

MAY–JUNE 2018

£1.50

The Gospel Magazine

1 Corinthians 15:1–28 • The exaltation of Christ • The importance of the Lord's Day

Contents

65	Editorial.....	<i>The Editor</i>
67	A sermon on 1 Corinthians 15:1–28.....	<i>The Editor</i>
73	The Light of Life.....	<i>Carine Mackenzie</i>
75	Christ and Belial.....	<i>The Rev P Los</i>
76	The Exaltation of Christ.....	<i>Brian Garrard</i>
79	The Olive Tree (part 2)	<i>John Hooper</i>
83	Thoughts on the cross of Christ.....	<i>William T. Foley</i>
84	The importance of the Lord's Day	<i>Ninos A. Hadjirousou</i>
89	Former Days, being a summary of past issues from <i>The Gospel Magazine</i>	
94	Studies in II Peter	<i>E. J. Malcolm</i>

1766–2018

*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.
Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.
Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

These texts, which have been associated for so many years with *The Gospel Magazine*, give some indication of what this bi-monthly stands for. We seek to present the Lord Jesus as the only Saviour for a lost world: to edify the people of God; and to promote unity among believers, 'the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace'.

The Gospel Magazine is believed to be the oldest religious periodical still being published. One distinguished former editor was the Rev. Augustus Toplady, whose famous hymn, 'Rock of Ages cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee', was first published in these pages.

The Trust Deed of *The Gospel Magazine* is defined in terms of the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion of the Church of England, but the magazine itself is non-denominational. We aim to provide variety in unity, publishing articles from a wide diversity of past and present writers committed to 'the faith once delivered to the saints'.

Editor

The Rt Rev Edward J Malcolm
1 Downshire Square,
Reading, Berkshire RG1 6NJ
Telephone: 0118 9595131
edward.malcolm@btinternet.com
*Only matters to do with
articles and book reviews
should be sent to the Editor*

The Secretary

Mr Philip Lievesley
1 Chaplins, Kirby Cross, Frinton-
on-Sea CO13 0RU
philip.lievesley@sky.com
*Only subscriptions and advert-
isements should be sent to the
Secretary*

**Cheques and postal orders
should be made payable to *The
Gospel Magazine*, in Sterling.
Please do not mail cash.**

Where subscriptions are due
a reminder is sent and prompt
payment is appreciated.

Subscription Rates

Bi-monthly, **£8.50 a year**
Previous issues, where available,
are **25p plus postage**
Current copies **£1.50**
*We encourage Church and
Chapel group subscriptions to
reduce administration*

Advertising Rates

To advertise please send details **six
weeks** prior to publication, and
include your cheque for the correct
amount as follows:

Full page **£30 mono, £45 colour**
½ page **£16 mono, £24 colour**
¼ page **£8 mono, £12 colour**
Classified adverts **14p per word**
*We reserve the right to refuse
advertisements*

Bankers

Barclays Bank PLC
Account Number 00236284
Sort code 20-41-12

gospelmagazine.org.uk
Charity No. 1070357

THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE

Incorporating the Protestant Beacon and the British Protestant

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

New Series
No. 1720

MAY–JUNE 2018

Old Series
No. 2720

EDITORIAL

It is my privilege to preach from time to time in different churches. Mostly these are churches that are not of my denomination. I get to meet Baptists of various sorts, Congregationalists, Methodists (of the Free variety) and Presbyterians. There are certain differences between me and them, on a number of issues. There are, however, a number of matters in which we are entirely in agreement. We love the Lord Jesus Christ, and confess that we are saved by grace. We love the gospel, and we confess that we are guilty sinners by nature, and that our only hope is in Jesus Christ and his finished work. We worship the Lord God of heaven and earth, and we seek to do so reverently, scripturally and joyfully. In short, we are more united by those things we have in common than we are divided by those things on which we would disagree. Consequently, I, for one, admit to being refreshed in the fellowship and love of believers wherever I am permitted to meet them. We discover that we have a true unity.

The Psalmist spoke of unity. In Psalm 133

David declared, 'Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!' Indeed it is, and we who know the truth of this cry, Amen.

The Psalmist went on, 'It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;' (verse 2). Readers will doubtless be aware that 'down to the skirts' is most likely to mean 'down to the collar', since the word 'skirts' is really 'mouth' or 'opening'. The image, therefore, is of Aaron's oil-covered beard becoming stuck to the garment he wore. Without the oil the hair of his beard might brush the garment, but with the oil the two become stuck together. There is sort of unity between the garment and the beard, and it is a unity which depends on the oil.

Then think of the oil. This was not any ordinary oil, but was a special mixture, ordained of God. We read in Exodus 30:22–25 that this oil was to contain pure myrrh, sweet cinnamon, sweet calamus (sweet flag, or

flag iris) and cassia (Chinese cinnamon). It would therefore have had a pungent, sweet odour, and would have been highly distinctive. God's law commanded that it was not permitted for anyone to make this oil for any purpose other than anointing in the tabernacle and temple. Being a type under the old covenant, the oil is representative of the Holy Spirit. This is demonstrated by the anointing of our Lord Jesus Christ at his baptism when the Holy Spirit descended on him in the form of a dove.

What we have, therefore, is a picture of the gracious, sweet-smelling work of God the Holy Spirit, who alone can bring Christ's people together in true unity. What a beautiful picture this is. There is something very pleasant about Christian unity, and it stands as an unmistakeable witness to the world at large that we are all brought together by a heavenly and gracious power.

David continues in the final verse, 'As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.' The dew that fell on Mount Hermon came from above. There was a heavenly watering of the place, so that it was fertile and fruitful. Mount Zion received its watering from above; not, perhaps the dew of heaven, but those spiritual gifts by which it was the place where the Lord chose to set his name, to command his house, and to be worshipped by those who knew him through his own revelation. There is something healthy and productive about brotherly unity, without which we would be rather lifeless as Christian believers. This blessing, of Christian unity, is not something we work for ourselves, but is said by the Psalmist to be commanded of the Lord. This is life for evermore, since all who have true unity through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ shall spend eternity together.

Our unity is not the cause of eternal life, but is a fruit of our partaking of the blessing. The Church on earth ought to be a foretaste of heaven, and where there is unity among believers, there is heaven to be found—even if only in a little part.

How we should therefore seek opportunities to express our unity. I do not mean by this that we should forget our denominational differences (though would to God we could all agree on these matters), nor do I mean that we should downplay doctrinal differences for the sake of an outward expression of unity—that is the method of the ecumenical movement, and we have nothing to do with it. Rather, we should uphold one another in prayer, both in private and in our public worship. What greater expression of unity can there be than to pray for ministers and churches who know and love the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth. What better witness can we bear to the world than to demonstrate our common faith. What better guard can we seek against pride, than to uphold as children of the living God, those who confess the same Saviour, who profess faith in the same shed blood, and who glory in the same cross.

May we know true unity, in Christ, among each other. The days in which we live demand it. The testimony of Scripture pronounces the richest blessing upon it. The experience of those who know this brotherly unity calls us to it. The loneliness of our own souls urges us to it. There are many sheep in the care of the Shepherd, but he leads only one flock. There is but one house in heaven, and although it contain many mansions, or rooms, we shall be near neighbours there. Let us practice our neighbourly love here, and enjoy that blessing of which David speaks, that blessing commanded of the Lord, even life for evermore. AMEN. ¶

1 CORINTHIANS 15:1–28

A SERMON BY THE EDITOR

Here at the end of this First Epistle to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul takes up a subject of the utmost importance. Just how important it is may be gathered from his statement in verse 3 that 'I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received.' He declares the foundational importance of the doctrine of the resurrection as being 'first of all.' He means that it comes at the very beginning of the gospel, so that all that follows is built on this great truth, that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. We see this in, for instance, Paul's address to the Areopagites in Acts 17:31, where his declaration of the resurrection was the cause of much mocking among some, verse 32, as well as of interest in others. As to the source of this doctrine, Paul declares that he 'received' it, meaning he had it, not from his own imagination, nor from the teaching of the other apostles, but directly by revelation of Jesus Christ.

Since this doctrine is so important, so foundational, it may be asked why Paul waited until he had written fourteen chapters before coming to it. The answer is simple; the Corinthians were under the influence of certain teachers who taught that Paul was not a true apostle. Since, in their minds, Paul was not a true apostle, his teaching was suspect. Paul has therefore spent the previous fourteen chapters re-establishing his authority as an apostle, in order that, when he comes to this vital truth of the resurrection, the Corinthians will hear what he has to say.

As to why it was necessary for him to speak on this subject, note what he says in verse 12, 'Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among

you that there is no resurrection of the dead?' Clearly there were some at Corinth who, having been taught that Christ did indeed rise from the dead, had moved to a position in which they denied this truth. Who would teach such things? There are two possible culprits.

First, there were the philosophers of the ancient world. These taught, in the main, that the soul lives on after death, but that it does so without any bodily dwelling. To them, the material world was not good, for in the material world we suffer pain, loss and hardship. The key to eternal happiness, they argued, was to be freed from the body, which only happens at death. Therefore, it is possible that the Corinthians were being instructed by Greek philosophers.

The second possible culprit is the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, Matthew 22:23. Given that most of the false teachers with whom St Paul had to contend were Jewish, it is most probable that an element of the Sadducees had come to Corinth, and had begun to teach a different gospel. These newcomers were not deniers of the gospel, in that they would have professed faith in Jesus Christ as the Messiah. They would, however, have denied the miraculous elements of his ministry, most particularly the fact of his resurrection from the dead.

And so we see that it is possible to begin well, but then to fall away from the truth. The Corinthians had, in the beginning, held to the gospel as preached by the Apostle Paul. They had held to the truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Under the influence of certain new teachers, they

had been moved to deny what they once affirmed. This is a solemn lesson to us to bring ourselves back to the basics of the faith over and over again. We are never too old to re-read the Catechism, and to be reminded of those things on which our hope of salvation is built. It matters that we continue in those things we have learned from childhood, and do not vary from them, except where we may have learned something other than the truth.

In order to establish his argument, Paul reminds his readers of what he first taught them, and what they first professed to believe, verses 1 to 2. What he taught was this.

First, Jesus Christ died for our sins. There can be no resurrection except there first be a death. Christ's death was not of the usual sort, but was a sacrificial death as the sin offering. Furthermore, it was not for his own sins that he died, but for our sins. This means that all our hopes of eternal happiness are bound up in the fact of Christ's death. If he had not died, we would yet be in our sins. But we have no reason to be concerned. The death of Jesus Christ for our sins is 'according to the scriptures'.

Not only was the death of Jesus Christ 'according to the scriptures', but so too were his burial, and his resurrection, verse 4. If it be asked, according to which scriptures, look no further than these three passages.

First, Isaiah 53. There, in verses 4 to 9, the fact of Christ's death is foretold. Then, in verses 10 to 11, the cause of his death is declared, as being 'when thou (meaning the Lord God) shalt make his soul an offering for sin.' The acceptance of that sin-offering is declared, verse 11, in that Christ will 'see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.' This means that those for whom he is the sin-offering are accounted just before

God for the sake of Christ's death. Finally, the promise of the resurrection is given, verse 12, in which he is told, 'I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong.' How can the dead have any inheritance, unless they first be raised from the dead? Isaiah, therefore, foretold the death of Christ for sin, and his resurrection for the justification of sinners.

Secondly, see Daniel 9:26. There, the prophet speaks of the Messiah being cut off, meaning killed, but not for himself. That is, he will not die for anything he has done, but he will confirm the covenant with many, verse 27, meaning many will be called to faith in Christ until the time when the temple at Jerusalem is destroyed (AD 66–70). How can he confirm the covenant with any after he has been cut off, unless he also rises again from the dead?

Thirdly, consider Psalm 22. It falls into two main parts. The first, from verse 1 to 18, speaks of the death of Christ. The second part, from verse 19 to the end, speaks of his hope on God to deliver him from death, with the expectation that he will give praise to the Lord in the future; this means he knows he will be raised from the dead. Through this the Lord God will be praised, verse 25, and the meek of the earth, meaning the humble righteous, will be blessed. In the light of all that comes, we take this as being both a promise of Christ's resurrection, and of the blessings of his atoning sacrifice upon all who believe in his name.

To this we could add the implications of Abraham's readiness to sacrifice Isaac on Mount Moriah, and the promise of the remnant at the end of Isaiah 6, and many other passages that can only be understood if the resurrection is real.

But to return to the key element, we are told that Jesus Christ died for our sins. This

we accept, since the Scripture testifies everywhere that without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. How does this relate to Christ's resurrection? Is it necessary for him to rise from the dead if his death has made atonement for our sins?

Paul addresses this point elsewhere. Note what he says at the end of Romans 4. There, the Apostle has been extolling the faith of Abraham, as being the great example of justifying faith for all people, Jews and non-Jews alike. Abraham believed God, and was accounted righteous, before the introduction of circumcision. That ceremony, therefore, cannot affect either our need of being justified, nor the outcome of the declaration. The imputation of righteousness, or the declaration of Abraham as being innocent before God's throne of justice, was declared for our sakes as well as Abraham's. In verse 23 the Apostle states, 'Now, it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.' In other words, Paul declares that there would be no imputation of righteousness, and therefore no declaration of justification, but for the fact of Christ's resurrection from the dead.

Therefore, to claim, as the Sadducees and those at Corinth who were under their influence did, that it is possible to believe in Jesus as Saviour but deny his resurrection, is impossible. Worse, it is utter madness, for it amounts to a denial of the gospel. To say that Jesus died for our sins, but that he did not rise again, is as much as to say that Jesus did not die for our sins. Every sacrifice offered under the old system, both before, during and after Moses, was burnt up in the fire. Its total consumption signified its acceptance by God as

a temporary satisfaction for the sins of those who offered it. The death of Jesus Christ is the one final, full and complete sacrifice, and this is signified by his rising again from the dead.

That Christ did indeed rise again from the dead in fact, and not merely in thought, is the subject of the next section. In verses 5 to 8 Paul lists the major post-resurrection appearances of the Lord Jesus Christ. These were, first, to the apostles, verse 5. The significance of this is that the apostles are eye-witnesses of the resurrection. This much Peter declared, Acts 2:24. Note that in choosing a replacement for the traitor Judas, the apostles defined the eligible candidate as being those 'which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that day that he was taken up from us.' The appointment of the right man would be that he would be 'a witness with us of his resurrection' (Acts 1:21–22). That the apostles were all chosen by Jesus Christ himself shows that they have an authority which exceeds that of all others, both in their day and in ours.

Having spoken of the resurrection appearances to witnesses, many of whom were still living and could be asked to speak of what they saw, verse 6, Paul puts himself forward as a witness. He was not an eye-witness of the resurrection at the time it happened, but was given to see the risen Lord Jesus Christ some time after his ascension into heaven. This is why Paul calls himself 'one born out of due time.' Paul does not advance himself above the other apostles because of this, but calls himself the least of the apostles, because he had once been a persecutor of Christians. What changed? He met the risen Christ! He was the recipient of abundant grace, both to know the truth of the

resurrection, and also to be called to go and bear witness to the fact before many people.

Paul's immediate conclusion, verse 11, is that the fact of the resurrection is the common doctrine of all the apostles, regardless of who had come preaching to the Corinthians. The implication is very clear; those who deny the resurrection are not true apostles, or do not follow the true apostolic doctrine. Either way, they are not to be trusted.

Having shown that, far from it being unreasonable to believe the resurrection of Jesus Christ, it is in fact thoroughly unreasonable to deny it, Paul now turns to the implications of the doctrine. From verses 12 to 19 he will speak of the negative implications. From verses 20 to 28 he will speak of the positive implications.

The negative implications, or what would be true if Jesus had not risen from the dead
Given all that Paul has said concerning the nature and content of the authentic gospel, and of the large number of still-living eye-witnesses to the resurrection, and of the authority of the apostles (including himself) to declare this truth, how can any deny the resurrection? That is the intention of the opening words of verse 12. To deny the resurrection is to deny the gospel.

But suppose there is no resurrection, verse 13. In that case, Christ is not risen. If he is not risen, verse 14, the gospel preached by Paul and all the apostles is vain, meaning foolish or worthless. If this is so, then the faith of the believers at Corinth (and everywhere else) is also foolish or worthless. Indeed, the apostles must all be judged false witnesses, because they have all testified that Jesus Christ rose again from the dead, and that they had seen him alive after his burial. They had testified that God had raised up Jesus from the dead, and God cannot have raised him up if

the dead do not rise. This means the apostle are guilty of making God a liar, if Christ is not risen.

More specifically, if the dead do not rise as a hard-and-fast rule, then Jesus Christ is not risen from the dead, verse 16. If Christ is not risen from the dead, the faith of the Corinthians is foolish or worthless, for they are yet in their sins, since Christ died to atone for our sins, verse 3, and rose again for our justification, which he did not do if he did not rise again. Furthermore, those who have died in the hope of Christ and his resurrection are lost for ever, verse 18. If there is no resurrection of the dead, then the benefits of faith in Christ is limited to this life, verse 19, which makes those who profess faith in him the most miserable of all men. In 2 Timothy 3:12 Paul wrote, 'all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.' Why would any make their life miserable, painful and hard if at the end of it they went into the grave in common with the wicked, and that was the end for both? Only the resurrection of the dead, both ours and that of our Lord Jesus Christ, makes sense of the call to a holy life. Why should Christians be purified in the fire, undergoing the trial of our faith, 1 Peter 1:7, if God puts no difference between them and the unbelievers in death? If Christ is not risen, then we should all cast off every restraint, and go and indulge the passions of the flesh to the fullest height, or depth, of desire, since no lasting (as in eternal) consequences will result. All of this if Christ has indeed not risen from the dead.

The positive implications, or what is true because Jesus Christ has indeed risen from the dead

This is Paul's subject from verse 20. 'But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.' These words

are full of significance. In the first place, they declare the fact of Christ's resurrection with a solid degree of conviction. Paul is no longer dealing with 'what-ifs'. He is no longer taking up the hypotheticals of Sadducee errors. Instead, he is dealing with the Truth, with the facts as they have been given to him by the revelation of Jesus Christ himself. We can now dispense with the doubtful, and rest in the certain.

In the second place, Paul links Christ's resurrection with its timing. It was no coincidence that Jesus lay in the tomb for three days. This was the length of time between the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread—the occasion of his death—and the Feast of First-fruits—the occasion of his resurrection. Now, the sacrifice or feast that day was the Sheaf offering, as required in Leviticus 23:10–12, which was to be an offering of the first-fruits of the harvest. It acted as a demonstration of the faith of the Israel, that what the land first brought forth was to be offered to the Lord, in the knowledge that his grace and mercy would multiply that harvest to them many times over. They were not being asked to sacrifice the only produce, merely the first of it, in confidence that God would give them all they would need.

So with the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is not the end of the resurrection, as if he alone should rise from the dead. Rather, his resurrection is the promise of ours, and to the extent that we give thanks for his resurrection, we bear testimony to our faith that God will raise us up at the last day. Therefore those who see little of value in Christ's resurrection imply very strongly that they see little value in their own.

In the third place, Paul states the situation of those who have cause to believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He speaks of 'them that slept.' What is this sleep, but death? And

how came death into the world? 'By man came death', verse 21. This is the great and terrible truth. Man brought death on himself. Yes, it is a judicial sentence on man by God for our sins. Yet it is our own fault that we are under the curse of death. 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.' Yet the wonder of God's grace is that 'by man came also the resurrection of the dead.' Indeed, Paul declares that since death came by man, the resurrection must also come by man. This is not to teach that man must save himself from the consequences of his sin, for none can. Rather, it is that, since a man brought death, a man must bring the resurrection of the dead. This is explained in the next verse, where Paul writes, 'As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.'

Our death is our inheritance from our father Adam. This is the family heirloom, passed down from generation to generation. None can avoid it. None can pass it by. None can refuse to receive it. We are bound to it by virtue of the federal headship of Adam, who stood before God in Eden as the representative of the whole human race. We were in Adam when he fell, both as to our natural generation (since we are all his children) and as to our standing before God (in that he is our federal head). The sin of Adam, and the consequent curse of God on all mankind, makes the resurrection of the dead absolutely necessary for us, if we are to re-enter and enjoy the blessings and promises of God, which Adam knew but forfeited by his sin.

For this reason we have another federal head. 'Even so in Christ shall all be made alive.' Christ is the federal head of his people; not of all mankind, as if his resurrection is the promise of new and eternal life for all, but for those for whom he died. Remember the words of Isaiah; 'he saw of the travail of his soul, and was satisfied.' That means, he saw

the reason why he suffered, and the blessing it brought, and was filled up. He died to save a people, and that people is saved. Paul's main point, however, is that, as our being in Adam has brought death on us, so our being in Christ (remember that he is writing to professing believers, 1:2) brings the resurrection of the dead to us.

Why then are the dead in Christ not raised up? 'Every man in his own order', verse 23. Christ is the firstfruits, as he has already declared. Those who are Christ's will be raised up at his coming. This is shown to be true by Pentecost. Leviticus 23:15 and following gives the law of the harvest thanksgiving. It is to be counted fifty days after the firstfruits. That is, it is Pentecost. What happened then? Christ came down upon his Church in that he sent down the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit. The immediate effect of this outpouring of the Spirit was that the apostles and assembled believers became bold. They went out and preached, and they did so with great power. Thousands were added to the Church that day. It was the beginning of the harvest of souls for which Christ had taught his disciples to pray, John 4:35–36. As there would be no sending down of the Holy Spirit had Christ not risen from the dead, so there can be no resurrection for us had he not risen from the dead. The fact of Pentecost stands as a powerful testimony to the truth of Christ's resurrection, and is a sure and certain promise to us of our resurrection when Christ appears.

This leads Paul on to speak of those things that shall come to pass when Christ does indeed appear. We may sum up this part like this. Christ is reigning now, and will show his authority when he delivers up his kingdom to his Father. Only one enemy remains to be defeated, and that is death, verse 26. How can Christ defeat death if death has already

defeated him? The resurrection is the proof that Christ has already conquered death, and will do so for us in the day of his appearing. At that point all authority will be his, and he will deliver up all things to God the Father. The implication of this is that those who deny the resurrection will have to face the judgment of God on their false teaching. The end result of all this is the manifestation of God's supreme glory, verse 28, when God is all in all. And this is the fullest and most significant implication of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

What are we to make of this teaching?

In the first place, let us recognise the authority of the apostles to be our teachers in matters of the faith. We may read things in their writings that we do not fully understand. This does not justify our rejecting their teachings, but requires us to submit to their authority. If the Church were truly apostolic, in the sense of receiving the fulness of the apostles' teaching, it would be more effectual in preaching, and stand as a better witness to Christ and his gospel.

In the second place, let us understand the importance of careful study of the Scriptures. Are we aware that the doctrine of the resurrection is taught in the Old Testament? Have we seen the ways in which it is signified to us in various passages, incidents and types? If not, we have failed to read the Scriptures with our eyes open. We need to read humbly, as those who are teachable. We must learn to put aside our objections that arise from pride and unbelief, and instead receive the pure Word of God with joy. When we do, we will be blessed in the Word.

In the third place, let us know and confess that our hope of salvation depends entirely on the grace and mercy of God. Had he not promised the Son to be our Saviour, to bear

our sins, and to rise again for our justification, we would be so hopeless as to despair of life itself. There would be no reason to go on living, especially as the world is so full of wickedness and violence. The innocent, especially those who love the Lord Jesus Christ, are the playthings of sinners. We might as well go and join them if there is no resurrection. But the truth of the resurrection is

beyond doubt. Christ is risen again, and one day will return to gather his people to himself. Let us lay hold on that hope, and on the Christ in whom that hope is to be had, and walk with him for as long as life remains. This is the way and life of faith, and is our demonstration that we have faith in the resurrection. May Christ be glorified in all we say and do. AMEN. ¶

THE LIGHT OF LIFE

BY CARINE MACKENZIE

My husband woke early one morning before the alarm went off. He got dressed quietly and went downstairs. He did not want to disturb me, so he did not put on the hall light. But very soon I was disturbed by a loud clatter. He missed the last step and fell heavily against a door frame, grazing his head badly. He shouted up to me, 'I've had a fall!' The bleeding was so profuse we decided to go to the Accident and Emergency department of the hospital to get it seen to.

What a lot of pain and discomfort caused by walking in darkness. How much easier things would have been if he had only put on the light.

God's word is described as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (Psalm 119:105). Are we making use of that light. It is essential to use that light to keep us safe from the dangers in this world both around us and in us. If we ignore God's word, we so easily stumble into sin, and sin has hurtful consequences.

The Apostle John warns us about walking in darkness. 'But if we walk in the light as he (God) is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin' (1 John 1:7).

Peter calls the word of God 'a light that shineth in a dark place' (2 Peter 1:19), and tells us to take heed to it. The word of God is the only rule to direct us how to glorify and enjoy God. (Shorter Catechism 2). It gives us commands about how to live with others. The Bible also tells us of the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ—the good news that 'Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3). Jesus himself is the light of the world. Those who follow him, shall not walk in darkness but have the light of life.

We now leave a light on in our hall all night. We have learned the hard way that we need that light. We need the light of the Gospel all the time, to give us hope for the future and assurance of God's love, as we trust in Christ for the forgiveness of our sins and for grace to help in every time of need.

We have told others about this experience. They were very sympathetic. One of our friends said the next time we met him, 'We have started leaving a light on now overnight too'. So

hopefully that will save them from an unpleasant fall. It is our duty and privilege to tell others about the wonderful light of the Gospel. If it is precious and helpful to us, we would be selfish not to share the good news. 'Come and hear ... I will declare what he hath done for my soul,' said the Psalmist (Psalm 66:16). We can pass on that good news too.

My little granddaughter Elizabeth says she likes the hall light left on at night because she is frightened of the dark. The light of God's word is a wonderful comfort too, dispelling fear and giving assurance of God's love and care for his people.

God's promises meet our every need.

When we are anxious, we can cast all our care on the Lord, 'for he careth for you' (1 Peter 5:7).

When we feel weak, we should trust in the Lord for ever 'for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength' (Isaiah 26:4).

If we are afraid of the future, we are told to trust in the Lord. 'In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths' (Proverbs 3:6).

In whatever situation we find ourselves, we can be confident in the Lord. 'The Lord is my light and salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life: of whom shall I be afraid?' (Psalm 27:1).

Jesus, in the Sermon on the mount told his followers that they were to be a light in the world. Our lives should shine brightly. Our love for the Lord should lead to good works for the glory of God. Our prayer should be that we would walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God (Colossians 1:10).

Bible Search

Find the missing words. The initials of the correct answers spell out a word connected with the story.

1. O _____ out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me (Psalm 43:3).
2. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness _____ upon you (John 12:35).
3. Harken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall proceed from me and I will make my judgment to _____ for a light of the people (Isaiah 51:4).
4. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of _____ are the way of life (Proverbs 6:23).

5. And behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the _____ (Acts 12:7).
6. That was the _____ light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world (John 1:9).
7. The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth _____ unto the simple (Psalm 119:130).
8. Light is sown for the _____ and gladness for the upright in heart (Psalm 97:11).
9. For thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will _____ my darkness (Psalm 18:28).
10. For ye were _____ darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light (Ephesians 5.8).

CHRIST AND BELIAL

PART VII

BY THE REV P LOS

Supplied by A W DE LANGE (Scherpenzeel, The Netherlands)

What do you think, my reader! Which of the two kingdoms is the best, which of the two kingdoms is most desirable? With the one is life, with the other is death and between both is a great chasm, so that there is until eternity no possibility to bring both kingdoms to one. It is Christ or Belial, so that every man is a subject of King Jesus or a child of Belial.

It is a terrible thought to partake in the miseries of the children of Belial, because, according to what Scripture says, their worm

shall not die and their fire not be quenched. We do not want to give you a terrible exposition of the dwelling places of the souls of the children of Belial. We have said that what the Lord speaketh in his Word testifieth about it, that it is the most terrible of all circumstances whereof man could think. Here, in the greatest distress is there always some refreshment by all the mercies which compensate it; but there is a woe that endures eternally.

THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST

BY BRIAN GARRARD (Basingstoke)

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name. (Philippians 2:9)

The Matthew Henry commentary says of this verse that the Lord's 'exaltation was the reward of his humiliation. Because he humbled himself, God exalted him...' This exaltation does not relate merely to his divine nature but to the human as well. A whole Christ was exalted after 'he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross' (Philippians 2:8).

What happened when the Lord entered what is called his 'State of humiliation'?

First of all he took on human flesh and was then born in a lowly condition, 'made under the law' (Galatians 4:4). Consequently he went through all the miseries of this life. In addition, he suffered the wrath of God, endured the death of the cross and continued under the power of death for a time.¹ None of these truths must be passed over without due thought and serious meditation. Give thanks to the Lord every day for loving and giving himself for you (Galatians 2:20). Although His sufferings and death were not eternal, they were infinite. Their horror and agony is beyond human description and understanding and knowledge, yet Christ endured them in order to redeem and save sinners. The glorified church in heaven praises and adores Christ for washing them in his blood. But why wait until then? Begin now and then continue on in glory! Some accuse Christians of obeying God out of fear of punishment or for the sake of duty or hope of

¹ See Shorter Catechism Q & A 27.

reward. Yet the truth is, a genuine Christian realises what Christ has done for them and obeys and serves him out of love and thankfulness. Duty may be a fine thing but does not living and dying for Christ require deep and true love?

The exaltation was, and still is, a time of triumph

What does this 'triumph' involve? In the first place, the Lord rose from the dead on the third day. Secondly, he ascended up into heaven where he sits at the right hand of God the Father. And thirdly, he will come again to judge the world at the end of the age.²

There is a common belief that the Lord's body still remains in the tomb and it was just his spirit that rose from the dead and ascended up into heaven. Yet I ask you, what hope and victory is that for you and me? If the body of Christ has not been raised up, then a whole Christ is not in heaven and he is not ruling over his Church and the world. Also, he is not making continual intercession for all his saints. But the Scriptures clearly state that his physical body was raised up and therefore his divine and human nature combine now in the one blessed Person of the Son of God.

Never forget who is in heaven for you. Not a mere spirit being detached from anything that you experience and suffer. The God-Man is there and he will carry your human nature for ever. It is now a glorified and exalted One but a body all the same. So when you

² Ibid Q & A 28 and The Apostles' Creed.

pray keep in mind that there is a God who knows and understands and sympathises with you. He is described as a 'merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted' (Hebrews 2:17-18). See, too, Hebrews 4:14-16 that exhorts believers to come boldly to the throne of grace and 'obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need'. Mercy and grace and help are a constant necessity so go to Christ and never tire of approaching him. He is ready to hear and answer, but the trouble is that you and I are too apt to think that he does not want to be concerned with the matters of this life. It is the lie of Satan and your own doubting heart that says this and unbelief always requires a stern rebuke! When the children were young they could break a favourite toy occasionally. There were many tears and I would receive a sad visit in the study. I had more pressing duties like caring for a church or producing sermons and visiting etc. But the toy mattered to them and so it mattered to me and I did what I could. One or two of those repaired toys still exist and are reasonably functional! All this is mentioned to show that if earthly parents are concerned with the little things of childhood then how much more is your Heavenly Father taken up with the matters that can worry you and me.

The exaltation of Christ is like a great fountain or spring, and much flows from it

Realise and never forget that this mighty Son of God is highly exalted above all things. He is no slightly better extension of you and me, but the all powerful God who is clothed with infinite majesty and strength. This is the one who says of himself, 'I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me ... I have made the earth, and created man upon

it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded' (Isaiah 45:5 & 12). This Lord Christ is the 'God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, Begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.'³ It is this same Lord Jesus Christ who 'shall come again with glory to judge both the quick (living) and the dead: whose kingdom shall have no end'. It is vital that Christians believe and know these things and live godly lives, knowing that they are in the presence of the glorious and sovereign God. Also, that they cease from doubts and fears and low views of Christ. He is the only Lord and God therefore let him be that whether in your home, heart or church. Sadly too many Christians go sorrowing and limping to heaven and seem to forget that they belong to him whose name is above every name. They also fail to remember that every knee shall bow to Christ one day and every tongue confess him as Lord to the glory of God the Father.

There may be days when you and I may feel no better than something that wriggles through soil but the reality is quite different. See Romans 8:14-18 and 1 John 3:1-3, which underline what no child of God should ever allow to slip from the mind. They are heirs of God and joint heirs with this highly exalted Christ. So you are not a worm but a saint! Your Saviour became a worm and a 'no man' in order to bring you into union with himself. That means that present sufferings 'are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us' (Romans 8: 18).

There are also further consequences flowing from the Lord's exaltation

For one thing, you and I are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in

³ The Nicene Creed from the Communion service, Book of Common Prayer.

Christ (Ephesians 1:3). Amongst many these include justification and forgiveness and being made holy and brought into union and communion with the Lord. For an understanding of what is involved, read the Epistle to the Ephesians, especially chapters 1 to 3. As you read them you will notice that Christian believers are said to be raised up and seated in heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 2:5–6). In some mighty and spiritual way you share in the resurrection and exaltation of the Lord even at the present time. What a thing that is! And yet it is easy to let these truths slip and go through life as a spiritual pauper. I am reminded of a husband and wife who had saved up for an expensive holiday in a hotel. They enjoyed their time there with the exception that they tried to reduce expenses by smuggling food into their room and catering for themselves. Imagine how they felt when they discovered towards the end of their holiday that they had wasted their money on buying extra food. Everything was included in the original price of the hotel! It is true that much yet remains to be enjoyed in heaven but I am persuaded as I read the Bible that a vast amount is passed over in this life that ought not to be. You and I miss out on a great deal simply because the infinite stores of divine grace are not called upon. ‘Where is your faith?’ the Lord once asked the Apostles. I fancy that I often hear the Lord directing a similar question to his Church.

There may be those who might say, ‘It is all very well to write and talk in this way

when you are in good health and enjoying vigorous strength. What happens when you are struck down by some dreadful illness?’ Those who speak in that way are quite right. It is one thing to be triumphant and optimistic in a good day when the sun is bright and shining in the heavens. Wait until the clouds are dark and threatening and bitter cold rain is lashing down. Are you trusting and rejoicing then? The truth is, the exalted Lord Jesus Christ still sends his Holy Spirit to weak and frail saints and gives them songs in a sleepless and painful night. ‘Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.’ ‘This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles’ (Psalm 66:16 and 34:6). One personal testimony is worth a hundred lectures and this, along with Scripture, teaches that this exalted Christ never deserts his own. He stays with them through everything and shall bring them safe home to glory one day. That is surely all that matters. A worthy Christian lady recently took me to task because I said the days were desperately wicked and evil and that I was looking for the Lord’s final coming. She is active for the Lord and zealous and is to be commended, but I still think as I did and make no apology for this. Is not the supreme and highest joy of the believer to see the Lord? One day all the saints of God shall be together and never part. Everyone shall behold him and gaze upon his lovely and exalted face and then that shall be glory indeed! ¶

There is a light of reason, which is imparted to every man by nature; but this light is darkness compared with the saints, as the night is dark to the day even when the moon is in its full glory. This night-light of reason may save a person from some ditch or pond (open and broad sins) but it will never help him to escape the more secret corruptions which the saints see like atoms in the beams of spiritual knowledge.

William Gurnall

THE OLIVE TREE

JOHN HOOPER (Saltash, Cornwall)

Spiritual things

It is noticeable how strongly Paul emphasizes ‘the root and fatness of the olive tree.’ He speaks of benefits and blessings of the covenant that previously were the sole preserve of Jews but are now partaken ‘with them’ by the nations also (Romans 11:17). There is a striking and important lesson here. The true covenantal blessings promised to the Jews were never the earthly, temporal elements of land and physical prosperity but always the heavenly, spiritual delights of eternal salvation that spring from union with Christ. He is the holy root from which the branches derive their holiness (v. 16). He is the fountain source of every blessing, blessings that are now for Gentile as well as for Jew, both richly to enjoy (Psalm 36:9).

This same thought occurs a few chapters later where Paul writes, ‘For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their [the Jews’] spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things’ (Romans 15:27). The blessings that until so very recently had belonged solely to Jews by virtue of the covenant God had made with their fathers, were ‘spiritual things’ and not temporal. By grafting Gentiles into the olive tree God has made Gentiles—made *us* no less—partakers and sharers of those same spiritual things. Israel’s God is now our God. He has made us to be his people, bringing us into union with Christ and the happy privilege of everlasting friendship and communion with himself (cf. also Hosea 2:23 and Romans 9:25). How gracious a God is our God!

Having received all the blessings of his salvation *we* are now able to join in the praises of God with the old covenant saints and

sing as one, ‘Blessed be the LORD, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation’ (Psalm 68:19).

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.

(Psalm 103:2–5).

In passing I am sure we can see here one of the benefits to our souls of singing Psalms. As we do so we give tangible expression to the continuity and unity of God’s people throughout all the ages, old covenant and new, all singing from the same ‘hymn sheet’—God’s very own book of praises.

The fulness of the Jews

Is it still possible that the Jews as a people, that Israel as an entire nation, might one day be grafted back into the olive tree? This is a pressing question. Some find an affirmative answer in Romans 11:24 and succeeding verses with their promises that the blindness currently darkening the eyes of the nation will be lifted when ‘the fulness of the Gentiles be come in,’ and then ‘all Israel shall be saved’ (v. 26). It is said that toward the end of the age, shortly before the Lord returns, a mighty revival amongst the Jews will take place such that they return *en masse* to the Messiah whom they once rejected.

Regardless of how appealing this idea might be there are at least three grounds

for thinking that it is not what the Spirit of God is saying. In the first place the text does not actually state that the 'blindness in part' will be lifted. In the second place, the apostle says in verse 26 'so [= thus or in this way] all Israel shall be saved' not 'then all Israel shall be saved.'

Thirdly, it should be remembered that it was never the Jews as a people in their entirety who were cut off from the olive tree. As we have seen, the tree was not uprooted and destroyed but only pruned of its unbelieving branches (v. 20). The blindness was not complete, it was only in part (v. 25). The point of Paul's argument throughout the chapter is that 'God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew' (v. 2). Thus the olive tree remains, and the basis for the remaining branches is not physical descent from Abraham but, as ever, there being 'a remnant according to the election of grace' (v. 5), just like Paul himself (v. 1) and the seven thousand in Elijah's day who would not bow the knee to Baal (v. 4). Both then and now by God's grace natural branches are grafted back into their own olive tree (v. 24).

It is only with this in mind that we are able to understand verses 12 and 15. On the face of it these verses seem to suggest that some future generation of Jews will be saved in its entirety, but that would be to take them out of context. Let us remind ourselves of what they say:

¹² Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?

¹⁵ For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?

In these verses we have reference to the 'fall' and 'diminishing' of the Jews, and their

'casting away'. These terms refer to the Jews' descent into unbelief, their rejection of the gospel, and the subsequent severing of their branches from the olive tree. This has, says Paul, occasioned the enriching of the Gentile world with the riches of salvation, even 'the reconciling of the world' to God. He then goes on to argue that if this has been the blessing occasioned by the fall and casting away of the Jews, how much greater will be the blessing, how much more wonderful will be the work of God, that accompanies their 'fulness' or their 'receiving'?

So what is this 'fulness' and 'receiving' of the Jews? Does it mean that in the end times the Jews as a special people and nation will be restored to favour with God and be saved? Does *fulness* refer to all the Jews, or at least all those living at a certain time? It is helpful to look further down the chapter to verse 25 where the word *fulness* appears again. Paul is speaking now of 'the fulness of the Gentiles' (v. 25) but quite clearly he is not saying that *all* the Gentiles must be saved in order for their 'fulness' to be come in. He is speaking of a definite number, a number that must be completed, made up, or *filled*. He is referring to that which fills or completes the number, the very last Gentile to be saved and gathered into the church according to God's eternal electing decree.

This helps us to understand the idea of the fulness of the Jews in verse 12. Here too the apostle is speaking of that which fills or completes the number, in this case the very last elect Jew to be saved and gathered into the church. The *fulness* is that which completes the total number of the 'people which he foreknew' (v. 2), the sum of all the remnants 'according to the election of grace' (v. 5). In other words, it is the 'all Israel' of sovereign election (*cf.* v. 26). That filling is being accomplished day by day and one day will be completed. In this way, or *so*, as we have it

in our Bible, 'all Israel shall be saved.' When that happens there will be a blessing for the church that appears even more glorious than its reconciliation to God for it will be 'life from the dead' (v. 15).

This leaves one final question: what is this 'life from the dead'? Well, in the first place, it must be said that the apostle is not merely using a rhetorical flourish here. He is not saying that the blessing will be *like* life from the dead. Commentators who view the passage as predicting the conversion of the whole nation of Israel at the end of time, see this Jewish revival as having such a spiritually awakening effect on the entire Gentile world that the only suitable metaphor is 'life from the dead.' But Paul is not being metaphorical. He is not saying it will be *like* life from the dead but that it will *be* life from the dead. Just as the fall of the Jew meant reconciliation, so his fulness and receiving will mean life from the dead.

There is no more reason to treat the expression 'life from the dead' figuratively than there is to treat the word 'reconciling' in the same way. Rather, when we give it the full literal force of *resurrection* the meaning becomes wonderfully clear. The fulness of the Jews will herald the resurrection-life of glory with Christ. What we have now is precious, namely, reconciliation with God, and no one can take that away from us, but what we will have then will be more blessed by far. And so vital is the place of the Jew in the church of Jesus Christ, so intimate is the church's unity of Jew with Gentile, that the resurrection of the dead cannot take place until the very last elect Jew is saved, converted, and gathered into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Only then will we Gentiles know the blessedness of resurrection-glory.

Where is boasting?

The prophet Zechariah records, 'Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come

to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages and nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you' (Zechariah 8:23). The picture here is of the Jew setting out on his journey to the temple in Jerusalem, but as he does so there are Gentiles clutching on to his clothes. Expressing humility and at the same time true faith, like the woman who touched the hem of Jesus' garment, they insist that they go with him. There is a willingness and eagerness on their part because they recognise and believe that God is with him. It is possible that the words 'him that is a Jew' refer chiefly to Christ himself since he alone is the Jew who leads the elect of all the nations up to the house of God and to the new Jerusalem that is above.

Gentiles have no grounds for boasting and in Romans 11 Paul is at pains to impress this upon his Christian Gentile readers. Yes, natural branches had been broken off the olive tree so that they might be grafted in among the remaining Jewish branches, but this is no reason for them to boast against those rejected branches. On the contrary, there is every reason for humility for they are the *wild* tree, outsiders who by free and sovereign grace have been grafted in to the cultivated tree to partake of its 'root and fatness.' Paul reminds them, as a remedy for boasting, that it is not they who support the root but the root that supports them. All the spiritual blessings that they enjoy stem from the root of that cultivated tree. Robert Haldane put it like this:

The Jews received no advantage from the Gentiles; but, on the contrary, the Gentiles have received much from the Jews... The Gentile believers become the children of Abraham, and all the blessings they enjoy are in virtue of that relation. Hence the covenant (Jeremiah

31:31) includes all believers; yet it is said only to be made with the house of Israel and Judah.⁴

It is true that Jewish branches were rejected and felled by God in order to make room for Gentile ones, but why were the Jewish branches broken off? It was because of their unbelief! And on what basis are Gentile branches grafted in? Superiority in the sight of God? Good works and merit? Not at all. It is by faith alone! And faith is the gift of God sovereignly bestowed on whom he wills, leaving no room for arrogance and pride.

'Be not high-minded', warns the apostle, 'but fear' (v. 20). We might think of faith and fear as contradictory graces but they are not, they are complementary. It is by faith that we learn to fear ourselves and to distrust all confidence in our own strength and feelings while placing absolute trust and confidence in the Lord who has saved us. The apostle reminds us elsewhere that our salvation is to be worked out 'with fear and trembling' (Philippians 2:12; cf. 1 Peter 1:17).

For this reason too there should be no quarter given to anti-Semitic sentiment in

⁴ Robert Haldane, *Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans*, Vol. IV, (Louisville, KY: The Sovereign Grace Book Club, 1956), p. 538.

the heart of the Gentile believer. Be it far from us. It is only the grace of God that makes us to differ from the rejected natural branches. It is true that those natural branches rejected the Lord of glory, sending Messiah to a cross, but how careful Scripture is to record that they did so 'with the Gentiles' (Acts 4:27). It is the sin of every believer, whether Jew or Gentile, that nailed him there.

If we are a Gentile believer we owe our Jewish brethren an immense spiritual debt, one that was felt and openly acknowledged by the early church. Setting an example to us all of doctrine being outworked in practical godliness, it was this sense of indebtedness that moved the Greek Christians to send financial aid to the suffering Jewish believers in Jerusalem (Romans 15:25-27). 'If the Gentiles have come to share in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings.'⁵

But the greatest debt we owe is to the God of the covenant who only by his grace has grafted us into his olive tree that we might yet partake of blessings which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, even life from the dead. 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!' (Romans 11:33). ¶

⁵ William Hendriksen's translation of the second half of Romans 15:27.

The Gospel Magazine Trust holds a complete set of bound volumes of the magazine from 1766 to date apart from the years 1772, 1799 and 1824. Additionally the volume for 1783 contains only January–September, missing October–December and January 1784, which was the final issue before a break in publication. If any of our readers can assist in locating the missing volumes with a view to acquisition, please contact the Editor. The set of volumes is currently held at St Mary's Library, Castle Street, Reading, and is available for reference and study *by prior arrangement*. In addition a full set of issues has been scanned to the website at www.gospelmagazine.org.uk.

THOUGHTS ON THE CROSS OF CHRIST

BY WILLIAM T. FOLEY (London)

The great work of salvation was accomplished by Jesus Christ through His crucifixion. This was the complete redemption of God's people in both the Old Testament and New Testament eras. The cross brings the full and free atonement. The cross was absolutely necessary if anyone was to be saved.

We only learn exclusively and only through opening the Scriptures, that God Himself, without the aid of humanity, provided salvation by sending Jesus Christ to die on the cross. The cross alone was always God's intended method by which to bring salvation to sinners.

The cross of Christ, and the terrible wrath of God poured upon Christ on the cross, shows as the uncompromising reminder, that the atonement of Christ is an absolutely essential doctrine of the Christian faith.

Each believer has an absolute duty to study the Cross-work of Christ and to preach and teach the Cross to God's people.

Unbelievers think the Cross of Christ is unnecessary, and that Christ dying on the Cross means that He was a victim of Jewish hatred and the harsh administration of Roman justice.

As believers we should contemplate the

sufficiency and great sacrifice - never to be repeated in the Roman mass - that was accomplished on the Cross by Christ alone.

Wonderful to think analytically that Christ is the only way of salvation. How could any so-called Christian minister say that Buddha, or Islam or any other foreign religion can be taken into consideration by God in the Salvation of a sinner?

It is pure fiction and the product of a sinful imagination to argue that salvation can be achieved by either individual merit, religious works or otherwise.

The Christian Church must preach and teach, once again, with conviction, that Christ alone on the Cross purchased a wonderful redemption for sinners.

God is most displeased with theologians or preachers or teachers who seek to offer or find alternatives or methods or religiously orientated practices, to the only and exclusive way of salvation, which is through the atonement, or penal substitution of Christ alone!

Christ's work was totally accepted by God the Father, so we would be wise also, and only, to trust God's approval of Christ, as God's appointed Saviour of sinners. ¶

By the word Grace we are to understand God's free, sovereign, good pleasure, whereby he acteth in Christ towards his people. Grace and mercy therefore are terms that have their distinct significations. Mercy signifies pitifulness, or a running-over of infinite bowels to objects in a miserable and helpless condition. But grace signifies that God still acts in this as a free agent, not being wrought upon by the misery of the creature, as a procuring cause, but of his own princely mind.

John Bunyan

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LORD'S DAY

BY NINOS A. HADJIROUSOU (Cheltenham)

The Lord's Day a Creation Ordinance

Genesis 2:2–3 'And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.'

Here we see the ordination of the Sabbath day. That God 'rested'. It is literally translated as God 'sabbathed' which is the same root of the word 'the Sabbath'. This is a day where God ceased from his work of all creation. And the language in v.3 indicates that God made this day a holy day. That is, he 'sanctified it', he set it apart for man to be blessed. The word in Hebrew *qadash* is used in reference of being ceremonially clean or morally pure. Something set apart from uncleanness. It also can mean to appoint, to preserve, to keep something clean and holy. And the reason why God desired this particular day, from all other days, to be remembered is because he said that 'in it he had rested from all his work' that is, his work of creation. And the reason why God did so was not because he became weary and needed to sit down and take a break. We know that God by nature is never tired. He works everything for creation and sustains all things by the power of his word constantly. God never stops working his providence and his Sovereign rule over all things.

So how can we understand what it means God 'rested'?

Rest here means that God is setting a teaching pattern for mankind to follow. God

is teaching man that, since God has stopped from working, after six days, therefore man also on the seventh day must stop and observe and remember this unique Day as a Holy Day. It is God's day. He said it is 'my holy day' (Isaiah 58:13).

There are some key factors that I want us to notice here:

First, God sanctified the seventh day in the time of Creation.

'And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it' (Genesis 2:3). In Genesis 2 we notice that on the seventh day the Lord God blessed it. Why not the sixth day? Or the second day?

Because as we read in verse 1 God finished his work of creation. And secondly, since God created man to be a worshipper, since man was created to have intimacy and delight with his maker, God planned that after six days labour, for the glory of God, man would have a whole day to enjoy his Master. Though we are always close to God even in those six days, God knew that man is in need of a whole day to contemplate and to delight in the works and the attributes of God. Man needs a real spiritual day with his Lord, full of Christ and full of Gospel.

Hence, God, instead of creating the world in a split second or a minute (which he could have done), he specifically and particularly chose to bless one day. This implies that the planning of six days' labour and one day of the week to keep it holy, is not a temporal decision as some may think. God did not do this without having a plan. God is showing us a pattern to follow since we are image

bearers of God.

Out of all the other days, God sets apart a whole day for the contemplation of divine things and the free exercise for man to do public and private worship to God.

He sanctified it for this reason: as God rested and stopped work, so it must be for man also to stop from any labours he is doing for God in the world, and to give himself to rest in the Lord. Rest means that God desires man to delight in him alone (Isaiah 58:13–14). That is why after Christ's Resurrection, God moved this Holy Day from the sixth day to the first day, for man's sake (1 Corinthians 16:2, Mark 2:27–28), so that man would take delight in worshipping God. That is what he was created for.

Secondly, this is God's first express indication of his divine will in relation to man.

From Genesis 1:1–31 God has been working. Verse 31 says 'And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.'

In Genesis 1:27 God tells us that it was his divine will and decree to create man in his own image, to make him lord of the animals and keeper of the Garden, and to be fruitful and to multiply (Genesis 1:28). So, first, God's divine will was to create man, which he did, detailed in Genesis 2:7. Then he made the garden of Eden, detailed in Genesis 2:8. Then he creates a help meet for Adam out of Adam in Genesis 2:18, which is Eve (Genesis 2:21–25). Thus we see the institution of marriage as a creation ordinance. All this was done on the sixth day (Genesis 1:31). After God has completed his work of creation, God blessed the day and sanctified it. And as God has sanctified the seventh day holy, so it was God's divine will for man to imitate his creator, by keeping that day holy (Genesis 2:2–3). This was God's first act of expressing his divine will for man to worship him.

Take a close look here. Why would God bless the Sabbath or sanctify it unless it was for his creatures? God lacks nothing and needs nothing more. God is self-sustaining. Remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ in Mark 2:27 when he said that the Sabbath was made for man. It is God's gift to man. In Exodus 16:29 God says that the Sabbath was 'given' to man so that man would have a whole day to spend time worshipping and contemplating on God. He would have communion with him more than other days of the week. The fact that the first obligation God laid on man regarding worship was to keep the Sabbath holy shows the importance of the hallowed day.

Secondly, it no doubt proves that this day appointed to be holy and sanctified and blessed is a creation ordinance instituted by God.

If God instituted this at this period of time, then we can surely say that it is still in force today along with the Fourth Commandment. Man ought to be blessed by God and observe the Lord's Day. It cannot therefore be a temporal ceremonial command, since it is a creation ordinance.

Bishop J.C. Ryle wrote, 'There are five things that were given to the father of the human race in the day that he was made. God gave him a dwelling place, a work to do, a command to observe, a help meet to be his companion, and a Sabbath Day to keep. I am utterly unable to believe that it was in the mind of God that there ever should be a time when Adam's children should keep no Sabbath.'¹

Defending God's creation ordinance

On 20 September, 2009, the pastor of Grace Community Church, Dr. John MacArthur,

¹ J.C. Ryle, Biblical Thoughts about the Lord's Day, from Free Grace Broadcaster, issue 233, international edition, The Lord's Day, Chapel Library, 2015, p.7

preached a sermon that tried to explain why the Sabbath is not binding to the Christian today as an obligation. His sermon entitled 'Understanding the Sabbath' began with an introduction to the fact that many great men of the faith such as the Reformers, the Puritans, preachers of the Great Awakening, London Baptist Confession, Westminster Confession, all believed that the Sabbath is to be kept holy according to the Fourth Commandment. Then, MacArthur began an exposition of Genesis 2, to teach that there was no law given to Adam to keep the Sabbath holy. We will look at his arguments, and then carefully answer them.

MacArthur stated his belief of the Fourth Commandment:

'There is no question about the other nine commandments being permanent and binding. We are to have no other gods. We are never to make an idol. We are to worship only the true and living God. We are never to take the name of the Lord in vain. We are not to dishonour our father or mother, but rather give them honour. We are not to murder, commit adultery, steal, lie, or covet. Those are all moral mandates, moral commands, with the exception of verses 8 through 11, the fourth command regarding the sabbath.'²

MacArthur does not regard the Fourth Commandment as a Moral law, as an obligation to keep. He regards it as Jewish ceremonial keeping, that is, as part of the Mosaic Law on Mount Sinai.

In explaining the text, his emphasis was in verse 2-3 with the word 'rest'. He said:

'But what it tells us when he rested is really that he was satisfied. And that takes you back to 1:31, "God saw all that he had made, and behold, it was very good."

² <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/90-379/understanding-the-sabbath>

It was a perfect work, and it was the rest of utter satisfaction.'³

That summed up his conclusion regarding the Sabbath. He added:

'Now, you do not hear in those three verses anything about people resting. There's nothing here about man resting, nothing here about Adam resting, and because he was without sin and a perfect man in every sense, there was no depletion of his energies when he was doing whatever the simple tending of the garden called for. There's no need to have a day of rest for man. What would he rest from? He's living in a paradise with no labour, and no sweat, and no expended and lost energy.'⁴

'There's no sabbath law given here for Adam, none at all. Nothing is said about this day being a day of worship. It doesn't say anything about that. It doesn't prescribe anything for anyone. It is isolated completely to God.'⁵

'He designed that that seventh day would be a special memorial to his creation and its original perfection. This is so important for you to understand. This is a day to be elevated above all other days as a memorial to remember the glory of God's perfection in creation. Every seventh day from here on out would be a reminder that God in six days created the universe in perfection.'⁶

Though this is a long quote from MacArthur, I would not have put it unless it was helpful and informative for us to carefully examine his theology, which is one of the distinctions of the 'New Calvinism'.

Hence, if we were to simply review what MacArthur is actually saying he is

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

simply teaching that all the reformers, all the Puritans and most Christians throughout the centuries got it wrong. His conclusion is that there is no Sabbath law given to Adam. Rather, it is simply a memorial of God's perfection in creation. It has nothing to do with the worship of God. This day of creation is like any other day of the week. Consequently, it can be treated as an optional day for worshipping God, but not an obligation since, as MacArthur teaches, it is a Jewish ceremonial Sabbath.

His logic in hermeneutics is basically this: 'it does not explicitly say anything about Adam doing something on the Lord's day as a form of worship. Therefore, since it does not say anything, we must interpret the text to mean that there is actually no Sabbath keeping'.

Now let us take this logic very carefully and apply it elsewhere.

MacArthur said: 'There's no sabbath law given here for Adam, none at all. Nothing is said about this day being a day of worship. It doesn't say anything about that. It doesn't prescribe anything for anyone. It is isolated completely to God.'

The objections that MacArthur presents are:

- a) There is no specific Sabbath law given to Adam,
 - b) It says nothing about being a day of worship, and
 - c) it is isolated completely to God.
- We take each objection in turn.

Considering Genesis 4

MacArthur's first argument is: there is no specific Sabbath law given to Adam.

There are two sufficient answers:

First, the sacrifices of Cain and Abel.

Let us focus on this wording 'there is no specific'. If you look at Genesis 4 you will find

Abel and Cain offering sacrifices to God. No one has any trouble seeing this and there is no debate about it. Yet, what people don't notice is that God in the Scriptures did not specifically instruct Abel or Cain to offer worship to him. The Scriptures do not show us God saying 'Abel, I want you to worship me now. Here is the "to do" list.' God does not write anything in his book about what exactly he said to Abel or Cain. Nevertheless, there are some important things to observe here. We observe Abel doing actions. He is worshipping God. We observe that he is offering something specific to God. What does this tell us? It logically implies two things: that someone told him exactly what kind of worship is to be offered to God.

But nowhere do we find God in the Scriptures specifically instructing 'this is the kind of things I want you to do for me'.

The question we must ask then is: 'from where did Abel get his instructions?' Answer: it was the revealed will of God. It implies that since Abel's offering was acceptable to God, it is because God instructed him how. God told him what his will is concerning sacrifice. Abel was righteous with his act of worship before God. A righteous man only desires to follow and obey according to the prescriptive will of God. In other words, God says it, we do.

But does this relate to our examining text in Genesis 2? If Abel received instructions from God to worship him with a specific offering, with a prescription, then logically it would imply that Abel was worshipping God on a specific day. And according to Scripture alone, there is no other day that we know of which was appointed by God to be kept holy and worship him, other than the one He commanded Adam to keep in Genesis 2.

What has been passed on to Adam was then passed on to the next generation, Cain and Abel. It is biblical to also be aware that

God instructs fathers in the homes to teach their children the council of God and pass it on to the next generation. As the Lord has instructed Moses and the family 'to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged' (Deuteronomy 6:2). 'When thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord our God hath commanded you?' (Deuteronomy 6:20–25).

Secondly, the law written in the heart of man.

In Genesis 1:26–27 we read that man was created in the image of God. The words 'image' and 'likeness' are both used in verse 26–27 which implies that man was naturally created in the likeness of God. As image bearers of God we are created with a moral mind which bears the blueprint of God. The Apostle refers to this code within our conscience in Romans 2:14–15 'For when the Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts.'

Paul's argument in Romans 1–2 is that the law of God did not begin to exist when Moses arrived on Mount Sinai. Rather, it was naturally planted in the hearts of men. This proves that every man is created in the likeness of God. Though sin after Adam's fall (Genesis 3) corrupted man with original sin, God's 'blue

print' on man, as an image bearer was not fully destroyed (1 Corinthians 11:7, 15:49). If this is true, then Adam was commanded to keep the law of God which was written in his heart. For the fall man was under the covenant of works. As a moral creature, man was given a command and a condition with a warning (Genesis 2:16–17). It does not show the reader specifically that God commands man to keep the Sabbath. Nevertheless, since Scripture alone reveals to us that man has the law of God written in his heart, we conclude that Adam obeyed the law of God which included the keeping of the Sabbath. This was God's prescription.

Therefore, MacArthur's hermeneutic for seeking a 'specific' text or verse or a 'particular' sentence is miserably weak. For if any well-grounded Christian in Scripture would use this pattern of thinking in every text in the Bible, he would have to then reject the doctrine of the Trinity, the doctrine of cessationism and other important doctrines. Charismatics make the same excuse here made by MacArthur, saying 'there is no specific rule that speaks about cessationism'. Yet the doctrine has been proven throughout Church history to be true. The Bible does not speak of 'three persons' or the word 'trinity'. Liberals make the same excuse by rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity. Hence, it is not right to conclude Genesis 2 interpretation with 'no specifics'.

We can show from the Scriptures that God has given us a prescription. We can also know from God's word alone that Scripture will interpret Scripture.

TO BE CONCLUDED

The righteous man makes godliness his gain; the wicked man makes gain his godliness.

Ralph Venning

FORMER DAYS

BEING A SUMMARY OF PAST ISSUES FROM *THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE*

250 years ago: May & June 1768

The May issue opens with a treatment of the First Commandment. 'Though the First Commandment may seem only to forbid, yet it may be truly said to require things of us; because it is a rule for the right understanding of the Commandments, that where a sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded; and where a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is forbidden: and so we find the Scripture explains the Law, Isaiah 58:13, Matthew 15:4–6.' May we remember this rule when we read or hear the Lord's commandments. The same rule is applied to the Second Commandment, which follows.

A portrait of John Chrysostom leads into a biography of the golden-mouthed preacher. He is quoted as having said, 'I fear nothing but sin.' It is fashionable these days to reject the Church Fathers as having been in error, or the source of later error, over many matters. In truth, they were flesh and blood as we are, and some were at times capable of serious mistakes. However, they were also capable of expressing truth in a timeless manner. Furthermore, they lived in a society that, while ostensibly Christian, was full of opposition to the gospel. They have much to teach us, if we read with care. The biographies that appeared in *The Gospel Magazine* are a good place to being.

The Dialogue between Christian and Truth follows, taking up 'some of the similitudes and metaphors in Solomon's Song, or the Canticles.' The point covered under several headings is that Solomon is a type of Christ. There is much comfort and blessing here for the child of God.

Question 38 of Casuistical Divinity comes

next, being, 'What cause has every true Christian to glory in the cross of Christ?' Six short answers are given. They are followed by Question 39, 'How doth faith establish the law?' Six more short answers show that this is so.

Cases of conscience arising from weakness of faith are dealt with next, from the text, 'If any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever' (John 6:51). Reasons why faith may be weak are explored, and the humble believer is pointed to Christ, and to his finished work, for comfort and relief. No doubt many congregations would be greatly helped if preachers were to attend to this aspect of their sermons, and give careful consideration to the conditions of their hearers—not the felt needs the hearers might admit to, but the actual needs arising from our being weak and sinful creatures.

The case of the Six Students is dealt with by George Whitefield, in which he reproduces in sections a letter written to the Vice-Chancellor, with comment. Lack of space in the issue meant that the article would be finished in the next issue. The month ends with Poetry, including a poem which attempts to describe heaven.

To write the love, the boundless love
Of God the Lord on high
Would drain the sea, the parchment fill,
Though stretched from sky to sky.

The June issue continues the exposition of the Commandments. The Third, 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain', is given a wider treatment than some writers have managed. A broad range of sins are discussed, from empty worship to the

casual use of God's holy name in conversation. The commandment is not restricted to oath-taking, as some expositors have it. The same careful treatment is given to the Fourth Commandment, which is taken to permit three things; works of piety (mainly the worship of God); works of mercy; and works of necessity. No license is granted for laxity, frivolity or profit.

Augustine of Hippo—called the Great—is the subject of the portrait and biography. His influence on the Protestant Reformers ought to be sufficiently well known for us to be careful to read him. He was a great expounder of Paul's doctrine, which was why the Reformers found him so invaluable. It is true that some of his statements were misapplied by the medieval Church to justify wrong doctrine and practice, and it is true that he was capable of errors. However, his life is a wonderful testimony to sovereign grace, and his teaching is of immense value today.

The Dialogue between Christian and Truth continues the examination of similitudes and metaphors in the Song of Solomon. 'Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth' (1:2) is taken to teach 'the pledges, embraces and manifestations of [Christ's] love.' In the exposition the beauty and love of Christ are set forth most wonderfully.

Casuistical Divinity, Question 40, asks concerning the marks by which we may know that we have indeed been born again. Nine brief answers follow, each with at least one Scripture reference to show its veracity. Question 41 asks, 'What kind of remembrance of Christ ought we to have in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper?' The answers centre around a remembering of Christ's sufferings, which presupposes our knowing him, for we cannot remember what we do not know.

Whitefield's account of the Six Students is continued. Readers are encouraged to

purchase the letter, which was then being sold for 4d by Dilly in the Poultry.

A helpful treatment of the subject of Perfection comes next. The author suggests that, scripturally, the word may be taken four ways. We are in a state of perfection if we are justified, for then are we sanctified. As such, we are accepted of God who is holy, just and perfect. There is a perfection of parts, whereby the babe in Christ is as secure in Christ as the strong man. Whether they are babes or strong men they are truly Christ's, and so they are, in that sense, perfect. Then there is the perfection of degrees, whereby Noah may be said to be perfect, but only in comparison with other men. Finally there is that perfection which will belong to the spirits of just men made perfect in heaven.

Two pages are given over to a letter 'from a pious lady to two ladies her children.' In it, the mother speaks of her prayers for her daughters, who, she has been told, are under conviction of sin and are seeking Christ. She advises and exhorts them to close with Christ, that they may lay hold of the most precious treasure there is. Happiness is before them, if only they will cast themselves on the Saviour.

The issue closes with Poetry, of which the last two items are of note. One is a piece entitled, 'The emptiness of the world', and speaks of the comparison between peace with Christ and the vanity of the unbelieving life. The second is a fine expression of thankfulness for forgiveness through the blood of Christ.

200 years ago: May & June 1818

A sermon on drawing near to God opens the May issue. The reader is reminded that we are to draw near 'having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience' and 'our bodies washed with pure water.' The way to the throne of God is open only to sinners, who must come through the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is followed by a lengthy critique of a dispute over the personality of the Holy Spirit. Some writers were then denying this doctrine, and claiming that the biblical references to the Holy Spirit were meant to indicate God himself, or his influence. The writer, 'Julius P. H.', uses various arguments to expose the unscripturalness of the opinion.

An exposition of John 16:14 comes next, on the work of the Holy Spirit to testify of Christ.

Good works, under the title of Progressive Sanctification, are dealt with next. Dr Hawker is the target of the piece, although the author affirms his admiration for the Doctor's preaching generally. His concern is that some expressions give rise to the view that our good works are more and more acceptable to God, and so contribute to our salvation. Of course, such a view is highly dangerous, and the author is correct to warn against it. Whether this is exactly what Dr Hawker intended to say is another matter; it is the effect on the hearers that concerns the writer of the letter.

Upsilon writes on the Robe of Righteousness. A Stripling writes on God's appointment, and takes up a question arising from Ephesians 2:3, that the saints in Ephesus were by nature children of wrath even as others. A previous correspondent had wondered how any could be both a child of God and a child of wrath. The author's reply is that, by nature, all are children of wrath, but that Christ—who was appointed to wrath for us—has satisfied God's wrath on behalf of the elect.

Hannah writes on the eternal love of God, and this is followed by comment on Hebrews 12:25ff.

A question raised in a previous issue, on whether the body can believe without the head—in other words, did Christ believe on behalf of his people—is answered. In short,

while it is true that Christ died for, in the sense of on behalf of, his people, it is not true that he believed on their behalf. We must have 'the faith of the Son of God' (Galatians 2:20) which faith we have through the inward working of the Holy Spirit.

Further correspondence is concerned with the 'new light' of the early nineteenth century, which, it is said, is no light. There was much confusion at that time over the doctrine of the Trinity, and in particular over the work of the Holy Spirit. The correspondent whose writing we are considering draws particular attention to an opinion of Dr Watts, who wrote that our natural faculties, once influenced by the Holy Spirit, are sufficient for understanding spiritual truth. This implies that man is more capable of receiving the truth than the doctrine of total depravity teaches. The error arises, it is asserted, from the belief that no supernatural work is needed to bring man to salvation, only the right encouragements. Although the language may have changed, the opinion has not; how often do preachers contend that all we need to do is follow some example from Jesus in order to become the people he wants us to be? The necessity of regeneration is effectively denied.

The final piece is highly critical of *The Evangelical Magazine* for publishing an article which argued that those of 'evangelical principles' are less generous towards Christian work than others.

The June issue opens with a sermon on the blessedness of God's people. This is followed by a short piece on our knowing the Father through the Son. A correspondent shares some (lengthy) sermon notes on several texts, and then an old letter is published with a forthcoming general election in mind. In it, the author compares our calling and election—which is all of grace, and

to uncorruption—with the corrupt practices of elections in his day. He also considers the suitability or otherwise of candidates. There are lessons for us here, when we come to vote.

The article on the work of the Holy Spirit, begun in the previous issue, continues, and another (from an earlier month) on the Spirit's role in applying Christ's finished work to us.

The exposition of Hebrews has reached chapter 13, and the Theological Review takes up a published sermon on regeneration. In it, the author contends for the heresy of baptismal regeneration.

A review of a work on 'The Mystic Babylon' is highly critical of the author who, it is said, denounces Rome on the one hand, and builds her up on the other. That the writer of the offending book is a Presbyterian is noted with care. Another book is dismissed in a few lines, while one on 'Progressive sanctification requisite to salvation' is held up before the reader. 'In order to find out the meaning of this writer, we have perused his tract twice, but are as ignorant of progressive sanctification, as if we had never read it.' The work contains more than eighty rules for promoting sanctification. Some are external—do not take snuff, chew or smoke tobacco, do not loiter in front of print shops—and some are internal—pray at least seven times a day. The Ten Commandments are added at the end of the list.

The next work under review is a reprint of a tract on prayer by John Bunyan. 'There is more spirituality, sober sense, and judicious observations, contained in this little tract' than in hundreds of longer books published on the subject.

A published letter to the Prince Consort on the death of Princess Charlotte is treated. The reviewers reminds his readers that, before God, there is no difference between the death of a princess and that of a poor

commoner. The letter writer's attempt to make the royal bereavement a message from God is not well received by the reviewer.

The final review is of a work which takes up some remarks by Dr Hawker, to which the author objects. The reviewer condemns the author for being dull, and of trying to attract attention to himself by climbing on Dr Hawker's reputation. However, given that the heart of the objection is to Hawker's hyper-Calvinism, one feels that the author of the work may have been treated unfairly.

100 years ago: May & June 1918

A sermon on the blessedness of God's people is followed by one on knowing and believing the love of God. Next comes one on receiving the blessings and mercies of God. A sermon by the late Editor, the Rev. James Ormiston, on the everlasting arms is followed by one on 'A sea of glass mingled with fire' from Revelation 15:2.

The series on Jacob's sons continues, with an examination of the way in which Jacob's blessing on Judah was fulfilled through the nation's history. The spiritual state of the nation is reviewed next, with the opinion expressed that there was much hearing, but little doing of the Word of God.

The inspiration of Scripture is the next subject dealt with, followed by a sermon on 1 Corinthians 15:19. 'Something secret' speaks of that which the Lord makes known to his own. An obituary of Bishop Straton, who was faithful to Reformation principles is followed by a brief exposition of part of Psalm 119. Correspondence, and further warnings of the rise of Romanising tendencies in the Established Church, lead into reviews, of which there is one. This is a tract on Election, which is well received.

During the month of June, sermons included 'The whole church at prayer', from

Acts 12:5 (It was prayer in harmony with the divine will; It was collective prayer; It was earnest prayer; It was prayer offered to the right quarter; It was answered prayer); 'The effects of redemption, from Hebrews 9:12, and on our Great High Priest, Hebrews 4:14. The works of the devil, which Christ came to destroy, 1 John 3:8, are treated next. Thoughts on hidden things manifested, from Colossians 1:26, the fifth instalment of Jacob's sons and Moses' tribes, and the next part of the series on the inspiration of Scripture (The Higher Criticism: its folly and its wickedness) lead into A word of promise for 1918, from Isaiah 55:11. A report of the memorial plaque to the late Rev. James Ormiston, thoughts on Psalm 119:148–151, and a brief section of correspondence lead into the final item.

In June 1916 the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Bourne, published a Letter to the Nation in the *Times* and other leading national newspapers. In it he sought to encourage readers to view Romanism as being equally compatible with the national spirit as Protestantism. A reply was published by the United Protestant Council, and a section was printed in *The Gospel Magazine*. It is reproduced below.

Rome's estimate and treatment of the Bible present one of the most cogent of reasons for refusing to accept her as either a spiritual or a social guide.

In opposition to the Reformation principle, that the Bible is the one and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice, the Church of Rome at the Council of Trent authoritatively declared the insufficiency of Scripture, putting alongside of it, and indeed above it, in the creed, tradition apostolic and ecclesiastical. The consistent policy of Rome has been to treat the Bible as if it were a wild beast that might hurt people when not held

in on a priestly leash, or a poison that would destroy them unless administered in homeopathic doses and along with a due admixture of the saving antidote supplied in Romish annotations. The reason of this is not far to seek. Rome fears Bible circulation because the Bible is hostile to her claims, and she keeps the Bible out of the hands of the people because its plan of salvation and its relation to sin and morality are so different from her own.

Pope Pius VII in 1816 denounced Bible Societies as 'a crafty device by which the very foundations of religion are undermined, a pestilence which must be remedied and abolished.' The authorized Catholic Dictionary records, with apparent satisfaction, that Leo XII, Pius VIII, and Pius IX have likewise, in their turn, warned Catholics against the Protestant Bible Societies. Leo XIII, in 1897, prohibited 'all versions in any vernacular language made by non-Catholics, and especially those published by the Bible Societies.' In the same document, he altogether prohibited 'vernacular versions even by Catholics, unless approved by the Holy See, or published under the vigilant care of the bishops, with annotations.' Rome, of course, swears by the very faulty Latin Vulgate translation, and the same Pope prescribed that the use of 'editions of the original text, if published by non-Catholics, even though apparently edited in a faithful and complete manner,' is permitted 'only to those engaged in theological and Biblical studies.'

It is sometimes alleged that in recent years Rome has modified her policy, as in France and Italy, but there is little foundation for such a statement. The French translation of the Gospels by Lasserre, to which Pope Leo XIII gave

his sanction, ran into twenty-one editions in the course of a few months; but the Vatican became alarmed, and the Book was put on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. Thus the world witnessed the perplexing spectacle of an infallible Pontiff first blessing and then banning the same volume within about a year.

The St. Jerome Society in Italy, too, which issued, with Papal sanction, the Gospels and Acts in Italian, with notes, has now lost its independence by being annexed to a department of the Curia—with characteristic results. In Malta, one of the most priest-ridden places on God's earth, nothing would induce the local Roman Catholic authorities to permit the publication of a Maltese translation even of the St. Jerome Gospels, which the Pope had approved. As nine-tenths of the population do not know Italian, but only Maltese—which is a patois largely Arabic—this means that to the inhabitants of this British dependency the Bible is made a sealed book. Bible-burning, by the hands or at the mandate of the priest, is no infrequent experience of the poor people in Ireland: and, as has been pithily observed, 'There is only one Church which would burn the Bible, and

that is the Church which burnt the men who gave us the Bible.'

Akin to Rome's maltreatment of the Holy Scriptures is her connivance at the desecration of God's Holy Day of Rest. But on this we cannot dwell. While Saints' days are multiplied, it is notorious that in Popish lands, apart from canonical hours and observances, the Lord's day is freely given over either to secular work or to frivolous amusement. Thus one of the greatest boons conferred on man—for whose conservation and appropriation to sacred uses, so far as possible even in war time, President Wilson, as a Christian patriot and philanthropist, uttered himself so manfully the other day—is meanly filched away.

Last of all, there is a review of David Baron's exposition of *The Visions and Prophecies of Zechariah*. Baron was Jewish, and knew Hebrew; by his own admission, it was when he saw the light of Christ and his gospel that the true meaning of Scripture began to become clear to him. Baron's work is still valued today.

These issues may all be found on the web site, gospelmagazine.org.uk.

Though thy grace be little for the present, yet it will grow for the future to a greater measure. The little grain of mustard seed (the least of seeds) will in time grow up to a tree. Grace is fitly compared to leaven, which is of a spreading nature; to the cloud which the prophet's servant saw, and to the waters of the sanctuary; which did all increase. An infant of days shall proceed by degrees, till he become like the Ancient of days, perfect as his heavenly Father is perfect. Naturalists observe, That the seeds of the Cyprus-tree are very small, and yet of them proceeds a very high tree. Such is the birth and growth of grace.

Christopher Love

STUDIES IN II PETER

BY EDWARD MALCOLM (Reading)

2 Peter 3:13

We do indeed look for and haste unto the coming of the day of the Lord, since we pray for this very thing when we say, 'Thy kingdom come'. The promise of the new heavens and the new earth is contained in, among other places, Isaiah 65:17f, Isaiah 30:26, Matthew 13:43, and Romans 8:20–23. We are to read the closing chapters of Revelation in the light of these promises, and we are to be comforted in this present world by them. The great comfort given to us is this, that righteousness makes its home in the new heavens and the new earth. That is, there will be no vying for mastery between righteousness and wickedness, no corrupting presence of sin to discomfort and destroy, and no foothold for temptation to use to try to get a grip on us. This will be the pure kingdom of God, such as David's kingdom was in comparison with all the other kingdoms of the earth.

So our hope of the new creation is not fanciful, but arises from the gracious promises of God through his prophets and apostles to his people down the ages. It is a promise which fits exactly with the whole tenor of Scripture, for to what end does the Lord redeem people who dwell in a fallen world, unless he intends to set them in a world which is itself redeemed from the fall and all its effects? The condition of those who die in faith, but who await the resurrection of the body is made clear in I Thessalonians 4:13ff. What will the order be? Christ will return, and the dead in Christ shall arise first. Then we who remain (those who are alive) at his coming will be caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air. 'So shall we ever be with the Lord'.

Note carefully that Paul wrote these things in order to comfort (v. 18) those who thought that the dead believers had somehow missed out on the resurrection. This shows that they understood the resurrection to occur when Christ returned, and to be the necessary precursor to enjoying the eternal blessings. The apostolic doctrine is this, that those who die will be raised from the dead—and they and we (the living) will be changed, transformed, perfected, given resurrection bodies. Then we will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, as he descends, v. 16. Like the crowds which came out of Jerusalem to welcome in the Lord in his triumphal procession, and like David going out of Jerusalem to welcome in the ark of the covenant, Christ's people will throng to meet him, and to welcome him into his kingdom, the new heavens and the new earth. This is the scriptural doctrine of our eternal state.

2 Peter 3:14

The character of the new heavens and the new earth were described in the previous verse, when the Apostle wrote, 'wherein dwelleth righteousness'. We are not to consider that this means righteousness dwells alongside unrighteousness, but that only righteousness dwells there. So John in his Revelation, describing the blessings of those who will dwell in new Jerusalem, says plainly that certain classes are excluded, 'the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire', 21:8. Again, v. 27, 'There shall in no wise enter into

it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.' And again, 'Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie', 22:15. Since we are told so plainly who will not enter into heaven, it follows that all who express the hope of heaven ought not only to avoid such things, but to actively seek after their opposite. Righteousness can be described as the lack of sin, but it is more properly described as the active doing of that which the Lord loves.

So it is no surprise that the Apostle calls on us to be found in Christ in peace, without spot or blemish. This, again, is the intention of the Letters to the Seven Churches in the early chapters of Revelation, where John describes their sins in such terms. Having peace with Christ is as we described earlier, quoting Psalm 2:12. The only ground of peace is through our being justified by faith.⁷ How does this operate? The answer is simple. By nature we are at enmity with God, 'for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God'.⁸ How might this state of enmity be changed? We must make peace through the propitiating blood of Christ, so that we are accounted righteous, being accepted in the Beloved.⁹ When we are justified by faith we are placed in a right relationship with God. This is because the perfect righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, and our sinful status is imputed to him. Since Christ has already made satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, it follows that what is imputed to him

7 'Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ' Romans 5:1.

8 Romans 3:23.

9 Ephesians 1:6.

from us is no longer accounted as being in need of justice; Christ having died, the sins he bore are considered as dealt with.

What, then, of our ongoing living? What satisfaction is there for sins committed after we are justified by faith? Remember that the justified sinner is now in a right standing with God, is in a state of peace through Jesus Christ. His sins, therefore, are not viewed in the same light as the sins of an unbeliever. The unbeliever heaps up judgment upon himself for all his sins; the justified sinner is no longer viewed as being under wrath, but under righteousness. The sins of the believer are considered as being dealt with in Christ, even those sins committed after the act of justifying. This means, therefore, that God looks upon our living in a different light. Although our deeds are still corrupted through indwelling sin, and although we can produce no perfect work, God is pleased to overlook the corruption in our deeds because they now spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith.¹⁰

Does this mean, therefore, that when we are commanded to be found in Christ in peace, without spot or blame, that we are in fact inherently righteous, and incapable of committing sin? Clearly not, unless we are prepared to confess that we are not believers, since we know we all continue to sin.

At the same time, if we are not fruitful in good works, it follows that we cannot be righteous. If we are not fruitful in good works our claim to being justified by faith rings hollow, for how can we claim to have the gift of faith if the evidence of the gift is absent? When Peter adds that we must be without spot and blemish, he is saying that we are accounted truly righteous for Christ's sake, being washed in the blood of the Lamb.

10 Article XII, 'Of Good Works'.

TO BE CONCLUDED

MINISTRY

BIDEFORD, DEVON: *North Road Chapel*. Consecutive Expository Ministry. AV, *Christian Hymns*. LORD'S DAY 10.45 am and 6.30 pm. *Minister:* Mr R.J. Steward. northroadchapel.org. nrcbideford@gmail.com.

CHELTENHAM. *Providence Baptist Chapel*. Lord's Day services, 10.30 am and 6.30 pm. Bible Study and Prayer Meeting, Wednesdays 7.30 pm. Use AV and *Christian Worship*. *Pastor:* Mr Pooyan Mehrshahi. Tel. 01242 245116.

FRISTON, SUFFOLK: *Baptist Church*, Mill Road IP17 1PH (4 miles from Aldeburgh, 3 miles from Snape Maltings). Lord's Day services: 10.45 am and 2 pm. Bible Study Tuesdays 7.30 pm. AV and *Gospel Hymns*. Reformed Evangelical worship. *Pastor:* Michael Harley. fristonbaptistsuffolk.org.uk. Tel 01728 602657.

SUFFOLK: *Wattisham Chapel*. Evangelical and Reformed services each LORD'S DAY 10.45 am, 2.30 and 6.30 pm. Metrical Psalms and hymns. AV only used. Telephone 01449 612524.

WOLVERHAMPTON: *St Silas Church of England (Continuing)*, 49 Long Street, WV1 1HU. Sunday Morning Prayer 11am. Holy Communion as notified. AV and BCP used. For directions, parking and other details please phone 0747 7704921.

AUDIO MINISTRY

FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND (CONTINUING) *Audio ministry*. For the latest CD list contact Donald Morgan, 7 Cearn Sheileidh, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, HS1 2YW, or email donaldmorgan186@googlemail.com



Reformation Scotland mines the riches of our reformed heritage to produce sound and readable resources.

Visit our website or contact 07462049178 for information by post.
Proceeds from sales are donated to hospices.

www.reformationscotland.org



BRITISH CHURCH NEWSPAPER

The New Protestant Newspaper

NON-DENOMINATIONAL • FORTNIGHTLY*

16 pages – full colour

SEND FOR YOUR FREE SAMPLE COPY TODAY

— • —

£20 for 12 months (*average 24 issues) • £12 for 6 months (*average 12 issues)

Cheque to: 'British Church Newspaper'

111 Passage Road, Bristol, BS9 3LF

Tel: 07818 865680. Email: bcn105@outlook.com

Amid ecumenical error,
theological liberalism
and secularism, multi-
faithism and the Romeward
movement

THE ENGLISH CHURCHMAN

advocates 'the old paths
... the good way, and walk
therein'. The divine promise
is, 'and ye shall find rest for
your souls', Jeremiah 6:16

THE ENGLISH CHURCHMAN

SEND FOR A FREE COPY

THE ENGLISH CHURCHMAN

is a fortnightly journal of news,
comment, correspondence,
book reviews and articles.

We seek to maintain a
testimony to the Scriptural
principles of the Reformation,
and the Doctrines of Grace, as
set out in the XXXIX Articles.

£24 per year post paid

Details from the Manager

The English Churchman,

118 Arbroath Avenue, Glasgow, G52 3HJ

Tel: 07452 991434 or 0141 882 3645