. Some years later our pastor resigned, which was a bitter blow to me, but the Lord sustained me and helped me to obtain suitable ministers until the church felt led to ask Mr. R.E. Sayers to become pastor.

“I shall not forget a time of affliction when I was laid up with a bad attack of Asian flu which brought me very low in my bodily strength and spiritual strength. My sins were brought before me again with great conviction, and I verily cried out to the Lord in my weakness, ‘God be merciful to me, a sinner.’ ‘Tell me Lord, O can there be, mercy still for such as me?’ I wrestled in prayer on that bed of affliction until these words were dropped with such sweetness, mercy and power into my soul:

“‘Once they were mourning here below,  
And wet their couch with tears;

They wrestled hard, as we do now,  
With sins and doubts and fears.'

I wept to the praise of the mercy I found. That heavenly host were once like me, had reached heaven at last, been washed in the blood of the Lamb, and I through sovereign grace and mercy would reach there too.

"My wife was baptized in June 1970, and while she was so blessed and so filled with the love of God, all my religion seemed to fade away and I spent one whole evening and all night long feelingly without God, mercy or hope, and hardly able to pray. In the morning I went to my work feeling desolate. There at work I proved the truth of the Word, 'Beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning.' I was a mourner in Zion, and suddenly amidst all my dejection and sorrow a voice spoke these words: 'Behold how He loved him.' The scene was changed in a moment and I said, 'What, me Lord? Dost Thou love me, one so poor and needy? O I would ever cling to Thee; I would never grieve Thee; Thou art so good and merciful.' I proved these words true: 'Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.'"

Brian was a man of much prayer. Many of those prayers have been of great encouragement to me in my pastorate. He last attended the house of God on the last Lord's day of 2014. Although suffering from increased weakness and pain in the last two years of his life, he rarely missed attending a service. When being driven to chapel, he would often express how he had prayed all night to be able to be there. He was so thankful to the Lord for every small mercy he daily received.

He now weeps no more, having been called up higher to be with Christ which is far better. His funeral service was held on Thursday, January 29th, at Hope Chapel, Stotfold, conducted by his pastor, with interment at Clifton Chapel, Bedfordshire, where he also attended most Sunday evenings whilst living at Letchworth.

G.E.H.

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### THE BLESSED END OF THE RIGHTEOUS

*"The righteous is taken away from the evil to come" (Isa. 57. 1)*

Let not your heart be sad, my friend,  
But to the Word of God attend –  
The righteous is but taken home  
From evil which is yet to come.

Fragrant his name, his memory blest,  
He enters in eternal rest;  
His bliss, his joy, no tongue can tell,  
With him for ever it is well.

His flesh – low in the grave well laid,  
 Until the call to wake the dead –  
 In hope awaits the Lord’s return,  
 Nor dreads the resurrection morn.

Vain pleasures *here*, and passing dreams –  
 Shadow is found where substance seems;  
 No rose so sweet but has its thorn,  
 For unto trouble man is born.

Tumult and war, and strife and din,  
 The world is upside down through sin;  
 Confusion everywhere we find –  
*All* this the righteous leaves behind.

No tongue can tell, or fancy paint  
 The pleasures that await the saint;  
 But joys substantial, full and free,  
 The righteous have eternally.

Then who shall murmur or complain,  
 Or wish the righteous back again?  
 To heaven he goes – his longed-for home –  
 And ’scapes the evil yet to come.

Famine, or war, or pestilence,  
 Mar not this bright inheritance;  
 No tears are shed; no night is there –  
 O happy clime! O region fair!

O may this prospect cheer my heart,  
 And help me with time things to part;  
 My chief concern through life – that I  
 A righteous man may live and die

For like the righteous I would be;  
 His life I’d live, his joys I’d see;  
 And while I live a pilgrim roam,  
 Till Jesus bids me “Welcome home!”

Herbert Dawson  
 pastor at Union Chapel, Bethersden,  
 1915-1969

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There is nothing in the world that renders a man more unlike to a saint and more like to Satan than to argue from mercy to sinful liberty, from divine goodness to licentiousness. This is the devil’s logic, and in whomsoever you find it, you may say of him, “This soul is lost.”

*Thomas Brooks*



THE  
**GOSPEL STANDARD**  
AUGUST 2015

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

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**TILL THE DAY BREAK**

*Sermon preached by Jesse Delves at Ebenezer Chapel, Clapham,  
London, on June 26th, 1938*

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**Text:** "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my Beloved, and be Thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether" (Song 2. 17).

In some parts of this Song it is difficult to ascertain who it is speaking – whether it is the voice of the church or the voice of her Beloved – but in this verse it is clear who is speaking. It is distinctly the voice of the church, and this in the form of a prayer that her Beloved would be with her, would favour her with the visitations of His grace, would come quickly to her succour in every time of her need, and thus, figuratively speaking, be unto her as a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether, until the day break and the shadows flee away.

In the last four verses we have the voice of the Bridegroom and of the bride. The Bridegroom's invitation to the bride, to the church is: "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 is a sweet invitation extended by the Lord Jesus unto His people, desiring that they may come forth out of the secret places where they may be hidden. "Let Me see thy countenance, let Me hear thy voice," for both are attractive to Me. "Sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely."

"Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes." In these verses we have two different creatures mentioned of very different characteristics. There is a great difference between doves and foxes. The first are emblems of meekness, purity and harmlessness. "Be ye therefore," said Christ to His disciples "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." But in the fox we have a creature noted for its destroying powers, its subtlety. The Lord compared Herod to a fox: "Go ye, and tell that fox." And yet sad it is to observe that there are such characters, who may perhaps be a type of false teachers and prophets, who do great harm and injury to the vine and tender grapes. What injury may be done to some of the Lord's people, even in whom is the tender fear of God, who may here be likened to the tender grapes, whose conscience is made tender in the fear of the Lord; what harm those baneful things may do to them. There may be many foxes in the

professing church who may seek, in a very subtle manner, to overthrow the faith of God's people, and who may do much injury, especially to those younger in the way; "for our vines have tender grapes." The baneful things of the world may be compared to foxes, which may so easily destroy those vines or at least injure them. Then again we have the fox of unbelief in our own hearts. O what injury this does to us at times! "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes."

Then the church is enabled to speak of the relationship which she enjoys with her Lord: "My Beloved is mine, and I am His; He feedeth among the lilies." Perhaps it would not be irrelevant to connect this verse with the last verse: "He feedeth among the lilies until the day break." By this the church would affirm that the relationship during this mortal state, while the church is in a waiting state, anticipating a great day not yet arrived, would be sustained by the Lord, that He would be with her and would come down from time to time into the gardens of His grace and feed among the lilies. In another part we read of His coming down, and this in response to the invitation, "Let my Beloved come into His garden." He says, "I am come into My garden, My sister, My spouse." Thus the Lord communes with His people, with those who are thus waiting for Him. He comes down into the gardens of His grace and receives of the spices that flow out, the sweet fruits of the Spirit that the Lord's people bring forth. He comes down and communes with them.

O what a mercy this is, and the presence of Christ will thus be in the church during her time in this world while here in this mourning state, until that glorious day arrives when there will be a fulfilment of what we were reading in the Revelation (chapter 7 verses 15-17), for then it may truly be said that the day will break and all shadows will flee away. That will be the dawn of an eternal day, after what may be compared to a night of trouble, affliction, persecution, sorrow, anguish and pain, and yet in this state (and this is the state of the church in this world for the most part) she is favoured with the presence of her Beloved without which she could not endure. Therefore it may be said, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His: He feedeth among the lilies. Until the day break and the shadows flee away."

This does not infer that that blessed relationship, and a sweet sense of it at times felt and enjoyed by the Lord's living family here, will cease; rather that then it will be more clearly and more fully manifest, manifest in a brighter and more glorious sense than can be in this mortal state, wherein we are, so to speak, under a shadow. Then the shadows will flee away, and those that see Him now by faith, through a glass, darkly, will see Him then face to face, for then all the shadows will have dispersed, and there shall be no night, but one eternal day of blessed communion,

uninterrupted, free and full, where the cup will be running over with the blessing of God for ever and ever.

But until that day arrives there are many shadows, many shadows. A shadow is a form, outline or representation of anything which intercepts the rays of the sun. We all know that as the sun rises, anything that comes between its rays and us causes a shadow, a moving shadow. As the sun moves round, the shadow moves. So it is, friends, in and with the church here below. She has the presence of her best Beloved, but those sweet communications of His love are intercepted by many a shadow. Things come between at times that hide Him from her view, but there will be no shadows there. The dawn of this day has not yet broken forth. Meanwhile the prayer is that the Bridegroom of the chosen bride, the Husband, the great Head of the church, the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, will be with His people, even as "a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether."

"Until the day break." This would point, then, to a certain period of time when something will take place that has not yet been, and the word infers, as I have mentioned, that when the day breaks the shadows will flee away. Now I feel we may look upon this in one or two distinct ways as having a particular bearing upon the church of God, and as relating to the coming of the Lord Jesus into the heart. And may it not have respect to the coming of Christ in the flesh? That was the breaking forth of a great day, a gospel day, and very possibly the church here, in this prayer, may have had this great matter in view. "Until the day break," looking forth to that time when the Messiah, as promised, should come in the flesh.

The former dispensation or period is likened by the Apostle Paul to a shadow; he says that the law is "a shadow of things to come, and not the very image of the things," the shadow, not the substance. The shadow is, as it were, a representation, but not the thing itself; the shadow must necessarily be distinct from it. So the former dispensation, the Mosaic dispensation, is likened by Paul to a shadow of good things to come. Now when Christ came in the flesh, all types and ceremonies, there termed shadows under the Mosaic law, had their fulfilment in Him, who was the Substance of all shadows. Therefore it was as the breaking forth of a great day which had long been anticipated by the church. Thus when Christ came in the flesh, the shadows of that dispensation, the darkness, comparatively speaking, that was upon the church and upon many people, fled away, and He who was the Substance and the Fulness of the gospel came.

How wonderful all this is! We see Christ prefigured through the Old Testament, we see the promise of His coming, but all, so to speak, under a shadow, a representation. But when we come to the close of the

Old Testament, we find Malachi there predicting the coming of the Messiah in these words: "Unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings." He closes his prophecy with a forecast of the dawning of that gospel day when the shadows of the Mosaic dispensation should flee away and cease, when the handwriting of the ordinances should be nailed to His cross, and when the middle wall of partition should be broken down, so that there should be neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ All and in all. What a day that was! We have a record of it. The apostles being filled with the Holy Ghost proclaimed with great boldness the Person of the Redeemer, that He was the Promised One, He that should come, and the great light broke forth, as it were, upon the dark world, and some that were looking for Him saw their anticipations realised, as it had been in the case of Simeon. "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away."

But there is something sweeter even than this as it pertains to our particular cases, and that is the coming of the Lord Jesus in the spiritual visitations of His love and grace to individual believers. Now before He comes thus in a way of experience, there is a kind of a shadow, a darkness over the mind, a bondage upon the spirit. Christ is not seen by the eye of faith clearly until He reveals Himself. When He comes to a poor sinner, to a believer, and disperses the intervening shadows and clouds and shines into the soul, then this word has a fulfilment. "The day breaks, and the shadows flee away." Many a child of God is waiting for Him, looking for His coming, longing for Him, but there is darkness over the mind. They are labouring under the shadows of temptation and inward conflict and fear about their state and case, doubting often if He will ever come to them. O what darkness there is when the Lord's face is hidden! But there is the coming to an individual believer here, and then the day breaks. When He shines then there is light; the light shines. This is the dawning of the gospel day in the heart, and the shadows of doubt, of fear and unbelief, of distress and trouble, for the time flee away. But O what a waiting this is, and yet the Lord has said, "They shall not be ashamed that wait for Me."

"Until the day break!" Has the Lord ever come to you like this and turned your night to day? You see the day must be preceded by the night season, and I understand that the darkest part of the night is often that which is just before the dawn, and it is like this in experience sometimes. The darkest part, for the child of God, may be just that time which precedes the breaking forth of the Lord Jesus upon his heart. The child of God may be passing through a vale of trouble, deep trouble, having much darkness, but when the Lord comes then it is light with him. Christ

is said to be the Light of the world; He declares Himself to be this. "I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness."

Now some of us may be waiting, as the church here, for His coming, for the breaking of this day, saying, perhaps, "Lord, when wilt Thou come unto me?" The Lord declared to His disciples that He would manifest Himself to His people. "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him." When He comes, then day breaks. He, and He only, can turn our darkness into light, our night into day, but until this day breaks in upon the soul in experience, the prayer is just this: Lord, sustain me, keep my faith alive, be near unto me, hold me up in faith and prayer, be like unto a roe or a young hart to me, come quickly to my relief, sustain me in trouble, keep me from falling and grant that in the night of temptation I may be enabled to hold fast. Grant that when faith is tried, when things look as black as night, I may be helped to hold fast; keep me and be with me until the day breaks.

What shadows, at times, come over the Lord's children. Sometimes a shadow comes over their faith and they find themselves doubting things that they had been comparatively sure of and strong in previously. They may have a shadow come over the Scriptures, a shadow over their circumstances; and sometimes things come between the Lord and themselves which are as a shadow, but when He appears, then He turns our night into day, and this is the prayer: Lord, help me, hold me up, sustain me and keep me, come quickly to my help in this night of conflict, temptation, fear, darkness and affliction.

"Until the day break." Then again, we may look upon this as having application to the second coming of the Lord Jesus. It will be more or less as a time or period of shadows and darkness to the church until then. That is the day looked forward to by the church, and which was spoken of by Paul as the great day of the Lord, when He shall come, not as before in His humiliation, as "a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," but when He shall come in His Father's glory with all His holy angels, to be admired in all them that believe. This is the hope of the saints. This will be the day when those who have fallen asleep in Christ will be raised again, and those who are alive shall not prevent them that are asleep, but they shall rise to meet the Lord in the air. "So," we read, "shall we ever be with the Lord."

Now that will be a day, the dawning of an eternal day, to be intercepted by no more shadows, no more sin, trouble, conflict, darkness, sorrow, pain and death. Every shadow will have fled away then; Jesus in His ascended glory will be seen by His people and admired by them then; all shall unite in ascribing praise, honour and glory unto Him. We

read, "Thou art worthy ... for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue." That will be a great day, the day to which the saints look forward. Therefore, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection." Such will awaken to see the light of a glorious day, a day where the light is never intercepted by shadows. Therefore the Lord give us faith while here now in this waiting, mortal state to receive and believe what He has declared and revealed, that such a time will come to His people when His glory in full shall be seen, when they will have a capacity to enjoy it and to dwell within the light of it for ever. This will be when "the day breaks and the shadows flee away."

What a glorious prospect is held forth for the church, whether it be looking forward as in Old Testament times to His coming in the flesh, which was the dawning of the gospel day, a great day indeed when the shadows of the Mosaic law fled away once for all, and the Lord Jesus Christ, the Sum and Substance of all shadows appeared upon this earth as the Saviour of sinners; or whether it be the spiritual day of His coming in the soul to bless His people in the visitation of His grace. Many are waiting for this. In fact, if we are spiritually alive we are all waiting for it, often saying, Lord come to me, come over the mountain of sin, dispel the shadows between, discover Thyself to my soul, let me see Thy beauty and glory by faith, permit me to sit down under Thy shadow with great delight, for Thy fruit is sweet to my taste, manifest Thyself to my soul so that I can say, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee." For this day we wait, some of us, and long for His appearing unto us. Then there will be the last great day, so clearly set forth in Holy Scripture when He shall come again in His glory, and the bodies of all who died in the faith and hope of the gospel, whose immortal spirits are now in heaven enjoying that felicity, will be raised again and therefore made complete in Him, and will be favoured to look upon Him in His glory, and will be fashioned like unto His glorious body. What a day there is coming!

Meanwhile we are in a waiting state, and would pray for grace to wait on, to look forward, to be revived in our souls, to be refreshed with His presence, favoured with His visitations, desiring that He would be to us as "a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether." The margin says, "mountains of divisions." Mountains of divisions wherein there are many things which at times divide and separate us from the Object of our love, but all of which are nothing to Him, for He is spoken of as coming, under this figure, "Leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills," as though all is nothing to Him, as a roe or young hart, being exceedingly alert and agile, can leap over the mountains and rocks. So Christ can

come over all difficulties, being above and beyond the scenes of dejection, and come to the help and aid of His poor and afflicted people.

Therefore the Lord help us to pray like this: Be this unto me, be my Beloved, give me to feel I am Thine, that Thou art mine, come to my help quickly and speedily, answering to the figure here so descriptive – *until*. “Until.” There is a set time prefigured when a full and final relief shall come, when the shadows, the things which attend us now, the difficulties, dangers, troubles and darkness, here likened to the rain, will flee away, when the church shall say in the most blessed sense, “For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.” Until then! But O what there may be between, may there not, in the interim! Until then, until the last shadow disperses, Lord, keep me, hold me up, give me to believe what Thy Word reveals, and glorify Thyself in my soul, “until the day break, and the shadows flee away.”

But I believe we may say, in speaking of the Lord’s chosen family, that the day of their death is but the dawning of a glorious day. While here, you see, in this mortal state there are many shadows, trials, afflictions, disappointments, sorrows and sins, all of which cast a shade, at times, so to describe it, over us, over our faith. But when that time comes, solemn though it is, unspeakably solemn, when heart and flesh shall fail, and the powers of nature give way, soul and body separate, then, death having lost its sting to the redeemed family of Zion, and being but as a sleep wherein they sleep in Jesus, until the resurrection as to their bodies, it will be the dawning of a glorious day. We read and believe too, that the moment when the soul is freed from its tenement of clay, it opens its eyes in heaven; the redeemed spirit flies to eternal bliss and the day breaks upon the soul. Then, in such a way as never before, Jesus is seen, seen, as one speaks, without “the weary veil of the flesh between.”

“Until the day break, and the shadows flee away.” Amen.



Our sins are debts that none can pay but Christ. It is not our tears, but His blood; it is not our sighs, but His sufferings, that can satisfy for our sins. Christ must pay *all*, or we are prisoners for ever.

*Thomas Brooks*

Intellectual light may soften the character, and improve the morals; but experience testifies that nothing but the power of the Holy Spirit can newly create the soul.

*Thomas Reade*

## A FRESH LOOK AT THE GOSPEL STANDARD ARTICLES

By Dr. Gerard T.J. Charmley

*It is unusual to have so many footnotes to any of our articles; but we feel it necessary to leave them to authenticate what is being written.*

*Gospel Standard* Strict Baptists are frequently accused of holding Hyper-Calvinistic theology, denying that the gospel is to be preached to any but the elect.<sup>1</sup> While Article twenty-nine, “Indiscriminate Offers of Grace Denied” (see note at end), and Article twenty-six, denying duty-faith (the obligation of all men to exercise saving faith),<sup>2</sup> have been cited in support of this contention, the most frequently-criticised portion of our Confession of Faith are the four articles added in 1878, when the Articles assumed their current form. The history of one church which once appeared on the *Gospel Standard* list describes the articles as including “an extreme statement of Hyper-Calvinism, which includes the denial of the sufficiency of Scripture as a guide for evangelistic preaching,”<sup>3</sup> the last clause referring directly to Article thirty-two, “Preaching of The Gospel (Apostolic Uniqueness).” Recently (2013), David H.J. Gay has published a lengthy (over 300 pages) attack on the Added Articles, calling on the Committee of the Gospel Standard Societies to amend the articles, and implying that many ministers and members are doing violence to their consciences or the English language in preaching to the unconverted while subscribing to the Articles.<sup>4</sup> So, why were these controversial Articles adopted in the first place, and are they truly meant to kill evangelistic efforts?

### *Confessions of Faith in History:*

Confessions of faith, it has been observed, often function as landmarks of heresy. The first confession of faith we see was that of Peter at Caesarea Philippi: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16. 16). In Acts, we see that the confession required of believers before they were baptized was also the Godhead of the Lord

<sup>1</sup> A case in point would be the recent work by David Gay on Septimus Sears, minister at Clifton Particular Baptist Chapel 1842-77 (David H. Gay, *Septimus Sears: A Victorian Injustice and its Aftermath* (no place of publication, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> “We deny duty faith and duty-repentance – these terms signifying that it is every man’s duty to spiritually and savingly repent and believe.” Again, it is vital to read the whole article, rather than just the words “duty-faith.” By “duty-faith,” the framers understood not the duty of all men to fear God and to obey His will, but to believe that their names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life (J.H. Gosden, *What Gospel Standard Baptists Believe* (Kington Langley, Chippenham, 1993), p. 130).

<sup>3</sup> Old Baptist Chapel, Bradford on Avon History, <http://www.oldbaptistchapel.org/hist6.html> (accessed July 26th, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> David H.J. Gay, *No Safety Before Saving Faith: Septimus Sears, John Gadsby and the Gospel Standard Added Articles* (no place of publication, 2013).



Jesus and repentance from sins and dead works. However, the rise of heretical groups such as the Judaisers and proto-gnostic groups meant that this message of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the one Saviour of sinners had to be clarified. The Epistles are particularly concerned with this; for example, John stresses the necessity of believing in the full and true humanity of Christ, as well as His divinity, as certain teachers, influenced by Greek ideas about the inherent sinfulness of matter, were saying that the Lord's body was a mere phantom. By the second century, candidates for baptism were required to recite a more detailed statement of faith, containing a summary of the gospel history in addition to a profession of belief in Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

When, early in the fourth century, Arius, a Syrian-trained presbyter, began to teach that the Lord Jesus was not co-equal with the Father, but was rather a lesser (but still divine) being, a number of church councils (the most famous being at Nicea in 325) saw the church expand their old baptismal formula to include the statement that the Son and the Spirit are co-equal, co-substantial and co-eternal with the Father, three Persons but one God. This was not, as heretics and rationalists have alleged, the creation of new teachings, but a summary of Bible teaching on the nature of the Godhead, in the face of challenges.

Every framing and revision of a Confession of Faith furnishes us with an insight into church history, whether the detailed confessions of the Reformation and Evangelical Awakenings, with their concern clearly to outline the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, according to the light granted to the denomination and the age, or the brief, often unclear short "confessions" or "statements" of the ecumenical age.

The Articles of the Gospel Standard Societies arose in an age when most chapel trust deeds would include a statement about what the church worshipping in that chapel believed. This was a practice widely adopted in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Many of the first nonconformist meeting houses had deeds which simply said that the chapel was for the use of "Protestant Dissenters." Later known as "open" trusts, these were vulnerable to abuse by heretics; many chapels taken over by Unitarians were originally built by men and women believing the truths of the gospel. Although a trust deed cannot guarantee the orthodoxy of a church, it does give churches a measure of protection against ungodly men who would creep into a church by adopting the language of fashionable piety, only to lead the flock astray.

For Strict Baptists, the need for Articles clearly setting out that only those baptized on profession of faith may gather round the Lord's table was rendered more pressing by the St. Mary's Chapel case of 1860, in which an attempt to maintain strict communion at a Norwich Baptist church by appeal to its Articles was set aside by the Master of the Rolls as the articles of the church were not sufficiently clear, only requiring the

church to be Particular Baptist in faith and order.<sup>5</sup> Following this, a number of Strict Baptist organisations issued specimen Articles for insertion in the trust deeds of chapels in which the principle of Strict Communion was clearly set forth.

For the group of churches which became the *Gospel Standard* churches, other areas, such as the believer's relationship to the law were also addressed, so that the Articles stand as a condensed summary of Scripture teaching.<sup>6</sup> A number of the other articles address particular controversies; for example Article twenty-two, "Backsliding and Chastening," has reference to the opinion once expressed by James Wells of the Surrey Tabernacle that God does not chasten His children for backsliding, as well as the perfectionist teaching that believers are incapable of declension, while Article thirty-one is a denial of annihilationism, a teaching first broached among nonconformists with the publication of Edward White's *Life in Christ* (1845).<sup>7</sup>

*The Added Articles:*

The Added Articles were formulated in 1877 by a committee including some of the leading Gospel Standard ministers, among them Francis Covell of Providence, Croydon, Joseph Hatton of Smallfield and Redhill, and Grey Hazlerigg of Leicester, and formally adopted in October 1878. The formal occasion for their adoption was a controversy which centred on Septimus Sears, a gifted minister who, under God, was responsible for the founding of the church at Clifton, and edited the religious periodicals *The Sower* and *The Little Gleaner*. In addition to exercising a powerful ministry at Clifton, Bedfordshire, where the chapel had to be extended several times, Sears' ministry was honoured among the churches to the conversion of sinners and the raising up of ministers.<sup>8</sup>

However, by 1865, Sears had begun to express the belief that "something more" than gospel invitations were needed, and by 1870, he clearly felt that a more "activist" approach in preaching the gospel was required, and is recorded as exhorting his hearers to flee to Christ.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> George P. Gould, *George Gould: Sermons and Addresses with a Memoir of His Life* (London, 1883), pp. 56-59.

<sup>6</sup> They were not the only group whose articles of faith address such issues. The Articles adopted by Park Congregational Church on its formation in 1865 assert: "The immutable authority of the moral law of God as the rule of human conduct."

<sup>7</sup> Frederick Ash Freer, *Edward White: His Life and Work* (London, 1903), pp. 24-5. The Park Congregational Church Articles of 1865 (seven years before Article 31 was adopted) also contain a strong affirmation of the eternal conscious punishment of the finally impenitent.

<sup>8</sup> David Smith, a leading figure among the Strict Baptists of Yorkshire, traced his call to the ministry to the Holy Spirit working through a sermon preached by Sears at Gower Street Chapel (David Smith, *Abounding Grace* (Halifax, 1891), p. 17).

<sup>9</sup> M.J. Hyde, *According to Mine Heart: The Collected Correspondence of J.K. Popham* (Harpenden, 2010), pp. 355-356.

Matters came to a head in 1875, when John Gadsby rebuked Sears in print, while Sears attacked “experimental religion” as exemplified in the ministries of Bernard Gilpin and J.C. Philpot, and in a published sermon referred to the need for a specific “act of faith” on the part of a believer in order for that believer to be justified in the sight of a Holy God.<sup>10</sup>

Tempers clearly became frayed on both sides, and the controversy was only terminated by the untimely death of Sears, aged fifty-eight, convinced that the controversy had shortened his life.<sup>11</sup>

Significantly, among those who wrote in support of the *Gospel Standard* position was J.K. Popham, then minister at Shaw Street Chapel, Liverpool, whose 1878 pamphlet *Thoughts on Regeneration* covered some of the ground on which Popham believed Sears had gone astray in implying unregenerate men and women possessed a degree of ability to come to Christ, and who would, as Editor of the *Gospel Standard*, write a defence of the Added Articles. Pastor at Shaw Street since 1874, Mr. Popham attracted a great deal of abuse for his stand.<sup>12</sup>

But why is Mr. Popham’s involvement in the controversy at this stage significant? Not simply because of his later prominence as Editor of the *Gospel Standard*, but because of his geographical location and previous work. That same year, J.K. Popham had published a pamphlet criticising what he viewed as the erroneous teachings and methods of American evangelists Dwight L. Moody and Ira Sankey, who had held a number of well-attended meetings in Liverpool, the culmination of a tour of Scotland and England which had seen thousands pack large halls in order to hear the simple, direct sermons of Dwight L. Moody and listen to the evangelistic songs of Ira D. Sankey.<sup>13</sup> Up to ten thousand people a night attended the Moody and Sankey meetings in Liverpool, which were organised by an inter-denominational Protestant committee including Anglican evangelicals W. Hay Aitken and Richard Hobson, and Samuel Smith, a Presbyterian merchant and politician. Over two thousand five hundred “converts” were announced.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 357-8.

<sup>11</sup> “A Servant,” *Memoir of the Life and Labours of the Later Septimus Sears* (London, 188), p. 144.

<sup>12</sup> J.H. Gosden, *Memoir and Letters of James Kidwell Popham* (London, 1938), pp. 29-37.

<sup>13</sup> John Kent, *Holding the Fort: Studies in Victorian Revivalism* (London, 1978), pp. 133 ff.

<sup>14</sup> P.J. Waller, *Democracy and Sectarianism: A Political and Social History of Liverpool 1868-1939* (Liverpool, 1981), p.27. If the experience of one Liverpool minister is anything to go by, the actual number who continued was much less. One Liverpool Methodist minister was given the names of twenty who wished to join his church. Only two young men, who already attended the church, actually applied for church membership. Many of the others never darkened the doors of the church (Silas K. Hocking, *My Book of Memory* (London, 1923), pp. 51-52.

In the light of glowing press reports, Popham's criticism of Moody's free-will teachings represented a bold stand for truth indeed.<sup>15</sup> To the evangelist's assertion that "Regeneration was coming to Christ as a poor, lost, ruined sinner and taking life from Him," the Strict Baptist minister replied that this was to credit a corpse with the power of activity.<sup>16</sup> It is significant that, in his initial criticism of Sears, Popham accused the Clifton minister of denying the eternal union of Christ and His elect, later retracting that statement in the face of Sears' later statements to the contrary.<sup>17</sup> While Sears was not guilty of denying the eternal union between Christ and the church, this was an error of which Dwight L. Moody was certainly guilty.<sup>18</sup>

The sticking point for Hazelrigg and Popham was Sears' call for the sinner to perform what both men called "the justifying act."<sup>19</sup> While Sears seems to have meant simply that [it is dangerous] for a sinner to rest outside of trust in the life and death of Jesus for him,<sup>20</sup> Hazelrigg and Popham understood the Clifton pastor as teaching that a sinner under conviction has to perform a certain work to be saved, in the same way that a so-called revivalist would ask for a display of hands or call people to the front at a meeting.

It is this suggestion which led to the insertion of Article thirty-four, "Preaching of the Gospel (Exhorting the Unregenerate)":

"We believe that any such expressions as convey to the hearers the belief that they possess a certain power to flee to the Saviour, to close in with Christ, to receive Christ, while in an unregenerate state, so that unless they do thus close with Christ, etc., they shall perish, are untrue, and must, therefore, be rejected."

Anyone who has had to speak with a sinner utterly unconcerned about their standing before God because they came forward at an evangelistic event years before can understand a little of the sentiments behind this article. The professional evangelist may boldly declare before a multitude, "I want to tell you tonight that you can be saved if you will,"<sup>21</sup> playing on their emotions by means of music and sentimental

<sup>15</sup> Kent, *Holding the Fort*, pp. 180-181.

<sup>16</sup> J.K. Popham, "Moody and Sankey's Errors versus the Scriptures of Truth," reprinted in J.R. Broome (ed.), *Stand Fast: Some Polemical writings of J.K. Popham* (Harpندن, 2006), p. 21.

<sup>17</sup> Gay, *Saving Faith*, pp. 68-71.

<sup>18</sup> "I know that word 'whosoever' means every man, every woman, every child in this wide world" (Dwight L. Moody, *Where Art Thou? Addresses by D.L. Moody* (London, n.d.), pp. 39-40).

<sup>19</sup> Hyde (ed.), *According to Mine Heart*, p.352; *Gospel Standard*, October 1875, p.445.

<sup>20</sup> Gay, *Saving Faith*, pp. 44-5.

<sup>21</sup> Moody, *Where Art Thou?*, p. 11.

stories in order to get a reaction. No man not immediately inspired by the Holy Ghost can be so audacious as to inform their hearers, after picking out a number of characters visible in the hall, that they are meant by the “whosoever” of the gospel invitation, if only they believe!<sup>22</sup> Coupled with the inadequate concept of sin held by many of the American revivalists, who tended to major on sins as opposed to the radical corruption of human nature as a result of Adam’s fall, the likelihood of such converts proving sadly deluded was too strong for the “appeal” to be endorsed by men who knew what it was to preach the full gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>23</sup> What is denied is not that a minister, under the guiding of the Holy Spirit, may speak of the “sweet invitations” contained in the gospel to such as are weary and heavy laden, but that a minister should address a congregation in such a way as to imply that they possess any power independent of the sweet drawing of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, to come to God.<sup>24</sup>

David Gay’s antagonistic account of the events leading up to the adoption of the Added Articles discerns that the reason for the breach was partly due to the parties involved communicating on different wavelengths.<sup>25</sup> Where Sears, in his warnings to sinners against resting in anything short of a settled trust in Christ was addressing presumptuous professors, content to rest in a vague sense of their danger, but comforted that they were under the gospel’s sound, Hazlerigg and others feared that he was scourging troubled souls, perhaps to the extent of driving them to despair. This concern led the framers of the Added Articles to insert Article thirty-five, “Degrees of Faith,” the least contested of the Articles, perhaps because the experience of the believer teaches that it is true. As J.H. Gosden notes, the framers meant by this, saving faith, rather than a bare assent to the truth of the Scriptures, such as James tells us the devils possess.<sup>26</sup> In part, this was prompted by the feeling that Sears’ teaching implied that anything short of a firm, unshakeable faith was unworthy of the name.

Again, we note that revivalists such as Moody frequently poured scorn on those who expressed doubts, or were haunted by past sins and backslidings.<sup>27</sup> The coming of the Keswick teaching only added to the ranks of those willing to pour scorn on those afflicted by doubt and

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>23</sup> Kent, *Holding the Fort*, p. 181.

<sup>24</sup> J.A. Watts and G.D. Buss, *A Goodly Heritage: An Insight into the Gospel Standard Articles of Faith* (Harpندن, 2006), p. 70.

<sup>25</sup> Gay, *Saving Faith*, p. 78.

<sup>26</sup> Gosden, *What Gospel Standard Baptists Believe*, p. 153.

<sup>27</sup> Moody, *Where Art Thou?*, p. 11.

tempted to despair.<sup>28</sup> Again, it is worth noting that many of the leading ministers among the Gospel Standard Baptists had endured long periods under conviction of sin before being brought to gospel liberty.<sup>29</sup>

The pre-history of Articles Thirty-two and Thirty-three on the uniqueness of the apostolic preaching of the gospel may be traced back to an 1841 review by J.C. Philpot of a book by James Wells of the Surrey Tabernacle addressing man's responsibility and divine sovereignty.<sup>30</sup> Wells, whose success as a preacher was only equalled by his fondness of controversy, implied that the exhortations of the prophets and apostles were to be precisely imitated by modern-day ministers [*though it appears he thought the apostles only called for moral, not saving belief*. Editor]. Philpot replied by noting that the apostles stood in a rather different relation to the church than ministers, being endowed with supernatural power to a far greater extent.<sup>31</sup> Only the previous year, the first British edition of Charles Grandison Finney's *Lectures on Revivals*, in which the revival of religion was presented as a wholly mechanical affair, produced by the right use of carnal "new measures," rather than the gracious actions of the Holy Spirit, had appeared.<sup>32</sup> A key part of the new method was the placing of intense pressure on those present who had not yet made a profession of faith to respond to the exhortations of the preacher. In the light of the Sears episode, it was decided to add a summary of Philpot's views on the uniqueness of the apostolic preaching to the Gospel Standard Articles, in the form of Articles Thirty-two and Thirty-three:

(32) "We believe that it would be unsafe, from the brief records we have of the way in which the apostles, under the immediate direction of the Lord, addressed their hearers in certain special cases and circumstances, to derive absolute and universal rules for ministerial addresses in the present day under widely different circumstances. And we further believe that an assumption that others have been inspired as the apostles were has led to the grossest errors amongst both Romanists and professed Protestants."

(33) "Therefore, that for ministers in the present day to address unconverted persons, or indiscriminately all in a mixed congregation, calling upon them to savingly repent, believe, and receive Christ, or perform any other acts dependent upon the new creative power of the

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<sup>28</sup> J.K. Popham, "The Keswick Convention in the Light of the Doctrines of Grace," *Stand Fast*, pp. 67-68.

<sup>29</sup> David Smith of Siddal was five years under conviction of sin, following a most remarkable divine visitation (*Abounding Grace*, pp. 7-14).

<sup>30</sup> Hyde, *According to Mine Heart*, pp. 353-354.

<sup>31</sup> *Gospel Standard*, 1841, p. 82.

<sup>32</sup> Kent, *Holding the Fort*, pp. 24-25.

Holy Ghost, is, on the one hand, to imply creature power, and, on the other, to deny the doctrine of special redemption.”

The language employed has led to some confusion, with critics alleging that this means Gospel Standard Baptists do not believe in preaching the gospel to the unconverted.<sup>33</sup> However, all Philpot and others meant by this language is to warn, firstly against treating ministers as precisely equal to the apostles, and secondly against the adoption of unduly extravagant and misleading language in addressing sinners.

J.C. Philpot, with William Tiptaft, came out from a church in which the doctrine of Apostolic Succession prevailed. Although commonly seen as referring to a succession of Bishops, the doctrine goes further than that, teaching that there is an unbroken tradition of laying on of hands stretching from Christ down to the minister in the pulpit. This ordination by the laying on of hands is (in words at least) supposed to convey spiritual gifts, whether the priest's in regenerating a child in baptism or a bishop in confirming a person who is come of age.<sup>34</sup> The concern expressed in the Thirty-second Article would seem to be the abuse of apostolic precedent, rather than the use thereof, the height of which is pretending to direct inspiration, to telling an individual that they can be saved tonight if they will. Or, which is the more terrible abuse, that if they do not embrace Christ that very hour, *then they are lost*.<sup>35</sup> The rise of fringe Charismatic groups which claim to possess apostles illustrates the very real danger of pretending that the apostles do not stand in a special relation to the church.

The Thirty-third Article, which must be read in conjunction with Article Twenty-nine, and with Article Thirty-four, is not, as has been misunderstood by some, a prohibition of preaching to the unconverted, but rather a warning against preaching in such a manner as to imply that the unregenerate may, without being awakened to their lost estate, come to Christ for life.<sup>36</sup> Frequently the act is of such a vague nature as to be almost designed to produce a response, without the one acting really knowing to what they are assenting.<sup>37</sup> Instantaneous “conversions,” produced in the hothouse atmosphere of the enquiry room or retreat, frequently prove the result of psychological pressure, rather than the Holy Ghost. Again, this brings the reader back to the evangelist's appeal, designed to lower the bar in order to produce immediate results, calling on the congregation to do something there and then, regardless of their

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<sup>33</sup> *Gospel Standard*, 1906, p. 531.

<sup>34</sup> See the orders of Baptism and Confirmation in the *Book of Common Prayer*.

<sup>35</sup> Kent, *Holding the Fort*, p. 80. A similar event occurred during the 1904-5 Revival in Wales.

<sup>36</sup> Watts and Buss, *A Goodly Heritage*, p. 70.

<sup>37</sup> Kent, *Holding the Fort*, pp. 172-173.

feelings. God's love is turned into a general love for all mankind, effective only to those who respond, rather than a discriminating love, choosing some sinners and passing by others.<sup>38</sup> The professional evangelist, working in the same way as a skilled salesman, must produce numbers in order to justify his hire.

Understood in their proper historical context, they are defending the churches against the excesses of a popular religion which, although masquerading under the title of Calvinism and successful enough to lead a number of men who should have known a good deal better (such as C.H. Spurgeon) enthusiastically to endorse the new methods and preaching brought to these shores by D.L. Moody.<sup>39</sup>

Whether Sears was attempting to join the preaching and doctrine of the Strict Baptists with Moody's emphasis on immediate salvation, or whether his difficulties with John Gadsby and concern that many of his hearers were resting in a soul concern without seeking to know their interest in the blood of Christ, is difficult to discern at this remove. Whichever was the case, Sears' words came to be seen through the lens of the Calvinistic reaction to Moody and Sankey's campaign, and had their issue in the much-abused Added Articles.

Properly read, these Articles do not prohibit the preaching of the gospel to mixed congregations, but they do prohibit the presentation of a system which makes man, and not God, the final arbiter of the eternal destiny of a soul, and, taking this as a starting-point, uses fleshly techniques in order to elicit a desired response, with the result that, once the excitement has died down, the supposed convert is left to the tender mercies of the world, the flesh and the devil, his freshly swept and garnished house becoming home to seven evil spirits where one dwelt before. Evangelism, that is, the setting forth of the law of God in all its severity to careless sinners, and the gospel of free grace salvation by the blood of Christ in all its sweetness to such as are labouring under a sense of their lost estate and heavy-laden on account of the burden of their sins, is not impaired by the Added Articles, which prohibit only unscriptural extravagances.

*Note from page 232:*

"While we believe that the gospel is to *be preached* in or proclaimed to all the world, as in Mark 16.15, we deny *offers* of grace; that is to say, that the gospel is to be *offered* indiscriminately to all." It is worth noting that the form of this article represents a clarification and expansion of earlier Strict Baptist Articles of Faith. J.C. Philpot's 1843 Stamford and Oakham Articles simply state, "We deny offers of grace and every

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<sup>38</sup> Moody, *Where Art Thou?*, p.40; Murray, *Forgotten Spurgeon*, pp. 185-187.

<sup>39</sup> Iain H. Murray, *The Forgotten Spurgeon* (Edinburgh, 2009), p. 183.



doctrine and sentiment which tends to rob the Lord Jesus Christ of His glory” (T. Abbott, “Early History of the Gospel Standard Articles,” in K.F.T. Matrunola and T. Abbott, *Articles of Faith: Why and Where from?* (Harpندن, n.d), p. 75. Similarly, Article 14 of the Articles of Faith adopted by Zion Baptist Church, Siddal (formed 1857), declares, “We deny offers of grace, that is to say, that the gospel is to be offered indiscriminately to all” (*Zion Strict Baptist Church, Siddal, Halifax: Articles of Faith & Rules of Practice* (Halifax, 1894), p. 11. By the time that John Gadsby published a set of model articles in 1866, the clarifying first clause on the need for the gospel to be preached to all the world had been added (Abbott, pp. 84-90).

It is necessary here to understand that the framers of these articles drew a distinction between *offers* and *invitations* which is not always recognised by their critics. Gadsby’s hymns often refer to the gospel invitation, for example hymns 524-528, which has led some authors, among them David Gay, to oppose Gadsby to the teaching held by his successors (David H.J. Gay, *No Safety Before Saving Faith* (No place of Publication, 2013), p. 337. However, Gadsby clearly separated the *invitation* from the *offer*, viewing the former as God’s means of calling His children out of a state of loss and ruin (W. Gadsby, “The Perfect Law of Liberty,” *The Works of William Gadsby of Manchester in Two Volumes* (London, 1851), vol. 1, pp. 185-187). By *offer*, Gadsby understood something very different:

“But I proceed to another charge which Mr. Gawthorn brings against those whom he calls Antinomians, which is, that they maintain that the gospel is not to be preached to *all* sinners, but to a part only. The characters Mr. Gawthorn calls antinomians maintain that it is right for ministers of Jesus Christ to preach the gospel in the hearing of all that hear them. What they find fault with is, not *preaching* the gospel to all that hear, but men pretending that they are authorised to *offer* the gospel to all that hear them. We consider that *to preach* the gospel is one thing, and *to offer* the gospel is quite another thing. Hence, when a man gets up into a pulpit, and says, “In God’s name I *offer* Christ and pardon, and salvation to every soul of you present; if you reject this offer you may never have another, therefore come now and take Christ and salvation while you have an opportunity; today is the time, tomorrow may be too late; and recollect that it is your own fault that you are not saved, for I have this day offered you Christ”, &c., we consider this is no more preaching the gospel than a poor, deluded papist counting his beads is like the true worship of God. To *preach* or *proclaim* God’s will is one thing, but to *offer* that which is the sole prerogative of God to give and to make manifest is quite another thing” (W. Gadsby, “Controversy on the Law,” *Works*, vol. 1, p. 256).

## CHRIST SAT DOWN AT GOD'S RIGHT HAND

*By Thomas Goodwin (1600-1680)*

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1. For the *first*; the phrase of *sitting* doth betoken rest, when work is fulfilled and finished. Christ was not to return till He had accomplished His work (Heb. 10. 11, 12). The apostle, comparing the force and excellency of Christ's sacrifice with those of the priests of the old law, says that those priests *stood* daily offering of sacrifices, which can never take sins away. Their *standing* implied that they could never make satisfaction, so as to say, "We have finished it." But Christ (says he, verse 12), "after He had offered up one sacrifice for sins for ever, *sat down,*" etc. Mark how he opposeth their *standing* to His *sitting down*. He sat as one who had done His work. Thus, "He that is entered into His rest" – speaking of Christ, as I have elsewhere shown – "hath ceased from His own works, as God did from His" (Heb. 4. 10).

2. Secondly, this, His being *at God's right hand*, as strongly argues that God is satisfied, for if God had not been infinitely well pleased with Him, He would never have let Him come so near Him, much less have advanced Him so high as His right hand. And, therefore, in that place even now cited (Heb. 10. 10, 11 compared with the former verses), this is alleged as an evidence that Christ had for ever taken sins away (which those priests of the law could not do, who therefore often offered the same sacrifice, as verse 11). That "this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God," as thereby showing (and that most manifestly) that He had at that once offered up such a satisfactory sacrifice as had pleased God for ever, and thereupon took up His place at God's right hand as an evidence of it, so possessing the highest place in court.

This setting Him at God's right hand is a token of special and highest favour. So kings, whom they were most pleased with, they did set at their right hands, as Solomon did his mother (1 Kings 2. 19); and so Christ, the church His queen (Psa. 45. 9), and it was a favour which God never after vouchsafed to any (Heb. 1. 13), "To which of the angels said He at any time, Sit on My right hand?" Therefore, it is not only said that He "exalted Him," but, *superexaltavit*, He "highly exalted Him" (Phil. 2. 9), so as never any was exalted; for He was made thereby higher than the heavens.

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It is a sad thing when Christians borrow spectacles to behold their weak brethren's weaknesses, and refuse looking glasses wherein they may see their weak brethren's grace.

*Thomas Brooks*

## “MADE NIGH BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST”

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My dear Friend,

The Lord's mercy and goodness, with a deep sense of my vileness, ignorance, perverseness, ingratitude, and a thousand other shortcomings, these combine together to humble me and soften my heart into contrition, love and compassion, flowing out to Immanuel, God in my nature (sin excepted); and in this frame I would, like the dear woman, a forgiven sinner, wash His blessed feet, etc., as I believe I did once, many years ago, in the gallery of Zoar Chapel, The Dicker, Sussex.

The time I refer to was occasioned instrumentally by the words being read, namely,

“The soldier pierced His side, 'tis true,  
But we (I) have pierced Him through and through.”

Ah! indeed I did feel that it was *my sins* that pierced Him. And O, what love and grief I felt in my soul! It did indeed “compound an unction.” My heart was like melted wax, and my eyes as a sluice of tears; and if ever I desired with all the powers of my soul to live holily as God is holy, it was then; and most ardently longed to honour the Lord in every breath I drew. I had *then* not a shadow of a doubt but I should praise Him for ever in heaven....

Yours affectionately in the truth,

J. Newton

[the pastor at Hanover Chapel]

Tunbridge Wells, January 6th, 1908

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## THOUGHTS ON THE SONG OF SOLOMON

By Grey Hazlerigg

(Continued from page 212)

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*“Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes” (chapter 2, verse 15).*

Evidently here the approach of Christ to the child of God, “Behold He cometh,” had aroused the somewhat slumbering faculties of the soul. Grace began to be in exercise, the flowers to appear on the earth, the voice of the turtle to be heard in the land, and sighs and groans to go forth unto Christ, expressive of awakened desires for close and sweet communion.

But now the condition of the soul is also becoming apparent. As sense and feeling come in, so also does a revived apprehension of the

person's state. Laodicean security departs, and the man perceives himself to be wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. Now the heart, conscious of its impurity, sin and vileness, its base backslidings, wanderings from Christ, and miserable condition, shrinks away from Him, considering itself not fit for His presence. Hence the dove is represented as in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, full of diffidence; but Christ speaks most encouraging words, to call it forth to Himself, and cause it to speak out its wants and confess its miseries. Then, in the words under consideration, it does this, crying, "Take us the foxes, that spoil the vines."

The words are full of *consciousness*, *sense of inability*, and *prayer*.

1. *Consciousness*. The soul evidently perceives the exceedingly-tender nature of the divine life and all which pertains to it: "Our vines have tender grapes." *Truth* is a tender thing, and soon injured by the least degree of error. *Spirituality of mind* is a tender thing, and soon marred by carnality; a thought of foolishness will quickly spoil it. *Love* is a tender thing, and soon marred by a little disputing, anger and bitterness.

"Disputings only gender strife,  
And gall a tender mind."

*Comfort* is a tender thing, and very soon changed into sadness: "Behold, for peace I had great bitterness." *Communion with God* is a tender thing; *sweet fellowship with the saints* is a tender thing. Indeed, the whole of true, vital *spiritual religion* is a tender thing, and quickly injured: "Our vines have tender grapes."

The soul, too, is now conscious of the innumerable foxes, great and small, which have made their inroads into the vineyard, and perceives the deplorable mischief they have done. Sloth, worldly conformity, inordinate natural affections, covetousness, resting in high doctrinal notions, in forms, in the externals of godliness, and thousands of other things, which have been marring the true, spiritual prosperity of the soul, begin to be perceived. "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ" begins to be a great word to the soul. What that gospel demands as consistent with it, what humility, meekness, lowliness of heart, gentleness, forbearance, love, forgiveness of injuries, self-denial, active laying out a man's self for the sake of others, is now recognised.

Then the innumerable things inconsistent with the spirit of this gospel are perceived likewise; the man becomes of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, and in Christ's light sees light. Now little "innocent indulgences," which have crept in one after another, and grown bigger and bigger, are found to be little foxes. Vain amusements; a quiet game of cards, "of course not for money"; a dance, "a carpet dance only

at home"; then a private dance elsewhere; then an oratorio; then a concert in which there is to be sacred music; then, perhaps, for the children's sake, a peep at the fair; and God only knows what in the long run.

Thus the soul has gone on from one little compliance, inconsistent either with the express word or spirit of the gospel, to another; for we may decline of ourselves, but almighty grace only can recover us. But now the soul is awakened up to all this, sees its folly, feels its misery, fears perhaps for a time that all its religion has died out, and it is utterly reprobate; is almost inclined to give up all efforts at a better state of things, because there hardly seems any hope of a recovery. Still, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, it arouses itself, and cries to Christ: "Take us the foxes."

It is with the soul in these cases as with persons who have been nearly drowned, but are recovered. They have declared that the sensations in drowning are even pleasurable, the pain has been when the restoring process has been going on and suspended animation is returning. So it is with sinning and backsliding; self-indulgence is pleasurable through the flesh, which loves to cry, "Spare thyself; be not righteous overmuch"; but when the soul is aroused up, as it must and will assuredly be so as not to perish, to consciousness again, then come the pangs, the agonies, the conflict of heart and conscience; but then also come the cries to Christ for more grace, more power, and a complete recovery.

2. *Inability.* As the soul is now made aware of its condition, so it is also of its own utter inability to amend it. Sin, in its guilt and power, appears a little thing to unawakened men, and it is not properly estimated by even God's people, especially when in these carnally-secure states; but when the soul is enlightened and enlivened by the Holy Spirit, then that which before appeared but small and to be easily overcome is found to be infinite, and unconquerable by any man or angel. It is beyond the power of all the creatures really to conquer one sin, either in the guilt or power of it. The delusion accompanying sin makes poor creatures think differently. Hence they allow themselves in evils with a secret purpose one day or other of altering and amending, just as if it was in their own power; forgetting that sin indulged becomes a fresh chain of adamant upon the soul; and thus men bind themselves faster and faster, with secret purposes of breaking loose some time or other.

But O the adamant power of a man's sins, as felt by him, when sense and feeling of a spiritual kind come into his heart. Now he is tied and bound by the chain of his sins, now he feels no power of nature can suffice to release him, and now he is almost ready to despair, and even to give himself over to sin as hopeless of a victory over it. Nature cannot help him, the law cannot help him, legal preaching calling upon nature

to help and save itself cannot release him, priest and Levite pass him by and pronounce the case desperate. Thus the utter inability of a man to help himself always accompanies any true awakening and reviving of the work of the Spirit of God in the soul. And now the child of God is led by the Holy Spirit, who helps his infirmities, to turn to Christ in a way of prayer.

3. *Prayer.* This is the third thing in our verse which is observable. Christ is appealed to: "Take us the foxes." The soul here wants two things, *light* and *grace*.

i. *Light* is wanted in order to see these foxes, great and small, and this Christ gives by His Word and Spirit. The Word is the revelation of His mind and will, shows what is right and wrong, what is agreeable to the gospel and what is contrary to it; and if the written Word of God is neglected and despised, what light can the children of God have to see the foxes by? Many persons indeed set up the rule of their own wild and vain fancies in place of the Word, but what wisdom is in them? Still the Word will not do without the Spirit. A clear light shines in the Scriptures, but unless the Holy Spirit accompanies the Word we cannot see it; the Word is not light to us. "The entrance of God's Word giveth light," and this is by the Spirit. And when we see what is right and wrong we want

ii. *Grace* to comply with it. A man may clearly see his duty, but have no heart to perform it; and if he has even some desire, unless the Lord Jesus Christ gives him power, he will never have sufficient strength of will and purpose and energy of mind to break through all the oppositions to that performance. Light without obedience-constraining power is rather increased condemnation than anything else. The man sees, and therefore has the more sin. Now, then, we perceive the absolute necessity for a sufficiency of grace to make the person willing in the day of Christ's power.

If, too, this is always necessary, how much more in a case like the one under consideration? Here is a poor soul entangled, preyed upon by foxes, small and great, the vines marred, energy wanting, the life of God decayed, all things full of disorder; here is a needs-be for something more than light; here is wanted what Paul calls "the fulness of the gospel of Christ," the gospel in the grace of it. This will be sufficient: "It bids me fly and gives me wings." This raises dry bones, brings them up out of their graves, clothes them with flesh and sinews of spiritual strength likewise, and thus brings them into the land of Israel, and makes them into good soldiers of Jesus Christ. All this mighty work of divine love and power the soul prays for in these words: "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, which spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes."

O blessed be God there is a power that can prove sufficient in all our worst cases, the same mighty power which raised Christ the Sin-bearer from the grave, that same mighty power is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think; to break off our chains, legal and sensual; to save us from our hearts and our habits; to bring us out of our graves, and bring us back to God; to “take the foxes, the little foxes, which spoil the vines.”

*(To be continued)*

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### FARMER WILD AND HIS FAMILY

*“He will be our Guide even unto death” (Psa. 48. 14)*

*Immediately after his secession from the Church of England in 1835, J.C. Philpot was intimately connected with the tiny chapel at Allington, a most beautiful hamlet lying in the Vale of Pewsey, not far from Devizes, Wiltshire.*

*In The Seceders there is much about Allington; both the little chapel itself and the people who worshipped there are intimately described, with an almost graphical account of the services when J.C. Philpot himself preached there.*

*There are still many visitors to Allington, even from Holland, and not only is the chapel viewed with interest, but also the little burial ground, “God’s acre,” where a few choice saints lie buried.*

*Among these is one for whom J.C. Philpot had a special love and esteem, “Farmer” Wild, as he was known (died 1837).*

*The beautifully-written account is from the pen of J.C. Philpot himself.*

Farmer Wild, as he was generally called, and as I shall therefore term him, from carrying in manners and appearance so much about him of the plain, simple English farmer, was one of the good old school, being naturally, even before called by grace, remarkably honest, straightforward, sober and very industrious. He had also in his wife, to whom he was married in the year 1805, a thorough good helpmate, as she was a woman of considerable natural intellect, not indeed what now would be considered cultivated or educated, but of great shrewdness of observation, and a most industrious and careful manager. In fact she was, like her husband, one of the good old school of farmers’ wives; and though she could not play the piano or paint landscapes, and would have passed a very poor examination in history or geography, could and did make the butter and cheese, set the hens, feed the poultry, look up the

eggs, wash and dress her children, and all the while keep a sharp eye on all that was going on in parlour, kitchen and farmyard. And thus they went on toiling and moiling hard for a living, without thought of God or godliness, until the set time came for the Lord to begin His work of grace upon their souls.

It appears from the little memoir of her now before me that the Lord wrought first on the soul of Mrs. Wild. In it she tells her daughter, who, without letting her know, took down at various times memoranda of her conversation, some of her feelings about the year 1809. From these memoranda I make the following extract:

“I was afraid of death, and worked hard for salvation, hoping to escape hell and gain heaven by my good works, knowing no other way whereby sinners could be saved from the wrath to come. God’s plan of saving poor sinners I had not the least knowledge of, never having even once heard the doctrines of God’s grace preached or talked of. I remember at that time I seemed to have much more power over myself than since. I took out my earrings, left off curling my hair, and many such things, was afraid to visit my worldly relatives and neighbours, often denying myself a slice of meat for dinner that I might send it to any of my poor neighbours who I thought feared God. I used much at that time to read a book entitled *The Whole Duty of Man*,\* a book that at times almost drove me crazy, I was so continually coming short of fulfilling its requirements.”

When thus labouring under a soul trouble, a heavy temporal burden was laid upon them by the sudden raising of the rent of the farm from £400 to £700 a year after only five years’ occupation. She observes upon this:

“All our neighbours, as we were the first that were raised, prophesied our ruin, and we ourselves were very desponding how we should make up the rent. But the thoughts of my never-dying soul outweighed all those pressing earthly matters. I was so continually haunted by the fears of death.”

About this time, however, an old shepherd, a good man who as often as he had an opportunity would talk to her about the things of eternity, procured her Dr. Watts’s hymnbook, which, however, she had to hide lest her husband should know she had it. Through this shepherd and an old woman also in the village, at whose house there had been at one time preaching, she was induced, in the absence of her husband one Sunday, to go to the Baptist chapel at Pewsey. She thus describes her feelings when she first went there:

“The first time I ever ventured to go to Pewsey chapel was on a Lord’s day when your father and uncle were gone to Chilton in Berkshire

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\* A very popular anonymous book, with a legal bias, dating from the seventeenth century.



on parish affairs, to save time on weekdays. Old Sally G., the woman at whose house the preaching was, went with me. I do not believe I lifted up my head the whole time I was in the place, so did not see who was there, I felt so ashamed of the people and chapel; nor could I think what I should say for myself when my husband came home, knowing well enough he would be sure to hear where I had been in his absence.

“When he did return I, to be beforehand, said where I had gone whilst he was away. He did not seem to take much heed, only laughed at me, and I then promised him, if he would but sometimes allow me to go, I would be an obedient wife to him in other respects. Thus I sometimes got off with old Sally on Sunday evenings, after going to church with your father in the early part of the day.

“It was, however, some months before I went a second time. O my pride was such a barrier to me, and feeling what would my relatives think of my joining such a set of people; and, what was worse, what would the lady we rented from think of me, she being such a High Church woman. I feared the clergyman also, who was very much opposed to the chapel. If, however, there was a thunderstorm, or I heard of anyone dying suddenly or coming to an untimely end, or of any awful occurrence, I was again haunted with fears of my own death; but whenever I went to chapel, in some part or other of the sermon my feelings would be described, which kept me going from time to time with the old woman. We had two miles to walk, and my husband would sometimes come to meet us, and old Sally would often say to him, ‘Well, master, take and come with mistress and me all the way, and then you will hear for yourself.’

“After a time, one evening he went with us all the way to chapel, when the minister took for his text the very same which the church clergyman had preached from in the morning: ‘But we preach Christ crucified.’ The words were handled by the minister, who was a man of considerable ability, so differently from the way in which the church minister had done, that he was fully convinced who was right, and this gave him an inclination afterwards to attend there.”

I am not able to give any account how the work of grace was begun in Farmer Wild’s soul, whether, as Peter speaks, he was won by the conversation of his wife (1 Peter 3. 1), or whether a word of conviction was fastened on his conscience at the chapel. But he became a constant hearer there, and much attached to the minister. But, after undergoing a good deal of contempt and persecution for their attendance there, some very painful matters transpired at the chapel about the year 1814, which I do not wish to enter into, but they were such as not only brought great and wide reproach upon the cause, but also involved Farmer Wild in a heavy loss of £300, he having backed a bill to that amount for the

minister, which, when it became due, not being taken up, he had to pay the whole. Of this she says:

“This was indeed a sore trial to us, with our dear farm and young family, and the scoffs and jeers which we had to endure from our neighbours and relatives seemed almost as bad to bear as the loss of the money.”

But this heavy trial was made to work for their spiritual good, for the old shepherd before named had by some means heard of Mr. Symons,\* of Bristol, who then lived and preached in a small room at Marlborough; and as he brought a good report of the ministry, and they were completely cut off from the chapel at Pewsey by the painful circumstances to which I have alluded, they were induced to go to Marlborough to hear him. I have heard her speak of the effect of Mr. Symons’s ministry upon her soul. It was to pull to pieces all her religion and turn her inside out. But I shall give her own words:

“Many times has he sent me home crying and sadly cut to pieces, stripping me of my self-righteousness, so that I often thought I would not go to hear him again, but by the time Sunday came round again, I wanted to go. Like the Jews of old with Samuel, many times when he entered the pulpit have I said inwardly, ‘Comest thou peaceably, or not peaceably?’ She used to say that she never heard any other man insist on the practical part of religion as Mr. Symons did:

“Often did I think of him and of his preaching when I have been weighing up the butter for sale, or counting out our eggs for market, and when our landlady’s people sent to us for eggs, not to overcharge them for the same, though they were rich and made us pay so dear for the farm. I truly loved and feared Mr. Symons, and he told me that by the feelings he was the subject of when he came to our house, he was sure there was a son or daughter of peace in the house, or both.”

As they became acquainted with him, Mr. Symons took much to Mrs. Wild, coming sometimes to see them at Stowell, as she names above. I shall, therefore, insert a letter which he wrote to them about this time, which I think will be read with both pleasure and profit:

“Dear Mr. and Mrs. Wild,

Your little basket with its contents came safe to hand, for which I kindly thank you, and as the Lord has promised to bless His people in the basket, I could not return it until I had besought the Lord to put His blessing into it, namely, that which maketh the soul rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it. In general I am not forward either to converse with or write to strangers on religious subjects, and there are several in this town who I believe, from what I see and hear of them, have been savingly

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\* John Symons. He died about the year 1837. An account of his last days and also a few of his letters appear in the *Gospel Standard* 1849.

brought to a knowledge of the truth under my preaching, with whom I have never conversed and to whom I have never written.

Should you ask what made me depart from my general rule of procedure, I answer that what I have heard and seen of you has raised a hope in my mind that the Lord has begun a good work in both your souls, and this hope is abundantly confirmed by a strong affection of soul, so that I can say I long after you both in the bowels of Jesus Christ, and have from time to time great liberty of access for you at a throne of grace, praying the Lord to accomplish in you all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith by His almighty power, in granting you a double portion of His Spirit to lead you into a saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, to write the same on the fleshy tables of your hearts, to reveal Christ to you in all His excellences, power and glory, to apply His blood to your consciences and to clothe you with His righteousness, to shed abroad the Father's love in your hearts to bear witness with your spirits that you are born of God, passed from death unto life, and shall never again come into condemnation.

“These are some of the leadings and most important blessings of the everlasting gospel of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which He freely bestows on His people as the gifts of His eternal love, without money and without price. I should rejoice to hear you say in the affirmative, ‘These blessings are all our own; we have them in sweet and happy possession.’ But should you through unbelief stagger at any of the promises by which our covenant God has engaged to bestow them on His people, they are nevertheless set before you in the gospel, and faith is given to believe them, and in the Lord's good time to receive them, through and by which your hearts will be purified in obeying the truth to unfeigned love of the brethren, whom you will consider as the excellent of the earth, and with whom will be your delight.

“Faith will also render sin increasingly sinful. The evil of it will be seen, and the burden of it felt more and more, which will cause you frequently to go mourning, with your spirits bowed down within you. Doubts and fears will prevail, and you will be ready sometimes to conclude that all is a delusion and a cheat of Satan, which will make your minds like the troubled ocean. In this distress you will call on the name of the Lord with a deal of sighing and groaning within, and the secret corner often resorted to in order to pour out the heart with all its complaints before God, who hath said, ‘Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.’

“These are a few of the footsteps of the flock which I believe my friends are walking in. If so, I would say, Peace be on you, as a part of the true Israel of God. I am happy to see that with a large family and a multiplicity of business you can take up your cross and come six miles to hear the Word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. It is a mark that

you are of those that hunger and thirst after righteousness, and the promise is that you shall be filled. Yes, I believe that you will be abundantly satisfied with the goodness of the Lord's house and, if not now, in due time be brought to praise your covenant God with joyful lips. Beware of and keep from outside preaching and professors. I shall be very glad to see or hear from you both. Should you write, keep nothing back, good or bad, and it will be gladly received by

Your affectionate friend in the gospel of the Lord and Saviour,  
John Symons

Marlborough, December 1815"

Mr. Symons became much attached to Mrs. Wild, seeing in her so much honesty and sincerity, and kept up a correspondence with her up to the time of his decease. Indeed no one who knew anything of the truth could converse with her without seeing the grace of God manifested in her conversation. Mr. Symons, who was in the Excise [Government office collecting excise duties], continued to preach at Marlborough until 1818, when he moved to Bristol, I suppose by the order of the Commissioners. They continued, however, to go to Marlborough to hear a Mr. Weldon,\* who, having been in the army and a trumpet-major in it during the Peninsular War, was generally known by the name of "Trumpet-Major Weldon."

I am not able to say how far they profited under his ministry, but they could not hear the minister that succeeded him, and therefore left him to attend at a poor cottage at Rushall, a village about four miles off but in an opposite direction, the minister being a poor shoemaker, and his cottage the chapel, with a mud floor so uneven that she said she had often great difficulty to keep her stool from upsetting as she sat to hear. When the service was over, they went under some sheltered hedge to eat their dinner, and then down to the brook to get a little water to drink. But she had a heavier load all this time than sitting on a mud floor, dining under a hedge, or drinking from a brook, for she says:

"Many times when my mind was bondaged, and I could not hear to my satisfaction and had so to shift about, has my pride been sadly mortified, and what was worse, fearing my religion was only enough to make me miserable, and like what Mr. Hart describes:

'A sore that never healing  
Frets and rankles unto death.'

The devil would also tell me that I should have nothing else in this world or in the next, and that mine was nothing but the sorrow of the world that worketh death."

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\* In 1818 he began preaching in a room at Marlborough, where later a chapel was built in 1847.

Still, however, this honest, godly couple, for I place him with her, though I have not yet spoken much about him, struggled on through wind and storm, not beaten back, for hell was behind them and heaven before, even though the last was but dimly seen; and after a little time the friends at the cottage at Rushall helping each other, a little place was built at Manningford, about three miles off, in which they heard Henry Huntly,\* Mr. Pontin, of Devizes, and other good men, for about nine or ten years. Some reason, however, occurred about 1835, which caused them to leave Manningford, and Mrs. Wild for a little time went again to Pewsey Chapel. This was about the time that Mr. Godwin came to preach there. The poor old farmer, however, having so severely smarted from his connection with the chapel, could hardly bring himself again to enter it, and would, therefore, either stay at home or take his Bible or book to a little copse close by the farm meadow, and there read and pray by himself.

*(To be concluded)*



## BOOK REVIEWS

**Freedom from the Law**, by William Gadsby; paperback; 576 pages; price £9.99 plus £2.80 postage; published by CBO Publications, and obtainable from The Christian Bookshop, 21 Queen Street, Ossett, W. Yorkshire, WF5 8AS.

In his day William Gadsby was renowned as an eminent preacher. Today he is best known as a hymnwriter and for his wonderful selection of hymns. But in his day he was quite a voluminous writer, mostly controversial, and especially on the relationship of the law and the gospel.

Gadsby lived in a day when a spirit of legalism had infected many of the old dissenters, not least the Independents and the Particular Baptists. Edward Blackstock, in his autobiography, outlines the way in which he suffered from the legal preaching, and the wonderful effect that Gadsby's preaching had on him the first time he heard him preach.

*Freedom from the Law* is a reproduction of Gadsby's writings on the subject, and includes: "The Perfect Law of Liberty," "The Present State of Religion," an extract from "The Children's Catechism," and his replies to Andrew Fuller, James Upton, John Stevens, James Gawthorn, David Bogue and James Bennett – all who had written strongly, not only in defence of the law as the believer's rule of conduct, but stigmatising as antinomians those who believe that the gospel is the believer's rule of conduct. (At the beginning is the hymn, "The gospel's the law of the Lamb" – all the original seven verses of our hymn 523.)

As appendices, the writings of Gadsby's opponents are appended – which is a tremendous help in following Gadsby's own writings. There is a very useful foreword.

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\* Henry Huntly (c. 1798-1868). He preached at Manningford for seven years but later moved to Devon, and finally emigrated to Australia.

Apart from the controversial sections, *Freedom from the Law* includes some most beautiful pieces. Also Gadsby makes it abundantly clear that he is *not* an antinomian: the gospel is a higher standard than the law. And in Gadsby's day there was abundant witness on every hand, even from those who did not accept his doctrines, that there was no holier man in Manchester – and his congregation as well!

Gadsby writes: “The man who is living upon and walking in Christ, by faith, will be honest in his deportment in the world and among men; and, as God gives him ability, he will evidence his bowels of compassion to the afflicted, poor and distressed. His conduct will be circumspect in all his various undertakings, the cause of God and truth lying too near his heart for him to find a delight in the practice of such things as expose it to contempt. He wishes not only to be a Christian, but to *live* the Christian, in the world, in the family and in the church of God; and though he never expects to gain heaven, in whole or in part, by anything he can do, he nevertheless delights to do the will of God in keeping His commands, and often mourns over his shortcomings.”

The book is well produced, with clear print and with a lovely colour photograph on the front of a moorland road, such as Gadsby often trudged over in going forth to preach the everlasting gospel.

**You Must Read: Books that have Shaped our Lives;** thirty-three different authors; paperback; 290 pages; price £8, or clothbound, price £15; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

For those who like reading, especially gracious works, this is a fascinating book. Thirty-three different people (“the Reformed Evangelical élite”?) have given an account of the book which has had the most effect in their lives.

Obviously the chapters differ in quality and in interest. Some major on the author; some the content of the book; some their own experience. Here we have all the well-known authors: Calvin, Rutherford, Bunyan, Jonathan Edwards, J.C. Ryle, Dr. Owen, etc. The two surprises were that Krummacher (especially *The Suffering Saviour*) and John Newton (especially his letters) were missing.

We have wondered what we would have included. J.C. Philpot's *Meditations on the Sacred Humanity of the Blessed Redeemer* is an outstanding work. His work on the eternal Sonship is better known, but that is a book written in controversy, and this in quiet contemplation. We ourselves were deeply humbled when first reading *The Life of William Tiptaft*. Did anyone ever sacrifice so much for Christ's sake?

To return to the book. It would be invidious to select one author and chapter; but as we were not too impressed by Iain Campbell's little book on Psalm 73 (recently reviewed), we think it only fair to say that he has written a beautiful chapter on Octavius Winslow.

Without going into details, we must say we were somewhat puzzled by the opening chapter on Spurgeon. The writer, R. Albert Mohler, says that Spurgeon counted Arminianism as “a false gospel that demanded refutation” and Hyper-Calvinism “a great enemy of the gospel of Christ” (page 4). But Spurgeon welcomed Arminians into his pulpit, e.g. Moody and Sankey, whilst on the other hand he based his monthly sermons on Joseph Irons, he admired Gadsby, he even defended Huntington against his critics, and he loved Dr. Hawker!

This is a very interesting (and very profitable) book, which we found hard to put down. Also it is a good introduction to the Christian classics.

**The Korean Pentecost and the Sufferings which Followed**, by William Blair (1876-1970) and Bruce Hunt (1903-1992); paperback; 195 pages; price £6.25; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

The first part of the book, by Dr. William Blair, gives an account of a great revival in the Korean church in 1907.

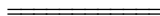
In the summer of 1832 the first Protestant missionary, Charles Gutzlaff, had visited Korea. The visit was brief – at this time all foreigners were forbidden on pain of death from entering her borders. For thirty-three years no other Protestant missionary was to visit Korea. When missionaries again arrived, it was discovered that many educated Koreans could read Chinese characters, and eventually it became possible to distribute Chinese gospels as vessels negotiated the country's rivers.

Dr. Blair arrived in Seoul, Korea in 1901. He found the Koreans a loving, generous-hearted people, poetic and deeply religious by nature. Most followed Confucianism, which had largely killed off Buddhism. As soon as he knew enough Korean, Dr. Blair began to preach, and Christian churches were established. In January 1907, at a crowded church service at Pyongyang (now the capital of North Korea), there was felt to be no life in the meeting. The missionaries met and cried out to God in earnest. The next day, on entering the church, each felt the place was full of God's presence. As one missionary began to pray, the whole congregation began to pray out loud, altogether. To Dr. Blair the prayer "sounded like an ocean of prayer beating against God's throne." Many threw themselves to the floor and beat the floor with fists in perfect agony of conviction; some wept, and almost screamed in agony. The meeting continued until two o'clock the next morning, with confession, weeping and praying. It was as though all were face to face with God. It seems that a time of special blessing then spread throughout the entire Korean peninsula.

The second part of the book, by Bruce Hunt (Dr. Blair's son-in-law), relates the terrible sufferings – almost too terrible to contemplate – of the church under the Japanese and Communists. During his forty-eight years of missionary service, Mr. Hunt personally knew many of the Korean Christian martyrs.

As always, the subject of revivalism needs to be approached with caution, but we acknowledge that God, in His sovereignty, may act occasionally in a more extraordinary and remarkable way. We recommend the book, but the second part may not be suitable reading for those who find it difficult to cope with harrowing accounts of the sufferings of others.

Trevor Scott, Harpenden



Your sins may provoke Christ to frown upon you, they may provoke Christ to chide with you, they may provoke Him gently to correct you, but they shall never provoke Him to give you a bill of divorce.

*Thomas Brooks*

## WEAKNESS

*"My strength is made perfect in weakness"* (2 Cor. 12. 9)

*"Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth"* (Heb. 12. 6)

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But does He really know and understand  
My growing weakness and increasing pain?  
And am I now and ever in His hand?  
And is He able always to sustain?

O yes, He's there each moment of the day,  
And knows the deepest longings of the soul.  
He's planning, wisely planning all the way.  
My life is fully under His control.

Behind the weakness, I can trace His love,  
A love that's true and cannot make mistake;  
A perfect love – the love of God above,  
Freely and fully given for Jesus' sake.

He chastens, for His love to me is great.  
He chastens, and thus proves that I'm His child.  
And so I learn to trust and for Him wait,  
Not by my foolish heart to be beguiled.

His power is mighty – perfect is His will.  
He reigns supreme, and triumphs over all.  
I'll trust in Him, He bids my soul be still.  
I know He loves, and hears my faintest call.

What lessons He is teaching me each hour;  
Some lessons I could never learn in strength.  
Increasing weakness makes me feel His power,  
So that I'm able to rejoice – at length.

The day of glory soon will meet my sight,  
And I shall see my Saviour face to face.  
No weakness then, but filled with His own might,  
I'll ever praise Him for His matchless grace.

Author Unknown

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Thou temptest God to suffer thy locks to be cut when thou art so bold as to lay thy head in the lap of a temptation.

*William Gurnall*

If you hold the stirrup, no wonder if Satan get into the saddle.

*William Secker*

Waverings where faith is are like the tossings of a ship fast at anchor.

*Stephen Charnock*



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD

SEPTEMBER 2015

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

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We have read of an eloquent and forceful minister who was counted a faithful man. His whole emphasis was *separation*: sheep and goats, chaff and wheat, righteous and wicked, saved and lost. His congregation loved him. They took it for granted they were on the right side!

He was followed by a completely different type of minister, a man who quietly set out what real religion is, contending for the vital, inward work of the Holy Spirit and a personal knowledge of Christ. His congregation disliked him as much as they loved that former minister. But he was the one who truly separated in the sight of God.

Such a minister was John Grace of Brighton (1800-1865). He was much blessed and was the minister of a large congregation. J.C. Philpot, who greatly admired him, felt he was extremely separating in reality in his quiet ministry, though outwardly it would not have seemed to be so.

We are afraid there is a type of preaching, which deems itself to be very faithful, which in a harsh way continually speaks of those right and those wrong. "If your name is not in the book of life you will be lost." But living souls, with tender consciences, want to know *how* they can find out whether their names are in the book of life, and whether their religion is real. Are they among the chaff or the wheat? Do they know themselves and do they know the Saviour?

Some of the harsh preaching has little of the Spirit in it. We remember a man who scowled, and clenched his teeth, and spoke all day on "lamentation, and mourning, and woe," but it seemed he himself had little or no knowledge of the Lord personally and savingly.

We have been blessed with a succession of most faithful ministers – but they warned in love (sometime with tears), and their great desire was to point lost sinners to Christ as an almighty Saviour, and to His precious blood.

The Apostle Paul makes it abundantly clear that a faithful preaching of the gospel, under the power and unction of the Holy Spirit, will *always* separate – "a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Cor. 2. 15, 16).

## THE BLOOD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

*Sermon preached by Samuel Curtis (the younger) of Tunbridge Wells  
at Blunsdon Hill, Wilshire, on March 11th, 1953*

**Text:** "And He said unto them, This is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many" (Mark 14. 24).

This text may seem to be far from that scripture we read together just now (Gen. 9. 1-17), but for a little while this morning my mind seemed to be stayed where we left reading: "And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between Me and all flesh that is upon the earth." The token of that covenant was the bow which God did set in the cloud. He said, "When I bring a cloud over the earth, My bow shall be seen in the cloud." However men may attribute that beautiful bow to natural causes, dear friends, it continues to be God's token of His covenant, and God is faithful to that covenant.

Sometimes we may speak of other clouds, those clouds which God's people so much dread, which "gather thick and thunder loud," and it cheers the soul, when those clouds gather, to have a glimpse of the bow in the cloud, not exactly that beautiful rainbow, though that sometimes is a means of leading us in contemplation of God's goodness and mercy, when the Lord shows us some token for good and of His special love.

Well, as my mind was stayed in a little measure upon the token of the covenant, we were led on to think upon and to seek rather than the token of the covenant which God made with Noah and all flesh, the "everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure," for poor, needy sinners want a true token, a real token. Rahab, who was saved through faith, desired a true token. That true token was the scarlet line which she was to bind in the window. What a token! It was her salvation. When the children of Israel came into the land of Canaan, they were not to enter that house to touch Rahab or any that were there with her. Now, the walls of Jericho fell flat, except where Rahab dwelt, and that scarlet line is, to my mind, a type of that scarlet line we find throughout the whole Word of God, but especially the "blood of the new testament."

Jesus at this time was with His disciples in the upper room. He had desired particularly to eat that Passover with them before He suffered, and there He instituted the ordinance of the Lord's supper. When He took bread and gave thanks and brake it and gave it to them, He said, "This is My body, which is given for you, which is broken for you," and then the cup, and He said unto them, "This is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many." The hour was at hand when the Lord Jesus Christ should pour out His soul unto death.

May we for a moment or two just mention a little of the blood of the Old Testament? We had our Sunday School gathering not many

evenings past, and there is, of course, some exercise to find a suitable word to speak to the young. Say you, I should not think that is much difficulty, considering the many interesting things and instructive subjects there are in the Scripture – and truly there are many. But in seeking to find that which we hoped would be according to the will of God, we found our mind was led to attempt to speak concerning blood. I am not going to try to rehearse all that could be spoken of blood in an instructive and profitable way, for, “the life is in the blood.” But, dear friends, the blood of the Passover Lamb! When God in His mercy led forth the people whom He had redeemed, they had been in Egyptian bondage for many years. God looked upon them. He heard their groanings. He had respect unto His covenant, but there was a time which God had fixed when they should come out. Dear friends, our times are in God’s hand, and if you are in bondage, if you are shut up and cannot come forth, and you have to do as Israel did – groan before God – it seems perhaps that He never hears or pays any attention. God has set a time to lead forth the people whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy. The children of Israel could not come out of Egypt until that appointed time. Moses began to kill the Egyptians. You know, he seemed to have some idea of that work that was appointed for him, but that was not the time nor the way that it should come to pass. The dear man of God had to go to a school yet where he learned to be humbled in the dust, and that is a good school, one of the best schools we can go to here upon earth. There may be some painful experiences and a solitary way in the backside of the desert – but profitable. When Moses had been there forty years, the Lord’s time had come, but Moses then would rather have been excused. He did not feel fit for it. And that is just when God had made him fit. But I did not think to touch upon that.

But you see, when the time had come, the Lord instructed Moses very particularly that they were to take the lamb without blemish, without spot, not a bone of him should be broken, and they were to eat this lamb. Everyone was to make his count for the lamb and poor, trembling sinner, you may venture to make your count for the Paschal Lamb, the blood of the new testament. They were to make their count, put in their claim. They were not to be left out. There is something choice, something encouraging, even in that word relative to the Old Testament Passover. They were to eat it with bitter herbs and with their loins girded, because they were about to be thrust out of Egypt.

But the blood, dear friends! It was the blood that was the token, the blood sprinkled upon the doorposts and lintel. God said, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you.” So it was. As they were sheltered beneath the blood of the paschal lamb, the destroying angel passed over them. It was their salvation. It was that which God had ordained, and to be

observed, not only that night, but in all their generations. It was that feast of the Passover which Jesus with His disciples had kept in the upper room when He spoke the words of our text.

We may speak of the blood of the Old Testament, because God commanded by Moses those burnt offerings and sacrifices, yea, many things recorded in the Scripture, spoken of as the ceremonial law, but they were types and shadows, and,

“Not all the blood of beasts  
On Jewish altars slain,  
Could give the guilty conscience peace,  
Or wash away the stain.”

Yet it was shed by God’s command, God’s particular instruction, and those who offered those burnt offerings and sacrifices with living faith in their hearts were led to look beyond those types and shadows. I believe the Old Testament saints looked forward by faith to the one sacrifice for sin, the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world. We sing sometimes (it is nice when we can sing it with the heart and understanding, and feel to have a little of that faith in exercise):

“My faith looks back to see  
The burdens Thou didst bear,  
When hanging on the accursed tree,  
And hopes her guilt was there.”

I believe the dear people of God in the days of the Old Testament Scriptures looked forward by faith.

We may go back even to the first sacrifices recorded in the Word of God, the sacrifices of Cain and Abel, and as you know, Cain’s sacrifice was rejected; it was not acceptable in God’s sight. There is manifest from the very beginning that solemn truth of God’s sovereignty – one is taken and the other is left. There was no shed blood in Cain’s sacrifice, friends, and may we not with truth say we have reason to believe it is so, even now, that there are many who are deceived? They are to be pitied, friends; yes, they are! They are not to be scorned; they are to be pitied, for we might have been in their case. We should have been, but for free and sovereign grace. Who maketh us to differ? What have we that we have not received? We may search our hearts at times and have many grave fears that what we have, we have not received from the Lord, and what will become of us? Well, in truth, what we possess that we have not received from God, it would be good for us to lose.

But I was going to say, how many, being thus deceived, bring of the fruits of the earth. In other words, they rest upon their own self-righteousness, or if not entirely so, they have such a doctrine as this –

which is one of the doctrines of Satan – that they can do their part, and what Jesus Christ has done will make up their deficiency. My dear young friends, may you never be deceived with such an awful doctrine as that. If our soul is saved, it will be saved wholly and solely by the blood of Jesus Christ. It will.

But just a moment again returning to the beginning. You see Abel brought of the flock by faith. The blood of that lamb which he offered was shed, a type of the Lamb of God. He offered his sacrifice with faith which God had given him. Faith is a heavenly gift; it is God's divine favour to a poor sinner. Did you pray, coming to chapel, "Remember me, O Lord, with the favour which Thou bearest unto Thy people"? This is one of the great favours that He bears to His people, His living children, that He gives them living faith. There is not a soul born again that is left destitute of it. You may sadly feel and pray, "Leave not my soul destitute." The first text that I went forth with: "Leave not my soul destitute." We have to come back to that spot sometimes too, and fall back on an old text, but an old truth, too, friends, a real prayer – "Leave not my soul destitute." O the fear, the trembling lest after all one should be destitute of living faith, of the life of God, of an interest in the finished work of Jesus Christ!

Thus we could speak still of the blood of the Old Testament, but in the words of our text the Lord Jesus says to His disciples, as He was about to be taken from them, "This is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many." This is the precious blood of Christ. That is what is shown forth when we take the bread, and then we take the cup – a solemn thing, friends, to take the cup and to drink thereof. It is nice when we feel our hearts moved in these things, but if I may speak for myself, and others too, it is not every time that we come to the Lord's table that we can receive these emblems of His broken body and shed blood feelingly in faith and hope and love. We feel a hard, wretched heart. Say you, Well, I would not go if I felt like that. And Satan would be very pleased, dear friend, to see you keep away too! You would be as it were giving place to the devil in yielding to that temptation, and that inward feeling: I am not fit; I am not worthy, and had better stay away. We do need to be kept by the power of God. We do need grace to hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering. We do need grace not to yield to that inward persuasion of our own feeling sense of sinfulness and unworthiness, but to venture. We were looking at that hymn before coming to chapel where one said,

"Ask thy Saviour for this token;  
He will all thy needs supply."

Well, fellow sinner, hoping in the mercy of God, with all that feeling sense of unworthiness and hardness of heart, feeling so ashamed that,

“All things of feeling show some sign,  
But this unfeeling heart of mine,”

you come here to commemorate His sufferings and death, to consider Him that endured the cross. Ah, but sometimes He gives a touch, doesn't He? Sometimes He grants that measure of faith that we can look beyond the sign. And O, when He grants the witness of His Spirit within that we are among the “many!” “This is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.”

The blood of Jesus Christ, God's dear Son, is that true token of the covenant ordered in all things and sure, that covenant of peace which was not to be removed, that covenant made with the Lord Jesus Christ. Yea, God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, entered into an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure, in which the eternal Son of God undertook that He would take part of the same flesh and blood as His children, that He might tabernacle here below to pour out His soul unto death.

There must be blood shed for the remission of sins, and no blood could atone for sin but the blood of Jesus Christ, for His blood was holy, undefiled. “Ye are not redeemed with corruptible things ... but with the precious blood of Christ.” Thus, in covenant love, an unalterable covenant. I was speaking recently a little of the stability of the everlasting covenant, but these things are sure and secure, unalterable, for God's love is an unchanging love. He is in one mind, and none can turn Him. God's eternal purpose of love and mercy to His church and people can never change. Thus the covenant made with David's Lord was “in all things ordered well.” Thus in due season did the Lord Jesus come into this valley of tears to seal that covenant with His blood, His shed blood. It is a solemn, sacred, holy theme. We do seek that we may be preserved from presumptuous sins, but would we not venture to draw near and plead the blood which does for sin atone?

Jesus said, “This is My blood of the new testament,” His shed blood. He went forth from the upper room into Gethsemane, and I have thought upon it sometimes. O to be led by the Spirit to consider Him! I remember being enabled to take this text only once, and we have spoken in the Lord's name now for a few years, but just once: “And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” We felt encouraged to venture with this feeling: those great drops of blood were for great sinners, the chiefest of sinners. I have one dear wife in glory who in hospital upon her bed had a little fellowship with the Lord Jesus

Christ. "And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly." The agony that Jesus endured, friends, we cannot conceive, because you will realise that then man had not laid hands upon Him. He was not as yet delivered into their hands, but, as the hymn says,

"The awful stroke that found Him  
Was the stroke that justice gave."

Thus the Lord Jesus Christ, the Friend of publicans and sinners, did shed His own precious blood. "His body bathed in blood." They scourged Him, they crowned Him with thorns, they nailed Him to the cross, the soldiers pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. "A fountain opened ... for sin and for uncleanness." God spoke by the prophet: "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." O what a day that was when Jesus died upon the cross and that fountain was opened! A mercy, dear friends, that fountain is open still, and as one says,

"Shall never lose its power  
Till all the ransomed church of God  
Be saved to sin no more."

You see, we shall not get to that this side of the gave. No, we shall not! Saved sinners! There are times of rejoicing in this life, but O is it not still to realise our need of that shed blood to take away our sins? For I feel as long as our soul tabernacles in this body of sin and death, as Paul said, "We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened." What is it? Sin within us, friends, its working within, its power, and the guilt of sin. But when the work of grace is done, when, "Saved to sin no more," when He shall change this vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, O that we may be found there!

"This is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many." Ah the point is, am I one of those? It is not for everybody. Some would have us to believe that it was shed for everybody and that everybody has that chance, that opportunity, if they will, to accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour. "He died for sinners, and I am a sinner, therefore He died for me." We have not so learned these blessed truths, friends. This precious blood of Jesus Christ was *not* shed for everybody. If it was shed for everybody, everybody would get to heaven. That would be very different from what we read throughout this sacred Volume of truth, for I find from beginning to end it divides between the sinners and the saints, takes forth the precious from the vile.

Say you, I believe it does, and I can see some of those that I believe are precious in His sight, but this vile sinner, what will become of him? But I might tell you this: that that poor sinner that so sadly and painfully

feels sin within at times – it is not just once, you know, but from time to time, that it is *felt*, it is realised – that one is brought where Job was brought. He was a man of God. God’s testimony of him was that he feared God and eschewed evil, yet there was a needs-be that he should pass through all that fiery trial and affliction, and God brought him to this: “Behold, I am vile”; “I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” And that is of God’s mercy, really and truly to bring us there, for when He brings us there, does He not lead our poor soul to the mercy seat to beg of Him to pardon our sins and to wash us in that fountain He has opened for sin and for all uncleanness? You may feel to be the vilest and out of the secret, yet this is that one that is precious in God’s sight. Of course, carnal reason cannot understand that, but with the spiritual mind, the spiritual understanding which the Lord is pleased to give, we know, at least in some small measure, the truth of it.

But it is “for many,” that “many” which God chose in Christ. Jesus said, when here below, “All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.” They shall come. And they will not come of their own will, for it is not of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man, but of God, as many as God has chosen in everlasting love. I know that truth is offensive to many professors, but may we not be among those who are offended at this truth! We may be tried about it, tried and exercised, and feel what a solemn thing it is that God in His sovereignty has set apart a people for Himself, and am I among them? Peter says, “Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.”

“Though God’s election is a truth,  
 Small comfort there I see,  
 Till I am told by God’s own mouth,  
 That He has chosen me.”

But as many as the Father gave unto His dear Son, the Lord Jesus did shed His blood for them. We read in the Epistle to the Romans that “as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” *Many* twice in that one verse, but a distinct difference. Because “by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners” – that is everybody – “by the obedience of One” – that is Jesus – “shall many be made righteous” – as many as God has loved with an everlasting love. For them did Jesus shed His precious blood. Then the point is this, and is it a point, a point I long to know? Am I His, or am I not? It is one thing or the other, dear friends. There is no intermediate, no neutrality. I am His, or I am not, and this is a point of trial, exercise and concern, a matter in which one’s poor soul does need the Lord to appear. We want a word from Him.



“Many.” Well, “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” They are the children of God. They are redeemed ones, and the Holy Spirit will lead just that same “many” that God has chosen and Jesus Christ has redeemed. They will be led by the Spirit of God. And if they are led by the Spirit of God, there is evidence that they are born again, for they must be living children. You do not take a dead person to lead him; it is not possible to do so. And the Holy Spirit does not lead dead people, but He found us dead. He finds them dead in trespasses and in sins. We believe, as the hymnwriter says,

“The appointed time rolls on apace,  
Not to propose, but call by grace.”

I maintain there are not any propositions in this great matter, but the effectual working of God Himself, and that He takes the object of His choice in hand and deals with his never-dying soul. He brings to pass that new birth, so that that sinner is born again and is one of the children, yea, a babe in grace. We do not wait so many days or months when a babe is born to regard it as belonging to us and one of the family, and so when a sinner is born again, he is a babe; he is one of the children. He was there in the everlasting covenant before, though by nature one of the children of wrath even as others.

But when quickened by the Spirit, He always leads. He leads us down into this heart of ours, and He leads to Jesus’ precious blood. He leads them in paths they have not known and would never have sought but for free and sovereign grace, in a path of prayer, a path of exercise, a path of trouble and sorrow, yea, trouble of soul more or less. We must not set up a standard of any degree of soul trouble – that is according to God’s purpose – but I do feel that every child of God will know soul trouble more or less, and though perhaps the beginnings are small, and you have begun to seek Him, you have begun to be in want, and you may be troubled because you feel you have not been convinced of sin deeply enough, that will come, my dear friends; that will come.

I remember when I felt I had not been into the depths sufficiently. I would pray for it, for one does want to be right, but I could not pray for that when it came to the test, but what my soul wanted was Jesus. Does your soul want Jesus, dear friends? Do you feel to need Him? Do you feel to need the blood of Jesus Christ which cleanseth from all sin? That is one mark of being among the “many.” Jesus shed His blood for many. O to be found amongst that blessed number!

“With them numbered may I be,  
Now, and in eternity.”

The Lord bless the word for His name’s sake. Amen.

## THOUGHTS ON THE SONG OF SOLOMON

By Grey Hazlerigg  
(Continued from page 247)

“*My Beloved is mine, and I am His. He feedeth among the lilies*”  
(chapter 2, verse 16).

We have in these words the language of assurance, and also of explanation. It is not a mere, bold proclaiming of the soul's interest in Christ, but the secret of the possession of this assurance is unfolded. It is no mere, high, unassaulted confidence; no mere, dead, doctrinal assurance; no persuasion of all being right, kept up in an unexercised heart, by means of notions of grace and a benumbed conscience. Here is life, and exercise, and tenderness, and godly fear, and communion with Christ, and the witness of the Holy Spirit, and a divine ability to say, “My Beloved is mine, and I am His.” I can use these words truthfully, O ye daughters of Jerusalem. I can make my boast of the Lord, and say I am His, but I can also explain to you the secret of the possession at this time of this sweet assurance. He has taken for me the foxes, the little foxes; He has revived His gracious work in my soul; renewed my days as of old; He has put my sins under the foot of grace; I have got disentangled from amongst the thorns of carnal-mindedness, worldliness, sloth and sin; He has made me and keeps me now spiritually-minded, and He feedeth amongst the lilies. “My Beloved is mine, and I am His.”

But how is this assurance of interest in Christ wrought for the most part in the soul? Or how is the soul brought to a blessed persuasion of its interest in Him? This may be in two ways.

1. By what we may call the *direct actings of faith*, or when the Lord more sweetly and fully discovers Himself to the soul, shedding abroad His love into the heart, and giving it a blessed taste of the sweetness of His grace. This, of course, may be in greater or less degrees; for in the very dealings of the Spirit there may be differences in the degree of the divine communications. Paul was at one time caught up into the third heaven, heard unspeakable words, was filled with the glories of God. Now, of course, his soul at such a time was in the fullest assurance of its interest in Christ. Thomas [was invited to] thrust his hand into Christ's side, and cried, “My Lord and my God.” Here again was, no doubt, a high degree of assurance, but all may not have even assuring manifestations in the same degree, and yet quite sufficient to overpower doubts and fears, and still the voice of all objections, so that they shall say with love and delight as in the words of the text: “My Beloved is mine, and I am His.” But assurance of a very firm kind may come.

2. In a more *indirect* way, by what is called the reflex acting of faith, or, in other and simpler words, by the believer's consideration of marks and evidences whereby he is enabled distinctly to perceive that he

has the characteristics and experience of a true child of God, and concludes accordingly that Christ is his and he is Christ's. On fair and honest examination he perceives that the Lord certainly has been dealing with him in a special manner, has heard his prayers, taught his soul, convinced him of sin, and revealed to him Jesus. Then he properly concludes from these things that God remembers him with the favour He bears unto His people, will not destroy but save his soul, that Christ is his, and he is Christ's.

We have such a process of spiritual reasoning in the case of Manoah's wife, who rightly argued that if the Lord had meant to destroy them He would not have dealt with them as He had done; and if not to destroy, then to save. John also shows us the same process in his first Epistle, where he dwells much upon evidences, and declares that by a due consideration of what spirit we are of, we may assure our hearts before God.

Now then, we see the two different ways in which the Lord ordinarily assures the soul: by the present, sweet discoveries of Christ and love to the soul; these are by the Holy Spirit as leading the soul into the secret things of God; and by a reflective operation, or consideration of the Lord's work in and towards us; this, too, is by the Holy Spirit, who shows unto man his uprightness, and enables a man to form a right and scriptural judgment of his state before God. The former of these may be with the most sweetness and delight, but the latter may be quite as confirming in the sweet truth: "My Beloved is mine, and I am His."

But it is a very tender plant, hardly gained, easily lost; therefore a cautionary word is added: "He feedeth among the lilies."

*"He feedeth among the lilies."* What a blessed thing is this true, godly assurance of interest in Christ. It is one of the things the Lord's people eagerly desire, and yet sometimes they forget and neglect those things which are essential to it, and expect to possess it rather by some sudden impulse of the Spirit and a marvellous manifestation than by being made and kept spiritually-minded. The fact is that assurance of interest in Christ may be in a poor child of God's soul under very varying circumstances, and may, therefore, be either sweet assurance or accompanied with much bitterness and sorrow of heart; assurance with sweet comfort or assurance without it; assurance on the mountain of God's enjoyed love, or assurance in the agonising conflict or on the cross. This may be easily seen by considering the Lord Jesus Himself as the great pattern of the soul's experiences in the children of God. We must never forget that, though the Son of God, He is also the Man Christ Jesus, Son of man as well as Son of God, and was in all things tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Now we find it said of Jesus: "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, Father, I thank Thee," but it is also recorded of Jesus that in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross He

used the same word, still calling God His Father. Thus, then, the Lord Jesus was able to call God His Father not only in joy, but in sorrow, not only during life, but in the bitter conflict and agony of death on Calvary. We see, then, that the spirit of adoption may be in a child of God under varying circumstances, sighing and crying, "Abba, Father," or singing in a foretaste of glory.

Now, of course, where the spirit of adoption is, there is the essence of assurance, and where the spirit of adoption is, there is also spiritual-mindedness. Our text shows us the same things: "He feedeth among the lilies." Feeding implies here presence and communion. But where is Christ present? With what does He hold communion? The answer is, "Among the lilies." Lilies may represent to us two things:

1. The dear children of God as adorned with Christ's righteousness, which makes them all fair in the eyes of the justice and holiness of God; and,

2. Christ's Spirit and graces, which give them an inward spiritual beauty in the eyes of God. "The king's daughter is all glorious within," as well as "her clothing is of wrought gold." She is glorious inwardly in respect of the graces of the Spirit, as well as arrayed in the robe of Christ's righteousness before the throne.

Thus, then, the child of God is a lily for beauty, lowliness and fragrance, having Christ upon the soul as a robe of righteousness, and in the soul as the source of inward beauty.

But the emblem may lead us, of course, to consider this inward beauty more particularly as the various graces of the Spirit in the soul; all, indeed, that is of the Holy Spirit answers to this figure of a lily. Thus the faith of a child of God is an inward lily, as Jude says, "Your most holy faith," and Paul writes, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." His hope is a lily, because it is a good hope through grace, produced by the God of hope. His love is a lily, for it is a pure love. Love to God and love to the brethren in the heart of a child of God come from God Himself. Ye are taught of God to love one another, and the love of God is shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto you. Then there is sweet humility, a true lily of the valley in the child of God, planted there by the hand of the Holy Spirit. Paul gives us a list of some of these lilies when he recounts the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5: 22: "Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," and Peter gives us another though a similar list: "Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity."

Here, then, we see what is intended by the emblem of lilies, all the dear saints of God, blood-washed, adorned with righteousness, and

having the inward graces of the Holy Spirit. Also all these inward graces of the Spirit themselves, all that is immediately of the Holy Spirit about the child of God. Now, then, we see a little further into the expression, "He feedeth amongst the lilies." Christ is present amongst His people: "Lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world." Christ is present where the graces of His Spirit are. He holds communion with His saints. He holds communion with what is of His Holy Spirit in those saints. He is in His gardens, not in the wilderness; in His churches amongst His people, not in the world amongst the ungodly. He is where the graces of His Spirit are, not where the flesh is; where faith, and hope, and love, and humility, and patience flourish, not where the things of the flesh and mere nature are present.

Now then, this properly leads to one or two practical reflections, and shows us the bearing of this last part of the verse upon the former words, "My Beloved." We want more of the presence of Christ, more communion with Him, more assurance of interest in Him and persuasion that it is all right with our souls for life, death and eternity. But are we seeking these things among the lilies? Or are we seeking the living amongst the dead? We shall not find Christ or assurance in worldliness or in sin. "He that will have too much of this world," one says, "shall have more to do with the devil than he likes." Of course, men must carry on the necessary business of this life, and in so doing have contact with the men of this world, but a Christian may take Christ into any necessary things or places, though He is not properly to be found or gained there. But, then, if he goes into unnecessary things and places, he is pretty sure to lose Christ. He gets on the mountains of the leopards and amongst the lions' dens, misses Christ, nor recovers what he has lost till he gets again among the lilies. Christ, again, is not present in our pride, worldliness, angry tempers, and things of this kind. These are thorns, and when we indulge in these carnal things and in sloth, self-indulgence, shunning the cross, and other works of the flesh, it is utterly in vain to hope to keep anything like godly peace and divine assurance. These depend upon the presence of Christ, and He feeds among the lilies.

We see, then, clearly what is the case that, if we sow to the flesh, we shall of the flesh reap corruption, loss of Christ's presence, godly assurance, and a divine peace; but if by God's grace we sow to the Spirit, diligently and spiritually seek Christ in means, associate with His living and lively people, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is; if we endeavour, God working in us, to keep a conscience void of offence towards God and man, mortify sin, and aim at maintaining spirituality of mind, then at least we are in the place of assurance and blessedness, for Christ is in these things. "He feedeth among the lilies."

## FARMER WILD AND HIS FAMILY

*By J.C. Philpot*

*(Concluded from page 253)*

I shall now have, though unwillingly, to speak a little about myself, and the way in which I first became acquainted with them, on my first going to Allington. I shall, therefore, give an extract or two from the little manuscript now before me in which her daughter has recorded some of her mother's conversations:

“Mr. Philpot's leaving the Church and coming for a time to preach at Allington was noised abroad and soon reached your father's ears, and he felt inclined to go and hear him, which, after once doing, you might as well have tried to stop a running stream as to stop his going.”

In a subsequent entry, dated May 11th, 1862, I find the following words:

“In the afternoon of this day she said to me, ‘I was thinking in the morning, whilst you were at chapel at Allington, of your father, how terribly sunk and low spirited he sometimes came home from there twenty-six years ago when he first began to hear Mr. Philpot. It came so fresh to my mind. Once in particular. The text was, ‘A sower went out to sow,’ etc. Your father seemed so cut off that he could scarce eat his dinner. He told me the singers were the same so that they could hardly sing. It was before I went there, but you might as well have tried to stop a watercourse as try to stop him from going.”

As my mind had been for several years a good deal exercised upon the things of God, and I had been led particularly to see and feel the wonderful difference which there was between natural and spiritual religion, and that nothing was of any worth or value as regards salvation but the teaching and testimony of God Himself in the soul, my ministry at that time ran much in that channel, and was therefore very separating, searching and, as I was young both in years and grace and had a good deal of warmth and zeal, was often no doubt very cutting both in manner and expression, which was, I am bound to say, rather a new sound in those parts.

I have reason to believe, from what I afterwards heard, that both Farmer Wild and his wife, like many others, had for some time been gradually sunk into a cold, lethargic and sleepy state of soul. When, therefore, the good old farmer was first brought under a more searching, separating ministry than he had been accustomed to since the days of Mr. Symons, it was very cutting to his feelings and seemed at times to strip him of all his religion. But as Mr. Huntington somewhere says, “Where we get our cutting there we get our healing,” and thus, as every now and then there was a little balm dropped upon the sore, it nailed his

ears fast to the door-post; and I may say, almost literally as well as spiritually so, for he always sat close to the door of the chapel, in one and the same place, and I seem to see him now in my mind's eye, for he was naturally one of the finest grown men that I have ever seen, hanging upon the Word as though he could eat it. When the service was over, he would creep away by himself and get under a hedge, or sit on a bank (for hedges are rare things in that part of Wiltshire), where he ate his dinner alone, rarely speaking to anyone and carrying as he best could his own burden, or feasting on any little morsel that he might have gathered up under the word.

But in 1837 the Lord was pleased to lay upon him His heavy hand in an illness which terminated in death. His complaint was what is commonly called water on the chest, one of the most distressing diseases that our poor frames are subject to. I visited him several times in his illness, and I have rarely seen anyone more distressed on a sick bed, both in body and soul. I remember on one occasion going to see him, when so great was his distress from his bodily complaint and the trouble of his mind that he could not continue in bed, but sat outside the clothes with nothing on but his shirt and a shawl thrown over his limbs whilst, it being summer, great drops of sweat rolled down his face. His poor wife seemed almost as much distressed as he. I said what I could to comfort him, read and prayed with him, but left him much as I found him.

But I shall here insert an extract from the little memorial before me, which will tell his end better than anything of my own which I could say:

“In July 1837, my father, who had been suffering much from heart disease and dropsy, died on the 24th of the month. To my knowledge he had been in a very dark and gloomy state of mind for several months, and a heavy affliction it was to my dear mother to see his end approaching, and his poor mind so bondaged and cast down, and also to witness his bodily sufferings. I recollect one of her expressions before the good Lord set his soul at happy liberty was, ‘O could I but see his poor soul delivered from the sad state he has been so long in, if it was only just before he leaves this world, and the Lord enables him only to lift his hand up to let me know that it is all right between God and his soul, I could willingly go into a cave, and there end my days.’ (I heard her say the words. *J.C.P.*) But, poor soul! she had many years of trouble to wade through after the death of her partner as bad as a cave to her.

“About three weeks before my father's death, after he had been reading the 333rd hymn (*Gadsby's Selection*), ‘O my soul, what means this sadness?’ the good Lord blessedly delivered him from all fears of death. He sent for his children to his bedside, admonished each and all, telling them how good the Lord had been to him in removing his fears. He also wished for several of his old servants to be sent for that he might

also declare to them what God had done for his never-dying soul, and they, being God-fearing men, rejoiced with him. Many times after this deliverance he was longing and desiring to be absent from his poor body that he might be present with his dear Saviour.

“I have many times heard him say the Lord had promised to be his God and Guide till death. I well recollect his lamentations and groaning before his deliverance. He described himself to be like the man in the cage in Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*; only he said there appeared to him a very little light in just one corner, and here he was shut up for several weeks, but said: ‘Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all.’ Also, ‘He bore our sins in His own body on the tree.’ The day before his death, he groaned to himself, and on mother asking him what was the matter, ‘O,’ he replied, ‘the enemy has got my mind out in the barn about winnowing that wheat. Under Stowell Hill many years ago, the Lord promised to be my God and Guide until death, but He did not promise to go through with me, and Satan tells me the Lord will then leave me.’ This was the enemy’s last attack, for the next day, hearing the clock strike, he enquired the time. Being told one o’clock, he said, ‘I thought I should have been gone before this time.’

“‘O father,’ my mother answered, ‘the Lord’s time is best.’

“He quickly replied, ‘Betsy, if thou didst but know the happiness I am going to enjoy, thou wouldst not want to keep me here,’ adding, ‘Thou wert the last idol I could give up; but, thank God, I can do that now.’

“He then talked for some time of the sufferings of Christ, saying, ‘He bore our sins in His own body on the tree,’ and tried to repeat one of Mr. Hart’s verses:

“‘For all our sins we *His* may call,  
As He sustained their weight;  
How huge the heavy load of all,  
When only mine’s so great.’

And in less than ten minutes after this he breathed his last, giving my mother a much plainer testimony of his being safely housed into the heavenly garner than a bare lifting up of his hand.”

As it was his especial request that his remains should be interred in the chapel yard at Allington, where he had been favoured to hear the Word with power for the last two years of his life, and that I should bury him, though I had left for a long journey, which in those days was not accomplished with its present ease, I came back for the express purpose, and committed his body to the ground in a spot where now lie by his side, or in the same grave, the remains of his wife, whom I buried in 1863, and of his son Edward, whom I also interred in 1861.



And now in the same spot in the little chapel yard at Allington, which I may well call consecrated ground, for few sleep there who have not been manifested as saints of God, lie the remains of Mary Wild; and I can say of them now that they are dead, what I would have said of them when they were living, and what everyone who knew them would bear witness of as a truth, that four more honest, sincere and Godfearing souls, as members of one family, never breathed the breath of life, and never lay together waiting for the glorious resurrection morn.

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### APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

*This very gracious letter was written by Mrs. Pavlik, widow of Mr. J.G. Pavlik, apologising for absence from a church meeting. It is typical of the Christian courtesy and "godly etiquette" relating to church matters, so prevalent in former days.*

Dear Pastor,

Although we have a full week before our church meeting, I do not expect my present health problems to have cleared sufficiently to enable me to be with you all. I am truly grieved about this and my continued absence from the services. However, "All our times are in His hands, all events at His command," and may *all* work together for my soul's good and profit and to *His* own honour and glory.

I felt deeply touched at the way Timothy's and Trevor's prayers [listened to over the relay] brought me into our little church on the past evening. O it was so sweet to me and I felt to be one with you all despite being absent.

I do trust you will feel the Lord's overruling love and presence throughout at the church meeting, and all flesh as grass before Him. I will be with you in thought and much prayer. I have had some sweet meditation during my recent spell of illness, feeling the *'tis wells*, and well when called to die, Satan not being permitted to harass me at all.

My love to Jean and my Christian regards and thanks to you, dear Pastor. I don't forget Isaiah 40.11 and that ewe lamb, etc.

Yours in His dear and precious name,

Adah (P.)

Bethesda, Harpenden, January 18th, 1994

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The Lord uses His flail of tribulation to separate the chaff from the wheat.  
*John Bunyan*

**THE GOSPEL STANDARD TRUST**  
**49TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

*Report of the Meeting held at Ebenezer Chapel, Broad Oak, Heathfield,  
 on Saturday afternoon, May 9th, 2015*

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The meeting commenced with hymn 372, “Glorious things of thee are spoken,” following which the Chairman, Mr. D.J. Christian, read Hebrews 11. 32-40 and 12. 1-6 and then called on Mr. D.E. Cornford to seek the Lord’s blessing. The Chairman then called on the Secretary of the Trust, Mr. Playfoot, to introduce the Annual Report and to speak about the work of the Trust.

Mr. Playfoot reported first on the finances. The Trust was favoured to receive a legacy for the Publications activities from the estate of the late Mr. Arthur Stanley Johnson. This was very welcome as the Publications outgoings generally exceed income. As a result of this legacy there had been an overall Trust surplus of £19,714 for the year. The total funds available for the work entrusted to the Committee amounted to over £1.2m. The principal beneficiaries of grants were the Providence Chapels at Croydon and at Staplehurst, each receiving £10,000 towards renovations and improvements. The Library was helped with grants totalling £2,667 towards its financial needs.

He then posed the question: “What does the Gospel Standard Trust do?” A summary was provided in the printed report and so he just dealt with a few areas. Much time on the General side revolves around the ownership and use of chapels, their repair and improvement, and necessary legal matters, and sadly dealing with the sale of redundant chapels and distribution of the proceeds. As examples, in recent months Bethel Chapel, Bath, had been visited in connection with the renewal of the lease – the chapel no longer being occupied by one of our congregations, but still owned by trustees. Prestwood had been visited to discuss the ongoing maintenance of the burial ground. In connection with this, the Charity Commission is permitting a fund to be established from the chapel sale proceeds for the continued maintenance of the burial ground. The reinvestment of funds held for the benefit of the church at Bournemouth had been dealt with. Documents had been prepared for the appointment of new trustees at one of our chapels as well as taking advantage of a provision in the Charities Act 2011 to amend administrative powers in the trust deed to extend decisions from male members to both male and female. He reported some current involvement with three chapels, where improvements to toilets are being considered, and with another where a major refurbishment is necessary.

The responsibilities of trustees had been emphasised in the printed report. To assist trustees and churches, the Committee had issued a number of circulars over the years. Recently a sub-committee had been

working to produce a chapel reference source for the main rules and regulations which apply to chapels and the occupying churches, and the intention was to have this loaded on to the Trust website later in the year. The Trust has the funds available to help where matters required attention.

The activities of Trust Publications were not large, but in each of the last two years over 7,000 books had been sold. Whilst the *Miracles* series and *Bible Doctrines Simply Explained* sold the most, the Committee was thankful for the steady demand for other books as listed in the printed report. A great deal of work had to be undertaken by the Publications Manager, the book authors and others, which is only really realised when one sits down to try to produce a book oneself. From time to time permission is granted for other people to work on translations into other languages of *Bible Doctrines*, *Divine Guidance*, *Spirit of Truth* and books in the *Miracles* series. Information about many of the Trust's publications is given on the Publications website.

It was a continuing exercise for the Committee to produce appropriate books within the Trust's remit, and these are discussed at each Committee meeting.

Of these, one new book which would hopefully become available later in the year was about Strict Baptists and the First World War, written and compiled by Dr. Matthew Hyde. It was expected to run to around 500 pages and contain many accounts of Strict Baptists serving in the First World War in the Army, Navy and in the fledgling Air Force, and would cover the anxieties, the losses, the exercises of soul, and the effect on those left at home and on the churches. As currently drafted, extracts had been included from over sixty diaries, memoirs and letters of those who survived and those who were killed in action. Being in Sussex for the Annual Meeting, Mr. Playfoot mentioned the first letter in the book from Lance Corporal Alfred Jenkins of Brighton who was killed in 1917. He read an extract from this letter which showed that the Lord was evidently working in his heart, and he recorded much thanks to the Lord from "so great a sinner." Mention was also made of others from Sussex. It was stated in the book that of the many accounts of men serving in the Army, nearly all of them make reference to the blessing, help and encouragement they found in the couplet from hymn 64: "Not a single shaft can hit, Till the God of love sees fit."

The Secretary then mentioned the Library, the Report for which had been for many years included in the Trust's printed report. It was pleasing to note that the number of books loaned at 533 was an increase of over 50% on the previous year. The Trustees of Rehoboth Chapel, New Barnet, had favoured the Library with £10,000 out of the sale proceeds, which had materially improved the Library's finances. Finally, he thanked Trust members and churches for their continuing loyal

support. He encouraged the younger generation, and members of churches and congregations who had benefited from Trust grants, to become members of the Trust.

There were no questions on the Report and Financial Statements which were then received. Mr. A. Crowter, Dr. M.J. Hyde and Mr. H. Mercer were the three members of the Executive Committee retiring in rotation, and they were re-elected in separate resolutions by the members present without dissent.

The Chairman spoke with much appreciation of all the work done by the Secretary, and mentioned one or two examples as well of the Trust's willingness to help, especially in cases with smaller congregations. He thanked also the Publications Manager for carrying on the work at Harpenden and mentioned the support from Mr. John Kingham and Mr. Caleb Pearce. He made particular reference to the new book in 2015 *Pastoral Counsel* of George Rose, which brings together many of the monthly circulars from Mr. Rose to his church and congregation whilst he was pastor at Tamworth Road, Croydon. These are short pieces, for example, on particular spiritual matters or on Christian living. Also he mentioned the book produced at the end of 2014, *Forty Years in the Wilderness* concerning John Chandler from Sussex who emigrated to Australia. He thanked the friends at Broad Oak for their kind hospitality.

Hymn 477 was then sung, following which Dr. Matthew Hyde, a member of the Trust's Executive Committee, addressed the meeting on *Sussex Martyrs*.

Dr. Hyde introduced his subject by speaking first generally on martyrs and what they stood for. He defined the meaning of the word martyr as witness, one who chooses to be put to death rather than abandon his faith. But it does not mean those who make their religious views an excuse for crime, thinking of those today we hear about in connection with Islam. He referred particularly to the martyrs who suffered during the reign of Mary Tudor (1553-1558), when 284 men and women were put to death for their faith, and of these, thirty either came from Sussex or were put to death in this county. He said martyrdom in England is not just a Protestant phenomenon; Anabaptists, Roman Catholics and other sincere members of various sects have suffered for their faith.

In England the history of martyrdom went back to Alban, who was generally described as the protomartyr in England, martyred in the 3rd or 4th century, after whom St. Albans is named. It was not until 1401 in England, during the reign of Henry VI, that the Roman Catholic church brought in the burning of heretics. The Act of Parliament passed was aimed at the Lollards, the followers of John Wycliffe, and the first martyr to die under that law was William Sawtree, who was burnt at Smithfield

in London in March 1401. In Kent there were a number of martyrs who suffered during that early period, but in Sussex it does not appear there were any before Mary Tudor came to the throne, and then during her reign, according to one modern historian, took place the “most severe religious persecution in English history.”

John Foxe, in his well-known *Acts and Monuments of the Christian Church*, is considered to provide the best source of information on the martyrs. Of the thirty Sussex martyrs, most were men, but five women were martyred: Margery Morris of Heathfield was burnt on June 22nd, 1557, alongside Ann Ashdown of Rotherfield, Thomasina Wood of Mayfield and Mary Groves of Lewes. Anne Tree of East Grinstead was burnt in East Grinstead on July 18th, 1556. The first Sussex martyr who was burnt at the stake for his faith was Deryk Carver, who denied transubstantiation, the confession of sins to the priest, and said the Latin used in the church services was unprofitable. He was found guilty of heresy and burnt at the stake in Lewes where it is reported he joyfully gave his last exhortation. His two friends, Thomas Iveson and John Launder, were also burnt at the stake. Other martyrs were also mentioned: Richard Hook, Stephen Gratwick and four from East Grinstead, Henry Adlington, Thomas Dungate, John Foreman and Mother Tree.

From Mayfield six inhabitants received a martyr's crown, but Lewes was the main site of burnings during the Marian persecutions in Sussex. The largest fire was June 22nd, 1557, when ten were martyred, six men and four women. Of these ten, only two had been tried; the other eight were executed without trial. The historian of the Sussex Martyrs, Edward Stonham, said of this terrible execution, “Probably it was hoped that such a terrible happening would result in crushing the spread of the Reformed faith during the reformation, but as always, efforts to burn out the truth of God only burnt it the deeper in the hearts and affections of those who had experienced its power.” Amongst the ten was the best known of the Sussex martyrs, Richard Woodman, and Foxe gives a full account of him from which Dr. Hyde gave details. Woodman was one who gave up a profitable business, wife and children “for the sake of his Lord.” So the burning of martyrs at Lewes was the beginning of the Sussex Bonfire Societies.

Dr. Hyde in closing asked, Why should we remember the martyrs? He gave two reasons. First, because of the stand they made for the truth. They stood particularly against the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation. He asked those of us who participate of the Lord's supper, Are we clear on the truths the martyrs stood for? They also stood for the only two sacraments (not seven as Rome teaches) of the New Testament church, Baptism and the Lord's supper. Ultimately it was the primacy of the Word of God that these men died for. Secondly, we should remember

the martyrs for the manner of their witness. The martyrs could only stand and witness to the truth as the Lord gave them grace and strength. He mentioned the verse sung earlier in the afternoon, which had been on his mind for a few weeks concerning this afternoon:

“I ask them whence their victory came:  
They with united breath,  
Ascribe their conquest to the Lamb,  
Their triumph to His death.”

Dr. Hyde asked, how would we stand if persecutions came upon us? He said that grace as given to the martyrs is the same grace today that the Lord Jesus gives His people, and how we need that same grace to stand in our day, a day not of martyrdom, but a day of light things, of liberalism, when the Word of God is trodden underfoot and denied. May we rightly remember the martyrs today, the truths they preached and witnessed to in their deaths, and above all else, to see Jesus. As the Apostle John wrote when he saw those martyrs in heaven when he opened the fifth seal: “I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.”

The Chairman thanked Dr. Hyde for his very interesting and profitable address. The meeting concluded with hymn 267 and the benediction.

D.J.P.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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**The Letters of John Berridge of Everton: A Singular Spirituality**, edited and annotated by Nigel R. Pibworth; 498 pages; hardback; £28.99; paperback £22.99; published by Joshua Press, Canada, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

This book is a treasure, both spiritually and academically. It contains, as far as can be ascertained, all the letters written by John Berridge that are still in existence.

John Berridge (1716-1793) was a remarkable man. Known to us today through his hymns (William Gadsby admired him as, along with Hart, “the sweetest and greatest experimental hymnwriters”), in his day he was one of the leading preachers of the Evangelical Revival – along with Whitefield, Grimshaw and Venn. It seems almost unbelievable to read of Berridge’s success as a preacher. He would go forth early in the morning, and find thousands in the

fields waiting for him to preach. Berridge was Vicar of Everton in Bedfordshire, but was a very welcome and popular preacher each year in London at Whitefield's Tabernacle.

All who knew him commented on a strange peculiarity in his conversation and behaviour, but were much more impressed by his eminent godliness. The thing that stands out throughout his letters is his utter abhorrence of himself as a sinner, and his overwhelming love and devotion to his Saviour.

These letters are very different from the majority of published Victorian letters, which invariably consist almost entirely of spiritual matters – almost like sermons. These have so much of the intimate details of events in Berridge's life, with fascinating details of his contacts with such people as George Whitefield, John Newton, the great philanthropist John Thornton, Henry Venn, Rowland Hill, The Countess of Huntington, and many others. This is of extreme interest to those familiar with the happenings of the Evangelical Revival; to others there may not seem the same interest.

It was Nigel Pibworth who some time ago brought Berridge to light with his excellent biography *The Gospel Pedlar*. Now Mr. Pibworth has done a wonderful piece of editing. There is a good introduction; but then many footnotes explaining who the people are addressed in the letters, those who are mentioned, the circumstances alluded to, unusual expressions, etc.

Some may be offended at the quaintness (even peculiarity) of many of Berridge's expressions, and, as he says, "I was born with a fool's cap on" – for which his friend John Thornton reproved him. We wonder just how Berridge's mind worked.

Over the years a good number of Berridge's letters have appeared in the *Gospel Standard*. From a spiritual viewpoint the treasure in the letters is Berridge's own experience, interspersed with his letters, and often a few precious things at the end. We give a few examples:

"I am growing, as I should, more small and loathsome in my own sight, and Christ is growing more precious and lovely."

"My daily prayer is to grow up into Him and lose myself in Him, and find Him my All in all."

"No Master like Jesus. He has abundant charms to captivate a heart when the eye is opened to behold Him. 'Blessed are your eyes, for they see,' Jesus saith to His disciples. And may we not join in thanking God for this blessedness bestowed on us also."

"When I get a glimpse of Jesus, and we have only glimpses here, He seems so precious, so desirable, so all over glorious, I wonder that my thoughts can be employed on any other subject."

"Ten years ago I hoped to be something long before this time, and seemed in a promising way; but a clearer view of the spiritual wickedness in my heart, and of the spiritual demands of God's law, has forced me daily to cry, O wretched man that I am! God be merciful to me a sinner. I am now sinking from a poor something into a vile nothing; and wish to be nothing, that Christ may be all."

The price may seem high, but it may be possible to obtain *The Letters of John Berridge* from different sources at a lower cost.

**Holiness**, by J.C. Ryle; hardback; 454 pages; price £15; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

This Christian classic needs no recommendation, and we are pleased that it has been published once again. Arguably it is J.C. Ryle's finest work and probably his best known.

John Charles Ryle (1816-1900) was the first Bishop of Liverpool, where he took a firm stand for the Protestantism of the Church of England. His writings are marked by a wonderful ability to put deep truths in exceedingly simple language.

*Holiness* was written just before Ryle became a bishop. It was at a time when the "higher life" teaching, strongly influenced by the Keswick Convention, was becoming popular in "evangelical" circles. The first four chapters of *Holiness* are Sin, Sanctification, Holiness, The Fight – and Ryle makes it clear that there is no easy pathway of sanctification ("Let go, and let God"), but a continual conflict between flesh and spirit. There are twenty chapters in all, and the book ends with extracts on the subject from eminent Puritan writers.

Not all the chapters are strictly on the subject, though certainly loosely connected with it. We remember well how impressed we were years ago by four chapters particularly – all very solemn; all immensely profitable.

Chapter 8: "Moses – an Example" on the text in Hebrews 11. 24-26.

Chapter 9: "Lot – a Beacon" on the text, "He lingered" (Gen. 19. 16).

Chapter 10: "A Woman to be Remembered": "Remember Lot's Wife" (Luke 17. 32).

Chapter 11: "Christ's Greatest Trophy" – the dying thief (Luke 23. 39-43).

Most, if not all, of these have appeared in the *Gospel Standard*.

*Holiness* first appeared in 1877. When it was republished in the early 1950s, Mr. J.H. Gosden gave it a good welcome in a review, also including an extract from "Christ's Greatest Trophy."

We welcome the appearance of *Holiness* again today. We believe it will be most profitable reading, not least for our young people.

**The Last Part of William Tiptaft's Religion**, by Matthew J. Hyde; 66 page booklet; price £3.45 plus £1.19 postage; published by The Huntingtonian Press, and obtainable from 72a Upper Northam Road, Hedge End, Southampton, SO30 4EB.

We greatly admire William Tiptaft (1803-1864). Through the grace of God he was a wonderful man. He was willing to sacrifice everything for Jesus' sake, and for His honour and glory. Therefore we welcome this booklet on the latter part of Tiptaft's life. Dr. Hyde makes the point that J.C. Philpot's *Memoir of William Tiptaft* tends to end quite early in his life.

This is an essentially-spiritual book. It includes a number of letters (many hitherto unpublished) and an account of a number of special blessings William Tiptaft received. Quite a bit is written about his friends, such as Joseph Parry and John Kay, with whom he had such a close relationship. There is a very touching account of his favoured last days and how his severe affliction (cancer of the throat) was sanctified.

Of course, Tiptaft's closest friend was J.C. Philpot, and their early connection and the beginning of Tiptaft's life, with his separation from the Church of England, are sketched. Older readers will be very familiar with *The Seceders*, written by Philpot's son, which in abbreviated form has been published by The Banner of Truth Trust.



The book is well researched, and as is customary today, there are many footnote references to authenticate the facts.

There is one small mistake. 2014 is the 150th anniversary of Tiptaft's death (not the 250th).

**The Ministry of the Gospel**, by Bernard Gilpin; 28 page booklet; price £1.95 plus 54p postage; published by The Huntingtonian Press, and obtainable as above.

Bernard Gilpin has become quite well known in recent years through J.H. Alexander's book *More Than Notion*. He, and the little group with which he was connected, insisted on vital, experimental religion.

This little booklet, after an interesting introduction by Henry Sant, contains a sermon preached in Great Titchfield Street Chapel, London, on December 14th, 1853. The occasion was the death of their pastor, Joseph Francis Burrell, in the previous October, and the church's exercise in choosing a new pastor.

Bernard Gilpin's text was Jeremiah 3. 12-15, and his own original preface to the published sermon is added. He clearly sets out the solemnity of the Christian ministry, what it is, and what the Great Titchfield Street church should be seeking.

Bernard Gilpin's ministry was of the type alluded to on the opening page of this month's *Gospel Standard*, similar to that of John Grace, very quiet and gentle yet none the less separating.

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## OBITUARY

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**Peter James Cottingham**, pastor at Providence Chapel, Staplehurst for fifteen years, and faithful minister of the gospel for nearly thirty years, died on July 2nd, 2014 aged 66.

Our dear father was born at Marklye Farm, in the village of Rushlake Green, East Sussex on July 12th, 1947. He was the youngest child of Frederick and Beatrice Cottingham.

The following is taken from his writings:

"When my father was going to register my birth with the authorities, he rebelled against my mother's wish to call me Peter, but the Lord said to him, 'Peter denied his Lord.' Well, I certainly know what it is to have denied my Lord, but blessed be His name I know what it is that the Lord has turned and looked upon me.

"I have been very thankful to have had praying parents and from a babe taken into the house of God at Heathfield, where as a child I sat under the faithful ministry of Mr. F.L. Gosden, although sad to say I cannot remember any spiritual profit from it. Once Mr. Gosden said, 'If the Lord has answered one of your prayers, then you are one of His children.' In my simplicity I thought if God answered my prayer, I

should be safe. I believe He has answered my poor petitions, yet we have to plead more and more as we realise the exceeding sinfulness of our sins.”

When he was about four years of age, his father was baptized by Mr. Frank Gosden at Heathfield. Soon after this he became ill with cancer, from which he died in about two years.

“In my childish way (Satan’s temptation) I believed that baptism caused my father’s illness and took away his life. Satan used this to bring into my heart a hatred to baptism.”

He wrote of eternity: “These thoughts terrified me as I knew that because of my sins there was no hope for me in heaven, yet my heart was hard and succeeded for the most part to subdue the terror for many years. What wondrous mercy indeed when we are helped to look back and see how the Lord has kept us and not cut us off as we deserve!”

Our father never left attending the Lord’s house in his teens and early years at work, which he felt was an answer to his widowed mother’s prayers. In referring to these prayers he wrote: “How precious they are! I had that enmity to the Lord, His house, Word and people, that I wanted nothing to do with it all, but the Lord watched over all my ways, even when I tried to have my fill of this world and its so called pleasures. ‘Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it.’

“There was a time when I despised the name of Jesus Christ and have often felt if I was alive at the time of Christ, I would have been among those that cried out that He must be crucified; now I desire to know Him as my precious Saviour whose blood cleanseth from all sin. I trust I do a little.”

Our father and mother were married in September 1971, and many at the service felt the Lord’s presence and blessing. He wrote: “Sad to say I felt nothing and had no desire to feel anything. I went on in this careless way, kept to the house of God, preserved from the ways of the world but dead.”

On November 23rd, 1975 our father heard of the homecall of the Lord’s servant Mr. Moody, which had a profound effect upon his soul.

He continues: “How the Lord laid His hand upon me then! My sins arose, the law condemned and I felt lost for all eternity. My mind was lost, giving way under it all, feeling I would go insane.

“My dear wife was also exercised in her own soul at this time, was brought into liberty and felt constrained to venture before the church. This brought a greater darkness in my own soul that I felt my case hopeless, yet the time of deliverance was at hand. The Lord spoke these words: ‘And let him that is athirst come’ (Rev. 22. 17).” This was a word of deliverance to him out of this terror and fear and these words drew him to Christ and he began to love and trust in that dear Saviour.

“In the time of my espousals many texts and sermons were blessed to my soul, and then the Lord began to exercise my soul regarding baptism. Then poured in these words under the ministry of Mr. Seth Mercer (his pastor at Grove Road, Eastbourne) service after service: ‘Neglect not the gift that is in thee’ (1 Tim. 4. 14). (I had a secret persuasion at this time I should one day preach.)”

His pastor at that time has since written about this occasion: “I still remember having to preach from, ‘Neglect not the gift that is in thee,’ many years ago, and at the end of the day, as I went out of the chapel, everyone was gone, except your dear father and mother, and dear Peter’s face shone.”

Our father wrote of other texts and sermons which were made a blessing to him around this time, including: “‘Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden’ (Matt. 11. 28); ‘If ye love Me, keep My commandments’ (John 14. 15); ‘Them that honour Me I will honour’ (1 Sam. 2. 30). Also, with much power: ‘Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not’ (Luke 22. 31, 32); (a token indeed from the Lord, but what follows: ‘And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren’ the Lord also spoke and I knew this meant the ministry).”

Our father was baptized with our dear mother on February 11th, 1976. The word given by Mr. Seth Mercer was, “Neglect not the gift that is in thee.” He was received into the church March 1976, and the word given was, “Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (Esther 4. 14).

#### *Exercise regarding the ministry*

Of the above time he wrote: “These words the Lord used to bring me into a very real exercise regarding the ministry. This I sought to reject and turn away from, feeling my unworthiness, foolishness and weakness and feeling how impossible it was for me. These thoughts I could not share with anyone except God for seven years. Yet it was line upon line, precept upon precept, all that time, with many confirming words, just a few being, ‘And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left’ (Isa. 30. 20, 21); ‘By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went’ (Heb. 11. 8); ‘Lord, all my desire is before Thee; and my groaning is not hid from Thee’ (Psa. 38. 9); ‘That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the

hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it' (Isa. 41. 20); and, 'And that servant, which knew his lord's will and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes' (Luke 12. 47)."

In August 1979 our father was made a deacon at Grove Road, Eastbourne. He had also begun teaching in the Sunday School and was made Assistant Superintendent. All these things he felt seemed to be preventing him from being sent out to preach.

His father-in-law, Mr. Philip Drury, has spoken of how his wife, Mrs. Mary Drury, was very exercised concerning our father and the solemn work of the ministry during these years.

In June 1983 our father mentioned his exercise with regard to the ministry to his dear wife, but he said he would never go out to preach.

He continued: "The next morning I awoke utterly barren, the Lord's presence removed from me. I then had to pass through the wilderness for a period, mourning an absent God, yet He soon returned and now I knew without doubt the reality of this exercise regarding the ministry.

"In July 1984 Mr. Seth Mercer preached from these words: 'I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of' (Gen. 28. 15), and the Lord would not leave me to rebel against His commands. Many words were used to confirm, as well as texts that came to me, which were opened up to me that I felt that I could speak from them (how I do desire this at times now)."

"One prayer meeting the first eight verses of Isaiah 6 were read and when we came to the eighth verse I felt I must cry out, 'Here am I; send me.' So the Lord brought me to the point where I had to speak to our pastor.

"I was sent out into the solemn work of the ministry early November 1984. I soon had many calls to preach and so went to many places upheld by the Lord with sometimes the thought that I might be a pastor."

*Exercise regarding the pastorate*

In January 1997 the Lord laid upon his spirit, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power" (Psa. 110. 3); so much so that in prayer at home or in the pulpit he had to pray, "Lord, make me willing in the day of Thy power."

Of this time he writes: "I felt persuaded that the Lord would 'lead me to my master's brethren' and the Lord said, 'Go near, and join thyself to this chariot' (Acts 8. 29). I felt peace in leaving the whole matter in the Lord's hand. I could not look around me wondering where it would be.

"In May 1997 I received a letter from Staplehurst and everything fell into place, although I had no thoughts of going there before this as it was so soon after Mr. Seymour had left. During 1997 different words were

laid upon my spirit regarding this matter which I had to preach from as they were the exercise of my soul regarding the engagements made at Staplehurst with a view to the pastorate.”

This further led to our father serving a probationary period at the beginning of 1998, during which time the following words were applied to his heart: “And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of His mercy and His truth: I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master’s brethren” (Gen. 24. 27); “Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest” (Josh. 1. 9); “I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of Thy righteousness, even of Thine only” (Psa. 71. 16). After receiving the letter giving him the call to the pastorate in May 1998, “Go near, and join thyself to this chariot” (Acts 8. 29) was again laid in his heart. This led him after much prayer to accept the call, of which he wrote: “All future paths I now have to leave in the Lord’s hands. Amen and Amen.”

This was the last of our father’s writings.

In June 2014, our father had a holiday in Devon with our dear mother and her father, Mr. Philip Drury. The last time he sat in the Lord’s house as a hearer was at South Chard chapel when he heard the Word of God preached by Mr. G.D. Buss on Wednesday, June 26th. Mr. Buss took for his text, “He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22. 20). This sermon had a real effect on our father and he mentioned that it had been a good time for him. Mr. Buss has since said that he felt the word he preached was in preparation for the end of someone in the congregation, not thinking it would be applied to our father.

On Sunday, June 29th, he preached for the last time to his people at Staplehurst. The text was, “Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well” (2 Kings 4. 26). He seemed to spend most of his time on the last words: “It is well.” He said that he had been led to the text by the solemn word preached on the previous Wednesday. In the afternoon they commenced with hymn 412: “What cheering words are these?” and our father spoke in prayer that he felt he must continue with the subject.

On that Sunday evening our father preached his last sermon, at Uckfield. The text was, “And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying” (Matt. 5. 2). This was the last time he preached to poor, dying sinners on this earth. He set before the people the sayings of the Lord Jesus; and what more can poor sinners need? The closing hymn of the evening service was 501, “For a season called to part.” Looking back, we feel how suitable those verses were.

On Tuesday morning, July 1st, our mother went to wake our father and it quickly became apparent that he was unwell. He was rushed to Eastbourne Hospital where it was found that he had had a severe stroke, which resulted in paralysis of his left side and the loss of his speech. His wife, two daughters and son were with him the whole day, during which time he was conscious and showed some response to those who spoke to him. That evening the nurses told us to go home as they felt his condition had stabilised and to resume normal visiting hours the next day.

The following day we received a telephone call from the hospital around midday to say that his condition had deteriorated. We arrived to find him unconscious and at 11 p.m. he breathed his last with his wife, two daughters, and son at his bedside along with his sons-in-law and daughter-in-law.

The funeral service was conducted at Broad Oak Chapel, Heathfield, by Mr. Brian Mercer. His text was, "Little children, it is the last time" (1 John 2. 18). He spoke of three *lasts* in our father's life. He read Revelation 22. 12-21, the last time our dear father heard the Word of God preached; 2 Kings 4. 18-26, the last time he preached at Staplehurst and Matthew 5. 1-12, the last sermon he preached. He also spoke saying that each present would enter a place of worship for the last time and open their eyes on this earth for the last time. Our father's mortal remains were interred in the graveyard there, conducted by Mr. G.D. Buss, "in sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection." At the funeral service, the hymns sung were, "Pause, my soul! and ask the question," "In vain the fancy strives to paint," and at the graveside, "The Saviour lives no more to die!" The hymn, "Thy mercy, my God, is the theme of my song" was printed on the hymn sheet for private reading and meditation, as it had been made very special to our dear father over the years.

Thus our dear father's life was brought to a swift end. He was a man that devoted his spare time to the practical help of his family and congregation, who were very near to his heart. He was not one to write or speak much of his feelings and leadings, but we are strongly persuaded that his walk and the truths he preached were a true witness to his Lord and Saviour. As was quoted at his burial, "The Lord hath need of him" (Luke 19. 34).

G.P.C.

*The following is enclosed on behalf of the church and congregation at Providence Chapel, Staplehurst:*

The church and congregation at Staplehurst feel the loss of our late dear pastor deeply. We desire to seek comfort from the Holy Comforter believing that despite this bitter blow, the matter is in the Lord's hands.

“Too wise to be mistaken, He,  
Too good to be unkind.”

It is our prayer as a church and people that our late pastor's loving prayers for his flock will be answered and that the Lord will watch over us and go before us.

We would like to record the special care that our pastor had towards his people. Many times on a Sunday morning during his pastorate he said that he had been praying for each and every member of the congregation the previous evening. His thoughts would go from one to another in pleading for their souls and for them in their pathway. He was burdened for his flock and carried them much in prayer.

Our pastor's ministry was clear, searching and distinguishing, yet loving, tender and simple. He would often speak words of counsel to the young people and to the younger ones in his sermons.

We know that there have been occasions when our pastor's ministry has met the cases of some of those gathered in a particular way, entering into things as if he knew their pathway when he clearly knew nothing.

There have been those times of real blessing in our little cause at Staplehurst through his ministry. One such time was in February 1997, just one month after Mr. Seymour had left for Australia. Mr. Cottingham spoke about Hannah and her double blessing and we know of at least four souls who were favoured that night, and the exercise for him to become pastor of Staplehurst commenced then. In 2002 two friends were led to come forward to join the church, and our pastor's ministry had been much used in both cases. One friend was sent into the ministry in 2010 and another friend was led to join in March 2014, and again our pastor's ministry had been very much used. It was truly a time of rejoicing for our pastor and he seemed overflowing when he spoke to us of his son and daughter-in-law's impending baptism. He seemed like Naphtali, “satisfied with favour, and full of the blessing of the Lord.”

On our pastor's last Sunday with us as a people, he preached from 2 Kings 4. 26. He seemed to spend most time on the last words, “It is well.” He said that he had been led to the text by the solemn word preached by Mr. G.D. Buss at South Chard the previous Wednesday: “Surely I come quickly.” Our pastor mentioned before the morning service that it had been a good time for him. In the afternoon we commenced with hymn 412 and he spoke in prayer that he felt he must continue with the subject. It was only three days later that he would be in heaven.

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They lose nothing who gain Christ.

*Samuel Rutherford*

## NOT FORGOTTEN

*“O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of Me” (Isa. 44. 21)*

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No! Israel shall ne'er be forgotten of God.  
My soul, keep this promise at home and abroad.  
Yea, bind it as tightly as coil round thy heart,  
And never till death with the priceless gem part.

Remember who makes it, Jehovah most high;  
Of infinite power on earth and in sky.  
He speaks it moreover to weaklings like thee,  
“Yea, Israel shall ne'er be forgotten of Me.”

He did not forget thee, though long years had seen  
Thy wanderings, perverseness, indulgence in sin;  
But followed thy footsteps with billow and storm,  
And crushed thy fond hopes, as with Jacob the worm.

He did not forget thee. The seed He had sown  
Has not to the fowls of the desert been thrown;  
His hand and His power that seedling shall keep,  
Till angels with sickle earth's harvest shall reap.

He will not forget thee; for death as a friend  
Shall use his soft fingers, humanity rend,  
And peacefully place it beneath the green sod,  
To rest as a treasure, well guarded by God.

Forgotten! No, never! Engraved on His hands  
The name of each member eternally stands.  
Jehovah remembers the deed of His Son,  
And reckons the Head and the members as one.

In life and in dying, in weal and in woe;  
In sunshine or tempest, which meet thee below;  
In sickness, in changes, at home or abroad,  
No, never shall saint be forgotten of God.

Ann Hennah (d. 1879)

There is quite a long article about Mrs. Hennah (of Torquay) by Charles Hemington, who highly esteemed her, in the *Gospel Standard* 1880, pages 140-143. Various of her writings as well as poems had been published in the *Gospel Standard*.

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## MINISTERS' PRAYER MEETING

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Once again a meeting of our ministers for prayer has been arranged, subject to the Lord's will, for Friday, November 15th. 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**  
OCTOBER 2015

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

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

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

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

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**RETIREMENT OF THE EDITOR OF THE *GOSPEL STANDARD***

A Statement from the Gospel Standard Committee

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After forty-five years of loving and loyal service to our churches our esteemed Editor Mr. Ramsbottom is retiring as Editor of the *Gospel Standard* at the end of this current year, if the Lord will, the December issue being the last that he will edit. The Gospel Standard churches and readers of the *Gospel Standard* owe a great debt to our friend for his unstinting labours over these many years, and we recognise the help given to him by the God of all grace, without whose indispensable aid the burden upon him would have been unsustainable.

At a special meeting of the Gospel Standard Committee on September 7th, Mr. Timothy J. Rosier, the esteemed pastor of Priory Road Chapel, Maidstone, was unanimously elected to succeed Mr. Ramsbottom, taking up his labours, if the Lord will, from the January 2016 issue of the *Gospel Standard*. May the God of all grace supply his every need, and confirm that this burden which has been laid upon him is one appointed for the good of our churches, and the furtherance and continuance of the doctrines of the gospel of free and sovereign grace that our forefathers so earnestly contended for when the *Gospel Standard* was first launched in 1835.

Mr. J. Cottington will continue as deputy editor, having ultimate responsibility for the wrapper of the magazine.

May a spirit of wrestling prayer be given to the readers of the *Gospel Standard* that the Lord may yet continue His lovingkindness to us as a group of churches in these increasingly-dark days in which we are called to live.

G.D. Buss  
Chairman of the Gospel Standard Committee

## THE FEAR OF THE LORD

*Sermon preached by Er Grace (Pastor), at Ebenezer Chapel, Ossett,  
on September 15th, 1963*

**Text:** “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. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels” (Mal. 3. 16, 17).

These words since yesterday have been much upon my mind. In the first place it brings me to remember the Lord’s goodness to me in preserving me in the days of my youth when at that time I had no thoughts of love towards Him. When I thought today of His preserving grace, it brought to mind the words of dear John Kent:

“Preserved in Jesus when,  
My feet made haste to hell,  
And there should I have gone,  
But Thou dost all things well;  
Thy love was great, Thy mercy free,  
Which from the pit delivered me.”

Before the time I had the grace of love in my heart, I believe the Lord sealed these words upon my memory. For in His strange and mysterious dealings with me in providence when I was about five years of age, I heard a preacher speak from these words: “They shall be Mine ... in that day when I make up My jewels.” I never forgot them; they have followed me, more or less, all the days of my life, even when passing condemnation upon my own self. O you say, did you pass condemnation upon yourself? Yes, I believe before I knew fully what it was to have the law condemning my poor soul, I was condemning myself, for even at that time I had smittings of conscience.

Here the word is addressed to a certain people, and you will find in Malachi it was a dark time because, in this respect, it was a sinful time. The people had done much evil, they had departed from God and also they had accused God sinfully and foolishly. “Your words have been stout against Me, saith the Lord, yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against Thee? Ye have said, It is vain to serve God.” My friends, what a solemn thing with which to charge God, to say, “It is vain.” It is a good thing to serve God. What a difference it was with Paul when he said, “For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve.” Ah, that is pure language, the language of love, the language of truth, the language of faith. It is a God-honouring language, and I am sure if we have grace in our hearts, we love to hear God honoured in a right way.

These people also said, “What profit is it that we have kept His ordinance?” O friends, how they charged God falsely. In the ordinance of prayer, though our prayers are short before men, I hope they are long before God, as Paul exhorts us, “Pray without ceasing.” God only knows how often I have tried to lift up my soul unto Him on your behalf, and all the Israel of God, remembering that word, “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.” Again these people said, “What profit is it ... that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of Hosts?” What a category of false accusations to the God of all grace!

But our text says, “Then they that feared the Lord,” and friends, there has always been a people amongst a people. What kind of people are these? The word declares, “I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord. The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies, neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth, for they shall lie down and none shall make them afraid.”

It says, “Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another.” My dear friends, there is a right way of speaking. Sometimes people use right words in a wrong way. Whilst I believe there is gracious silence, where there is grace, there is also gracious speaking. When I was thinking what portion we should read tonight, these words came: “If these should hold their peace the very stones would cry out.” I know, my friends, that true religion begins in a silent way. I like a silent beginning, but the time will come when they will have to speak forth His praise, to the glory of His great name: “This people have I formed for Myself; they shall shew forth My praise.” They show it forth in their obedience to His gospel commandments; they show it forth in speaking one to another. Why do they speak? That His great name might be exalted.

But I must come now to what is *the fear of God*. There are various fears, friends, I know; naturally speaking, I am a very fearful man, but I hope through grace I am a true follower of the Lord and, if so, shall go to heaven. Yes, I shall. There is not one sinner that has planted in his heart God’s holy fear but who shall land safe home in glory. And very often when I think like this, it is a time of prayer in my soul. You see, friends, there is much prayer when we dwell upon heaven, although prayer will not be needed there. I find a great amount of true prayer is often summed up in these two things – a portion of Scripture or a verse of a hymn. Now that comes to my mind, when I am speaking of being landed safe home to glory – one beautifully penned it:

“To glory bring me, Lord at last,  
And there, when all my fears are past,  
With all Thy saints I’ll then agree,  
God has been merciful to me!”

But why did I say if I had got that grace I would get to heaven? Solomon says, “It shall be well with them that fear God.” If the Lord has been pleased to plant His holy fear in your heart – and friends, He always does that with His people; I know this, though their experiences in providence may vary – there will be a few things of which they must all be partakers. They must all be born again of the blessed Spirit – partake of the grace of repentance, and the grace of forgiveness will follow. You may say, Do you believe that every repenting sinner, spiritually considered, will have the blessing of forgiveness applied to him? I do, my dear friends, and woe unto any man that speaks to the contrary. I know there is a difference in dealings, but to this end Christ was exalted. He was humbled to die for sinners. He humbled Himself, but why was He exalted? “He was exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and the remission of sins.”

And when is this holy fear implanted in the heart of a quickened sinner? It is when God takes up His abode in their heart. Jeremiah says, “I will put My fear in their heart, and they shall not depart from following after Me.” The principle of this fear is holiness. I do not mean to say that the flesh will become holy, but there is a holy principle within where this fear is implanted. You may say, Don’t you get better after all these many years? Not in a fleshly sense, my friends. I hope, in some measure, that I have grown a little in the fear of the Lord, by His grace. “Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Where there is a work of grace there will be a humbling time, and friends, I was never more humbled than I am tonight. They speak about great things! Well the greatest thing to me is that ever Christ came into this world to save sinners, but the next is that I should be found among that number. Blessed be His name, He hates to put away. I feel more humbled today than ever I have done in my life. He is a great Saviour. I never viewed Him as a more loving Saviour than I do tonight.

And so, my dear friends, “They that feared the Lord,” they “spake often one to another.” Let us look at this fear, what is it? It is of heavenly origin. “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.” And you know, all the graces more or less are accompanied by one another. We have a hymn which puts it very plainly:

“Fear is a grace which ever dwells,  
With its fair partner, love;  
Blending their beauties, both proclaim,  
Their source is from above.”

It is a holy grace and has always the honour and glory of God in view, without exception.

Let us look at it a little further. I will mention two characters who used different words, but to the same end. I refer now to Joseph and Nehemiah. One said, "How can I do this wickedness, and sin against God?" The other said, "So did not I, because of the fear of the Lord." O to have that grace which ever has the honour and glory of God in view, and which ever sets the Lord Jesus Christ before them. Ah, that is it, friends, hatred to sin on the one hand and love to God on the other. O that in temptation's vale, in temptations from the flesh and from without, we may set the Lord Jesus Christ ever before us. I hope it is so many times, my friends, but I dare not say always. Well might one say, "O my soul, be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long." The fear of the Lord in itself is stainless; it is pure like the Author and Giver of it, and not only that, it hates evil, pride and every evil way and has a love to holiness.

And another thing about the fear of God – it loves to honour His Word. Ah it says, we desire to "owe no man anything but love," and that is the right thing. See the effect of it when the Lord said, "Zacchaeus, come down; for to day I must abide at thy house." And he came down and received Him joyfully, and straightway said, "Half my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken anything by false accusation, I restore it fourfold." In desiring to do right, they will do it as far as they can. I once knew a man whom I believe had the fear of God in his heart, but the time came, although he worked hard, that he got behind in his payment and he had to be sold up. A relation said, "You want to go bankrupt." He said, "I can't do that; I'll try and pay my way. I think I shall die a debtor, but as far as I can I'll pay and I must leave the rest." Now I believe in God's kind providence he was spared and was able to pay all his debts and honour that principle of God's fear. "Them that honour Me I will honour."

God's fear is a God-honouring grace – it is a trading grace. O "the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies, and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour."

You remember in the days of Elisha how the wife of one of the prophets came to him. Her husband had died and left her in debt and they came to take her two sons to be bondmen. Elisha said, "What hast thou in thy house?" Only a pot of oil. Ah, a cruse, one only! He sent her to borrow vessels from her neighbours till no more could be found. He kept on filling till all were full; then the oil stayed. O my friends, although God fills, He does not give us grace to waste. "The needy shall not always be forgotten, and the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever." Elisha said, "Now pay thy debt, and thou and thy sons live off

the other.” O what a wonderful working God He is – how true He is, and especially in this fear of the Lord.

The fear of the Lord is a holy grace. God’s Word says, “He brought me into the banqueting house, and His banner over me was love.” I believe faith has a thousand victories in Christ. He wrought a work without us, but with the fear of the Lord it will be a work within us, and it will work all our life, friends. I hope the Lord will enable me to keep from sin, and honour that fear. “Thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee, that it may be displayed because of truth.”

We read, friends, “They took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus,” and learned of Him. Does our life show forth that we have been with Jesus, that we are acting in the fear of the Lord? It is not only a victory without us, but a victory within us. He was a Victor over sin, death, hell and the grave – but He makes us a victor over our self, friends. A child of God, however much grace he has had, will feel the need of more grace to live in holiness of life. We need this, His strength for comfort and to overcome that which is evil in our breast, where the conflict goes on and you cry to Him, Lord don’t let me sin; I’m afraid of self and I’m afraid of grieving Thee.

“Thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee.” A banner means victory – all the glory due to God. It was a victory without us, and we want Him to be with us, and to bless us with His grace, to keep us, and to make us walk in His fear, that we may live a godly life to His honour and glory. “The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.” O no wonder that one wrote the gracious hymn:

“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.  
 Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it;  
 Prone to leave the God I love;  
 Here’s my heart, Lord, take and seal it;  
 Seal it from Thy courts above!”

Now I have touched a few marks, friends, and I hope graciously and lovingly, to the honour of God and with the hope that God will hear our prayer that the Lord will bless us with His holy fear in our hearts, and grant us grace to walk in His fear that we may be amongst those to whom He has given shoes. Shoes, you know, are to walk about with, aren’t they? To walk in God’s fear! “Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.” To walk with Him is to be brought into union with Him – the atonement being applied, and I tell you this, friends, when I

am not walking with Him in His holy fear, I bring guilt upon my conscience. If I walk not according to His fear, I am condemned. O for grace to walk humbly and lovingly and graciously in the sight of a holy and heart-searching God.

Is there the grace of His holy fear in our prayers bringing us to say, “Search me, O Lord, and prove me; try me and see if there be any wicked way in me”? This was a real prayer of the Psalmist – “and lead me in the way everlasting.” Yes, sometimes the reading of God’s Word is sanctified to the heart, leading one to meditate upon it, and to pray with God’s holy fear in the soul.

But let us look a little further now. “They that feared the Lord spake often one to another.” When I was younger, I found some who did not encourage right speaking. Now I know,

“No big words, of ready talkers,  
No dry doctrine will suffice,”

is alright in its place, but I have heard right words used wrongly, friends. I believe that in the first beginnings of a work of grace we are silent, although there is much hearkening in the soul; but the time comes when we must speak forth. There is a time of weaning, and we are comforted in that respect – going forth in love to the honour and glory of His great name. His love is the same yesterday, today and forever. “Whom once He loves, He never leaves, but loves them to the end.”

Have I a case here, a troubled sinner, a sin-hating sinner, a God-loving sinner? Ah you say, I understand, but I cannot say I love. O yes you do, friends, because if you have been brought to hate sin graciously, and to look upon it as God looks upon it – and how is that, friends? As Moses says, “Thou hast set our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance” – my dear friends, you are a lover. You will be slow to take this to yourself, but there it is. “The believer shall not make haste,” but He will come. Much is going on in a believer’s soul, a speaking like this: speaking right to yourself, speaking right before God, speaking right to one another – there is a threefold speaking right where the fear of God is implanted in the soul and they are speaking according to it.

There is one thing, where the fear of God is, you will fear to offend Him and you fear to go too far. Sometimes, however, self has to take a back place. It is right to be careful, but in the heart of believers, friends, love is so great and God so clothes His Word with power, that self takes a back place. I remember one time, I did love the Lord – He had spoken peace to my poor soul, but tribulation came and I thought as I have said many a time concerning it, “I won’t stop going to the house of God” – I was never tempted to do that – but I had come to the conclusion that I would never speak again; I would just go to the chapel, read His Word and think upon Him – but do nothing outwardly – I would keep my

mouth with a bridle. But the Lord spoke, friends, and what did He say? “No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” I remember the place and I said, “O Lord, give me grace to leave myself in Thy hands.” If ever I committed myself to His care it was at that time. “Then let us rejoice in His name, and leave all our cares” – and all that concerns us for time and eternity – “in His hands.” This is what I was enabled to do that night.

But friends, the time came when I had to speak forth. There is a little speaking apart from the ministry, and what is spoken about? The hymn says, “Sorrows, sins and sufferings told” – but God’s people for the most part are slow to burden others with their sorrows; they try to carry their own and that of others also. I know sometimes when there has been a meeting together, that time has not always been used as it ought to have been used. “In the place of drawing water they rehearsed the righteous acts of the Lord.” Ah, when we have a little time, let us spend it aright. I do not mean to say that other things are not right in their right place. We can tell in our own hearts, friends, whether we are using it to the honour and glory of God.

And so they were speaking together. “How good, and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” In this Psalm it speaks of the ointment on Aaron’s head running down even to the skirts of his garments. What a blessed thing that is! It also speaks of the dew upon the mountains of Zion and the dew of Hermon. The Lord says, “My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew.” Hasn’t it been so sometimes in your poor soul when you have met a dear child of God that loves you, and you tell him how the Lord has appeared for you and blessed you, or it may have been you have had a faith’s view of the loveliness of Christ? “How great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty! corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids.” At such times there has been a cheerfulness. Then you have been like it was with Boaz when he lay down at the end of the heap of corn – he went to sleep full of happiness. Isn’t it sometimes with you as the dew of Hermon, when some blessed sweet portion comes up in your breast and you have longed to take it to the house of God and drink it in the courts of His holiness – you have gathered? “That Thou givest them they gather” – and you repeat it, not in a way of pride, for often before you speak there is a prayer goes before it: “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.”

I remember, before I go further, how I was once rebuked. It is a lesson I have never forgotten. It is not good to sin, but our God can make sin to work for our good. I was working in the pit [down a coal mine] with three or four men, not that the pit worker is a worse sinner than the rest of mankind, and it came upon my spirit to tell them what the



Lord had done for my poor soul. I had never done it before and I do not know that I have ever done it since. It was not that what I said was not true, but I did not act graciously. I spoke; what reception did it meet with? Not a word. But the Lord spoke: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine." O my dear friends, a loving heart and a guarded spirit go together.

But there are other times when there is a speaking between the people of God. "They shall speak of the glory of Thy kingdom, and they shall talk of Thy power." His power to save, my friends. The kingdoms they speak of are four: nature and providence, grace and glory. Well might they talk to one another – and who do they call upon to hear them? They that fear God. Ah friends, these are the characters in my text. The Word says, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul." That's the speaking, friends.

I remember concerning one whom I loved, we had met together for many years night after night – he was under the conviction of sin, and wished he was anything but a man and envied even the very beasts. He called upon us one Friday but would not stay. I could see the anguish of his soul. O the depth of his sorrow! Every heart knows its own bitterness and a stranger does not intermeddle with its joy. He said, "I shan't be coming in tonight," nor did he come in the following night. But O I shall never forget the radiancy on his face, my friends, when we met on the Sunday morning. He told me the Lord had spoken to him in the night-time with power to his soul and the glorifying of Jesus in him, taking of the precious promises which are in Christ and sealing pardon to his never-dying soul with these words: "Thou art all fair, My love, there is no spot in thee." O the time of love, my friends!

Sometimes it may be you feel, I daren't speak tonight, ashamed of yourself. The love is there, friends, and the love to God is there, but you say, Well, tonight there will be a quietness, and I do say this, friends, when there is quietness graciously between one another, for the most part sin is the cause. You feel many a time, It is better for me to hold my noise than to speak. "O my soul, why art thou cast down, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." O what a difference when He breaks through the clouds, friends, as in the precious promise: "Unto you that fear My name." There may be a cloudy dispensation in many ways – not all being the result of sin, but being for our profit. You may be walking a dark, trying path in providence and you may condemn yourself wrongly, but I do hope when this is the case that the Lord will give you grace to wait upon Him.

I remember reading about a much-favoured woman, someone speaking to her said she must not have any clouds, "Why," she said, "if I didn't have any clouds, I would not have any rain." I don't mean to say

that clouds of sin bring showers of love into your soul – it is a mercy they do not cut us off; no, I want to have grace to live nearer to Him. “Draw me, and we will run after Thee.” These cloudy dispensations, whatever they may be, are to draw us nearer to Him, as it was with the children of Israel: “As I have watched over them to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down and to destroy, and to afflict, so will I watch over them, to build and to plant, saith the Lord,” and so it is, as one said,

“Burst through the clouds, O Source of Light!  
Let joy succeed the weeping night;  
Thy beams shall make my desert blow,  
The fruit appear, the spices flow.”

Now “unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings.” Ah you see, my dear friends, “He sent His word, and healed them” – a sweet promise maybe. “I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.” O may we feel the virtue of the love of Christ! Look at that woman there. She said, “If I may but touch the hem of His garment, I shall be made whole.” “And His disciples said, Why sayest Thou that someone hath touched Thee, seeing the throng press Thee? He said, Someone hath touched Me, for I perceive that virtue” – life, power, unction, holiness – “hath gone out of Me.”

And they shall speak one to another. “They shall speak of the glory of Thy kingdom, and talk of Thy power.” Sometimes, my friends, we try to speak about heaven, but what I will say now, who can describe it? “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard ... but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit,” and it will be revealed fully when faith gives way to sight.

“O for a sight, a pleasing sight,  
Of our almighty Father’s throne,  
There sits our Saviour crowned with light,  
Clothed in a body like our own.”

And there is one thing I would like to speak of now: it is the loveliness of Christ. I would like another token but I love to repeat those things which God speaks to me. I can say this, friends, the more I feel my blackness, the more I see the beauty of His Person. It lays me low, but it enables me to lift up a precious Christ.

“They spake often one to another.” “And talk of Thy power.” Yea, I have heard once, yea, I have heard twice that power belongeth unto God. Now we speak of His power, when He destroyed death and him that had the power over death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. By His power what can He do? He makes darkness light. Is it dark with you, my friends? Crooked things straight. “All

these things will I do unto you, and not forsake you.” Ah friends, there may have been a crook in your path for many a year and you feel sometimes that it will never be made straight. Ah my friends, I know there will be many things will happen before we get to heaven. We shall have to go there to know what we have been saved from. A family in moving from one county to another to live had tribulation and darkness in their path. The mother said, “We know what we’ve passed through, but we don’t know what we’ve been saved from.” That was a wise remark to make, I think. “Let us rejoice in His name, and leave all our cares in His hands” – casting all our care upon Him, in the conscious knowledge that we are His.

And so, my dear friends, “They spake often one to another.” They speak of bringing down. We are all brought down by the Adam Fall, but have we been brought down by His grace? Ah that is it. Can you join the song of Hannah, my dear friends, as she puts it forth? She was brought down and she was lifted up. What a lifting time when He appears for you! “He compasseth me about with songs of deliverance,” and who delivers like Him?

“And the Lord hearkened.” Yes, He hears. Think of it: His ears are ever open to their cry; He hearkens to every word. O ever to think of that: He is attentive to your cry. It is a comfort sometimes to realise, My witness is in heaven, and my record is on high. That will guard our speech: Lord don’t let me utter anything wrong. If you do, and you do not think about it, the devil will remind you. The child of God cannot say, It does not matter! One said, “Thou didst laugh.” O to have a tender conscience! A tender conscience comes in with my text tonight, to this end, that we might walk in His fear.

“And a book of remembrance was written before Him.” Every word that has been spoken is recorded in the book of the eternal mind, and will be to the end of time. It is ever before Him. There were those that heard that feared the Lord and that thought upon His name. Now it is no uncommon thing for a believer to get low in himself. I know some got low and they went too far in that they did not speak the truth when they said, “The Lord hath forgotten us!” They went so far that they charged God foolishly, and what did He say? There was a gracious look. “Can a woman forget the sucking child of her womb, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet I will not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands, thy walls are continually before Me.”

You may say, What has that to do with your text tonight – they that thought upon His name? Sometimes when one gets low, it is a time of searching, a time of looking back. I am glad to say sometimes, “I will remember Thee from the land of Jordan ... from the hill Mizar.” You will find sometimes, when you are very low, it is a looking back, when

the Lord has dropped His Word like dew into your poor soul, on the mountains of Zion, that is, His house. When His gospel has been faithfully preached, there has been a new mount of Hermon in your private devotion and experience in the Lord's house. O you say, I saw no man but Jesus and my soul bathed in His love. Have you known that, friends? As I have said many a time before you, at conviction there is a looking back and finding nothing to rest upon. When the Lord quickened my poor soul into divine life, I looked forward, and what did I see before me? Nothing but a never-ending hell for my portion, if the Lord did not appear for me. But when the Lord did bless me, I could look forward and say,

“Sweet to look back and see my name,  
In life's fair book set down;  
Sweet to look forward and behold  
Eternal joy's my own.”

O the sweetness of that!

But now I want to come to this point, and I go a long step now both in preaching and hearing. Has there ever been a time when you are in heaven, as it were? I once remember, after preaching here, I sat down and I seemed filled with the fulness of God. Suddenly I thought, “O I haven't given out the hymn!” [Northern ministers give out their own hymns.] What time had elapsed I cannot say – my soul was so full of His love.

“He who has helped me hitherto,  
Will help me all my journey through,  
And give me daily cause to raise  
New Ebenezers to His praise.”

I hope you follow me, friends. The remarks may be broken, but I hope there are some gracious truths in them.

“And they shall be Mine.” Ah, chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, to the glory of His name. We must not forget that. They are His, made willing in the day of His power, like Rebecca, “Yes, I will go.” They are His by price, bought. Is it a daily thing with us to ask the Lord to bless us? “Give us this day our daily bread,” also grace to forgive others their trespasses, for remember, if we forgive not men their trespasses, neither will our heavenly Father forgive our trespasses. My friends, these are the glorious truths of the gospel. Ah, you say, I know they are; I know the church is purchased. “Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.” What does it mean to do that? It means to obey. It is nice to be assured, but what do we need, friends, to be assured that we are honouring Him? We need His holy fear active in our hearts

and lives working for good to the honour and glory of His name, and He has said, "Them that honour Me, I will honour."

So, my dear friends, they "thought upon His name." Yes, you say, I believe all that, but I want Him to call me His. You want union, and how does this come about? Only one way. The Word of God says they shall be brought from under the law. If you feel tonight that your soul is under the curse of a broken law, you are not feeling love-assured. Blood applied and love-assured go together, as it says, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." "Ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you."

May the Lord bless the few broken remarks and to His name shall all the glory be. Amen.

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### CHRIST OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

*From John Bunyan's Grace Abounding*

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One day, as I was passing in the field, and that too with some dashes on my conscience, fearing lest yet all was not right, suddenly this sentence fell upon my soul: *Thy righteousness is in heaven*. And methought withal I saw, with the eyes of my soul, Jesus Christ at God's right hand, there, I say, as my righteousness, so that wherever I was, or whatever I was doing, God could not say of me, He wants [is without] my righteousness, for that was just before Him. I also saw, moreover, that it was not my good frame of heart that made my righteousness better, nor yet my bad frame that made my righteousness worse; for my righteousness was Jesus Christ Himself, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.

Now did my chains fall of my legs indeed, and I was loosed from my affliction and irons; my temptations also fled away, so that from that time, those dreadful scriptures of God left off to trouble me; now went I also home rejoicing for the grace and love of God. So when I came home, I looked to see if I could find that sentence: *Thy righteousness is in heaven*, but could not find such a saying, wherefore my heart began to sink again, only that was brought to my remembrance: He "of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption." By this word I saw the other sentence true.

For by this scripture I saw that the Man Christ Jesus, as He is distinct from us as touching His bodily presence, so He is our righteousness and sanctification before God. Here, therefore, I lived for some time, very sweetly at peace with God through Christ. O, methought, Christ! Christ! There was nothing but Christ that was before my eyes. I was not now only for looking upon this and the other benefits of Christ apart, as of His blood, burial or resurrection, but considered

Him as a whole Christ. As He in whom all these, and all other His virtues, relations, offices and operations met together, and that as He sat on the right hand of God in heaven.

It was glorious to me to see His exaltation, and the worth and prevalency of all His benefits, and that because of this: now I could look from myself to Him, and should reckon that all those graces of God that now were green in me were yet but like those cracked groats and fourpence halfpennies that rich men carry in their purses when their gold is in their trunks at home. O I saw my gold was in my trunk at home, in Christ, my Lord and Saviour. Now Christ was all; all my wisdom, all my righteousness, all my sanctification and all my redemption.

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### CHRIST IN THE MIDST OF HIS PEOPLE

*Zechariah chapter 1, verses 7 to 17.*

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The godly Puritans, when considering the Old Testament Scriptures, felt that one text must always be kept in mind: that the Lord is “the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.” As He was then, so is He now. So it is with this glorious revelation that despite their fears and discouragements, the Lord is always present with His people, in their midst. It was so in the days of the prophet Zechariah. It still is so today.

The prophet has a vision. In the vision he sees “a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom.” It is very clear that these myrtle trees represented Israel, the Jewish theocracy then, and looking forward to gospel days, the church of God now. A myrtle tree is a very suitable emblem for the church – small, insignificant, but giving out a beautiful aroma when bruised.

But it was night, it was dark, and the myrtle trees were “in the bottom,” in a valley. That was the state of Israel, despised, brought low, helpless, sinful – a dark and cloudy day. And it is the same with the church of God today.

As the chapter unfolds it becomes very clear that the man among the myrtle trees is Christ. Later He is referred to as “the angel” and then as “Lord.” What a wonderful truth it is that He is ever present with His people! “Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.”

Behind this glorious Man could be seen red horses, speckled (or bay) and white. We do not presume to explain exactly what they represent, but they moved in complete obedience to Christ as their Lord and Master as they were sent forth through the whole earth.

“Creatures of every sort and kind  
Are all at His control;

The God that fills immensity  
Must reign from pole to pole.”

They come back, and what have they discovered? “All the earth sitteth still, and is at rest.” If you will, in the whole of the earth everything is quiet, everything is going well. With the poor, despised people of God, everything is going wrong! We are reminded of Asaph’s complaint in the 73rd Psalm.

Now is the time for God to work (Psa. 119. 126). So, “The Angel of the Lord answered and said, O Lord of hosts, how long wilt Thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah?” This is none other than the Son of God interceding on behalf of His people with His eternal Father.

The intercession of Christ is a wonderful thing. In heaven He intercedes, both on the grounds of His eternal relationship with His Father, and on the grounds of His complete atonement. “He ever liveth to make intercession.” The story is told of “the burghers of Calais,” condemned to death during wars with France. But the Queen of England interceded for them with her husband: first, because of his love to her; second, because during his absence she had ruled England well. And her intercession prevailed.

And Christ’s intercession must prevail. He received a blessed answer. “The Lord answered ... with good words and comfortable words.” Some words are comfortable but not good; some words are good but they are not comfortable. These were both. And we are told what they were.

“Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy.” So often the prophets were commanded to cry aloud. This does not mean they had to shout, but to speak with authority, as the herald of a king. Jealousy really is composed of two things: love and hatred; so if the Lord is jealous for His people, it means that He dearly loves them and hates all that would draw their hearts from Him. His people had long been oppressed, but now He is going to appear for them. He is angry with those that are at ease who have afflicted them.

The good and comfortable words continue. “Thus saith the Lord; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: My house shall be built in it, saith the Lord of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem.” This is a beautiful scripture, and it was just what the prophet and the godly remnant wanted to hear. And it is our prayer: that the Lord will return to us “with mercies.”

Mercy is one of the great themes of Scripture. Sinners can have no claim and all that the Lord does for His people is on the grounds of mercy. The little story has often been told. In the days of Napoleon a French soldier was sentenced to death. His aged mother walked all the

way to Paris and craved an interview with the emperor, begging for mercy for her son. Napoleon's answer was, "Madam, your son does not deserve mercy," to which she replied, "Sir, if he deserved it, it would not be mercy!"

"I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies." So long Jerusalem had been forsaken, but now the Lord had returned. Notice that the word "mercies" is in the plural. We understand that the Hebrew language often uses the plural ("mercies," not "mercy") to show the greatness of something. Here we have "the immensity of mercy." But, also, we believe it sets forth the different displays of God's mercy: forgiving mercy, saving mercy, delivering mercy, upholding mercy, preserving mercy. Above all, it is "mercy through blood" we make our plea.

The question might be asked: if the Lord never leaves nor forsakes His people, how can He be said to return? In reality and truth, the Lord is always present with His people. "He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." But at times the Lord withdraws the sense of His presence, He hides His face, especially when there has been backsliding and a grieving of His Spirit. How precious, then, when He returns "with mercies" – the only ground on which He does return!

Then the great point practically: "My house shall be built." For sixteen years the work had been at a standstill. Satan was determined that the temple should never be built. There were many adversaries. But God's purpose must stand, and we can read how shortly afterwards the temple was completed (Ezra 6. 5).

"And a line" – a measuring line – "shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem" – the clear sign that God's work is going on to completion.

But all this looks forward to gospel days. Christ says, "Upon this Rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." He is gathering out living stones from the quarry of nature; fitting, shaping, fashioning them; drawing them to the one Foundation; and building them one by one in this spiritual temple. Each one is firmly built upon the Rock of Ages, Christ Himself.

As in Zechariah's day, the world and sin and Satan oppose, but,

"What though the gates of hell oppose?  
Yet *must* this building rise."

The world only continues till Christ has fulfilled His gracious purpose of love and mercy in building His church. Then, when the topstone is laid in its place, fitted and prepared for glory, let time be no longer (Rev. 10. 6). Our great concern should be to be found as a living stone in the building. (See 1 Peter 2. 5).

The comfortable words have a striking ending. Despite the darkness and the uncertainty, there is a future for the church of God. This



remarkable verse contains the word “yet” four times (and there is no vain repetition in Scripture): “Cry *yet*, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; My cities through prosperity shall *yet* be spread abroad; and the Lord shall *yet* comfort Zion, and shall *yet* choose Jerusalem.” Here is a promise, a promise of prosperity, and the emphasis is the certainty of it. And the reason? Because Christ is in the midst of His people. “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

One last thing, not unimportant, needs to be mentioned. Throughout this vision (and indeed throughout the whole book) the Lord is again and again spoken of as “the Lord of hosts.” What does it signify? The Almighty God. Hosts of angels, hosts of devils, hosts of circumstances obey Him. He is King of kings and Lord of lords. And this name belongs to Christ, the Man among the myrtle trees, just as it belongs to His eternal Father.

“Yes, if His name be Lord of hosts,  
Of His almighty power I’ll boast;  
He all my foes shall quell.”

*O Lord, all our sufferings arise from Thy just displeasure against us for our sins. But may the consideration of Thy readiness to pardon, and to receive returning sinners, encourage us to draw nigh to Thee, with broken and contrite hearts. Though darkness and sorrow attend Thy children for a time, Thou wilt return to them with mercies, and wilt heal their breaches, and comfort their hearts.* (John Fawcett)

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF CHURCH ORDER

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### QUESTION

Dear Sir,

I should be glad if you will kindly answer the following: Is it consistent with good government and discipline in our churches, where two churches exist in one town, for one church to accept a member from the other without acquainting it? And is such action in accordance with 1 Corinthians 14. 40?

A LOVER OF ZION

*In answering this question J.K. Popham most ably and graciously deals with the whole matter of gospel churches and how they stand related to each other.*

## ANSWER

Before answering our correspondent's question we may perhaps with profit consider generally what the Scriptures teach concerning the constitution of churches. For unless there is a measure of true apprehension of *that*, and of how the glory of God is to be displayed in their order, there can be no proper knowledge of their government. It behoves all members of gospel churches, especially ministers and deacons, carefully to study what is delivered in the Word concerning the nature of a gospel church, its relationship to God, the rights, powers, privileges and responsibilities of it, and what relationship one church has to another. Led by the Spirit in such a study, many of the saints who, perhaps, hitherto have given little or no attention to so important a subject, would be filled with surprise to see the loving care the Lord has bestowed, not only on individual believers, but on the whole flock of His heritage, as such, "which dwell solitarily in the wood" (Mic. 7. 14).

Strictly there is but one church, "the church of the firstborn which are written in heaven" (Heb 12. 23). Also Col. 1. 18; Eph. 5. 25-27; 3. 10, 21. Saints below and the spirits of just men made perfect come together in their Head, and their union in Him. And when time shall have run its predestined course, "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," shall stand "before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands" (Rev. 7. 9).

But this beautiful union and oneness, and the glory of God therein, the world sees not (John 15. 20, 21; 1 John 3. 1; Rev. 21. 21). Yet there is a union among the saints which is to be so visible as to be a testimony to the divine mission of Christ in the world (John. 13. 35; 17. 22, 23). When the Jewish nation ceased to be the sole depository of His Word and name, and to exhibit His glory, and when the Day of Pentecost had come, He began to plant churches in the Gentile world to the praise of the glory of His invincible grace (Col. 1. 6; 1 Thess. 1. 8; Acts 2. 47).

The first visible church after Christ's ascension was indeed at Jerusalem. And a large and wonderful church it quickly became (Acts. 2. 41-47; 6. 7). But the purpose of God in Christ, and His promise to Him (Psa. 2. 8; 22. 27); and the command of Jesus Himself (Matt. 28. 19, 20; Mark 16. 15), must be fulfilled; and the bitter persecution of Saul scattered abroad disciples and preachers, who went everywhere preaching the Word (Acts 8. 4). Ere long Saul himself was made a minister, "And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 9. 29).

Then began more fully the blessed work of calling the Gentiles and founding churches. There were beloved ones in Rome "called to be saints." In Corinth the Lord had much people. In Thessalonica the gospel had great success. There were churches in Galatia. To seven

churches in Asia Christ sent seven letters. Those were great days in which “through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God,” sinners who were ordained to believe were brought to the obedience of faith, and Christ was extolled and made very high.

Now the Scriptures show that when these churches were planted, it was by the voluntary coming together of the divinely-called ones in any locality, upon the authority, rules and order given them by the Lord Christ. The first mention of a gospel church is in Matthew 18. 15-20. The nature of the case demands that the authority of Christ, His rules and order, regulated the first bodies of believers whom He called out from the ancient Jewish church, or the heathen world. There is evidence that confession of faith in Him was made, and made before persons competent to judge, and act on that judgment (Acts 2. 41-47; 4. 32-35). Such confession was called for from an individual believer even where church membership could not immediately, if ever, follow the baptism which he desired (Acts. 8. 37). Blessed be our condescending Lord, He has not left us without teaching with regard to the constitution of His gospel churches. And that teaching is authoritative. He mercifully and powerfully sets “the solitary in families,” or churches, and writes in the Scriptures and in their hearts rules for their guidance and government (Heb. 8. 10). As “Samuel told the people the *manner* of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord” (1 Sam. 10. 25), so has the Lord told His disciples, and written in His Book, the manner of a gospel church, which is made up of a company of believers in whom is the Spirit of God.

And the *first* thing which would, we think, strike one who was carefully reading that “manner,” would be the fact that *to each church is given the right and authority to control and deal with its own internal affairs*, according to rules and instances recorded in Scripture, and in immediate dependence on Christ as its sole Lord and Head. Let our readers turn to Matthew 18. 15-17; 1 Corinthians 5. 1-13; 2 Corinthians 8. 5-12; and Revelation 2 and 3. In all these passages we see that each individual church was divinely authorised to act in the case under consideration, no reference being made, or needed, to a second church in the matter. Let us jealously guard this first part of our constitution.

But a *second* point, which would also be apparent to a student of the churches’ charter, would be the fact that the apostolic churches were not so many absolute units, each complete in itself, having no relationship to another. *There was a bond of union common to them*, binding all together. This, first and last, was in Him in whom His people live, and move, and have their spiritual being. Christ is the Head, “from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every

part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love” (Eph. 4. 15, 16; 2. 20, 21). Growing out of this *naturally*, so to speak, was a visible union of churches. If we consider the following points, this union will appear.

1. A question of practice, involving doctrine (which some brought up who taught the law, and sought to impose its observance for salvation on the Gentile converts), was brought before the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, who debated the matter; and when they had arrived at a decision they drew up a letter and sent it to their brethren, who, when they had read it, “rejoiced for the consolation” (Acts 15. 1-31). This first apostolic council was divinely approved, as appears by the presence and guidance of the Holy Ghost.

2. The Epistle to the “faithful brethren at Colosse” was by the solemn charge of the apostle to be the common property of them and the “church of the Laodiceans,” and they in their turn were to have among them the Epistle to Laodicea (Col. 4. 16).

3. Barnabas and Saul, already ministers, the latter an apostle, were separated, by the commandment of the Holy Ghost, for a certain work, by the laying on of the hands of “certain prophets and teachers at Antioch” (Acts 13. 1-3).

4. The hands of the presbytery were laid on Timothy, ordaining him for the work of the ministry (1 Tim. 4. 14). He, again, was to commit the things he had received to “faithful men,” who should be able to teach (2 Tim. 2. 2). Titus was authorised by Paul to remain in Crete to rule and ordain elders, or ministers, in every city (1. 5). Now what do these things prove but that in apostolic days there existed a very real, visible union among the churches, and that they were *one* body in certain matters? Nor does this weaken in the least degree the outstanding, previous fact that each church, presided over by its pastor, attended to its own immediate, internal affairs.

It may not immediately appear to some that there is any connection between what we have advanced and the question asked by our correspondent; but there is a close connection. For if the Scriptures teach that a visible union existed among the churches in the days of the apostles, manifested in the ways already noticed, it cannot properly be doubted that the church of Christ to the end of time ought to walk in the same ways. For the apostles are our authoritative ensamples (Phil. 3. 16, 17; Eph. 2. 20). Was the Lord’s prayer (John 17. 20 -23), for those only who should believe through the personal ministry of the apostles? Surely to the end of time, and for all the world; therefore for Strict Baptists in England. And the inexpressible importance of the blessed oneness prayed for is seen in the solemn fact that it is to be a convincing

proof to the world of the divine commission of Christ: "That the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me."

In the beautiful light of the Scripture-union of the churches of Christ we now come to the question, "Is it consistent?" etc. Assuming that the church from which the member went out is of the same faith and order as that into which he was received, has neither departed from the truth of the gospel, nor in any other way justly forfeited the character of a gospel church, it must be said that the church which received that member in the manner alleged violated the holy principles of church union, brotherly love, good government and all proper regard for 1 Corinthians 14. 40. But knowing nothing of the circumstances, we speak but generally. If a member finds no spiritual profit in the ministry he is under, and after much exercise in committing his case to the Lord, is led to find such profit at another chapel, there is nothing, as far as we know, in the Word of God to condemn his attendance there. Good hearings are of the Lord, and one ministry may be more divinely suited to one child of God than another. But such a step cannot be taken lightly, nor without cause; and where a child of God has been truly led of the Lord to become one with a church in the close ties of spiritual relationship and love of the truth, he will not be able rightly to leave it to attend another, unless he sees the Lord clearly going before him; and certainly not to seek to remove his membership to another. Neither he nor the other church can ignore his membership (as has been said to have been done in the case above) without showing a serious disregard of all the obligations of it, the tender and sweet relationship which it involves.

It seems to us that mutual love between two churches in one locality, a proper regard of the law of love, of what is due from church to church, each seeking the other's good and the glory of God, would turn a painful case of this kind into a means of the exercise of grace, and so of an increase of love and fellowship. If there are pastors over the two churches, why should they not meet, the pastor who is gaining a member making the first approach to the one who is losing? And what is to hinder communications between the churches, if walking "after the Spirit" in the matter? Such love and consideration would probably lead to a peaceful, honourable conclusion, and peace, of which God is the Author, and not confusion, would be the fruit (1 Cor. 14. 33; Eph. 4. 3). It would be exceedingly pleasant, and a proper course to take, in case a church has made a breach of church order and broken the golden rule of love laid down by the Lord, and should perceive the evil it has done, for it to make the only possible amends by sending an acknowledgment to the church injured (Matt. 7. 12; Jas. 5. 16).

It will be seen that this answer, as setting forth a principle, of necessity applies to all places, however distant from one another, where churches of the same faith and order exist. Principles are not local. And

to all our brethren in Christ we would venture to say, “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Phil. 4. 8)

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### CHRIST OUR PASSOVER

*By Thomas Haweis (1732-1820), author of our hymn 1065, and  
composer of the tune “Richmond.”*

“Christ our passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Cor. 5. 7).

Was ever love indeed like His? Well may it be called love which passeth knowledge. Angels are lost in wonder, whilst they look into the mystery of redeeming love; and how then should we, to whom this love is shown, be astonished whilst we are called to partake of it? He died not for angels, but for men; and when? Was it when we were faithful, affectionate and obedient that we gained His heart to such an expensive manifestation of His love? No – when we were enemies by wicked works, when we were without strength or power to love or obey Him, even then in due time did Christ die for the ungodly. In us there was nothing but misery. We were lost in sin, wilfully lost by our disobedience, without power or inclination to seek for any favour at God’s hands; and He wanted [needed] not our services; His glory would have been unsullied, if He had given us up to the fruit of our folly, and left us to our deserved ruin. Neither can He receive any addition to His happiness by us, who is in Himself all-sufficient, and in His nature infinitely happy, exalted above all blessing and praise.

But, freely moved by the mere benignity [goodness] of His heart, and out of pure compassion to us, Jesus offered to stand in our stead; and since to save us He must be made man, His love stooped to every meanness [poverty or lowliness] of our condition, to the form of a servant, to the death of a slave. Love brought Him down from the throne of glory; love clothed Him with a body like our own; love urged Him on through all the painful steps of His afflicted life; the waters of trouble were never able to quench it, nor the floods of persecution drown it. Love put the cup of trembling into His hand, love bid Him drink the last drop of all its dregs; for having loved His own, He loved them unto the end. His love abode till He cried, “It is finished”; when, having sealed with blood the sure and well-ordered covenant, His soul was dismissed, and He went to begin His triumphs over death, hell and the grave.

And when He arose again, love was His first expression: “Go to My brethren, and say, I ascend to My Father and your Father.” Love carried

Him to the right hand of God, and there He is this moment showing forth the unchangeableness of His affection, by ever living to make intercession for us, and pleading before the throne the marks of love so deeply engraven in His hands and in His side.

And when can we then be called so feelingly to remember this love, as at an ordinance where all its glory is made to pass before us?

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### PROFESSING CHRIST

*By Robert Murray M'Cheyne (1813-1843)*

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#### WHAT IS A PROFESSION OF THE GOSPEL?

In the language of the world, it is a very slight matter indeed. To wear a Sabbath suit of clothes, to occupy a place in the house of God, to sit down at the Lord's table: this is to make a profession of the gospel. This is an outward profession, drawing near to God with the mouth and honouring Him with the lips. But in the Bible it has a far deeper meaning:

1. It is represented in the Bible as indissolubly connected with *salvation*: "Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 10. 32); and, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10. 9).

2. It is described as *the work of the Holy Spirit* in the heart: "No man can say that Jesus Christ is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. 12. 3).

Ah, brethren it is not mere lip work to make a true biblical confession of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not merely saying, I believe, or sitting down among believers, or putting on a serious face on a Sabbath day. It is real heart-work, the work of the Holy Spirit.

3. *Believing with the heart* is at the root of it.

All profession without this is like an empty reed, having the appearance of a staff but hollow and sapless within. The moment a soul is brought to taste that the Lord is gracious, that soul has got the root of a true profession in him. O see if you have got the true root and ground of a good profession in you.

4. *Changing heart and life* is also included in this.

When the leaven has been thrust into three measures of meal it soon discovers itself. It makes the dough rise and swell. And so when the Word of God has really been put into the heart, it soon becomes visible. So it was with the Thessalonians: "From you sounded out the Word of the Lord." And he explains how: "Ye turned to God from idols to serve

the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven” (1 Thess. 1. 8-10). So in the case of the maniac, the change was obvious before he spoke a word. He was sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind (Mark 5. 15). See if you have this kind of profession.

#### 5. *Confessing Jesus before men.*

It was so with Paul. No sooner had God turned his heart and opened his eyes than “straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God” (Acts 9. 20). So the maniac in Mark 5. 20: he “departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him.”

Ah, believers if there be real faith in the heart and real, saving change in the life, the tongue will not lie silent. We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. If ye be ashamed of Christ in this adulterous generation, ye may be sure He will be ashamed of you when He comes in His Father’s glory with all the holy angels.

#### A TRUE PROFESSION WILL BE SORELY TRIED

This is implied in the words, “Hold fast.” As long as a man lives a quiet, worldly life, it is possible he may pass quietly through this world. He may never know by experience that there is a devil, or a Christ-opposing world. But the moment a man is born again, all earth and hell are stirred up against that man.

In Revelation 12, the great red dragon is represented as standing ready to devour the child as soon as it is born. This is a true picture. Satan stands at the right hand of that soul to resist him. That man has to stand against the wiles of the devil and to wrestle with spiritual wickedness in high places. In wrestling two things are required: *struggle and cunning*. Now we have to meet both of these in Satan.

*The world* also comes in like a flood against an open believer. An open confessor of Christ torments the world, he makes their conscience uneasy, he shows that there is such a thing as conversion. He is a witness for Christ, and therefore the world may dash against him like a flood.

*Indwelling sin* also fights against an open confession of Christ. Flesh and blood are always for avoiding reproach and shame. Old pride often rises again. Ah, had you known the heart of Moses that day when he left the door of Pharaoh’s palace, refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; when he began to suffer the reproach of God’s people, had you seen the risings of Moses’ heart, you would know that a bold profession is sorely tried. Think it not strange, brethren, “concerning the fiery trial that is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.” “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man.”



## IT IS OUR DUTY TO HOLD FAST

This God commands in many parts of His Word. It implies:

1. Taking heed of *apostasy*.

In 1 Corinthians 9. 27, Paul says, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself would be a castaway." Ah brethren, if you saw your enemies and knew the weakness of your own heart, it would make you more vigilant against the greatest of all evils. "Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck."

2. Taking heed of *declension*.

When a house is beginning to decay, it soon falls to pieces. When a soul begins to decline, it is on the highway to ruin. Take care of losing your first love, of losing the things which you have wrought. A declension consists in the sense of sin being weakened. The soul, no longer humbled, does not lie low before God. Faith is weakened. Christ is dimly seen. His preciousness is little felt. Divine peace and joy are little felt, and a carnal stupidity takes their place. Love to Jesus becomes lukewarm. The tongue cannot speak for Jesus; the hand cannot act for Jesus. O brethren if this is the state of any of you, take heed lest you fall. You are on the very brink of apostasy.

3. *Growth in grace*.

If you would hold fast, you must grow. "Beware lest ye also, being led away by the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3. 17, 18). Only a living, growing tree can resist the stormy blast that levels the withered tree to the ground. Only a living, growing Christian can stand in the evil day.

"Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Seek to grow in faith. Get firmer, fuller hold of Jesus. Grow in peace, grow in love, get deeper views of His love and love Him more. Grow in a sense of sin, that you may lie lower every day. Grow in the knowledge of Christ. Then you will hold fast.

## THE MAIN ENCOURAGEMENT: A GREAT HIGH PRIEST

1. *We have a High Priest*.

Before sin entered into the world, there was no need of a high priest. Adam had free access into the presence of God, and so would all his children have had if there had been no sin. There was no veil, no cloud interposed between God and the soul, no sin to be avenged, no sacrifice needed, and therefore no high priest. So it is today among the holy angels. They have neither priest nor sacrifice. Some of them are higher in rank than others, some stand nearer the throne, but all of them behold

the face of our Father; they bow before Him and cast their crowns at His feet.

When sin entered into the world, then no man could draw near to God. Man's heart and life became impure in the sight of God. And now every offering he could bring was polluted and abominable before God. Hence it was that Cain's offering was rejected by God, and that the sacrifice of the wicked is to this day an abomination to God.

Hence came the need of a high priest. We need a daysman (Job 9. 33) to lay His hand upon us both. We need one to interpose between sinners and God. And since sin must be punished and cannot be forgiven without blood being shed, we need one who will offer a sacrifice, a high priest to make atonement.

All this we have in Jesus the Son of God. We have such a high priest, a merciful and faithful High Priest. We have one of God's providing, one who came between us and God, "who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot unto God." He is our Righteousness for "this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jer. 23. 6). In Him we have access by one Spirit to the Father. He covers us with His white robe and brings us in before His Father. He also bears the iniquity of all holy things and offers up our prayers in His golden censer perfumed with much incense.

"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest ... let us hold fast our profession." Hold fast the beginning of your confidence steadfast unto the end. If there were no High Priest, then you might well despair. To go into the presence of God would be to go into the consuming fire. But do you have a hold of this High Priest? Then keep hold and do not let Him go. Through Him all that believe are justified. Satan and the world will do all they can to keep your eye from resting on that High Priest. But hold fast till He come, that no man take thy crown.

## 2. *Where He has gone.*

He has "passed into the heavens." His work is finished and accepted. He is gone into the presence of God for us. He has gone to the right hand of God. O brethren, could you see Jesus where He is now, as Stephen saw Him, could you see how He has finished the work given Him to do, how He has carried your sins away as far as east is from the west, and stands before God in your name, how your names are written on His breastplate, you would hold fast your profession in spite of all difficulties and dangers. "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

## WE HAVE A SYMPATHISING HIGH PRIEST

Some may be ready to object, If He be so great a High Priest, I fear He will not care for one so poor as I am. If He be passed into the heavens, I fear He has forgotten His followers on earth and that His mind

will now be taken up with the angels and the redeemed made perfect. Ah no! "We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities."

1. *He was tried in all points like as we are, yet without sin.*

There were only two points in which Christ was different from us. The one was that He was God as well as Man, the other that He was without sin. In all other respects He was the same.

i. He was tried in His *body* as we are.

He suffered hunger and thirst and weariness. His gentle frame was over-burdened when He carried the cross. His tender hands and feet were pierced. He suffered pain and agony in death.

ii. He was tried in *mental griefs* as we are.

He bore all the trials of the gospel ministry. He preached everywhere, yet few received His Word; many turned back and walked no more with Him. Peter denied and Judas betrayed Him. His family afflictions were deep and painful when even His brothers and sisters did not believe on Him, and often He saw the sword pierce through His mother's heart.

iii. He was tried *by the same agonies of soul.*

He knew what it was to feel the burden of guilt [laid upon Him], so that He could not lift His eyes. He felt the sword of justice cutting into His soul. He felt the flames of God and knew what it was to be deserted.

2. *He is able to sympathise.*

Had he been God only, He would have known your sorrows but He could not sympathise with them. He could not have had a fellow-feeling with you. But now He can. He is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Here is a sweet reason for holding fast your profession, even in the midst of troubles.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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**Eternal Reality, Sermons by Archibald Cook**, hardback; 332 pages; price £19.50, published by Free Presbyterian Publications and obtainable from 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE.

Archibald Cook was ordained a minister of the Church of Scotland in 1822, joined the Free Church at the 1843 Disruption and for the last 21 years of his life was the minister at Daviot, near Inverness. This book contains a biographical introduction, a moving account of the call by grace of Duncan MacIver who took Cook's sermons down in shorthand, and twenty-four sermons, all of which were preached in Gaelic during the last few years of Cook's life. The sermons were first published in Gaelic in 1916 and are now published for the first time in English.

These sermons show a man deeply taught of God to see the vanity of this world and the unutterable blessing of being found in Christ. He speaks with authority in separating “the precious from the vile” and could deeply enter into the exercises, temptations and sorrows of others, showing the tenderness of a spiritual nurse combined with a withering denunciation of anything counterfeit. A text to Mr. Cook seemed a handle to base his thoughts on, rather than an ordered exposition; yet in his own way he evidently riveted the attention of his hearers.

The biographical introduction comments, “Mr. Cook paid little regard to composition of his sentences.” In preaching, this can be passed by, but it becomes more difficult when sermons are printed, having been taken down in shorthand and then translated into a language with a different idiom. We noticed several sentences which did not seem to make sense as they stood. Just one example on page 179, second paragraph, “You are there who are living comfortably in sin, but beware lest you be suffering throughout eternity,” seems bewildering. If the first few words are changed to read, “There are those of you who are living comfortably in sin, but beware lest you be suffering throughout eternity,” it would make complete sense and fit the context. The sermons would benefit from such careful editing in places.

We wish the Lord’s blessing on these faithful sermons, and those who know that blessing will overlook the blemishes.

John A. Kingham, Luton

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## OBITUARY

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**Grace Hazel Harwood**, died at the Hove Bethesda Home on August 23rd, 2014, aged 92.

Her husband John [son of John Harwood, pastor at Godmanchester] died in 1969 after a heart attack; she lived forty-five years as a widow and became very dependent upon the Lord in matters of providence and grace. She also lost her daughter Cynthia, aged 47, in 1994. Cynthia died leaving four children under eighteen, and Hazel did all she could to help them and their father Paul in bringing up the little family. Paul also died in 2010. So our dear friend knew a lot of sadness in her life, but was never heard to complain; she was very submissive to the Lord’s dealings with her. Even when losing her sight in later years, she said, “It is all ordered.”

Her own writings she heads as “Rememberings (often with shame.)”

“I had God-fearing parents. At a very tender age, I told my parents a lie, and persistently, but it was so impressed on my mind that God knew and saw me that I trembled and tried to hide under the stairway. I do not remember what my parents’ reaction was to the affair, but it has left a lasting impression on my mind.

“School years followed in the usual way until the age of about thirteen being sent to secretarial classes in the school holidays much against my will; I was most rebellious. Crossing the road quite near home I was very nearly run down by a car. It was impressed on my mind that God had spared me and the spot still remains in my mind.

“I then seemed to drift on in the same way, not really listening to the Word preached, although always attending the services with my parents, well into my teens by then. Until one day like an arrow came the words, ‘Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth.’ I went home in dread of what might happen and felt God had banished me from His sight. I was troubled and was made more careful of my conduct. One day I overheard my dear mother relate to someone how that very text of being lukewarm, etc., had arrested her. I listened intently, and as my mother was a godly mother, I hoped that the Lord would have mercy on me also.

“In my late teens a certain providential matter concerned me and I was able sincerely to commit it to the Lord, but the trial lasted for some time. I cannot now remember whether it was a prayer meeting or not, but like an arrow again those words from Habakkuk chapter 2: ‘The vision is yet for an appointed time,’ etc. I felt I could wait, and went home into my bedroom and stood by the window and sang, ‘Sovereign Ruler of the skies.’ It was sweet and I remember it still. Eventually that promise was fulfilled abundantly.

“War years followed with all their troubles and anxieties, and in looking back I can see many were the mercies and many provisions. I was granted a most loving husband and we were brought through and supplied together in so many anxious times. One very serious circumstance when the Lord gave me the promise contained in Psalm 121. 8: ‘The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth, and even for evermore.’ A few days later that same promise was given to my John. I had not mentioned my feelings to him for several days, and when I could not hold back any longer I mentioned it to him, only to hear that he had had it promised to him also, whilst on the way to work. It followed that serious trouble. Psalm 121 has been our and my Psalm ever since.

“I have seen the Lord’s goodness many times since, and in a small measure, I have walked up and down in that Psalm many times, for correction as well. On one occasion I was bent on putting a certain matter right, which I thought was an injustice. On going to bed that night the thought was put into my mind to read the 121st Psalm. I did start to read, but got no further than, ‘The Lord is thy Keeper.’ I was broken down and had to leave the matter where it was, in the Lord’s hands.

“Another time just as I was getting into bed, the words, ‘No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper.’ What it meant I could not

think. I found out at a later date and saw that the Lord had intervened for me in something I was not aware of at the time.

“Where I have been since I do not know, where I am nor what I am. Mr. Peter Simmonds [pastor at Scaynes Hill] used to quote, ‘Tell me with Thine own mouth that Thou hast chosen me,’ and I echoed that in my heart each time he mentioned it.

“Once at the end of a prayer meeting he quoted John 14. 18: ‘I will not leave you comfortless,’ also Heb. 13. 5: ‘I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.’ That really went home and tears flowed and the utter feeling of perfect peace followed. I seemed to be apart from everyone and everything. I have not felt such indescribable peace since and neither can I recall that same depth of feeling, but it was so real; it did not last long, but it was so remarkable. Since has fallen a spell of such darkness. I really do not know whether I have any faith, any love or even believe. It all seems a sham.

“The minister mentioned from the pulpit about some words and instances being signposts in life, but we do need food to strengthen us to tread the road. It seemed most apt, but have I ever had any food – real food? I feel I cannot talk to man (or woman) about these things. In the past when some things have come to mind, I have felt cut down and so my mouth is shut. Perhaps that is just as well.

“Many years ago I saw on a gravestone of someone I knew, ‘The Lord knoweth them that are His.’ That was such a comfort.

“Another thing that has been a trouble to me: ‘One shall be taken and another left.’ I seem and feel to be left. My dear John was taken and I left. I have been prevented from rebellion. The beginnings of it began to arise as I left the hospital where he passed away; these words dropped in forcibly: ‘The Lord hath need of him.’ I thought my daughter would be a comfort to me in my old age and in my disabilities; she too has been taken from me. I propose, but God disposes. He does know what is best and sometimes I have to prove it, although I do not always see it in the same light of Eternal Wisdom. My son is spared thus far, but I have had cause to wonder! Why am I left and even spared to this age?

“I am persuaded that a good deal of my troubles have been brought on by myself because of that wretched pride. It is always there, right at my elbow, and I am not always aware of it until something is given me to deal with it of myself. It is only when the Lord puts something in my path that He shows me where I have been.

“Feeling really down in the depths and not possessing anything real at all. As if all hope has gone, and yet I dare not deny those words that have come with such power in the past. What has happened and just where am I, spiritually that is?”

The writer visited our dear friend many times over a number of years and in particular her last few years when at Hove Bethesda Home,

and would often write something down of my visit, when I reached home, and below are just some of those things.

One Thursday evening in December 2008 at Haywards Heath chapel, the text was Jeremiah 29. 11: "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." The minister asked her after the service, "Hazel, have you an expected end?" and she was able in the fear of the Lord and with an honest heart to answer, "Yes, I have." Some years later speaking of this, she said, "I have never forgotten that service."

In January 2012 she had to go into hospital at Haywards Heath. On visiting her, I read and prayed with her, and had read a few verses in Deuteronomy 31. She referred to verse 8, which reads, "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." Then she said, "That links up with the first promise I had years ago." She was very quiet and peaceful, and said, "I am leaving it all in the Lord's hands and then there will be no mistakes. I have been trying to commit my way unto Him, and I think He is saying something to me." When discharged she entered the Home at Hove Bethesda.

October 2012, Bethesda, Hove. She said, "I know one thing, my help cometh from the Lord, and it doesn't come from anywhere else." She went on to speak about a very special hearing time from the preaching of the late pastor, Peter Simmonds, at Scaynes Hill chapel. She was beginning to lose her sight, and his subject was "His presence." She was not sure if the hymn 758 was given out, or was quoted in the preaching, but the lines in the third verse were made a great blessing to her.

Another resident at the home gave me some of notes that Hazel had written, which are very brief, and there are no dates.

One reads: On reflecting on the tribulations of the way, it dropped in, "Jesus Christ, thy Father's Son, bids thee undismayed *go on.*" Greatly encouraged. Can it be *my Father's Son*?

Our friend spoke about a very special time, hearing Mr. Robert Field preach (via relay) at Brighton from Daniel 12. 13: "But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." Hazel's words were, "It was so wonderful," and the words of hymn 267 verse 5 came to her mind and the sermon mentioned earlier by her late pastor Peter Simmonds when she had such peace, from John 14.

It was a very sweet time we had together that morning. One felt she had received an anointing for her burial, but she very graciously would not claim that to be so.

In trying to talk with her I said, "Hazel, in that last verse I have just read it speaks there of the Lord thy Redeemer," and asked, "Do you feel He is your Redeemer?" and went on to say, "When you were in the

hospital last week, you said that you wanted the Lord to come once more. Well, has He come and visited you?" She replied so clearly saying, "*Underneath are.*" I then finished the verse for her, and she responded by saying, "*Yes, underneath.*" Her granddaughter said, "Well that was clear enough," so those words become a sweet and lasting memory of our dear, departed friend.

The funeral service took place on September 23rd, 2014, held at the Bethesda Home, Hove, and she was laid to rest at Walstead Cemetery in sweet and blessed hope of a glorious resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

R.F.

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**THE KING'S DAUGHTER IS ALL GLORIOUS WITHIN**

*Psa. 45. 13*

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O what a glorious company  
 Will be before Thy throne,  
 When Thou, O Lord, hast gathered all  
 Thy children safely home!

O what a wondrous, blood-bought throng,  
 Washed all from taint of sin;  
 The daughter of the King made pure,  
 All glorious within,

Then, far across the heavenly plains,  
 To Thee what praise and song!  
 What wonder too if I through grace  
 Am found among that throng!

For O it must be all of grace,  
 'Tis only Christ alone  
 Can wash my needy, naked soul,  
 And bring me safely home.

What praise then to the worthy Lamb!  
 What songs to Thee, O God!  
 Knowing the price to ransom us:  
 No less, Thy precious blood!

Clive Jefferys of Studley, January 1987  
 (He died the following March)

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Let those be thy choicest companions who have made Christ their chief Companion.

*Thomas Brooks*



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
NOVEMBER 2015

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

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**WALKING WORTHY**

*Sermon preached by John Harwood at Galeed, Brighton,  
on September 22nd, 1943*

**Text:** "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Eph. 4. 1).

I would preface my remarks on this passage by asking the question: whether we sufficiently appreciate the importance of practical godliness? Whatever tendency there may be among professing people to think disparagingly about essential and practical truth, the apostle had a great deal to say about its use and importance. Giving counsel to Titus, he said, "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men." The apostle's judgment is undoubtedly true; to it every tender conscience must bear witness, each feeling his own deficiency in this matter.

It is to be observed that the apostle, in his references and exhortations to practical godliness, always associates it with the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every precept was based upon some gospel truth, and upon some gracious experience of that truth in the heart. For instance, in exhorting not only servants but masters to a humble, consistent walking, that they might adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, he goes on to say, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Tit. 2. 9-14). Thus in many other passages the apostle bases exhortations to practical godliness upon the experience of the truth, showing what a close connection there is between truth in the heart and truth in the life.

Paul is at pains in all his epistles clearly to state the ground upon which the children of God might hope to experience the blessings with which they were so signally favoured and blessed. For instance, in this epistle he says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places *in*

*Christ ... to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.*" He goes on to enumerate the benefits which flow to the children of God by reason of their union with Him: they have the forgiveness of their sins, redemption through His blood, obtain an inheritance in the Person and work of Christ. He shows that their regeneration is after the pattern of Christ's resurrection, by virtue of it, and by the same almighty power which was exerted by the Spirit of God in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. He attributes the quickening power of God the Holy Spirit in regenerating His people to the sovereign mercy and goodness of God; speaks of those that were afar off being made nigh by the blood of Christ (a very desirable and precious favour indeed), and further speaks of their being built up in the Person of Christ, grounded upon the merits of His death; and finishes the doctrinal part of the epistle with a doxology, in which he attributes glory to God: "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." Then, as a prisoner of the Lord, he gives utterance to the exhortation that they would walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they had been called.

Three things in this passage demand our attention as God shall enable us. First of all, the privilege, the vocation wherewith they were called; secondly, the exhortation; lastly, the enforcement of that exhortation.

Before I notice my first point, the privilege, I cannot help giving utterance to what has frequently struck my mind, that a considerable portion of every epistle of the apostle's was devoted to exhortations and injunctions which bear upon practical experience and godliness among those who believe. Now there must be a reason for this, and that reason is very clear indeed. *It is because the people of God need it.* They need instruction in righteousness and in every branch of truth, but they also need to be roused in their minds and stirred up in their spirits, not by legal lashing, but by the mercies of God bestowed upon them, and felt and enjoyed in their soul's experience. We have need to remember and to be concerned with the fact that the wise as well as the foolish may slumber and sleep.

If there are those who say that they do not like the preceptive part of God's Word, I ask whether such can possibly know the unction, the power, the authority, the grace of the gospel as it is applied and made over to the conscience by the Holy Spirit, and gratefully received in faith and love? Often it has been said, "I like comfort," but it is false comfort which disregards the precepts of His Word. Where such a spirit reigns, there is no evidence that the nature of real comfort is known – the

comfort of sins forgiven, the comfort of a Saviour's love constraining the heart, making it willing to bear reproach and suffer shame for the sake of Him who has loved them and blessed them with His grace. For to the people of God there is the privilege of being called with a vocation which embodies in it every spiritual mercy and benefit, both in grace and in glory. The ultimate end of this vocation is undoubtedly the honour and glory of God in the Person of His Son. God so disposes of His spiritual gifts, so works spiritual blessings in the hearts of His people, as to exemplify in them and by them the exceeding riches of His grace.

But the vocation has another use. It is for the enrichment of the church of Christ, the whole body of true believers. Every mercy bestowed, every blessing given, all gracious light and understanding, experience and favour we have in the things of God, is not for our personal advantage alone, but is to be cast into the treasury of the church; for none of us liveth to himself, and certainly when God blesses His people, it is that they may not only be the subjects of His blessing, but be in various ways a blessing to others who believe.

This vocation has a personal aspect. It is a calling out of death, out of peril, out of error, out of reigning ungodliness, out of despair; a calling unto living union with the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. And when we consider what grace delivers us from, and what it delivers us to, how great is His mercy to us! It is a vocation which is of eternal benefit, a vocation which is essential to the peace and safety of every believing soul.

It is a calling, in particular, to the exercise of *godly sorrow for sin*. The Saviour is exalted to give repentance as well as the remission of sins. We can never produce this repentance, never give ourselves a humble, broken and contrite heart, a heart out of love with sin, and out of love with ourselves. But O the mercy of God the Holy Spirit who produces this blessing in the heart! For one thing which is a trouble to an enlightened soul is a hard, unfeeling spirit, when he cannot be sorry as he would, when self is mixed with his sorrow, and when he cannot pray with fervency and earnestness, and some access at His throne.

God calls His people also to the *exercise of faith*. Yes, though a poor sinner may have groaned for months under the guilt of sin, and fears that mercy will never be his, and finds various discouragements in himself, the time will come when God the Holy Spirit will effectually call him to the exercise of faith. What a great moment it is when by the exercise of divine grace the soul casts away every confidence in the flesh, and ventures alone upon the Person and work of Christ, by the attraction and power of His love and grace, feeling unable longer to restrain himself from Him through unbelief! Then peace flows into the conscience, love is felt to the Lord Jesus, astonishment is realised at such

mercy that has blotted out his sins, cast them behind His back, and given to the Saviour's declaration a beauty and a realisation never felt before: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

God the Holy Spirit calls His people to *the enjoyment of sonship*. He sheds abroad the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and though they very rightly refrain from joy of enthusiasm, yet in their hearts they feel such a spirit of love, reverential fear and gracious constraint, as gives them liberty to approach a holy God as their God and Father in the Person of the incarnate Son. If this spirit of sonship has not been shed abroad in the heart of some graciously-exercised soul, remember it is the vocation to which the child of God is called; it is a possession which he shall yet have in his heart.

He is called to *obedience*, not merely to talk about the ways of God, and about the precepts, but to do the will of God. He is constrained by love, moved by the authority of God in His Word, recognising its importance and the right that God has to command what He will of His people – a command to walk in practical godliness, a command not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, a command to yield obedience to the ordinances, and to be loyal to the truth and the people of God, but especially to God our Saviour as our Prophet, Priest and King.

Another feature of this vocation is that we are called unto *liberty*. We live in a day when perhaps there is very little, comparatively speaking, of the liberty of the gospel, walking in the light of the countenance of God in Christ, rejoicing in the forgiveness of sins and in our liberation from the law of God, and in being married to Christ. Yet in some measure, the children of God do know and experience this liberty. O what a blessing it is when, in the experience of it, we can pray, and can worship, not only here, but especially in our private devotions; when we get God's ear, and He deigns to regard us in our request!

But this liberty is practical as well as spiritual. There are many vain, stupid superstitions in the world. There is the iron rule of fashion in the world. There are things which are sanctioned by men in authority, by leaders in religion, in respect to morals and matters of dress, from which the people of God are delivered by the law of Christ in their hearts. What is effectual in bringing salvation brings to them the liberty, not to walk as others walk, but as humble disciples of the Lord Jesus, esteeming a meek and quiet spirit, which is of great price in the sight of God, as of greater importance than conformity with what men allow. We cannot be too careful of our liberty. It has come to us through the Saviour's precious blood. Few esteem the importance and value of our religious liberties, but if God has called us to the enjoyment and possession of

them, may He give us grace to hold them fast, to use them wisely, and to pray for their continuance to us.

It is well to recollect in faith that the vocation which we have in our soul's experience is *a pledge, an earnest, a foretaste of the glory which remains for the people of God*. We can never earn it, never produce it. If we have it, we have it because of the effectual call and powerful operation of God the Holy Spirit through the truth. Undoubtedly the comfort of our vocation may be suspended in our souls, in order to show us that we are not at liberty to forsake His ways and transgress His laws. But O the mercy of this, that the same grace which called us at the first is effectual through the mercies of God, and will produce repentance in the backslider, and restoration of the joy of God's salvation, that he may learn the more tenderly to cherish and highly to value the privileges to which the apostle calls our attention.

But in the second place, the exhortation: walk worthy of this vocation. You will observe that the apostle does not say: *be* worthy of it. We never were worthy of it. We never shall be worthy of it. It is grace from first to last that bestows, maintains and eventually crowns the vocation to which the people of God are called. Every honour and every voice of praise belongs to grace, and grace alone. What he says is, *walk* worthy, that is graciously and consistently, with that vocation. The importance of this must be obvious to every thoughtful person. If we are proud, selfish, self-centred, obstinate, walking in the spirit of our own minds, carnal and worldly-minded, what evidence do we give of the Spirit of Christ, what exemplification of the vocation which we profess to have had? On the contrary, the prevalence of these influences in our lives dishonours that worthy name by which we are called.

To walk worthy of the vocation is, in the first place, to walk suitably, humbly and thankfully for the grace that He has bestowed upon us. One gracious feature of the life of God is that of thankfulness. The sinner that can talk about the doctrines of grace, and never manifest thankfulness for them, what can he know of their application to himself? It is to walk in love, constrained by the love of Christ to yield obedience not only to what is convenient, but inconvenient, crucifying and painful to our natural inclinations. It is to walk in the spirit of gracious dependence upon the God of all grace, that He will assist us in every matter, that He will guide us in every perplexity, that He will indicate the path in which we are to go. It is to walk in abhorrence of what is evil, as well as in the approbation of what is good. There is a word in the Book of Revelation, an important word, an indication of what is gracious: "Thou canst not bear them which are evil." It is no sign of a tender spirit to be tolerant of what is derogatory to the glory of the Son of God and His precious truth. It will rather show itself as it was noticed with

approbation in the angel of the church at Ephesus: thou canst not tolerate that which is evil and wrong and inconsistent.

But it is also a love of what is truth. Whatever bears the impress of the divine operations of the Spirit of Truth is very attractive, and will be sought and followed after. It is to walk in the spirit of obedience and, as God enables us, to walk in the spirit of submission to His will in what is crucifying to our natural affections. It is to walk as the apostle says in this following verse: "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love." That does not mean that we are to give up principles of truth to accommodate ourselves to some that would ignore them. Not that! Truth is to be maintained, principles are to be contended for; but in the spirit of love and humility. Indeed, God's vocation in our hearts will secure it, for it will make us sensible that we ourselves are liable to be overtaken in a fault.

But to walk worthy of the vocation indicates activity. There is a satisfaction with our attainments which is to be deprecated. It is not healthy, but contrary to truth. What is healthy and right is the grace which enables us to lay aside sloth and self-satisfaction and, acknowledging our inabilities and that we have not attained to certain things, to press forward to the mark for the prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

But a word in the last place about the enforcement of the exhortation: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord." When he says "therefore," he has in his mind the mercies which he had so beautifully traced out in the former part of the epistle. God's mercies felt, possessed, and enjoyed in the soul lay us under a most powerful constraint to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called. God's mercy is so sweet to His people, that as they realise its suitability, they desire to love it, desire to exemplify it. Child of God, never despise the doctrine, the grace of which has been such a blessing in your soul. Rather ask for grace, the grace of the continued experience of it, that you may never be ashamed of God's truth; and in a day when shame and contempt are poured upon the inspiration of God's Word, the doctrines of distinguishing grace and the ordinances of His house, that you may walk humbly, reverently and suitably to the vocation with which God has blessed you. If you do not fear God, if the mercies of God have never penetrated experimentally into your conscience, I cannot exhort you to a suitable walk. But I can, indeed I must, warn you most deliberately that, when the people of God are reaching the end for which God has called them, divine justice will find you out unless grace meets with you before you die, for there can be no hope for a Christless, graceless sinner. If a sinner has no interest in an exhortation, he can have no interest in God's blessing. O that God would show you this!

He says, "I, Paul, the prisoner of the Lord." He was a prisoner in the sense that God, in His providence, had permitted his enemies to restrain him in prison. But the margin says, "The prisoner *in* the Lord," because as a believer, and a minister, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, He was in the Lord. His enemies had vented their spite upon him, but better suffer reproach and contempt and persecution than give up the truth. This man of God, though a prisoner, though suffering restraint from the labour which was the delight and pleasure of his life, yet found grace sufficient for his days. He learned in whatsoever state he was, therewith to be content; and as a prisoner, as a man who knew what he was speaking about, he exhorted those to whom he wrote to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they were called, even though, like himself, they suffered persecution.

May God condescend to add a blessing to His Word for His name's sake. Amen.

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## REMOVING THE CANDLESTICK

*By Stephen Charnock (1628-1680)*

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"Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent" (Rev. 2. 5).

God doth often remove the gospel upon provocations, as the severest judgment He can inflict upon an unworthy people. Apostasies have been very frequent. Everything under the sun is subject to alteration and corruption. Faith is not a hereditary thing like a standing patrimony. Children do not always tread in the steps of their ancestors; what they receive only by education they will easily part with upon some carnal interest, some smiling or frowning temptation. Some have observed that the purity of the gospel hath scarce lasted in a city or province to the third generation. The gospel in the honour of it may remain longer, but usually some error, some mixtures, have deformed it. Good corn is scarcely sown but the devil is as ready to sow his tares. I shall premise:

1. The gospel shall not be removed out of the world while the world endures. Zion, the universal church, hath a promise of stability; the gospel therefore, whereby she is constituted a church, shall be perpetually in her. The shutting the gate of the sanctuary after the Lord's entering into it (Ezek. 44. 2) is expounded by some of the everlasting dwelling of the Lord in the gospel church and never departing from it, as He had done from the temple of Jerusalem. The promise of Christ assures it: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world"

(Matt. 28. 20). Not with the persons of the apostles, who were to expire, but with the doctrine of the apostles, which was to endure; though the apostles die in their bodies, yet they live in their doctrine.

2. The gospel hath been, and still may be, removed from particular places. No particular church but may be unchurched, because no particular church hath a promise of stability. There is no entail of God's favour to any particular church in the world. The gospel is a candle, and the church is a candlestick; both candle and candlestick are movable things, not an entailed inheritance.

That the removal of the gospel and unchurching a nation is the greatest judgment. Can there be a greater judgment than to have the Word of God removed, to want a prophet to instruct and warn, when the law shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the ancient? This God threatens as the greatest (Ezek. 8. 6). And the church complains of it as the sorest, "We see not our signs" (Psa. 74. 9), and, "there is no more any prophet ... among us." It was the greatest token of God's anger, when His glory went up from the cherubims (Ezek. 9. 3). How much more terrible is the shaking off the dust of the feet of God against a people than the shaking off the dust of the feet of an apostle!

When the gospel departs, all other blessings depart with it. When the great charter is taken away, all the privileges depending upon it are snatched away together with it. When God departs, judgments succeed. When the glory of God was gone up from the first cherub to the threshold of the house (Ezek. 9. 3), the angels are commanded to execute the destructive sentence against the city (verses 4, 5).

*Use:* Doth God often remove the gospel upon provocations, as the severest judgment He can inflict upon an unworthy people? Then,

Be afraid of this judgment. How do we know but that God hath limited the preaching of the gospel, and the standing of the candlestick in this and that place, only for a time, and when that is expired, it may be carried to another place? We see it hath been so with others. If He hath not spared the natural branches, nor the church next the primitive [following the days of the apostles], nay, those churches where the gospel was planted by the apostles, what reason have we to think He should spare us, who have long ago discarded primitive discipline, and are in a fair way to throw away primitive doctrines after it? Is England better than Jerusalem and Ephesus? Are the privileges we enjoy a bar to the removal of it? Are our privileges greater than those churches which were planted by the apostles had? Yet the hand of God hath shaken them off.

Did not the Jews oppose their descent from Abraham, to whom the promises were made, and the glory of their temple, as an invincible shield against all the threatenings of destruction by the prophets, as though God had been shut up in their temple, and so enamoured of the beauty of that



structure that He could not have the heart to leave them? But are they not rejected, and the Gentiles received in their room? Is not that which was once the glory of their nation and the wonder of the world, many an age since fallen to the ground and mouldered to dust?

What though the gospel be not yet gone? That sin may lie at the door which is meritorious of its departure. God's patience doth still last, but will it always last? The gospel may shine bright one day, and be eclipsed the next hour. The Jews might say with confidence, "Our temple yet stands," till they heard the report of the Roman eagles marching towards them. The sun shone very bright that day Sodom was burned. The preaching of the gospel in a plentiful manner is a sign of judgment when there is unfruitfulness under it. Was not the gospel preached to Jerusalem by the best preachers of it that ever were, the Son of God and the apostles after Him, not many years before the destruction of that city? God is quick in His judgments when the gospel is contemned. The black, red and pale horse – plague, war and famine – followed just upon the white horse, to cut off such as were not conquered by Him that sat on him (Rev. 6. 2), etc. The sun shines brightest many times when it is nearest setting.

I must confess I am of the opinion that the gospel will never be perfectly and totally taken away from these western parts of the world. It hath borne up its head for many ages within the scent of Rome, in those of Piedmont, notwithstanding all endeavours to extinguish it. Yet a great eclipse I fear; the interposition of a black moon between us and the sun, an antichristian smoke out of the bottomless pit to darken the sun and the air.

In the description of the Sardinian church (Rev. 3. 1-3), which is the state of the church where we are, Christ speaks of decays coming on them with some sharp scourge, but doth not threaten the removal of the candlestick. And may we not have just reason to fear it? to fear, I say, a judgment like this of removing the gospel, the removal of it in part? Bethel, when Jacob laid his head there, was a place where angels went up and down in vision; afterwards it was changed into Bethaven, where calves and devils were worshipped, when Jeroboam swayed the sceptre.

1. Is not our profaneness a just ground of our fear? When Eli the priest is remiss, and Phinehas his son is profane; when there is little care of the true worship of God, and no censures for profaneness of life, is not the fruit of this an Ichabod, the departure of the glory from Israel? (1 Sam. 4. 21). What can be expected when the punishment of profaneness is neglected, and the practice of piety hath been discouraged? When the Jewish vineyard brought forth wild grapes, God commanded the clouds to rain no more upon it (Isa. 5. 6).

2. Is not the slighting of the means of grace a just ground of this fear? When the Gadarenes desired Christ to depart from their coasts,

Christ granted their wish and turned His back. When there is no delight in the Word, Sabbath, gospel, then comes a famine of the word (Amos 8. 11). After Christ had pronounced a woe upon Bethsaida (Matt. 11. 21), though He came afterwards to the town and had the opportunity of curing a blind man, He would not do it in the town, and commanded him, after he was restored, not to go into the town, nor tell it to any inhabitant of it (Mark 8. 22, 26). He would spill no water upon that ground He had cursed.

3. And what shall I say of the barrenness of the church's womb? How few real converts are there brought forth of the church's womb, and nursed upon the church's knees? God seems to have written barrenness upon her womb and dryness upon her breasts. Doth not ignorance sway, where before the gospel triumphed? When the ground yields but a faint increase, and answers not the cost and labour of the husbandman, he lays it fallow. The abatement of the powerful workings of the Spirit is a presage of a removal or dimming the light in the candlestick. When God withdraws gifts from His ministers, and the Spirit from the hearers, it is a sign He will take away that lamp into which He will pour no more oil.

May we not add to this, the apostasy of the age? Where is the old, primitive spirit, I had almost said Puritan spirit, that sincere love to all the truths of the gospel, that valuation of all its ordinances? What generous designs are taken up to glorify and propagate it? Here pride and worldliness, like Pharaoh's lean kine, devour the fat ones of spiritual duties. How seldom have we a sense of God, and estimation of Christ, when we speak of Him!

God indeed is interested in the preservation of religion and a church, but not in this or that particular church, not among this or that particular people. Rather than want one, He will raise up stones to be children to Abraham. As He will not have His blessing abused, so He will not have His gospel extinguished in all parts of the world, or all parts of this western world. But doth this secure us from any great eclipse? What if God will not remove His gospel? May He not suffer many to be infected with popery? May not many of your friends, children, be tainted with this leprosy, that may prove incurable in them? What if there be a likelihood that it will not endure long? If it shall enter upon the stage, must we not therefore endeavour to prevent it? Prophecy is the rule of our foresight, precept is the rule of our duty.

What if God will not remove the gospel, may He not bring a sharp persecution? Is not the enemy at our door, the rod shaken over our heads? Have we not gathered the twigs of it ourselves, and formed a scourge for our own backs? Did we not first let in the serpent's head, and what should we expect but that God should begin His judgments at His own house, and scrape the sides of His sanctuary that have been defiled with so much filthiness?

Let us therefore meet God in a humble, reforming posture, and lay hold on His strength; consider where we left Him, and do our first work, whence we are fallen, and fallen by our own fault and peevishness, fallen from a zeal for God, a national endeavour for the propagation of the gospel. Let us desire Him, as the disciples that were going to Emmaus did Christ: “Lord, abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent” (Luke 24. 29). Our Saviour did so, and gave them His blessing before He vanished again out of their sight. God may deal so with us, and leave some notable blessing with us, till He comes again to pitch His sanctuary in the midst of us for evermore, as the promise is (Ezek. 37. 28).

Let us therefore seek to Him, chiefly to Him, only to Him; He only can remove the candlestick; He only can put His hand as a bar upon the light. Men may be instrumental, but it is Christ only removes the candlestick, and He only can maintain it against the puffs of men and devils. He hath the enemies in a chain, and the full command of their breath. Place no confidence in men; some may have some power to give relief, and will not; others may have will to help, and cannot. As He hath angels to bring, so He hath angels to carry away the everlasting gospel.

Remember the threatening in the text is not absolute; there is an “else” and an “except” to mitigate it. “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or *else* I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, *except* thou repent.”

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### LOOKING TO THE BLOOD

*By Thomas Doolittle (1630-1707)*

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A believer should eye the blood of Christ in the several properties, virtue and efficacy of it till suitable graces thereby are drawn forth into action.

Eye the blood of Christ as it is a *precious* blood. We “were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold ... but with the precious blood of Christ” (1 Pet. 1. 18, 19). The dignity and excellency of Christ’s Person make it so exceedingly precious, being the blood of that Person who was God as well as Man (Acts 20. 28).

Eye the blood of Christ as it is *satisfying* blood. The law of God was transgressed; the covenant of works was violated by us; the justice of God was wronged; and the sinner was indebted unto justice. Eye Christ’s blood as the payment of our debt; as shed for our good and in our stead. Christ has endured as much as our sins had deserved. “Who gave Himself a ransom for all” (1 Tim. 2. 6).

Eye the blood of Christ as *pacifying and reconciling* blood. When sin was expiated, God was appeased. “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood” (Rom. 3. 25). “He is the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 2. 2). By this blood, God’s wrath is turned aside.

Eye the blood of Christ as *purchasing* blood. By this He purchased His church and people. “Feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20. 28). “For ye are bought with a price” (1 Cor. 6. 20).

Eye the blood of Christ as *justifying* blood, as that which makes you righteous in the sight of God, though you have no righteousness of your own. “Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him” (Rom. 5. 9).

Eye the blood of Christ as *pardoning* blood, as that by which you have the full, free and everlasting pardon of all your sins. Through this blood of Christ we have redemption, that is, the forgiveness of sins (Eph. 1. 7; Col. 1. 14).

Eye the blood of Christ as *heart-purifying* blood. “Who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood” (Rev. 1. 5). It was not only holy blood, but it is sanctifying blood.

Eye the blood of Christ as *pleading* blood. “The blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel” (Heb. 12. 24). Abel’s blood cried for vengeance, but the blood of Christ cries for mercy.

Eye the blood of Christ as *comforting* blood; that it must be because of all the former properties already mentioned. The soul that is scorched with the fiery apprehensions of God’s burning displeasure may be cooled by the blood of Christ. The wounds of your conscience and the wounds of Christ, brought together, will make wholeness.

Eye the blood of Christ as *heart-softening* blood, as that which can dissolve the most stony heart, as that which can break the hardest sinner. “They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him” (Zech. 12. 10).

Eye the blood of Christ as *sin-mortifying* blood. It saves your soul because it kills your sin. This blood will kill your pride, mortify your earthly-mindedness, and subdue all your inordinate affections. “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Rom. 6. 6).

Eye the blood of Christ as *quickenning* blood. It lays your sin sprawling within you and dying in your hearts, but it will give life unto your heart. “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you” (John 6. 53). The blood of Christ is the life of all your graces.

## MOUNT SINAI AND MOUNT ZION

By John "Rabbi" Duncan (1796-1870)

Jehovah, He is the God. He is a wonderful God; He is a wonder-working God. God quickens the dead, God opens the blind eyes and unstops the deaf ears, and the quickened soul has a voice wherewith to respond to the call: "Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not," and the opened ear can hear the voice which says "Look," and the opened eye can look.

I have been lately, and methinks I still am, at the foot of MOUNT SINAI; and I heard *a voice*, and the voice spake of wrath, the wrath of God, which is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. God thundered with His voice – Who thundereth with a voice like Him? I heard the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, concerning which the Scriptures saith, "So terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake."

And the Lord showed me *a biography* – a biography written defectively in the memory, which at the best is ever treacherous, but written perfectly in the book of God's remembrance. And the voice said, "Come and read this biography." I said, O Lord, how can I read it! "I have read it," said God, "and you must, you must." And when I had looked, still the voice came, "Turn thee yet again, and I will shew thee greater abominations than these."

And not a biography only – He showed me *a heart*. "There are seven abominations in a man's heart" – seven being the Scripture number for completeness. And my eye was fixed on that with horror. I speak not now of godly sorrow and repentance, but of horror; and with something that is surely worse, with shame. For it was not simply my eye fixed on the heart, but God showing me His own eye looking on it. "See thy sin under My eye; see, My eye sees that." God be merciful to me a sinner!

Now I heard a voice, at first distant and mysterious; but it came nearer, *a still, small voice* publishing peace, proclaiming salvation; a voice which came from ZION, the city of our solemnities, the city of our God; a voice publishing peace, proclaiming the salvation which came from Zion; a voice proclaiming, as salvation, so also a Saviour: "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, for unto you is born in the city of David, a Saviour," and not merely a Saviour, and a Saviour on earth – Immanuel, God with us, God among us, God for us – but a Saviour slain.

Methought then I stood on *Calvary*, and heard these words, "It is finished." God said, Look into the heart of Christ, and behold Him in His vicarious death. Behold Him, and "know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." The greatest depth of this poverty

being not in His incarnation – though that was a wondrous depth – look at it in His death.

Then methought also that God said, Come by the blood to the *mercy seat*. And I heard a voice speak from the mercy seat, from between the cherubim. And what voice was that? “This is My beloved Son” – not merely with whom, but “in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him!” said He from the mercy seat, from between the cherubim. “The Lord is well pleased for His righteousness’ sake,” said He from the mercy seat, from between the cherubim. “I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions, and will not remember thy sins,” said He from the mercy seat, from between the cherubim. “Return unto Me, for I have redeemed thee,” said He from the mercy seat, from between the cherubim. Sweet invitation to me, a departer, “Return unto me,” God assigning to the sinner the saving cause – “for I have redeemed thee.”

Then methought the Lord said, “I know heart-secrets.” And I said, Lord, show me *a heart which Thou knowest*. And methought the Lord showed me a heart. Whose it was He did not say, and I do not know, but a heart which God knows; He showed me something of it.

It was a heart into which He had put a *new song*. The soul was making melody, attempting to make melody to the Lord. Where it was I do not know, but I heard it singing about the middle of its song. It had been singing other songs before this. It had been singing, “What profit is there in my blood when I go down to the pit?” It had been singing the fifty-first Psalm, and Jehovah had put a new song into its mouth. He had done it, and it was trying to sing, and I heard it in the middle of its song. It had been reading Revelation 5, and trying to sing some of its numbers, and now it was at these words, “For Thou wast slain.” And O how it was sobbing and breaking; how it was melting and breaking with a joyous grief, and a grievous joy! It could not get its song sung, though it would have liked it. O how it faltered when it tried to sing, “And hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood!”

It was the song of a soul known to God, and many such there are. It was the song of one to whom much had been forgiven, and who therefore loved much, and many such there are. But it was the song of the chief of sinners, of the one to whom *most* had been forgiven, and who loved *most*.

Yet it *faltered* and made wrong music; it jarred, and there was discord; and it grated on its own ear, and pained it. And God was listening to it, the omniscient God, who knows all things. But the song was presented through and by the Mediator of the new covenant, and if there was discord, it was removed by grace in atoning blood, by the sweet accents of intercession, for it came up as music in Jehovah’s ear, melody to the Lord. It was not discord in heaven.

I would know, O God, what soul that is! O God, let that soul be *mine!* And tell me of it. Let it be mine! Put a new song into my mouth; teach me to sing it. Teach me to sing it on earth, and to sing it when earth shall be no more.

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## THOUGHTS ON THE SONG OF SOLOMON

By Grey Hazlerigg  
(Continued from page 269)

*“Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bethel”*  
(chapter 2, verse 17).

He that is born again of God is born *for* God. The child of God is not his own. He is bought with the price of the blood of Christ, that he should be for Him who died for him and lives again. Hence it is that the really living soul can never find any satisfying rest out of the Lord Jesus:

“His heart is pained, nor can it be  
At rest till it finds rest in Thee.”

All creatures have their proper rest; the new creature in Christ finds none short of the Lord Jesus Christ: “When I awake,” says the heaven-born David, “I shall be satisfied with Thy likeness.”

The words of the verse under consideration contain the same truth. As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so the soul of the child of God is here represented as panting after God, the living, life-giving God in Jesus. The words contain four things:

1. The *night* and *shadows* which may still be on a child of God.
2. The *day* he expects.
3. The *hindrances* to peace and communion he now meets with.
4. The *remedy* and *relief* he looks for even now.

1. The *night* and *shadows*. During the Old Testament dispensation, no doubt, the time of the law, with its ceremonies and shadowy representations of gospel truths, would be as a night to the child of God. Not, indeed, to those taught of God, a night season without some light; but still, compared with the day of the New Testament, a kind of night, with moon and stars of promises and prophecies, but a time of comparative darkness. This period is called the “cloudy and dark day” in Ezekiel, and the Old Testament saints earnestly desired the first coming of Christ, which would be as the dayspring from on high visiting the benighted nations.

But in what respects can we who live in gospel times, with such a very full light of God's gracious truth shining in the Word and even ministry upon us, speak of nights and shadows?

In the first place, then, there may still be a very *legal* night-time on the spirit, even though this gospel day is shining. If a man is of a legal spirit, the law remains in its authority as it respects him. He judges of himself according to that rule, and expects God to deal with him in accordance with it. And so far as the legal spirit, even if in some degree broken, prevails over a child of God, so far this night prevails; and as the legal spirit, being a part of the old nature, is never completely rooted out in this world, we see how even a Christian may at times be greatly benighted in his soul. We know that "the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth." Therefore, if there is no faith in Christ, the Law-fulfiller, the law retains all its authority; and when there is little faith it retains much power, and can only be cast out by bringing into the conscience again and again the blood and obedience of the Lord Jesus. Faith is the only victory over this legal night, the power of this darkness, since to faith only the Sun of Righteousness arises with healing in His wings.

Again, there is a night of *sin*. Indeed, these two nights go together, though they may be distinguished; and the same faith which brings in Christ as the Law-fulfiller to remove the night of the law brings in Christ the Sin-subduer to drive away the darkness of the night of sin. It should never be forgotten that this is the victory which overcometh the world in all respects, and as it regards everything pertaining to man's condition as first created under a covenant of works, even our faith. Every exercised soul will be sure to know more or less of this night of sin. He will too often find that the psalmist's confession must be his: "Iniquities prevail against me," and he will readily own that when this is the case his iniquities separate between him and his God. If they prevail in their guilt, they separate from a just God; if in their filth, from a holy God; and if in their folly, from a wise God. The natural and inevitable tendency of sin in its various forms, of everything contrary to the mind of God as revealed in His Word and the pure truth as it is in Jesus, of all that grieves, therefore, the Holy Spirit of God, is to bring death and darkness upon the soul, and thus to plunge the child of God into a night season. Pride, covetousness, lust, worldliness, angry tempers, envy, malice and all uncharitableness, all these varied forms of sin, with unbelief their fruitful parent, will surely as they prevail bring a dark night upon the mind.

Again, there is a night of *temptation*. Satan's hands are not bound, and though he is chained from destroying, or carrying out the designs of his own wicked heart as he would desire, still permissively, as under the



overruling power of the Lord Jesus, he goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. He has a ready access, as far as allowed, to our hearts as a tempter, both in a seducing and terrifying form, and seems to have a special capability of acting upon the imagination, presenting thereby to the soul seductive or terrifying fancies, according as he sees his opportunity for leading into sin, puffing up with pride, or driving into distraction and despair.

Now when Satan is allowed to have his own way in any great degree with the poor believer, let him before have been ever so well established or rejoicing, he will soon have to complain of a dark night, and use his Master's language: "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." Blasphemies against things sacred, yea, the most sacred, accusations of the fiercest or most plausible kind, questionings and disputings as to the truth itself, are all injected, and with the force, too, of a devil; so no wonder they appear at times to overwhelm the soul.

*"Buts, ifs, and hows* are hurled,  
To sink us with the gloom  
Of all that's dismal in this world  
And in the world to come."

This, then, is another night the believer may have to pass through.

Again, there is a night of *persecution*. And though in the present day men are not allowed in this country to imprison and kill as formerly, still there may be a persecution of the tongue in slander, detraction and blasphemy. "Say we not well thou hast a devil?" Or even a persecution of a legal kind as to property and temporal well-being, which may constitute a very dark night to the soul.

Again, to be brief, there is a night of *temporal* and *circumstantial distress*, of poverty, sickness, loss of friends, which may sorely afflict the child of God, and make old Jacob's words expressive of his feelings: "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been." Such, then, are some night seasons the true child of God, who has even been espoused in soul to Christ, may have to go through.

Indeed, in one sense, as compared with the world to come, the entire condition of the child of God below, the whole of the day of his vain life upon earth, whilst still subject to corruption and vanity (Rom. 8. 20, 21), may well be styled a night season, and seems to be so here, though with a further regard to the various dark things we have mentioned.

As to the *shadows* which may be on the same person whilst in this world, we will only allude to those of *ignorance*, *partial knowledge* and *error*, all of which more or less affect the mind during the present imperfect state. What child of God will not confess his extreme ignorance in the things of God? Surely he will take up Agur's confession, and cry, "I am more brutish than any man, and have not the

understanding of a man.” His ignorance of God, His Word, His law, His gospel, His Christ, will deeply, at times, trouble him, and cause him too to have some entrance into Paul’s feelings when he wrote those words, expressive at once of his sense of ignorance, yet panting desire after the knowledge of Jesus: “That I may know Him.”

Then, at best, how partial is our knowledge. “We see,” says Paul, “through a glass darkly; we know but in part. We walk by faith, not by sight,” and even faith is feeble. But in addition to this there is much of error, false conception of God, mistakes, vain imaginations exalting themselves against God and Christ (2 Cor. 10. 4, 5). Our hearts are with the greatest difficulty subdued to truth, cast as in the gospel mould, and then with the same difficulty kept in the true gospel fashion. How seldom have our spirits that sweet mixture of “awe, delight and shame” which would indicate their subjection to the blessed truth of God, not only in the notion, but the living light and power of it!

2. If such is the condition of a child of God whilst upon earth, what is his expectation as to the *future*? O he has a glorious day coming:

“The day of glory bearing  
Its brightness far and near,  
The day of Christ’s appearing  
I now no longer fear.”

Thus he can sing, at times, when faith is in sweet exercise, and his evidences of an interest in Christ are made clear. This is a day with no shadows attending it, no night to follow it. As John tells us in Revelation 22, “There is no night there,” and no shadows, for there we shall see Christ as He is, and be like Him, and as David writes, “Christ shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds.” Christ has no clouds about Him to those who shall see Him as He is, “full of grace and truth.” This is the true description of Him, and so shall His people behold Him in glory.

This is a day without sin. Our best days here below have more or less sin about them. We can never be or do as we would the things which we would, but up in heaven, as John writes, “His servants shall serve Him.” Sweet promise, sweetly suitable to a saint’s present feelings. We now in our inmost spirits want to serve Him; we cry unto Him to make us be and do what is pleasing in His sight; but O how failing! But in heaven we *shall* serve Him; God says it; *fully* serve Him, *completely* serve Him; serve Him and only Him, and to eternity. How the heart longs, at times, to put off this mortal and put on immortality, to have the name of God fully written upon the forehead, to change self for Jesus, death for life, hope for the enjoyment of what is in store for God’s people.

“But hush, my soul, nor dare repine;  
The time my God appoints is best;  
Whilst here to do His will be mine,  
And His to fix my time of rest.”

This is a day without temptation. Satan can no more approach the happy citizen of heaven with his seducing or terrifying temptations. Then is fulfilled the sweet promise, “God shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.” The world, too, has been overcome and left behind, all its powers finally and eternally vanquished, and the happy victors stand upon the sea of glass mingled with fire, with harps of gold and palms of victory, and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. They look down into those depths of trouble and temptation and fiery trial through which they have passed. They now stand above them all, and see how every trial has only tended to lift them as in Jesus up on high. Now the trials are over and the victory gained, and the fruits enjoyed, and they joy as men who after a victory divide the spoil.

This is a day which has no death to end it, no tears to mar it. “For not a wave of trouble rolls across the peaceful heart.” The soul has entered into the joy of the Lord; the body is raised again after the likeness of Christ’s glorified body, capable of entering in companionship with the soul into the joys and glories of heaven. “And they shall go no more out.” Death ended, all death swallowed up in the victory of Christ. God wipes away tears from off all faces. There are no sources of tears or of grief up in heaven. The glory of God in Christ fills every eye; the love of God in Christ fills every heart. O what is heaven, where all is peace, all is life, all is love, all is God; where Christ lives, and loves, and smiles, and His saints see Him as He is, and fear no separation from Him, but are fully satisfied when they have awakened up in His likeness! This is the day they even now expect. The hope of this day supports and cheers them in their pilgrimage. Now they have clouds and shadows and night seasons to distress them. “It is of Christ they little know, and, ah! still less enjoy.” But their day is coming. When the worldly and self-righteous man’s day ends in a dark, dark night at the period of Christ’s second coming, then the night season of all the saints shall end in a sweet and glorious day, and they shall see to eternity the goodness and glory of God in the land of the living.

*(To be concluded)*

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Other things may be the worse for breaking, yet a heart is never at the best till it be broken.

*Sir Richard Baker*

## QUESTION AND ANSWER

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### QUESTION

Will you explain what is the true office of a deacon? There seems to be some misunderstanding in our churches.

### ANSWER

The office of a deacon is a very beautiful office, appointed by the Lord in love for the benefit of His church in its early days. The word “deacon” is really a Greek word not translated meaning “one who serves.” The well-known passage really reads, “The Son of man came not to be *deaconed* unto, but to *deacon*, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20. 28). A deacon is one who in love serves the Lord’s people and helps to relieve the minister of the gospel of some of his duties.

The original appointment of deacons is simply and clearly described in Acts chapter 6. It seems there was some difficulty in the early church. The widows who were Grecians felt they were being neglected. Very graciously the apostles dealt with the matter. “It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God, and serve tables.” Apparently before this the apostles themselves had sought to administer help in the church to the poor and needy – but their chief business was the ministry of the Word.

Therefore the apostles told the church to look out “seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom.” The choice was left entirely to the members of the church. The apostles then appointed those chosen. “We,” said the apostles, “will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word.”

The Lord overruled this to the good of the early church, and to the honour and glory of His name.

In 1 Timothy chapter 3 the qualifications for a deacon are given in verses 8 to 11. Without going into every detail, they must be men the church has confidence in and whom they can trust – so there will be no partiality or the slightest appearance of dishonesty as they have to deal with money and they have to deal with people. They must be sound in the faith. They must not be novices, but must be proved. Their own families must be kept in order, and it is needful that their wives should complement them in their office.

It has been remarked that, strangely, in this chapter the qualifications for the deacon seem to exceed the qualifications for the minister! One suggestion is that there is so much need of grace and humility in many of the deacons’ tasks.

So the Word of God answers the question, and makes the position clear – relieving the minister of the more mundane things in the church,

and visiting and helping the lonely, the needy and the afflicted. The announcing of hymns at our services has nothing whatsoever to do with the scriptural office of a deacon – though, obviously, where this is the custom, the deacons are the right persons to perform it.

In our churches historically we have had just the two offices, ministers and deacons (believing that ministers are elders) as distinct from those churches that have the three offices: ministers, elders and deacons.

The difficulty that has arisen is that so many of our churches are sadly without pastors. (Mr. Popham said we are living “in breach of the promise” – Numbers 14. 34). Thus, of necessity, the deacons have to take on a position of more than was arranged in Acts chapter 6 – caring for the spiritual side of the church, arranging preachers, etc. (almost holding the office of an elder). Nevertheless no deacon is ever entitled to “lord it over God’s heritage.”

Even where there is a pastor, the gracious confidence, help and support of the deacons is invaluable in spiritual things also. Good deacons are a wonderful blessing to any church. It is a wonderful blessing when all is done “decently and in order” – and in love.

In the obituaries in the old *Gospel Standards* mention is often made of a godly deacon. J.C. Philpot highly valued “the Stamford barber,” Samuel Lightfoot, saying how suitable he was to visit the poor and afflicted, cheerful in speaking to them and encouraging them when delivering the alms from the church, and then pouring out his heart in prayer and sympathy for them. J.K. Popham similarly spoke of D.T. Combridge and John Marshall. Of the latter, it was said he was exercised about preaching, “but fearing presumption, he found it in his heart to petition the Lord that He would make him useful in visiting His afflicted people. This prayer was abundantly answered. Many could testify of exceptional blessing resting upon Mr. Marshall’s visits. In this he was found worthy of ‘double honour.’” Mr. Popham said of him, “He possessed an unusual combination of qualities – the tenderness and sympathy of a woman and the strong understanding of a man.”

Of D.T. Combridge he wrote: “On retiring from business he addicted himself to the ministry of the saints. This the poor of our people knew well. The Lord alone knows how many ‘cups of cold water’ he gave to His disciples.”

May the Lord bless our churches with many such deacons.

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Repentance is a flower that grows not in nature’s garden.

*Thomas Brooks*

## BOOK REVIEW

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**The Church of Christ**, by James Bannerman; cloth bound; 1040 pages; price £20; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

The doctrine of the church, including the New Testament pattern for the government, ministry and ordinances of the church, is of great significance. Down through history people have taken great stands on issues relating to the doctrine of the church. These include James Bannerman, who wrote this book in the context of the great personal sacrifice he and others made at the Disruption of the Church of Scotland in 1843 on account of their deeply-held views of the doctrine of the church.

Arguably, amongst our churches we may not have paid as much attention to the doctrine of the church as we should. While the model of church government, view of the ministry and position on baptism and communion are not essential to salvation, they cannot be lightly cast aside. Paul, writing to Timothy, justifies his lengthy discussion of matters relating to church government for the reason that the house of God is the “church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3. 15). Matters relating to the church are not just matters for church officers, but should be of importance to any spiritually-exercised person, including what constitutes a call to the ministry; whether a man can preach without the sanction of a church; the proper candidates for baptism; the administration of the Lord’s supper; the duties of church office bearers; who has the right to appoint office bearers in the church; the relationship between local churches; the exercise of church discipline. Since the ministry of the Lord Jesus and the New Testament more generally, both clearly address the doctrine of the church, we cannot expect God’s approbation on our indifference to it. Additionally, the conduct of the church is a witness to the world; disorder within it invites the contempt of the world and brings dishonour on the church, the Bride of Christ, and on the Lord Jesus, the Head of the church. The prayerful study of the doctrine of the church should therefore commend itself to all readers.

Bannerman’s book is based on his lectures to students in the Free Church College. As such it is not difficult to read and has a certain freshness. Although it is regarded as the classic treatment of Presbyterian church government, Bannerman compares and contrasts all the main models of church government (Presbyterianism, Prelacy, Independency and Congregationalism). Strict Baptists have, in the main, traditionally held to a view of independent church government (indeed, Presbyterianism as a whole system is incompatible with Baptist principles), but books dealing with the Strict Baptist view of the church are limited. Strict Baptists would differ from Bannerman on his view of baptism, church membership and a number of other points. It should be noted that what Bannerman represents as the independent position is only one view, and not one that Strict Baptists would hold in all aspects. While these points will be reasons why a Strict Baptist might not normally turn to Bannerman, there will be profit for those willing to read this work prayerfully, and seek, with the spirit of the Bereans, to examine whether these things are according to Scripture or not.

Previously published by the Banner of Truth in a two volume facsimile, this new edition is completely retypeset in one volume. It is produced to a high standard. Other publishing houses would do well to follow the Banner’s lead in

producing books that are designed to last. The book uses the King James Version for Scripture quotations.

Matthew J. Hyde, Maidstone

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## OBITUARY

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**Gertrude Mary Stevens**, member of the church at Bethel, Luton (and formerly at Clapham and South Moreton), died on October 27th, 2014, aged 92. Altogether she had been a church member over sixty years.

The following is the account she gave when uniting with the church at Luton.

“I would like to quote one or two of the hymns as I feel they express my feelings very much. One hymn is 302, which I feel is the pilgrimage way through life. Another is the last verse of 667: ‘O that my soul could love and praise Him more.’ There is a verse in Rutherford’s lovely hymn which I feel encloses my life, and it is: ‘My web of time He wove.’ One I feel is: ‘My sins immense as is the sea – hide me, O Gethsemane!’ There was a hymn we used to learn at school; I cannot quote it now, but there is a line in the hymn I always used to think about, and it was, ‘Tell Thy name to me.’

“When I was four I went to the Sunday school attached to Manchester chapel and I remember the teacher showing us some large pictures of a shepherd and his sheep, Daniel in the lions’ den and David and Goliath, and as young as I was, I believe I thought, ‘Well, God must be very good to rescue those people!’

“Then when I was about five, I had a cousin who died. She had been a very sickly child all her life. She had a hole in the heart and was not expected to live long. She died, and my mother told me she had given all her toys away and she had said she was very happy, she was going to live with Jesus. This was a mystery to me. That child had come from a very ungodly home. As far as I know she had never been to Sunday school or chapel or anything, and how could she die like that? I believe years later, which I had not realised at the time, I had very godly grandparents who lived about four doors away and they must have known this little child was ill all her life, and I believe they must have carried her in prayer.

“I think I was about six, and one day my mother saw a man and he said the end of the world was coming on the next day. This really upset me and I went up to the bathroom and locked myself in and was crying and asked God to forgive my sins before the next day was over. I do not

think then I knew sin as I know it now, but must have known a little of what I had learned in the Sunday school.

“Time went on and I was about eight, and one Sunday morning, there were five of us, and we had to kiss our mother goodbye because she was very ill and going into hospital, and they did not know if she would get better. This was a terrible Sunday to me. After Sunday school in the afternoon we were taken to the deacon’s house for tea, Mr. Chaplin. I would not eat any because I was so upset about Mother. Mr. Chaplin’s youngest daughter Rachel, who was about fifteen, took me away and said, ‘We will go and pray about Mother,’ which she did, and that prayer was answered and Mother came home again.

“Life went on, school and various things. I believe I was given prayer about my examinations which was answered in schooling. As I became a teenager I tried to pray for a godly partner in life. I felt this was very necessary, and I became friendly with a young man from the chapel. We had grown up together. This went on and then the War came and my father, who worked in the civil service, had to move from Manchester to London to help assess the war damage. This was a great upheaval for the family and my young man wanted us to get married, but my parents did not approve. They were not at all happy and there were some things I was not happy about too, and they persuaded me to break off the friendship, which I did very sadly.

“We moved to Old Welwyn, because my father did not want us to live in London with the bombing and we could attend Welwyn chapel. We three older girls had to find work. My two sisters got work in offices of firms which were doing war work, but I got work in the accounts departments of the Welwyn Stores, now John Lewis. I was very happy there but did not realise at the time I was not doing war work and very soon my age group would be called up into the services. But at the same time my gracious grandparents who attended Lymm chapel near Warrington – my grandfather was a deacon there – and my grandfather was taken very ill with cancer of the tongue and had a great deal of his tongue taken out. My grandmother was a very weakly lady and I thought whilst I was waiting for my call-up papers, I would go and help them for a little while. My grandfather had a bed down in the sitting room and one day I was dusting in the lounge where he was and he said, ‘Will you play “Rock of Ages” on the organ?’ So I sat down and played “Rock of Ages,” and suddenly he put his hands up and looked in the corner of the room and said, ‘Look, all the angels singing with us!’ I was very overcome with this and went out of the room, and did not say any more to him about it, but I felt it was a very sacred place. I remember one other time like this when I offered to do a night shift at Bethesda at Harpenden when Mrs. Dillely was very ill, unconscious, and was dying.



I went in the room to see how she was and I felt this wonderful presence of the Lord, and some weeks later I was talking to Mr. Jabez Buss and he told me he had felt exactly the same in that room of Mrs. Dilley, and she died soon after. My grandfather had died soon after.

“Time went on and I went home and my call-up papers came. My father was very upset. He could not bear to think that one of his daughters had to go in the forces. I was posted, much to my surprise, to the Royal Marine docks at Chatham, so instead of being a Naval wren, I was a Royal Marine wren. There were not many of us. I was posted to the barrack master’s office. He was a colonel and he had about five wrens working for him, and I was to take on ledger work. I felt the Lord going before me because this colonel was very strict with the Royal Marines and told them if any misbehaved, they would be sent back to sea. Many of them had been in terrible battles in Italy and Crete and brought home for a rest and were quite well-behaved. This colonel used to show me little favours to help me and asked me if I would like to go home to tea with him to have a chat with his wife. This was very unusual and I think the news got around.

“One day I got to the barracks and the wren officer sent for me and said, ‘You are being moved to Plymouth today.’ I had every Sunday off but one, when I had to march before the king, whilst I was nearly four years with the Marines. I knew Plymouth was a great way off and I was terribly sad. She said, ‘Here is your rail warrant. You go home and pack your things and make your way to the station to go to Plymouth.’ I went back to my office to collect my few things and the barrack master sent for me. On the way there, I thought, ‘I do not know how the Lord can deal with this, but I cannot see any way out at all,’ and I remember praying that the Lord would appear for me. I got to the office and the barrack master sent for me and said, ‘I have this chit to say they are moving you to Plymouth.’ He said, ‘Do you want to go to Plymouth?’ I said, ‘No, I don’t.’ He said, ‘Right, you are not going,’ and I was allowed to stay in the barracks, and every Sunday I could get to Chatham chapel or sometimes Maidstone.

“They were very hazardous times, the continual bombing. At night I had to sleep in the attic of a very tall building on a top bunk, so every night I had to try and make it a matter of prayer that we would be kept in safety because of the bombing. We sometimes had to walk the streets in twos looking for fire bombs if there was a raid on, because the Germans used to drop these before they bombed a place. They were not comfortable times at all. After I had broken my friendship with the first young man, soon after I had been in the barracks a little while I met John [her future husband] at Mr. Delves’ house. He had asked me for a weekend when I was off, and it was the weekend of John and his twin

brother's twenty-first birthday, and Mr. Delves invited the young people for singing hymns after the service on Saturday. John started to write to me and wanted to have a more serious friendship. I was very uncomfortable about this. I could not get my mind settled because I felt I had not had anything to direct me to this friendship at all. Of course, I had the Royal Marines side every day which I had to battle with. In the end I got back to my billets one evening and decided I must write to John and ask him to finish the friendship because I had not had any word from the Lord about it. So I sat down and wrote this letter saying that for the time being we would finish the friendship. Then I picked up the *Telegraph*, and in those days the text was on the front and the text was 'Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.' It struck me that this was the answer to my prayers and it was regarding John and I could not send this letter, so I tore it up and decided we must try to pray that if it was right, the Lord would strengthen the friendship. So we did continue seeing each other. I was enabled some weekends to go to John's mother's home in Clapham. John volunteered for the Air Force but they would not take him because he was a trainee engineer on armaments and they were very short of people like that.

"But one time in particular I had a very nasty thing that happened to me. One Monday morning, I got in the train which was usually packed with sailors going back to Chatham. It was very dark and there was a flicker of light in the carriage, which was a very long carriage. I could not see who was getting into the carriage. These sailors all got in and I could not tell in the darkness whether they were English or not. When the train started to move, I realised they were Greek sailors. We had had a lot of trouble in Chatham with the Greek sailors, because they used to drink so heavily and there had been a murder. As the train moved along, they started getting their bottles of drink out. They were standing up and throwing their arms about. I was more and more afraid and prayed that God would appear, and this went on until they were really merry and I was very, very frightened. Suddenly a voice came from the corner of the carriage. It was an English sailor, and he spoke to these men and asked them what they were doing and didn't they know there was an English wren in the carriage. They all sat down and put their bottles away. I felt it was a wonderful answer of the Lord to my prayer. It was the only time I really came across real danger, I believe.

"Time went on and the war was looking as if it was going to close soon, we hoped. One of John's father's flats came empty in London. Housing was very, very short and we thought, what should we do, because there was no hope of getting any accommodation if we were to get married? As John was at home, we felt we should take this flat and John would live in it until I got my release from the Royal Marines. I

managed to get compassionate leave and we were married at Mr. Delves' chapel and while we were having the reception in the schoolroom, two rockets fell very close, one in the road where we had this flat, which was sparsely furnished. There was not a pane of glass broken, although the end of the road was absolute devastation where the rocket had knocked down two lots of flats. The doodle-bombs were still coming over and these were very frightening because they would stop and you knew they were coming down somewhere near you.

One Sunday morning we had just got home from the service and we heard one of these doodle-bombs stopping. I got under the kitchen table waiting for it to explode and it did explode somewhere near. It was a direct hit on the house of some of the members at Clapham. They had not got home. Mr. Delves, whenever he heard of anything like this, would get on his bicycle and go round to make sure his own people were not hurt. He found the family and took them home to his house and looked after them until the Government provided shelter for them.

"We got married, and I had to go back to the Royal Marines. In time I got my release and we were able to live a normal life together. Time went on and eventually I lost a baby. I felt it was God's will and we must be submissive to His will.

"There was an old lady at Clapham who used to have the young people round for hymn singing on Friday evenings once a month and I used to go. One of these Fridays I went to this singing, and normally I would not choose a hymn that would give away any of my feelings, but this night I began to feel quite ill and I did not know what was the matter. I felt there was something in front of me which I did not know about. I felt I had to give out 277:

'Now I see, whate'er betide,  
All is well if Christ be mine;  
He has promised to provide;  
May He teach me to resign.'

I felt this hymn was for me and what I had to go through. That night I was taken very seriously ill and the doctor was called, and the doctor had a dispute with the hospital and said I was expecting a baby and the hospital said I was not. That night I passed this baby, which was very malformed and it was about four months in growth although I had carried it for nine months. I had a severe haemorrhage and the doctor was trying all night to get me a bed in hospital. After the war beds were very short. I kept fainting away and I was so thankful I fainted away because I felt so ill, but eventually I was taken into hospital. When I came out of hospital the doctor said, 'It is not available, what I would like to give you, but you must stay in bed until after lunch every day until you get stronger,' which I had to do.

“I believe at this time I became very concerned about my soul and very much enjoyed Mr. Delves’ ministry and felt each Sunday there was something to listen to and receive. I went away for a little break to John’s brother’s. There were no telephones in those days and I was writing to John, and I wrote and told him I had been experiencing very good hearings under Mr. Delves’ ministry. I was very concerned about baptism, but I felt that I had never had a blessing, I had never felt all my sins were forgiven, but I loved the people in the Clapham church, and those words were given to me: ‘Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me.’ I felt I could learn nothing more of the Lord Jesus until I had taken this step. Much to my surprise, I found John also was concerned about baptism and he also had enjoyed Mr. Delves’ ministry very much. I came home and was still resting, and we both were one together in this seeking the Lord about baptism and the services became so good to us. They were never long enough and we so enjoyed listening to them and the hymns that were given out.

“In the end we felt compelled to go and see Mr. Delves and tell him what we felt, although I felt I had so little to say. It was only my love to the Lord and the people I could speak of. We went to see Mr. Delves and the deacons and the church and were eventually baptized together. This day I was very disappointed because I did not feel anything special about the baptism. But the next day, when I opened my Bible, I opened it on the last chapter in John where it says, ‘Jesus shewed Himself again to the disciples ... and on this wise shewed He Himself.’ I felt this was such a promise for the future that I would one day be shown Himself.

“Around this time when I was ill I awoke one morning and I felt such a love to the Lord Jesus in my heart. I had never had any feelings like that before and I felt as if I was not living in this world at all. I felt it was so wonderful to feel the Lord Jesus had a love to me. I felt it would have been easy to die. This lasted with me about five days. I remember talking to an elderly lady years before and she said that when the Lord blessed her, she said the body could not stand too much of this, and I could not understand what she meant, but I believe I understood when I came into that love myself. It is so powerful that your body could not stand too much of it. However, at the end of those five days a friend visited me and brought some household magazines for me to look at, and when she had gone I picked up one. I had not looked at anything but my Bible and hymnbook during that five days, and those words came very forcibly to me: ‘Could ye not watch with Me one hour?’ I thought, ‘What a reproof!’ and this wonderful feeling left me and I was back into the world again.

“After quite a long time I gradually got better and eventually Mr. Delves preached from, ‘For this child I prayed,’ and I was expecting

another child, and I believed I would have this child and there would be nothing wrong with it. Our son was born to us and was a very healthy boy.

“Another son was born to us. When he was nine months old, he was taken very seriously ill. Our family doctor was away on holiday and another doctor came in and did not seem to know what was wrong. He had a very high temperature for four days and I knew he was very ill. We decided on the Saturday night we would have to call for further advice because we felt the child would die. On that Sunday morning we were going to try and seek help, and very early in the morning there was a knock on the door, and it was our own doctor who had just got back and he was so worried on learning about this sick baby and said, ‘This baby is very ill; he might not live through the day. He has pneumonia.’ He was rushed to hospital, and in those days you could not stay with your baby. I believe that day Mr. Delves and the friends at Clapham prayed earnestly for this child. In the evening some friends came back to stay with us. It seemed that we prayed without ceasing, and I felt at the end of the night that if the Lord needed to take him, He was to take him. Well, the Lord heard prayer and he was kept in hospital a month and got better.

“Then some three years later we had another son, but at the same time he was born my husband was made a deacon, and this was a very heavy trial. I had three little children, and Mr. Delves had three services a week which John had to attend. But we were helped through.

“After eleven years John got notice that they were moving all the engineers out of London and he would have to move. We had no idea what places they might move him to. He tried to get other work but could not. In the end he felt we had to move. They gave him an appointment as assistant engineer in an ordnance factory at Burghfield. We had never heard of the place, but we found that South Moreton chapel would be the nearest chapel. We got a house between the ordnance factory and the chapel. It was nine miles for John to go to work and nine miles to chapel. I was brokenhearted about leaving the friends at Clapham, and now I was leaving everything. We did get on at the chapel. They had a very good supply ministry and we both felt that our souls were fed from time to time. For about thirty years we sat under this supply ministry. During that time we both joined the church there. Mr. Seth Mercer officiated when we were received into the church and gave me the text, ‘Fear not: for I am with thee.’ It has been a help to me several times.

“We had been at Pangbourne five months. The boys went to chapel with us. Mr. Green was expected to preach and it was a cold, dark February night and we had to go along country lanes, and we had our

seat belts on and suddenly a van crossed over from his side of the road and crashed right into us and the people got out of the cars and came to help. My son Paul, the youngest, said to me, 'Mummy, let us pray.' The steering wheel had broken in John's chest and he had a fractured sternum and injured legs and was badly injured. David hit the dashboard and had knocked out his front teeth. Timothy had damaged his arm. We were taken to hospital and sent home late at night. We knocked at some neighbour's doors and asked them to come and help us, which they did. The director at John's firm was very kind and lent us a car. The terrible thing was that the police came round the next day and said the driver of the van had just murdered his wife and was trying to commit suicide, and that was why he drove into us. This seemed to make the accident far worse. It weighed us down for some time, thinking of it.

"We carried on at Pangbourne, and we as a church appointed a pastor, Mr. Timothy Pocock.

"I had been in touch with the Pangbourne school and got to know the headmaster, and before the war it was one of my ambitions to work with children, but it never materialised. This headmaster asked me if I would like to help in the school and I felt this was an answer to prayer. He said I could go in any time, and I loved that work. But eventually I took a course and was able to open a nursery in my home for three to five year old children, so for four years I did that. At the end of this time I began with back trouble and the doctor said I should not be looking after young children, so I had to give it up and was on my back for twelve weeks. I was taken into hospital and put on traction. I thought I should never get better again, I was in such agony at times. Yet I seemed to be kept very quiet in my mind about it. Those words: 'still small voice' seemed to be my support. I did not have anything very special, but felt I was kept very quiet and submissive. I got better and eventually could walk again.

"We were both getting older and thought we were nine miles from chapel, and what would we do if we could not drive? We had to consider and pray about what we were to do. The two older boys were married and our younger son went abroad and married a girl from Trinidad. Then John began to be poorly and was not able to drive for a long time, which meant I had to take on all the driving. We began to think very seriously about this and decided we must try and seek the Lord about perhaps one of the flats at Harpenden. But before this we had both been ill and went into the Home for a week's respite. Whilst we were in the Home, Mr. Ramsbottom took at the week night service: 'This I know; for God is for me.' I felt this was regarding looking at one of the flats. There was only one vacant, a single one, and we talked to Mr. Scott, but he did not feel it was large enough. When I looked round, I felt that temporarily it could

serve us. We both were very fond of Bethel chapel. John had been for many years on the Home Committee and we knew many of the people. When we got back home again we decided to continue seeking about a move to Harpenden. I decided we could manage to get enough furniture for what we needed in the flat. John kept having bad turns of inflammation and could not use his hands. We made a date to move in January.

“Whilst we were packing up and trying to sort things out it kept coming to me: if you do go to Bethel Chapel one day you will have to join; you cannot just expect to sit down with the people unless you seek to join them. This became a great burden to me. Each time I got into the mini-bus to go to chapel this thought came over me, that one day I would have to seek to join Bethel, because we were both eighty-four and could not expect to have another move, and it would not be right not to belong to a church. One day when we were coming to chapel, it seemed as though the whole thing was turned round and the thought came to me that there could be happiness and joy in speaking to the people at Bethel instead of the fear that I had. We found that Mr. Ramsbottom’s ministry was so direct and helpful to us. He spoke about, ‘God ... shut the lions’ mouths,’ and about the consolations of the gospel not being small, and about the mountains being removed. Mr. Pack came and spoke about Esther. Then Mr. Broome took the prayer meeting and spoke from, ‘Although my house be not so with God; yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant.’ I thought we had really got to do something about joining at Bethel. The next Sunday Mr. Ramsbottom spoke about passing under the rod and the bond of the covenant. It came back to my mind that was the last text Mr. Neville took when we left Clapham and I felt then we had some trials to endure. I felt that is the completion now. We have had all we could desire.”

In her latter years Mrs. Stevens suffered from ill health and a number of falls. During this time she maintained a spirit of quiet submission and contentment. Following a fall which resulted in a broken hip, she wrote, “The previous Sunday we had heard Mr. Gerald Buss on ‘The lot is cast into the lap but the whole disposing is of the Lord.’ As I came up from the operating theatre these same words filled my soul in thankfulness and remained with me.” Her whole life was a very gracious witness.

She died at her son’s home in Guildford. We visited her the day she died. She was unconscious, but at the bottom of her bed was a big, beautiful text: “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” I felt this was what she rejoiced in at Clapham so many years ago, and this was the foundation on which she lived and died.

May the Lord still uphold her dear, aged husband.

B.A.R.

## TAKE NO THOUGHT FOR TOMORROW

*Matthew 6. 34*

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What will be my lot tomorrow?  
 Oft my trembling heart has said,  
 When anticipating sorrow,  
 I've been overwhelmed with dread;  
 Then in moments, thus distressing,  
 When I've sought the Lord by prayer,  
 He has said, my faith addressing,  
 "Leave the morrow to *My* care."

"'Tis enough that I uphold thee –  
 'Tis enough that I'm thy Guide;  
 In My Word of truth I've told thee,  
 'I will to the end provide';  
 What though dangers round thee hover;  
 What though fears thy bosom fill;  
 Soon thou shalt with joy discover,  
 I am *all*-sufficient still."

O Thou condescending Saviour,  
 Let me hear Thy gentle voice;  
 Let me still enjoy Thy favour,  
 In Thy pardoning love rejoice.  
 Then though all around be dreary –  
 Though all earthly comforts flee,  
 While I know that Thou art near me  
 I will still rejoice in Thee.

*Gospel Magazine, 1857*

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Aristotle requires this in an orator, that he be a good man. How much more then should God's orators be good and gracious? Unholy ministers pull down instead of building up. O the souls that their lives destroy! By their loose lives they lead their flocks to hell, where themselves must lie lowermost.

*Thomas Brooks*

Miseries always lie at that man's door who leans upon anything below Christ. Such a man is most in danger, and this is not his least plague, that he thinks himself secure.

*Thomas Brooks*



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
DECEMBER 2015

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

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“Finally, brethren, farewell” (2 Cor. 13. 11).

Forty-five years ago with God’s help I “girded on the harness” (1 Kings 20. 11). Now the time has come for “putting it off.” Then I was young, now I am old, and what changes there have been over those years – in the world, in the country, in the professing church of God, and in our own congregations. Nevertheless, amid it all,

“A faithful and unchanging God  
Has laid the foundation of our hope,  
In oaths, and promises, and blood.”

So I write in love and thanksgiving to the Saviour. To Him be the glory!

In looking back there are the regrets. I regret that I have not written more articles of spiritual profit and edification as my predecessors, J.K. Popham and J.H. Gosden, did. All along I never felt I was “a denominational leader,” or anything like that, and I was afraid to presume.

I have always felt a sense of sadness that, owing to editorial time and responsibility, I have not been able to visit our churches to preach the gospel nearly as much as I should have wished.

From our denomination, it is disappointing that in recent years I have not received the gracious obituaries as in former years. (There were over forty a year when I began.) These have always been a most profitable part of our magazine. In the past people were not afraid to send up *short* accounts.

From outside I have regretted the constant attacks over the whole forty-five years because we do not believe in the free offer of the gospel. Not only have unkind things been said but, sadly, things which are just not true. Many of the accusations – we have never come across anywhere some of the things that are said. It cannot be denied that, despite our many failures, we have a most glorious gospel we proclaim in all its fulness. Only in recent months have I been impressed by the numerous invitation hymns, welcome hymns, “why not for you?” hymns in the selection at the end of Gadsby’s hymnbook made by J.C. Philpot. No one can shake us from the sacred truth we hold that

“The vilest sinner, out of hell,  
Who lives to feel his need,

Is welcome to the throne of grace,  
The Saviour's blood to plead."

The one thing I do not regret is my attempt to defend the vital truth of the sacred humanity of the Son of God, body and soul, against the attacks on it. Among the good wishes received on my retirement (from the U.S.A., Scotland and Holland, as well as this country), I value this comment:

"I am particularly grateful to you for taking a stand on the fundamental truth that Christ was a real Man, with a human soul, as well as Almighty God. Without this stand our denomination would have moved from the foundation truths of the gospel."

As I said when I became Editor, I have felt like a man with the key to a wonderful treasure house, and who can bring out the precious things of gold and silver, and the jewels, to give them away – this is month by month bringing to our readers the glorious truths from so many of the old writers as well as present-day writings. If there has been any profit, to God be the glory.

I specially wish to thank my dear wife for all the forbearance and help received, and our children, especially when they were little – and continually for their help in recent years, Mrs. Alison Kingham and Mrs. Gill Parish.

My special prayerful wishes go up for Mr. Timothy Rosier, pastor at Priory Chapel, Maidstone, as now he becomes Editor. May the God of grace cause all grace to abound toward him.

In a wonderful way the *Gospel Standard* has been maintained for 180 years, and we believe the prayers of the founder, William Gadsby, have been abundantly answered. In the 1800s there were numerous Baptist magazines, but almost all of them now no longer exist. The desire has ever been that "in all things He may have the pre-eminence." As Gadsby so often said: "Honours crown His head for ever."

My final word:

"Christ and Him crucified has been our song;  
His unctuous love has tuned our hearts and tongue;  
We've been abashed, our vileness have confessed,  
And felt that God in blessing has us blessed."

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The teaching of this and that opinion may please a man's fancy, but it is only the preaching of Christ that changes the heart, that conquers the heart, that turns the heart. Peter, by preaching a crucified Christ, converts three thousands souls at once.

*Thomas Brooks*

## PREACHING JESUS

*Sermon preached by W.J. Wiltshire at Zoar Chapel, Norwich,  
on June 29th, 1950*

**Text:** "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus" (Acts 8. 35).

This afternoon we considered the importance of the Lord opening the mouth of His servants to proclaim the gospel, and that where that blessing is bestowed there will be the opening of the hearts of sinners to receive it. I hear sometimes people saying we need men today like Philpot and others of his type, and when I hear that I conclude in my own mind that such people cannot have much perception, at least of the solemn days in which we live. If there were people thirsting after the gospel as in those days, we should have the men who preach it. Alas that there should now be so little manifestation of real concern by sinners to hear Jesus preached! Popular preachers, there are still a few about, they preach another gospel which is not another gospel. The gospel of the grace of God never has been popular and never will be with the multitude.

We read not only that Philip opened his mouth, and Peter opened his mouth, but the Lord Jesus Himself when He gathered His own disciples upon the mountain, having left the multitude at the bottom, He opened His mouth and taught them – His disciples. The multitude did not fall under His teaching, and if He had opened His mouth to them, they would but have rebelled against His word, as we know they did. Seeing the multitude, He gathered His disciples from them, and then He opened His mouth to teach them, those true followers of His, those who knew and loved Him. He preached unto them Jesus. And there could not be any better preaching than that, none more unctuous. Never man spake like this Man. When He opened His mouth, even His enemies wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth, although these gracious words had no abiding place in their hearts.

And then we read in the last chapter of Luke how He opened the Scriptures to His disciples after His resurrection. "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." When Christ preaches Christ, O how blessed is the Word! Have you sometimes lost sight of the Lord's servants whilst they have been preaching Christ the Lord, because you have seen their Master and heard His voice? "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."

We read just now from the next chapter that immediately after his baptism Saul preached Christ in the synagogue that He is the Son of God, and that he increased the more in strength and confounded the Jews,

bringing forth from the Old Testament Scriptures that He is very Christ. He spake boldly in the name of the Lord, and disputed against the Grecians. And when the disciples would not believe that he was a disciple, Barnabas took him and told how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.

Then, after speaking a little about the opening of the mouth, we noticed that Philip did not wander all over the place for a text. He began at the same scripture, the same scripture at which the poor, ignorant eunuch had stumbled, not knowing of whom the prophet spake, but desiring to know. "He began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus."

Now for a little while this evening I want to preach to you Jesus, show you what it is to preach Jesus, and what effect it has on them who hear Him preached. What a blessing it is to the preacher! Here is food for the hungry; here is water for the thirsty; here is balm for the wounded and suffering and disconsolate; here is rest for the weary; here is heaven for hell-deserving sinners.

What is it to preach Jesus to the people? It is not merely to speak of a historical Christ, One of whom we read in the Scriptures. It is that, but it is not only that. We read of Paul that he determined to know nothing among the Corinthians save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. To preach Jesus, then, properly and fully according to that little ability the Lord may give one, is to preach that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. No other Jesus will do for a sinner convinced of his sin. Unless you are sure that He is God, how dare you put your salvation into His hands, and the keeping of your soul when that salvation has been made known? How dare you address God in His name and plead for His sake unless you believe that He was and ever will be God over all and blessed for evermore?

One cannot preach Jesus unless we preach Him to be the eternal Son of the eternal Father. "Unto us a Child is born," said Isaiah, and that was over 600 years before it happened. But he had such a certainty of it that he speaks in the past tense. "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given." A Son before He was a Child. And unless we are sure that He is God as well as Man, there is no hope for any of us. The salvation that He came to accomplish is an eternal salvation; the redemption that He obtained was an eternal redemption. He has gone into heaven having obtained eternal redemption for us. How could He unless He was the eternal Son of God incarnate? To preach Jesus. To preach Jesus to the people of God so that it is acceptable doctrine is to preach a living Christ, One who was dead but is alive for evermore, Amen, and has the keys of hell and death.

To preach Jesus is to preach the atonement, a blessed theme. I heard Dr. Dinsdale Young [the famous Methodist preacher] once preach

to a handful of people that had no time for this doctrine, though many of them called themselves Methodists. He said, "I never preach a sermon without preaching the blood." To preach Jesus is to preach the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot. To preach Jesus is to exalt the Lamb of God, the sin-atonement Lamb, to proclaim redemption through His blood and, to use His own word, "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me, and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." To preach Jesus is to preach the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God. To preach Jesus is to lift Him up. Some of you may remember a text I once spoke from here on a similar occasion as today, about Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness and even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

To preach Jesus is to preach the Spirit's work in revealing Him, and applying the blood to the conscience, and justifying sinners by His grace. "No man can say that Jesus is Lord," much less preach Him, "but by the Holy Ghost," but by the Holy Ghost opening his mouth. Jesus Christ is the sum and substance, Alpha and Omega, beginning and end, and all the way. There is nothing but Jesus that living souls desire when they are hungry, and God has given them an appetite for the gospel. I often say to my people at home, "I wish I could preach Him better."

"Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture," which testified of His humiliation and dreadful sufferings, that scripture which set Him forth as being condemned for His people, because all their guilt was laid to His charge. He had no word of complaint against justice and the holy law of His Father. Yet He must die. His holy life, holy as it was, was not enough. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," and He died in the place of the sinner who had sinned.

"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."

Not many people have ears to hear this preaching. They want smooth things. They do not want to hear about sin, therefore they do not want to hear about a Saviour from it. Solemn, is it not? How many people, even those who call themselves Strict Baptists, are quite satisfied with another gospel than this! I said this afternoon that if you are a living soul, you will not be satisfied with the preacher who preaches your experience only; you will want him to preach Jesus, and that preaching will be your experience. "To me to live is Christ," said Paul, and then referring to this blessed work, how he gloried in it. I have often been astonished at that word of his. In fact, someone asked me this week what I thought was the meaning of it, where he rejoices that Christ is preached

whether in pretence or truth. Well, I know Paul did not preach in pretence. This Jesus whom he preached was that same blessed Jesus who called to him out of heaven, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" "I am Jesus." And straightway, after Jesus was revealed to him and in him, he begins to preach. He could not help himself. "It pleased God, who separated me." That was a miracle, that God should call him by His grace and reveal His Son in him. But all these, who were apostles and evangelists, and Spirit-taught men, opened their mouths in the same name and by the same Spirit, and all their preaching had the same effect, either in condemnation, a savour of death unto death, or life unto life, to the hearers.

"And preached unto him Jesus." And if you will look it up in another chapter you will find there is a word added to that: "And the resurrection" (Acts 17. 18). I am sure of this. I should like to have been there to have heard when Philip preached Jesus in such a way, and the cross, sufferings, death, life and resurrection, so that the eunuch saw in the water they were approaching that he must, if he were an obedient child, walk that way. His Lord had given an example for him. No God-sent minister who preaches Christ truthfully leaves out the ordinance. How can he preach Jesus unless he preaches what Jesus commanded to be done and practised? Alas that it should be said of our denomination in some places today that from January to December you would never know about baptism because it is not preached. And if it is not preached, how are poor sinners to know?

"And as they went on their way, they came to a certain water; and the eunuch said, See, here is water: what doth hinder me to be baptized?" He did not say, I know if I am not baptized I shall not go to heaven, but he says, You have been telling me about the Lord Jesus, what He is, and the way He cast up for His people, so what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart what I have preached unto thee thou mayest. Do you remember what Paul said to the Corinthians: that his preaching of Jesus to them was for their salvation unless they had believed in vain? It makes me wonder sometimes how many of our hearers who profess to believe have believed in vain. It does not seem to mount up to practice.

He preached unto him Jesus in such a way that the eunuch, taught by the Spirit, must walk in obedience to Christ's command; the preaching was effectual. It always is where the Spirit sends it home to the conscience. We read of Lydia whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things that were spoken by Paul. Baptism was one of the things, and she did not put it off. She believed, and all her household too. Some foolish people say there must have been little ones, and they were christened. Who said there were little ones? Anyway they were

come to years of discretion, and were all baptized on a confession of their faith. Then in Acts 2. 42, "They continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship." Doctrine and preaching of Jesus first, then breaking of bread and prayers – the ordinances. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized." We read in this chapter of men and women giving heed to the things that Philip preached in the name of Jesus Christ. What a mercy, friends, if you and I can keep to Scripture order! O for godly men to be raised up to preach Jesus to the few that are left to hear. Many pastorless churches today, many hills of Zion mourning, many of God's servants laid aside unable to preach the gospel. The Word of God is not bound, although His servants may be.

"Then Philip opened his mouth and began at the same scripture." That is, Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and the resurrection. If Jesus is preached, He is preached as He rose from the dead. We might have known Christ in the flesh if we had lived in the apostles' day. But henceforth we know Him no more as to His bodily presence, but we do know Him resurrected; blessed be God for that. "I am the resurrection and the life ... believest thou this?" "Yea, Lord: I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." Blessed confession! Jesus preached Himself, and the apostles followed on in His way and work. His ministry was only of three years' duration, but some of the apostles lived many years to preach Jesus Christ, and they never got tired of it. Neither do the living family of God get tired of listening to it.

And then, preaching Jesus is that which leads the soul to Him. It draws the poor sinner to this glorious Person as He is set forth in the Word and by the Word. They are attracted to Him as the steel is attracted to the magnet. Do you know what it is to be drawn? A magnet is turned to the steel; let it get within a certain distance and it will run to its object. So Jesus preached in the Word comes home to Jesus dwelling in the heart by faith, and the result is fruit, and nowhere else. "Without Me ye can do nothing.... Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples." "How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" The beauty of Jesus held forth attracts the soul that is needy and ready to perish.

"They shall come which were ready to perish." That is a big word with me. A cousin of mine, many years ago, with whom I lived at the time, a godly man, a member of one of our churches, said to me, "You will have to come." I said, "I shall not unless God gives me a word to come with. Your testimony is good, but the witness of God is greater.

I must have a word from Him.” They were having a church meeting not so long after, and they wanted to know what about it. Two of the members were deputed to visit me; they seemed satisfied. I was not. “No. I shall have to let you know. I cannot decide now.” Well, there was another Sunday before the meeting, and I went to the house of God. It was ten miles in those days. I was praying, “Lord, if it is Thy will for me to take this solemn step, direct Thy servant to declare the way, and give me a token for good.” He was a stranger to me, but a God-sent minister. His text that morning was this: “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt.” And as he went on to trace out who these characters were, he picked up this sinner. I am not likely to forget that Sunday, or the text, or the man whom God used in opening his mouth to preach Jesus to me. And I ventured on this because the word had been applied with power, and my poor heart was saying in the substance of the words:

“Thou givest me the lot  
Of those that fear Thy name;  
If endless life be their reward,  
I shall possess the same.”

You do not need any other compulsion except love.

“’Tis love that makes the willing feet  
In swift obedience move,”

following Him in His blessed yet despised ordinance.

“He preached unto him Jesus.” The effect of preaching, with that of Peter, Paul and the others, was that there were multitudes added to the Lord, both men and women daily. But especially today, though Christ is preached, at least we hope so with the ability God gives, there seems to be so little fruit. So many services, so little obedience to the Word. What is the matter with us? Are we like the Galatians and those Samaritans who were bewitched with the sorcery of the times, although Jesus had been evidently set forth as crucified among them in the ministry? I am afraid we cannot boast of a much better state of things. Plenty of Strict Baptists are bewitched today.

“But here’s our point of rest,  
Though hard, the battle seem,  
Our Captain stood the fiery test,  
And we shall stand through Him.”

We will not preach any other Jesus, or any other gospel, or make any compromise with the truth of God. And if God has given you any sweet intimation of His grace by the Holy Ghost coming into your heart with



power, may He help you to hold it fast. That is your title, that is your credential, when the Lord Jesus is by the Holy Ghost found in your heart the hope of glory.

“Whatever loss you bear beside,  
O never give up this.”

“Then Philip opened his mouth,” because God opened it for him, and opened it for that poor, dumb eunuch, who could have believed nothing about this blessed Jesus until he had heard of Him with power. “Open Thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction.” “He began at the same scripture.” Because there was no more suitable one to be found in the Word for a needy sinner he preached unto him Jesus. And the Lord opened the heart of that poor man, and made him a true believer, and I believe he went home, back to the palace of the Ethiopians, to be a missionary to spread the gospel that he had so sweetly handled, tasted and felt himself. Who can tell, who will ever know, till the books are opened, the result of that one sermon to this one man!

Now I hope the Lord may in His mercy cause us to think upon these things, for they are the only things worth thinking about. May God help those of us who are ministers to give ourselves wholly to them, that our profiting may appear to all. To preach Christ the minister has to walk the gospel in his daily life as well as preach Christ in the pulpit. It is a poor sort of preaching where the daily life and walk contradicts what is said on the Lord’s day. How can one expect any fruit? We are watched by the world with jealous eye, and we are watched by the church, and watched by our own people. My godly great-grandfather, when anyone thought he would like to go here and there, used to say, “I don’t want to go anywhere where I should not like to die.” We never know when death is coming. What a mercy if we are found preaching Christ by a godly walk when the Lord sends for us, watching unto prayer, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and Saviour.

This same Jesus will come in like manner as the disciples saw Him go into heaven. And some of us are much concerned at the signs of the times as we hear of wars and rumours of wars. How it becomes us to believe this blessed gospel that we preach. May the Lord grant that this may be our watchword – “Jesus only” – till He come. Amen.

Those familiar with Mr. Leonard Broome, and the account of his life *Surely Goodness and Mercy*, will remember how affectionately he writes of Mr. Wiltshire.

“I had usually on Easter Monday attended a football match but now I was no longer able to go. Instead I ventured to this anniversary [at Guildford, 1923]. The preacher was Mr. W.J. Wiltshire from Upavon in Wiltshire, a man I had

never heard of before. His text was Philippians 3. 10: ‘That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.’ I sat there in wonderment, for he spoke of those very things which were in my heart, and I sat amazed at what he knew about me. It proved to be a time of blessing not only for me, but for the church at Guildford [where he became pastor].”

Sixty-two years later, not long before he died, Mr. Broome said, “That sermon rested on my heart and has been there ever after.”

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## THE ANGEL’S MESSAGE TO THE SHEPHERDS

*From John Newton (1725-1807)*

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The angel was sent with the most interesting news that could be made known to mankind, not to Caesar, or to Herod, or to the high priest, but to obscure and lowly shepherds. “The Lord seeth not as man seeth”; the petty distinctions that obtain among men are not regarded by Him. He is equally near to them that fear Him in every situation of life, as the sun shines as freely and fully upon a cottage as upon a palace.

These shepherds were doubtless of the number of the happy few who, in that time of degeneracy, were waiting and longing “for the consolation of Israel.” The heads of the Jewish people found their consolation in their rank and wealth, and in the respect paid them by the vulgar. These things usually add to the idea of self-importance, and feed those tempers which are most displeasing to the Lord, and which indispose the mind to the reception of the gospel, or to any due enquiry concerning it. And thus, in fact, from age to age, it has generally been hidden from the wise and the great, and revealed unto babes.

The magi, or wise men, who lived in the east, where the knowledge of astronomy obtained but where the Scripture was not known, were guided to Messiah by the appearance of a new star or meteor. The shepherds, who were acquainted with the prophecies concerning Messiah, were informed of their accomplishment by an angel. Thus the Lord was pleased to suit the different manner of making known His will to the previous situation of the persons.

The message of the angel, though concise, was comprehensive and full. It contained:

The fact – “Unto you is born this day”;

The place – “In the city of David,” that is, in Bethlehem, so called, because David likewise had been born there (Luke 2. 4);

The office of Messiah, “A Saviour”;

His name, honour and character, “Christ,” or the Anointed; “the Lord,” the Head and King of Israel, and of the church, the Lord of all.

I do but recite these particulars now. The description of the state in which they would find Him was such as could only be reconciled to His titles and honours by that simple faith which, without vain reasoning, acquiesces in the declarations of God. For how unlikely would it seem to a merely human judgment that the Saviour of sinners, the promised Messiah, the Lord of all, should be “a Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger.”

Yet thus it was. Though rich in Himself, He became poor for our sakes (2 Cor. 8. 9). On this account, as the Scripture had foretold, “He was despised and rejected of men.” Though He came to His own, as a Lord or Master to His own house, yet, coming in this manner, His own professed servants, who pretended that they were longing and waiting for Him, slighted and opposed Him, preferred a notorious malefactor to Him, and put Him to death as an impostor and blasphemer. But the shepherds reasoned not through unbelief, and therefore they were not staggered; they obeyed the message, they went, they saw, they believed.

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### THE MATCHLESS CONDESCENSION OF CHRIST

*From The Glory of Christ by Dr. John Owen (1616-1683)*

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How glorious is the condescension of the Son of God in His susception of the office of mediation! For if such be the perfection of the divine nature, and its distance so absolutely infinite from the whole creation, and if such be His self-sufficiency unto His own eternal blessedness, as that nothing can be taken from Him, nothing added unto Him, so that every regard in Him unto any of the creatures is an act of self-humiliation and condescension from the prerogative of His being and state, what heart can conceive, what tongue can express the glory of that condescension in the Son of God whereby He took our nature upon Him, took it to be His own, in order unto a discharge of the office of mediation on our behalf?

This is the foundation of the glory of Christ in this condescension, the life and soul of all heavenly truth and mysteries; namely, that the Son of God becoming in time to be what He was not, the Son of man, ceased not thereby to be what He was, even the eternal Son of God.

It may then be said, What did the Lord Christ in this condescension with respect unto His divine nature? The apostle tells us, that He “humbled Himself,” and “made Himself of no reputation” (Phil. 2. 7, 8). He veiled the glory of His divine nature in ours, and what He did therein, so as that there was no outward appearance or manifestation of it. The world hereon was so far from looking on Him as the true God, that it believed Him not to be a good man. Hence they could never bear the

least intimation of His divine nature, supposing themselves secured from any such thing, because they looked on Him with their eyes to be a man, as He was indeed, no less truly and really than any one of themselves.

Wherefore, on that testimony given of Himself, "Before Abraham was, I am," which asserts a pre-existence from eternity in another nature than what they saw, they were filled with rage, and "took up stones to cast at Him" (John 8. 58, 59). And they give a reason of their madness, namely, that He, being a man, should make Himself to be God (John 10. 33). This was such a thing they thought as could never enter into the heart of a wise and sober man; namely, that being so, owning Himself to be such, He should yet say of Himself that He was God. This is that which no reason can comprehend, which nothing in nature can parallel or illustrate, that one and the same person should be both God and man. And this is the principal plea of the Socinians at this day, who through the Mahometans succeed unto the Jews in an opposition unto the divine nature of Christ.

But all this difficulty is solved by the glory of Christ in this condescension; for although in Himself, or His own divine Person, He was "over all God blessed for ever," yet He humbled Himself for the salvation of the church unto the eternal glory of God, to take our nature upon Him, and to be made man, and those who cannot see a divine glory in His so doing, do neither know Him, nor love Him, nor believe in Him, nor do any way belong unto Him.

This is a short, general view of this incomprehensible condescension of the Son of God, as it is described by the apostle (Phil. 2. 5-8). And this is that wherein in an especial manner we are to behold the glory of Christ by faith whilst we are in this world.

But had we the tongue of men and angels, we were not able in any just measure to express the glory of this condescension. For it is the most ineffable effect of the divine wisdom of the Father, and of the love of the Son, the highest evidence of the care of God towards mankind. What can be equal unto it? What can be like it? It is the glory of Christian religion, and the animating soul of all evangelical truth. This carrieth the mystery of the wisdom of God, above the reason or understanding of men and angels, to be the object of faith and admiration only. A mystery it is that becomes the greatness of God with His infinite distance from the whole creation; which renders it unbecoming Him that all His ways and works should be comprehensible by any of His creatures.

He who was eternally in the form of God, that is, was essentially so, God by nature, equally participant of the same divine nature with God the Father, "God over all blessed for ever," who humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in heaven and earth, He takes on Him the nature of man, takes it to be His own; whereby He was no less truly a man in time

than He was truly God from eternity. And to increase the wonder of this mystery, because it was necessary unto the end He designed, He so humbled Himself in this assumption of our nature as to make Himself of no reputation in this world; yea, unto that degree that He said of Himself that He was a worm and no man, in comparison of them who were of any esteem.

We speak of these things in a poor, low, broken manner; we teach them as they are revealed in the Scripture; we labour by faith to adhere unto them as revealed; but when we come into a steady, direct view and consideration of the thing itself, our minds fail, our hearts tremble, and we can find no rest but in a holy admiration of what we cannot comprehend. Here we are at a loss, and know that we shall be so whilst we are in this world; but all the ineffable fruits and benefits of this truth are communicated unto them that do believe.

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### SYMPATHY IN BEREAVEMENT

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Dear Miss T.,

Just a few lines to convey our thoughts towards you in this time of your bereavement – a time of sorrow and sadness, but may you know the blessed experience of those two on the road to Emmaus. May the dear Lord draw near to you at this time so that you will indeed feel your heart to burn within you, knowing His love and peace deep within your own soul. To be enabled to say, “Abide with me, for the day is far spent,” and then to know Him in the breaking of the bread of life to your soul.

Remember also those two words that are recorded of our Lord in His love to those two sisters in their bereavement: “Jesus wept.” “For we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.”

All sorrow and suffering is over for your dear sister. “Who are these that are arrayed in white robes?” “These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes ... in the blood of the Lamb.” “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

One final word that has been upon my mind of late regarding the Lord’s people: “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

May the dear Lord strengthen you and help you in the coming days and at the funeral service.

With our Christian love, thoughts and prayers.

Peter and Josephine  
[Mr. and Mrs. Peter Cottingham]

Eastbourne, April 21st, 1988

## THOUGHTS ON THE SONG OF SOLOMON

By Grey Hazlerigg  
(Concluded from page 339)

3. We next come to the *hindrances* to communion and comfort the child of God now meets with, called here “mountains of Bether,” or division. These mountains represent things which seem to the soul not only to stand between it and Christ, but to be in the way of its going to Christ and apparently of Christ’s coming to it. We will mention four.

i. In the first place, there are *legal* and *fleshly* thoughts about God. By *legal*, I mean views of God as not only a just and holy God in the law, but as dealing with the sinner according to that justice and holiness; and this, of course, produces distance and apprehensions of wrath. By *fleshly*, I mean all views not in harmony with the sweet revelation of God in Christ by the gospel, wherein He is declared by the Spirit to be a God of free and full grace. “We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Persons may be prevailed over by these legal and fleshly conceptions of God and Christ darkening the glory of His free grace, and standing between God and the soul as mountains of division.

ii. In the next place there are *unapplied notions of the doctrines of free grace*. We must explain what we mean by *unapplied notions*. The judgment may be settled as to the truth of the doctrines of grace, but the heart not correspondingly affected by the grace of the doctrines. Election may be fully recognised as a truth, but a man’s own election entirely at an uncertainty; special redemption and the final perseverance of saints by the grace of God distinctly perceived to be agreeable to the Word of God, and yet the man’s own redemption and perseverance by no means sure to him. Under these circumstances, these great doctrines, instead of yielding comfort, may do just the reverse, and appear like so many mountains of division in the way of the soul’s approach to the Lord and, therefore, of its peace and consolation. If the sweet grace of these doctrines is perceived and relished in the heart, then it is very different; they are full of strength and consolation.

“Though God’s election is a truth,  
Small comfort there I see,  
Till I am told by God’s own mouth  
That He has chosen me.

“Sinners, I read, are justified  
By faith in Jesus’ blood;  
But when to me that blood’s applied,  
’Tis then it does me good.”

Thus unapplied notions may be like mountains of division.

iii. *Past sins* may appear like high mountains between the soul and God. These sins may be apprehended in two different ways by the sinner. He may see them as breaches of God's holy law and provocations of His anger, and may fear greatly that the anger of God will come upon him on account of them. Sin by the law is exceeding sinful, and also works in the conscience the fear of wrath. David cries, "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions." He feared God's remembering these things in the way of dealing with him according to the due deserts of them.

But a sinner may see even in a greater degree the evil and demerit of his sin, and may remember the sins of his youth and past follies, either before he was exercised about divine things or afterwards; but then all this may be so sweetly connected with a sense of mercy and pardoning blood that all fear of wrath is done away. The sin is remembered, but the guilt is removed, as it was in Paul: "Which am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted," but, "by the grace of God I am what I am." So David at length sings, "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities." Now, in the former case, sins are as mountains of division; in the latter, the mountains, according to the words of Israel, are melted in the blood of Christ and removed out of the way (Isa. 34. 3).

iv. *Present corruptions* may be such mountains: "Your iniquities" – inbred sins – "have separated," through their prevalency, "between you and your God." Every child of God learns that God is a holy God. "Our God is holy." And he knows that as sin inwardly prevails it necessarily becomes as a barrier between him and his God. It must be so. God can have no fellowship with evil. Light cannot dwell with darkness; the one must expel the other. Either God removes sin, or sin excludes God. Of course, we know that faith, when in exercise, brings the sinner and God into union, though God is holy and sin remains in the sinner, but then it does this in a way of bringing the soul into a state of perfect righteousness and holiness as seen in Christ, and also as it produces a resisting, prevailing against and overcoming his inbred corruptions. Thus Paul writes, "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free." Therefore there is union and not separation. But now when worldliness, pride, covetousness, sloth, angry tempers, unjust feelings, or other forms of the flesh are prevalent, they surely bring in a distance between Christ and the soul, and unbelief strongly prevailing also, they become like mountains of division, at times rising to the very heavens, shutting out all the sweet light of the heart, apparently impassable, dark mountains of division.

Such is a specimen of the mountains. They may be higher or lower at different times to our apprehension, as in a former verse, mountains or hills, but whether high or low, they are between the soul and God, and

seem to intercept His blessings, and do so, until removed by grace, as to the enjoyment of them.

4. We come, in the last place, to consider the remedy the child of God asks for and expects. "Be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether."

We have already seen that the child of God has been awakened to a sense of his condition (verses 15, 16). Now the shadows and the night season are perceived and felt, and now these mountains of Bether are beheld likewise. In the blessed time to come there will be no night, no shadows, no mountains of division. In this life they will still remain. These mountains have a strange facility in building up themselves or rising again and again in experience. On earth we travel much by night.

But whither shall we look for relief? A child of God by faith only looks in one direction: "My expectation is from God." The psalmist in his trouble cries, "And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in Thee"; "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil"; "Thou wilt preserve me." The child of God here expresses the same hope and desire: "Be thou like to a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether."

Nothing but the presence of Christ can really do the sinner any good. He comes to the heart in a way of believing. Christ dwells in our hearts by faith. When He brings faith by His Holy Spirit's power into lively, sweet exercise, then He comes like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether. He is the Sun of Righteousness, and as He rises upon the soul with healing in His wings, so proportionally the shadows flee away. And if He comes to the soul over these mountains, they cease to be the mountains of division any longer. Legal views of God and Christ give place to sweet apprehensions of free grace and eternal love. Even Mount Sinai itself is moved at the presence of the Lord God of Israel. The blessed doctrines of the gospel become mountains of spices, delectable mountains unto the soul. And then God makes all these mountains a way to God, to heaven, and to assured peace. The past sins that before seemed not only so heinous but so threatening are now seen and felt to be more heinous than ever, but their condemning power is gone. Now, too, the inbred corruptions of the heart, though still there, are sweetly controlled by grace, and no longer as mountains of separation. Unbelief has passed away before the power of faith, or, as a mountain, is surmounted by it; and, as Bunyan represents in his *Holy War*, Captain Credence and Immanuel have met in spite of Incredulity and more than five-and-twenty thousand doubters.

Such, then, being the sweet effects of Christ's visits even now, well may the child of God cry, as in the words of the Song: "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my Beloved," yes, turn and turn



again unto me; turn, though my sins so provoke Thee to depart; turn, though I am vile and worthless in myself; turn as Thou didst to Peter:

“Turn and look upon me, Lord,  
And break this heart of stone.

“Turn, my Beloved, and be Thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.”

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### AN END OF THE YEAR MESSAGE

*Address given at Bethel Chapel, Luton on December 31st, 2014*

**Text:** “After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward” (Gen. 15. 1).

This is the first *fear not* that we have in holy Scripture, and there are many of them. In mercy the Lord, knowing how fearful His people are, has spoken these many *fear nots* in the Word of God. To those who are really burdened concerning their sins and their souls and a never-ending eternity He says, “Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine.” To those in the midst of trouble He says, “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 to those with mysterious and perplexing things in providence in their lives He says, “Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.” And the final *fear not* in holy Scripture, the risen Saviour to the suffering church: “Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.”

Now here the Lord appeared and He did not just say, “Fear not.” He said, “Fear not, Abram.” Now these *fear nots* are not spoken to the world at large or even to those who just openly profess the Lord’s name. It is the opposite with so many. So many in the world, so many in the professing church of God, they have everything to fear; they ought to fear; they should fear. If led by the Spirit, they will fear; they must fear – the judgment of God, a never-ending eternity.

“Fear not, Abram.” Now I know what some of you are going to say. This great man, this eminent man, this godly man, but the emphasis here as this word is spoken to Abram is this: it is spoken to him *as a believer*, Abram blessed with faith in the Saviour who one day should come,

Abram on this ground and this ground alone, knowing something of the blessing of justification through the righteousness of Christ. So in that sense it is a separating, discriminating word. “Fear not, Abram.” But then also a sweetly-embracing word in this sense: that it is spoken to *each* believer, and it brings in the feeblest, the weakest, whose only hope is in Christ, who cleaves to Him alone, who hangs on Him. “Fear not, Abram.”

O but, “The word of the Lord came unto Abram.” And I believe there are some of you here tonight and that is what you want. As upheld by the Lord’s supporting hand we pass from year to year, and there is the unknown way before us, and some of you have your mountains, and some of you have your unknown things, and some have your perplexities, and some have your sorrows, and some have your afflictions, and some have your ill health, and some have the ill health of those you are concerned about, and the Lord *does* say, “Fear not,” to you. But I believe there are many of you here tonight, you would love it if the Lord were to come right where you are like the good Samaritan, come right where you are like He did to Abram here. “The word of the Lord *came* unto Abram” – for that word to come to you in the power and unction and sacred influence of the Holy Spirit and saying to you personally, “Fear not, Abram.” And then your fears will vanish like the morning dew before the sun.

“After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield.” Now I think even our youngest children here this evening know what a shield was, how it was carried when there was a fight and why it was carried. But some of these ancient shields, do not think of them as just a little, round shield that someone carried on his arm. Many of these shields in ancient times were taller than the man himself and they were not just straight – they went right round him; they almost completely encircled him. He was completely hidden behind it. If he was behind a shield, he was completely safe. Now some of these shields were *impenetrable*. That means nothing could get through, nothing could break them, nothing could destroy them, not the sharpest javelin, not the fiercest sword, not even a flaming arrow. Sometimes they were made with layer upon layer upon layer of leather, and sometimes they were embossed with studs of metal and nothing could get through them. Now that is what the Lord says to Abram and this is what He says to all His people: “I am thy shield.”

When Goliath came to fight against David, he had a man go in front of him carrying his shield. Now the Lord Jesus does not say, I will bring a shield; I will carry a shield. He says, “*I am thy shield.*” This is a wonderful subject: *Christ the shield of His people*. If He is your shield

and mine as we venture into the new year, then all will be well. What does it mean for Christ to be our shield? It means He is near us. It means He is with us. It means He is round about us. It means He is our Defender. It means He is our Protector. It means we are safe. It means we are secure. It means nothing can harm us behind this shield. It is a wonderful truth: "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield."

You notice how this verse begins: "*After these things.*" "After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield." "After these things." What things? Well, very, very briefly in the chapter just before this there had been a terrible war between four kings and five, and the five kings had been dreadfully defeated. All their possessions had been stolen from them, including Abram's nephew Lot, and in love to his nephew and risking his life and in great bravery, Abram had gathered just a little company together. He was not a soldier, but he had led them into battle against these four kings who were victorious, and he overcame them and regained all the spoil that had been lost in battle and rescued Lot.

But the point is this: it must have been a time of great anxiety and great fear for Abram. That is why we read, "After these things." If you read of these kings that Abram had defeated, they were some of the mightiest kings on the earth at this time. Poor Abram – it seems his life was in danger. It seems he was defenceless. It seems he had every cause for fear. The Lord says, No, Abram; these mighty kings are nothing in My sight. You have these dreadful enemies, these dreadful foes, these dreadful troubles, these awful fears, but you have Me on your side and I am greater than all this, and I am going to be with you, and I am going to defend you, and I am going to protect you so you are going to be safe. So, Abram, fear not.

Often, beloved friends, when you are in trouble, people come to you and in a pleasant way and meaning well they say, Well, I don't think anything will happen really, or, I don't think you have any need to worry, and things like that, and you appreciate their kindness, but you know there is every cause to fear. But this is it, beloved friends: when the Lord says, "Fear not," there is every reason for it, and the Lord does not minimise your fears and say, It doesn't matter, or, It is only a little thing. The Lord agrees with you that all these things, it is only right that you do fear them. But He says, "Fear not," and He gives you a reason, and that is the reason as you venture forth into the new year with all these things before you. Some of you do not know what is before you. With some it may be the day of your death. Some of you do know what things you have before you.

"Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." It is a wonderful truth, Christ the believer's shield – in two special ways.

First, a shield from God's condemnation, a shield from God's anger, a shield from God's wrath, a shield from God's punishment which we deserve because of our sin. If I were to ask some of you children, what is the real purpose for a shield, well, if there was a battle, the shield came between that blow and the person the blow was aimed at. Perhaps it was a spear and it was aimed at this person, but the shield was in the way and the spear struck the shield, but it did not strike the person hiding behind the shield. We sang a word in our hymn at the beginning (199). It was this: "*interposed*," which very simply means something that comes between, comes between that terrible blow and the person who wants to shield from the blow. Can you remember what we sang?

"He, to save my soul from danger,  
*Interposed* His precious blood."

That is Christ our shield, and Gadsby says,

"Nor shall it e'er be said at last,  
Here's one among the damned  
That, by a precious faith in Christ,  
Behind this Shield did stand."

"Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." Christ our shield; safety in Christ. The other thing is in providence – the various dangers, the various perplexities, or the opposition, especially the opposition of sin, Satan and the world, temptation, all these things, anything that might come against you and you feel it will overcome you. But this shield that is interposed, "a sovereign Protector, unseen, yet for ever at hand." O what a mercy if you and I by precious, God-given faith are sheltering behind Christ as our shield, hiding behind Christ as our shield!

"After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." Now at first this sounds rather strangely, a sinner being rewarded by God, but if you think of it, there are many places in Scripture where the Lord speaks of rewarding His people. But one thing He makes abundantly clear: it is a reward of grace. It is not on the grounds of law. It is not because the sinner earns it or merits it or deserves it. It is on the grounds of grace. And so the Lord says to His people, "I am ... thy exceeding great reward."

But once again, "After these things." If you are familiar with the chapter that came before, at the end of it Abram could have had a wonderful reward and he refused it. Let me just remind you of it. After he had gained this wonderful victory, the king of Sodom wanted to honour him and reward him. He had taken all this spoil in battle and he returned it to the king of Sodom, and the king of Sodom very generously

said, No, you can have all this. I wonder how many of us would have refused it. But Abram could see a principle there, and he was blessed with the tender fear of God and a tender conscience, and he sought the honour and glory of his God, and he said to the king of Sodom, "I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the Possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet" – not a thread even to a shoelatchet – "and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich." He felt there was a principle, and so there was a great sacrifice, and there was a great loss. He refused this reward, and the Lord honoured him in it. "Them that honour Me I will honour."

In the new year, may you and I be kept by the power of God and be enabled to walk tenderly in His holy fear. O but Abram, you have sacrificed all this for My sake, for My honour and glory. You will never be a loser for it. The old preachers used to say, God is a debtor to no man. You have refused this reward from the king of Sodom; there is something better for you. "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" – exceeding everything you have sacrificed, exceeding everything that the wicked king of Sodom might have given you.

"Thy exceeding great reward." Now some of you during this last year or during the coming year, as you stand for the truth, as you walk in the fear of the Lord, there may be something you have to sacrifice, or it may be in other ways. There might be things that you lose. Some of you might lose your health. Some of you might lose your home. Some of you might lose your job. Some of you might lose money. So we might go on. Some of you might lose friends. But you have the Lord in love and mercy watching over you and He is able to make all grace to abound, and He has promised to supply your need, and that word still stands: "The Lord is able to give thee much more than this."

"Abram, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." Beloved friends, as we venture from one year to the next, in dependence, leaning on all-sufficient grace, we do not know what bright scenes are before us or what sorrows are before us, but if our hope is in the Lord Jesus, we can venture with a word like this: "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."

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The senate of Rome accounted it a diminution of Augustus Caesar's dignity to join any consuls with him for the better carrying on of the affairs of the state. O but our God does not think it a diminution of His dignity that even His poor, despised servants should be fellow-labourers and co-workers with Him in the salvation of souls.

*Thomas Brooks*

### WHO WAS J.C. PHILPOT?

*Over the years many sermons and articles by J.C. Philpot have appeared in our pages, but little about the man himself and his life. Sadly no real biography has appeared (apart from one in The Netherlands). We hope this little account will be interesting and profitable to our readers*

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Oxford University in the 1820s was a hotbed of theological discussion and debate. At this time two young Oxford intellectuals were quite close acquaintances – John Henry Newman and Joseph Charles Philpot. Both were to become Church of England clergymen. Both were to secede. But what a difference! The one became one of the best-known figures in the Roman Catholic church, eventually becoming a cardinal. The other spent his life among the despised Baptists. “You will search for him in vain in the hospitable pages of the *Dictionary of National Biography*,” wrote his son some sixty years after his death – though happily this omission is now remedied.

#### I

The third son of the Rector of Ripple in Kent, of Huguenot descent on his mother’s side, Joseph Charles Philpot was born on September 13th, 1802. Merchant Taylor’s School, St. Paul’s (Pauline exhibitioner), Worcester College, Oxford, with a brilliant “first” and then elected Fellow – this seemed almost the obvious pattern for such a talented boy. Perhaps his father even had visions of his being a bishop; it seems that the family had thoughts of this.

But God has said, “My thoughts are not your thoughts,” and the later life of J.C. Philpot (as he was always known) could not have been more different from what had been envisaged or planned.

At Oxford, along with many of the future Tractarians, Philpot attended the special lectures given by the Regius Professor of Divinity, Charles Lloyd, who was to play such an eminent part in the Oxford Movement, and who later became Bishop of Oxford. At this time he was not outwardly sinful, and certainly not carried away with the frivolities of student life. “Naturally reserved and not very easy to know,” he later describes his state at that time; “not, indeed, what is called ‘a gay young man,’ not living an immoral life, but still utterly dead in sin, ‘having no hope and without God in the world,’ looking forward to prosperity in life, surrounded by worldly companions, and knowing as well as caring absolutely nothing spiritually for the things of God.”

But the time had now come when God was going to make a great change in his life. In 1826, attracted by the offer of a substantial salary, he left Oxford to become private tutor to two sons of a distinguished

Irish jurist, Edward Pennefather. This necessitated his leaving England for Dunlavin in County Wicklow. Here he fell hopelessly in love with one of the daughters in the family, and it appears that she was mutually devoted to him. But the father most strongly disapproved and prohibited the union. This bitter disappointment God sanctified to the awakening of a deep, spiritual concern in Philpot's heart.

Heartbroken, Philpot told a friend, "I have often wetted the pommel of my saddle with tears amid the lonely valleys of the Wicklow hills, or galloped half-distracted along the sea shore where no eye could see, or ear could hear my cry and groan, sometimes from natural trouble and sometimes in pouring out my soul before the Lord" – "the first tears and prayers that went up out of the heart to the throne of grace." Though J.C. Philpot never mentions him in his voluminous writings, it is claimed that J.N. Darby had a great influence on him at this time. Darby, later the founder of the "Brethren," was Mrs. Pennefather's brother and at the time curate at a nearby church.

Exactly how Philpot was brought to trust in the Lord Jesus for salvation we are not told. Somewhat strangely, as he became pre-eminent as an "experimental" (or experiential) preacher, he seldom referred to his *own* experience. All we learn is: "Under this heavy affliction the Lord gave him first a true spirit of prayer and of supplication; it was then that He showed him what a guilty sinner he was in the eyes of a righteous God, and gave him power to pour forth from the bottom of his heart groans and cries for pardon and peace through the blood of His dear Son."

It was some years later that he was abundantly blessed with what he would have called "a blessed manifestation of Christ":

"I saw nothing," he writes, "by the bodily eye, but it was as if I could see the blessed Lord by the eye of faith just over the foot of my bed; and I saw in the vision of faith three things in Him which filled me with admiration and adoration. 1, His eternal Godhead; 2, His pure and holy Manhood, and 3, His glorious Person as God-Man. What I felt at the sight I leave those to judge who have ever had a view by faith of the Lord of life and glory, and they will know best what holy desires and tender love flowed forth, and how I begged of Him to come and take full possession of my heart. It did not last very long, but it left a blessed influence upon my soul; and if ever I felt that sweet spirituality of mind which is life and peace, it was as the fruit of that view by faith of the glorious Person of Christ, and as the effect of that manifestation. Happy are they who can say by a sweet revelation of Him to their soul, 'And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true; and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.'"

## II

J.C. Philpot's life was never to be the same again. Burdened with grief, he abruptly resigned his tutorship and hastened back to Oxford. But now he could no longer take pleasure in Oxford society. "Oftentimes," he wrote, "seated after dinner in the common room with the other Fellows, amidst all the drinking of wine and the hum and buzz of conversation in which I took no part, I have been secretly lifting up my heart to the Lord." This brought much persecution upon him, the Provost particularly taking a dislike to him. Feeling now he must leave university life, on June 1st, 1828, he was ordained as a clergyman by the Bishop of Oxford (the famous E.B. Pusey being ordained at the same time).

Seven miles south of Oxford lies Stadhampton, "an unhealthy village with a damp green and miry roads." Here he became perpetual curate and began to be known as what would be described as an ideal country parson. His church was filled to overflowing and worshippers could be counted from at least eighteen parishes. Regular prayer meetings and lectures were arranged, gospel tracts distributed, a Sunday school organised, while coal was provided for the poor, along with flannel and calico for clothes.

In the following spring an event took place which was to have far-reaching effects in Philpot's life. A man named William Tiptaft became vicar in the nearby village of Sutton Courtney. Meeting at a gathering of local evangelical clergy, they found they had much in common. Philpot already strongly held to the doctrine of election and the other free grace truths set out in the 39 Articles of the Church. Many and long were the deep conversations the two young men held, the friendship being deepened when Tiptaft nursed his friend back to health at the Sutton Courtney vicarage in the winter of 1830-31. Throughout his life J.C. Philpot was to be plagued with ill-health, suffering from a very weak chest.

Soon Tiptaft was to shock the neighbourhood by his Christmas Day sermon in the "great church" of Abingdon before the mayor and corporation, and five thousand people – a sermon in which in no uncertain terms he contended for the discriminating doctrines commonly called Calvinism. Eventually this led to his secession.

Obviously Philpot could not be unawed by all this. He was sorely plagued whether it was right for himself to stay in the established church. His burden was: "I must see my way clear." There were the obvious difficulties; secession, as he said, was like "cutting down the tree that bore the golden apples." But his conscience was harassed about sprinkling infants and declaring them the children of God; administering the Lord's supper to the ungodly (one an adulterer and another a suspected murderer); and burying enemies of the truth in sure and certain



hope of heaven. Eventually, on September 22nd, 1834, he announced to a stunned congregation: "You have heard my voice for the last time within these walls, for I cannot continue in evil that good may come."

The next year, on his 33rd birthday, he was baptized at Allington chapel, near Devizes, by the old Lancashire weaver, John Warburton of Trowbridge. On their first meeting, John Warburton had been sorely afraid of meeting such a learned man, and J.C. Philpot had been frightened of meeting such a godly man – though Philpot commented, "I had much more cause to fear!"

The letter that Philpot wrote resigning his Fellowship at the time of his secession was published. Written almost in sensational style, concluding, "From this unholy system I now secede," it quickly passed through seventeen editions.

### III

A close friendship had developed between J.C. Philpot and a wealthy Wiltshire farmer, Joseph Parry of Allington, a hamlet nestling in the Wiltshire downs. Here a Strict Baptist chapel had been built in 1829. Even when Philpot was curate at Stadhampton, Parry, interested by what he had heard, had come over and had been amazed at the preaching of "the tall and handsome man, about 30 years of age." "I stood up all the time" (there was only standing room!), "listening to every word that he said, drinking it in like a thirsty ox."

Much of J.C. Philpot's time was now spent at Allington – it seemed likely he would settle here as minister. Deep was his concern as to what was the Lord's will for him.

Allington even today is still only a hamlet, the tiny chapel (with the graves of Philpot's hearers) the only place of worship. Six miles from Devizes it lay, "water-meadows at the bottom, cornland going up towards the hills, those hills being *downland*, and a farmhouse in a clump of trees, sheltered on every side but the south" – to use J.H. Philpot's quotation from Cobbett's description of an ideal home in a Wiltshire vale. Here, right to the end of his life, J.C. Philpot was to spend a month every year with the hospitable Parrys, ministering to the crowds who rode over the downs, or trudged on foot.

His son, Dr. J.H. Philpot, gives a delightful description of these sacred occasions: "When the news has gone forth on the pink wrapper of the *Gospel Standard*, or by word of mouth, that there is to be a preaching, especially when it is my father who, for three or four hours (with an interval for refreshment) is to occupy the pulpit, Allington bestirs itself, and becomes the hub of its little world. Gigs and sociables trundle in by the score from the distant farms and villages of Pewsey Vale, and are parked in the shady lanes, while room for their steeds is

found in Mr. Parry's straggling sheds – on one occasion, it is recorded, he put up as many as two score and five. Peasants trudge in from miles around, bringing their dinners with them, till, even the gallery being full, the chapel overflows into the little graveyard, and the late-comers join in the hymns and listen to the long prayer and longer sermon through the wide-open casements." After the service, "They discourse, not of the current price of corn and wool, or the ravages of the turnip-fly, but of the dearth or plenty in their souls, of the snares and wiles of Satan, and how far the morning's sermon has met their several needs."

But it was not at Allington but in the midland towns of Stamford and Oakham that J.C. Philpot was to spend his life, ministering in a joint pastorate for twenty-six years. On one of his first visits to preach at Oakham, he had fallen in love with the beautiful teenage daughter of the deacon there, Dr. W.T. Keal, and he and Sarah Louisa were married in 1838 just after her twentieth birthday and just before the commencement of his pastorates. It can be imagined what a talking point this was in religious circles in Victorian England! They were later blessed with four children, two of whom became well-known doctors.

Providence Chapel, Oakham, Rutland, had been opened in 1832, and was known locally as "The Factory"; North Street Chapel, Stamford, Lincolnshire, had been opened in 1834 by William Tiptaft (uncle of Sarah Louisa). Here Philpot enjoyed considerable prosperity, though often suffering periods of ill-health, while he also was a welcome visitor year by year at the large London chapels, and in places like Manchester (preaching for Gadsby) and Liverpool.

#### IV

In his early days J.C. Philpot's preaching was exceedingly cutting and separating. (Joseph Parry said, "It was enough to make a living man tremble.") He believed that much Christian profession lacked reality and that there must be a winnowing. "Having much zeal and warmth, as most young soldiers have, I used to cut away right and left, without fearing foe or sparing friend, if I thought him wrong.... I dare say I cut pretty sharply at a lifeless profession." In fact William Gadsby, concerning his early sermons, commented that they would have been improved by speaking more of the glory of Christ. It is clear that Philpot's preaching exceedingly mellowed in the following years – though his great theme was always the reality of vital godliness in the heart. "All forms, opinions, rites, ceremonies and notions to me are nothing, and worse than nothing; they are the husks which the swine eat, not the food of the living soul."

His ideal of what a sermon should be he expressed thus: "A ministry of this kind," he writes, "gushing out of the preacher's heart and mouth

as a spring of living water, is as different from a hard, dead, cut-and-dry ministry ... as a living, breathing man from a withered skeleton. Cold, dry learning is not wanted in the pulpit. What is wanted there is experience in the heart, life and feeling in the soul, and such a measure of divine power resting on the spirit as shall clothe the ideas that spring up with clear, simple, suitable language within the comprehension of the most uneducated hearer. A ministry of this kind will be fresh, original, stamped with a peculiar impress, and will carry with it a weight and power which manifest its divine Author."

Not only was Philpot well-liked as a preacher but, even in his lifetime, his sermons were extensively published, and also soon began to appear in Dutch. Perhaps next to C.H. Spurgeon more of his sermons are currently in print today than those of any other preacher. They have always been widely used in Strict Baptist circles, read in public worship by a deacon when no minister is available, and similarly among the Dutch Reformed churches, both in Holland and North America. The text can truly be applied: "He being dead yet speaketh."

J.C. Philpot's preaching was marked by clear views of the doctrines of the gospel (he would be termed a High Calvinist); a special ability to set forth the deepest truths in a simple manner; a wealth of magnificent similes, usually taken from nature, to illustrate and explain the things of God; and a clear discernment of the vital distinction between a mere profession of Christ and a true, saving knowledge of Him. It is for the latter he is specially remembered. Philpot was preaching in Victorian England in a day when it was respectable to be religious. Hence his concern that his congregations should be warned. Yet though he cuts away like a skilful surgeon at all false religion, he is exceedingly tender when he comes to deal with a true work of grace, and the first springing up of desire, hope and love.

The sermons themselves were very carefully edited, often additional material being added to clear up some important point. But when preached they must have had a special appeal, for a Stamford lady who by no means agreed with his doctrines, when remonstrated with for going so often to hear him, retorted, "But he's so interesting!"

All in all, though, the erudite Oxford scholar, speaking in polished tones, must have been a stark contrast to the homely preaching of men like the former handloom weavers, Gadsby, Warburton and Kershaw, and many others who occupied Strict Baptist pulpits.

## V

It has often been said that the Baptists have produced few outstanding writers. There are not many apart from Dr. Gill. J.C. Philpot is an exception – also an exception in being one of the few real

intellectuals among the Particular Baptists. (Till the end of his life, each morning he spent an hour with his Hebrew Testament and a like period in the evening with the Greek.)

In 1835 the *Gospel Standard* magazine had issued for the first time from an obscure printing works in Manchester. Begun by an energetic young printer, Gadsby's son John, its design was to meet the needs of those who "sigh and groan and cry for mercy, pardoning mercy, justifying mercy, in the Person, blood and obedience of Christ, for nothing short of this will satisfy their hungry souls." This was at almost the identical time when J.C. Philpot was baptized at Allington. News of the Oxford scholar reaching John Gadsby's ears, he immediately sought his help with the new magazine – and no choice could have been better. Till 1849 J.C. Philpot was joint editor, then sole editor till his death in 1869.

Under Philpot's able editorship the circulation of the *Gospel Standard* rapidly increased, finding its way "to private soldiers shivering in Crimean trenches, or sweltering before the gates of Delhi; to lonely men living in shacks on the Ballarat gold-fields, or on remote Australian sheep-farms; to lovers of truth in new American townships; while at home it was sold in ever-increasing numbers."

Amazing is the way he was able to explain the deepest of spiritual and doctrinal truths in the simplest of language to a readership, many of whom were barely literate. Thus in his interesting reviews, his questions and answers, and his meditations on scriptural and doctrinal subjects, his readers were introduced to a new world. Even educationally this must have been of profound value.

Though J.C. Philpot's emphasis was always on a vital, personal experience, he had very clear views of doctrinal truth. In the year 1860 a storm broke, which had been brewing for some years. A number of Strict Baptist ministers began to deny the doctrine of the eternal sonship of Christ in His divine nature. This was, of course, a denial of the orthodox view enshrined in the great Christian creeds, and Philpot, seeing the vital importance of the issue, most ably defended the orthodox doctrine. He pointed out that the error not only assailed the Person of Christ but also the whole doctrine of the Trinity.

Philpot in the pages of the *Gospel Standard* challenged ministers and churches to come out boldly on the side of the truth, and those who did and whose names appeared in the magazine became known as "Gospel Standard Strict Baptists."

## VI

J.C. Philpot's health had never been good, and with increasing years he felt constrained to relinquish his joint pastorate, and in 1864 to move

to Croydon, a town just south of London. There was a two-fold attraction here. First, the air was warmer and drier, more suited to his weak chest (the Victorians laid great store on the quality of the air); but second, here Francis Covell preached at Providence Chapel, and Philpot appreciated his simple, warm-hearted ministry. At times he occupied the pulpit here himself, and occasionally in other places, but he proved a very contented listener, and on more than one occasion was abundantly blessed under the Word preached. It speaks much for the union felt that the reserved scholar after a few weeks asked the minister if he could call him "Brother Frank"!

Altogether he lived in Croydon for five years, deeply appreciating his new pastor's visits, and still labouring with his pen.

Towards the end of 1869 his health deteriorated considerably. His end was peace. "Goodness and mercy," he said, "have followed me all the days of my life." At intervals could be heard: "Better to die than live"; "Mighty to save"; "I die in the faith I have preached and felt"; "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin"; "O, *if* I could depart, and be with Christ, which is far better!" His last words were, "Beautiful!" and then, "Praise the Lord, O my soul!" He died, aged 67, on December 9th, 1869. At his own desire he was buried by his friend Covell who said, as the coffin was lowered into the grave:

"Know you not that a great man and a prince is buried this day, proving that all flesh is grass, and the glory of man is as the flower of grass? The gold of acquired literature that our dear departed friend possessed, and the silver of human eloquence to speak it forth, now lies silent in the dust; but John said he 'heard a voice saying, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord: Yea, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.' It is done; the conflict is over; the spirit has fled. Let Zion's children weeping kiss the rod, and gird on their robes of deepest sackcloth. As the husbandman sows his seed in hope of a fruitful crop, so we commit our friend's body to the dust, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life. And while we say, 'Earth to earth, and dust to dust,' yet this mortal and corruptible body shall at the archangels trump be raised immortal and incorruptible, and soul and body be reunited, and be for ever with the Lord, singing, 'Salvation to God and the Lamb.'"

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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*

## BOOK REVIEWS

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**Scottish Theology**, by John Macleod; hardback; 384 pages; price £16; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

Very well written, intellectual, but not hard to read, we found this book both interesting and profitable.

It may be asked: why should Strict Baptists read about Scottish theology? There are the differences: infant baptism, the presbyterian system, the believer's rule of conduct, etc. But most of our readers are also familiar with names like John Knox, Samuel Rutherford, Thomas Boston, Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine, and many others. Not only so, some of the writings of these old Scottish divines are dearly loved. What about James Durham on Isaiah 53?

But *Scottish Theology* has a sub-title: "in relation to church history." So this is not just a history of the church in Scotland from the Reformation till modern times. Dr. Macleod graciously comments on the persons and happenings, shows where the strength of true godliness in the past in Scotland lay, and warns against the aberration from the truth which took place. Especially does he emphasise the complete infallibility of holy Scripture, and points out the sad effects of not being clear on the extent of the atonement. (He is not afraid to speak of Baxter and Andrew Fuller.)

We wonder if in places the author takes too much for granted. For instance, "Protesters" and "Resolutioners," "Burghers" and "Anti-burghers," a little more explanation would have helped for English readers. Also in the many interesting little biographical pieces, the dates of the person concerned would have helped to place him.

*Scottish Theology* is not devoid of spirituality. There are two quite long, and gracious, pieces quoted, one by Halyburton and the other by John "Rabbi" Duncan.

The book was first published in 1943, and the last chapter is not so profitable for us, dealing with the various church acts, separations and unions in the early years of that century – but which meant so much to Dr. Macleod himself.

In the past there were wonderful days in Scotland, the glorious gospel of the grace of God being abundantly blessed. What a warning, though, there is for us! It was in the highly-favoured Free Church of Scotland that the error of doubting Scripture inerrancy crept in!

**Richard Davis and Revival in Northamptonshire**, by Stephen Pickles; 286 pages including 25 illustrations; price £13.95 plus £3 postage; published by The James Bourne Society, and obtainable from Gable Hook Farm, Bethersden, Ashford, Kent, TN26 3BQ.

Two things struck us when receiving this book – how beautifully produced it is with a lovely, coloured dust jacket, and what careful and detailed research has gone into it.

Richard Davis (1658-1714) is little known today, but he was a remarkable man and minister. The pastor at Rothwell, Northamptonshire, 795 people were received into church membership during his twenty-five years' pastorate. During this time he was engaged in what, in modern parlance, would be called "aggressive evangelism" in the villages around, and several churches came into

being through his instrumentality. The two most interesting for us are the ones which became the Strict Baptist church at Southill and the other the one which became College Park church in Northampton, where the Rylands were pastors.

The vital point in Davis' ministry was the fervent defence of the Protestant doctrine (rather *scriptural* doctrine) of the full, free justification of sinners through Christ alone. This was the time of the neonomian controversy when the teaching of Richard Baxter was gaining ground. This, obviously, is why the James Bourne Society should so enthusiastically support such a man as Richard Davis.

Richard Davis was involved in much controversy during his life, and severe opposition from a number of ministers. The reason is not always clear, but there appears to have been an amount of jealousy at work because of his success. As with Gadsby and others, they called him an antinomian. However, Dr. John Gill wrote: "His memory has always been precious to me," and gave the reason: "on account of his very powerful and evangelical ministrations. He was a very lively, warm and zealous preacher of the gospel; his light on it was very uncommon, clear and distinct."

We hope this book will be well received.

**Bible Names; A Bible Alphabet Busy Book;** very large paperbacks; each 32 pages; price £3.50 and £3; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

*Bible Names* "presents gospel truths to little children using Bibles names and their meanings." The names are all those of well-known characters in the Word of God. Questions are asked, and the book is well illustrated, with places for the children to draw themselves.

*A Bible Alphabet Busy Book* "encourages younger children to write about Bible stories." These are the well-known Bible stories, e.g. ark (Noah), basket (Moses), coat (Joseph), etc. This follows the previously issued *A Bible Activity Book*.

The author, Alison Brown, "longs to see boys and girls understand, trust and cherish the precious truths of God's Word." Such things as God's promises, repentance, faith and obedience are brought in.

We are pleased to welcome books for children which are reverent, believe in the complete infallibility of holy Scripture, and have no cartoon-like pictures. We recommended two similar books by the same author two years ago. Parents obviously will need to explain what the "us" means: e.g. "Jesus loves us so much He died for us."

The little book of prayer meeting addresses, *Saturday Evening Meditations*, was well-received but is now out of print. It has just been published in The Netherlands in Dutch with the title *Beken in de Wildernis* ("Streams in the Desert") as a lovely production. For information about price, where obtained, etc., please contact Dhr. G. Jongsma, Klapproos 18, 9363 LK, Marum, The Netherlands.

The remarkable work of The Savannah Education Trust has received strong support from our congregations. Following the death of the well-esteemed Tom Dadswell (of Blackboys and Horam), another Christian school was built with his legacy. *A Brief History of the Savannah Education Trust* (paperback; well-

illustrated; 44 pages); has now been produced in a most interesting form, and is available, free of charge, from Savannah Education Trust, 58 Appledore Gardens, Lindfield, West Sussex, RH16 2EU.

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### THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

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Let songs of holy joy proclaim  
 The incarnate Saviour's wondrous name.  
 Wake earth, and all the choirs above,  
 Sing the vast wonders of His love.

Long before time its round began,  
 Or dust was fashioned into man,  
 Jesus the God in council stood,  
 Engaged to take our flesh and blood.

His name and Person, both of old,  
 Were by prophetic pens foretold;  
 They saw and sang the joyful morn,  
 When the Redeemer should be born.

The faithful, the revolving spheres  
 Roll on, and number all the years,  
 Till the appointed time takes place,  
 And earth beholds the Saviour's face.

Astonished angels bowed to view  
 Scenes so mysterious and so new,  
 While from their lofty, bright abode,  
 They hailed and sung the incarnate God.

Shepherds, those pious, humble swains,  
 Fled from their flocks, and left the plains;  
 To Bethlehem's stable they repair  
 To see, adore and worship there.

Thither the eastern sages came,  
 Warned of the Saviour's regal fame;  
 To Him their richest treasure bring,  
 And worship Zion's God and King.

Tokens amazing and divine,  
 Of deity around Him shine;  
 Ye saints adore, and praise Him too,  
 Jesus the God was born for you.

Then let the noblest, sweetest songs  
 Flow from each heart, and all our tongues;  
 Our only theme to sovereign grace,  
 And loud hosannahs fill the place.

Samuel Medley (1738-1799)



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD

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Editor: B.A. Ramsbottom

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## OUR MAGAZINES

As we retire, we thank the Lord for His mercies over the years, and thank our readers for their support and their prayers.

May we each "with purpose of heart cleave to the Lord" and to the glorious truths for which this magazine has always contended.

May the Lord's blessing be with our new Editor.

The Lord be with you all.

The Editor