

MARCH–APRIL 2019

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The Gospel Magazine



The Good Shepherd • The Synod of Dort • Shadows of heavenly things

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1766–2019

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.

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THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE

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

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EDITORIAL

WE are not far from knowing the type of 'Brexit' we are to have. We are not far from discovering what national life will be like outside the European Union. It is possible that there will be readers of this *Magazine* who have never known life outside the EU or any of its former iterations. I remember vividly the look on my father's face one morning, as he leaned against the refrigerator in the kitchen in Casablanca, listening to the World Service. He said, 'Britain has voted to join the Common Market.' His voice betrayed his feelings, and they were not positive. I was eight. The memory stuck.

People and nations learn to live with fundamental changes to their way of life. The people of God once enjoyed the pleasure and hospitality of Egypt, until 'there arose a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph.' Then the Hebrews began to know hardship. There seemed no end to the situation, which only became worse as a decree was issued that all male infants were to be killed, but the Lord graciously strengthened the midwives, so that they obeyed God rather than men.

And then, out of this terrible situation, the Lord provided hope. He raised up and prepared Moses to lead his people out of Egypt, and into the Promised Land. When deliverance came, it was so unmistakable and so wonderful that the people were given strength to get up and go, in the middle of the night, taking only what they could carry. To be sure, their subsequent journey was less glorious, in that they soon became fearful and doubting. The Lord, however, kept covenant with his people, and he brought them at last to Canaan, to the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; to a type of heaven, that glorious place where God's people live under God's blessing according to God's laws.

Of course, the nation learned to face many other changes. In the days of the judges they faced invasion from various neighbouring nations. These all came about as a consequence of faithlessness on the part of the Israelites, and on their repentance the Lord provided a saviour.

They came to the time when they had success under their great warrior king, David,

and then peace under their great wise ruler, Solomon. Yet this did not last either, for the time came when the divided nation was greatly reduced. First the northern tribes went into exile, and then the southern kingdom was carried away to Babylon. How hard that must have been for those who trusted in the Lord, and who looked to the covenant. How wonderful must have been the joy of Daniel, when he understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. An end was in sight, and in due time the Lord turned the heart of Cyrus to decree the return of the Jews, with their temple treasures, and letters of authority to rebuild the temple. The accounts in Ezra and Nehemiah are bittersweet, as the returnees felt the mixed emotions of all they encountered. Haggai the prophet sums up their thinking well, when he asked, 'Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?' Yes, there was a temple once more, and yes, the sacrifices and the priesthood had been restored. The building itself was a sorry affair compared with the magnificence of Solomon's temple, but the people were back.

In time that same temple was glorified. Herod spent a large fortune buying the favour of the Judeans by enlarging their temple. In John 2:20 we read that it had taken forty-six years so far to carry out the work. History records that the temple was completed in around AD 64. How many of the Jews must have taken this as a sign of divine blessing, only for the rebellion which began two years later to end with the complete destruction of the temple, in AD 70.

This is just a portion of the history of one nation, and the changes in fortune could be

repeated over and over, for almost every nation under heaven.

And all the while, the sovereign Lord is on the throne of heaven. The rise and fall of nations, and ebb and flow of power on earth, even the glory and ignominy of the Church visible, are all under God's sovereign rule. Nothing comes to pass on earth that has not begun in the will of our Creator and Judge.

This is a great comfort to faithful people, to know that our heavenly Father, who knows the end from the beginning, is working out his purpose in the unfolding of time. We are therefore able to be confident that nothing comes to pass, that no actions of men, are without his prior will. Of course, there are times when we are left to accept this, as we have to endure hardship of one sort or another under God's sovereign will. At other times we are able to rejoice freely, because we can see more clearly what the Lord is doing.

All the while, we have the same comfort. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. This much was promised almost from the very beginning. In due time the fact of Christ's coming was announced, and testified by the miracles he performed. Following Christ's death, the announcement changed; he who was promised, and who had come, was dead, and risen, and ascended up on high. The word of life, the gospel of grace, has been preached ever since. The world may turn against the gospel, and the Church may be weak and small, but Christ is coming again, and nothing can change this glorious truth. The day is coming when we will excel the Jewish people in our praises, who said, 'Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing' (Psalm 126:2). Let us prepare for that day, giving thanks for God's mercies to us, day by day. ¶

GOSPEL BOLDNESS

By THE EDITOR

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. (Romans 1:16)

These words provide

- I. An implied criticism: 'For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ'
- II. A ground of boldness: 'for it is the power of God unto salvation'
- III. A cause of great encouragement: 'to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek'

I. The criticism implied

Paul writes to the Romans, declaring himself to be a servant of Christ, v. 1, whose sole task is to preach the gospel. His responsibility, v. 14, is to preach it to all people, without distinction. This same responsibility rests on all who believe the gospel; we are to share the good news. But there was a reluctance to do so at Rome. We know this because, in Philippians 1:11, Paul speaks of all that has happened to him as being for the furtherance of the gospel. He has his sufferings in mind, and in particular his sufferings since arriving at Jerusalem. In Romans 1:10 he speaks of his desire to come to Rome, and in 15:22 of his having been hindered in coming. Before he can come, 15:25, he must go to Jerusalem, where, vv. 30–31, he must face the unbelievers—those Jews who deny that Jesus is the Christ. In Acts 21 we read of what happened when he came, of his near-lynching, his imprisonment, the plots against him, his two years in prison at Caesarea, and his near-disastrous journey to Rome as a prisoner. And yet one effect of all this was that the gospel is now preached boldly at Rome

by 'the brethren' (Philippians 1:14). Yes, some preach of envy and strife, supposing to add to Paul's bonds, but some with sincerity, and of love, having been emboldened by Paul's chains and witness, Philippians 1:12.

Thus the timidity Paul is hinting at in Romans 1:16 will give way to boldness in due time. And yet Paul himself, the one who was suffering all these things, is not ashamed of the gospel. Rather, he sees the mighty hand of God in all he suffers, working to the glorifying of the gospel and to the advancement of Christ's kingdom. How we need this same boldness.

II. The ground of boldness

The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation. How is the gospel the power of God unto salvation? What does Paul mean by this high and glorious language? To answer this we must go back almost to the beginning, to the events recorded in Genesis 3. I say 'events' because we are of course dealing with history and not with myth or legend.

Immediately following the act of disobedience recorded in Genesis 3:7–8 the LORD God met with Adam and Eve. They tried to hide from him but could not. The interview that followed is set out in vv. 9–19, at the heart of which is the promise to man, contained in the cursing of the serpent, that 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.' This is the promise of a Saviour,

one who would defeat our enemy, the devil, and put him down. In so doing the promised Child would suffer greatly, being bitten with the poison of death. But this poison would not so work in him as to destroy him. Paul shows this when he cried, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' (1 Corinthians 15:55). In Christ, the promised seed, the bite of death is ineffectual. It is as though the fangs of the devil remain, but in Christ the poison from those fangs can have no power. The grave has no power over him, and he must rise again from the dead.

That this promise of the child was to be the hope of mankind is taught in several things:

- i. Eve called her first son Cain, saying, 'I have gotten a man from the LORD' (4:1). She trusted in the promise of the seed. Was Cain that child?
- ii. Eve called her second son Abel, Vanity. Cain was not the promised seed, and the proof was the pain of childbirth, 3:16.
- iii. Lamech named his son Noah, 'Rest' (5:25). Lamech looked for respite from the curse, and trusted that the promised child must come. Was Noah that child?
- iv. God preserved Noah, who had found grace in God's sight, 6:8. By preserving his life the Lord maintained his promise of the seed; the line continued though all living perished.
- v. God promised seed to Abraham; not only a great nation, but one child in particular, as Paul showed, Galatians 3:16.
- vi. God kept covenant with Israel, not only in the exodus, but also in saving them on many occasions when their sin brought them to the brink of ruin. He did so because the covenant

he made with them was to fulfil the promise of the seed.

- vii. God promised David a son who should reign for ever, 2 Samuel 7:12–16, who would be the son of God, v. 14. Israel was taught to look for a king who would save them.

To this we could add that the prophets spoke concerning the suffering servant, and the healer, and so on. Expectations among the Jewish people should have been very high.

How is this the power of God unto salvation? Like this; when God spoke to Adam and Eve he did more than hold out a vague hope that, at some future point, something would happen. He did not tell of them of a process they must join, or give them a work to do in order to benefit from this promise. Instead, he simply promised them salvation. When Christ came, he brought salvation with him, Psalm 68:18, Ephesians 4:7–9. Christ is the seed of the woman as Luke shows, Luke 3:23–38. He is the King, Matthew 27:37, who heals, Mark 1:32 etc, and who suffers for the sins of his people, Matthew 3:15, 1 Peter 3:18, etc.

How great is the power of God to save? See Matthew 27:51–53; when Christ died the graves were broken open, and when he rose again the bodies of some of the saints arose and entered the holy city, appearing unto many. 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? ... But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' What greater testimony can there be to salvation accomplished than the resurrection (albeit temporary at this stage) of some who had died in the faith?

The power of God to save is absolute. He cursed man for sin, and he has saved man by Jesus Christ. Our only contribution is our corruption; Christ has done all the rest.

III. The cause of great encouragement

To whom does this salvation come? To everyone that believeth. That is, all who believe the gospel will be saved. Adam and Eve believed the gospel, trusting that the promised seed would bruise the serpent's head. They raised their children in the hope of that faith. Abel and Seth shared the hope; Cain did not. Abraham had the hope, and so did Isaac; but Ishmael did not. Isaac raised his two sons in the hope, and Jacob had it, but Esau did not. Jacob raised his children in the same hope, and Joseph had it, but it is not so evident that his other sons did. But lest we think that faith is passed on by procreation, note that Judah would be the one through whose line the promised seed should come, Genesis 49:8–9. Noah found grace, and lived justly and uprightly, because he had faith. Joseph would not commit fornication with Potiphar's wife because he had faith. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego would not worship the golden image because they had faith. And so it goes on in Scripture.

Paul speaks to this point when he says to the Ephesians, 'by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God' (2:8). Salvation is the gift of God by grace and not by works, v. 9. The gift comes by the instrument of faith, that passive instrument that can only receive what is given to it, and which is given only to those to whom it is given. A person who is an heir according to a will is only in that will by the will of the giver. The heir plays no part, but is only the beneficiary of a free and gracious act on the part of the one who names them as his heir. Once faith has received salvation it becomes active, in that we exercise faith *because* we are saved. Without faith it is impossible to please God, Hebrews 11:6, which faith comes only by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, Romans 10:17.

The preaching of the gospel is the declaration of the saving power of God. Belief in the gospel—faith in Jesus Christ the promised seed—is the effect of that power.

To whom does this power come? To Israel only, as the heirs of the covenant? After all, Jesus is the King of the Jews. He is the hope of Israel, as the angel declared to Mary, Luke 1:32; 'The LORD God shall give him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob.' She would go on to say, 'He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and his seed for ever.' Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, would say, 'Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David' (Luke 1:68–69). Jesus himself said, 'I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (Matthew 15:24). We could add many such verses. Is the gospel intended only for the people of God, the nation of Israel, the Jewish population? No, says Paul. It is 'to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.' Why so?

First, because all are under the same condemnation, being heirs of Adam's sin and guilt. All are corrupt, no matter what their ancestry. To be able to trace one's line to Abraham is no help, because both Jews and non-Jews are sinners in the sight of God. 'All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.'

Secondly, because the gospel was always for all mankind. Adam is not the father of only one race, but of all the nations of the earth. All nations are descended through Noah. More, Abraham had two sons, both of whom had an inheritance from him, Genesis 25:5–6, though only one was the heir of the covenant. The Old Testament is full of examples of Gentiles joining themselves to the people of Israel, as the harlot Rahab,

and Ruth, and so on. Ethnicity is no bar to salvation. It is true that men had to become circumcised in order to be joined to Israel, but it was the covenant sign that made them Israel, not their ancestry.

Thirdly, because God is Lord of all. He sent Jonah to Nineveh, Daniel to Babylon, Paul to Rome. God's power is over all. He saves not only the Jews who believe, but also the Gentiles who have the same faith. James saw this and declared it, Acts 15:13–18. Salvation is for sinners, and all are sinners before the Lord. Salvation, therefore, is to be preached to all.

And the power of God is that all who believe shall be saved, regardless of race,

sex, age, education or former sins and religion. The power of God is that he overcomes all our sins and obstacles, to save us in the Lord Jesus Christ. He has caused Christ to bear the iniquity of us all, and he has borne it effectually. To believe in Jesus Christ is to be saved. This being so, why should we be anything less than bold in declaring it? Paul was not ashamed of this gospel, and neither must we be. Paul knew the power of God unto salvation, and so must we. Paul would not look upon human and superficial differences or difficulties, and nor must we. Let us proclaim with conviction this message; look unto Jesus, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth. AMEN. ¶

A SERMON ON ISAIAH 1:2–3

REV. C. TUINMAN (1659–1728)

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

Part 3

Unto the heavens the prophet from God says 'hear', and to the earth 'give ear.' Hearing and giving ear is natural to man (Psalm 49:2). But because it was a rebellious nation that refused to hear, God, their shame, speaketh here to lifeless and reasonless creatures, as being better suited than that nation, in that they do not have the least objection to hearing—unlike these, who were like the deaf adder, that stoppeth her ear, and will not hearken to the voice of the charmers, charming never so wisely (Psalm 58:4, 5. Cf. Jeremiah 44:16; Zechariah 7:11, 12). Likewise we read be astonished, 'O ye heavens, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the LORD' (Jeremiah 2:12). 'I tell you that, if these

should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out' (Luke 19:40). Yes, even these creatures hear in their way (Numbers 19:40; Psalms 147:15; 148:6).

For the LORD

Here were also reasons to hear: because the LORD hath spoken.

The LORD, Jehovah, Israel's Triune Covenant God, the eternal and immutable highest Being, (Isaiah 43:11–13; Malachi 3:6), who made himself known to Israel by this name by the faithful execution of his promises (Exodus 6:1; Psalm 144:15; Lamentations 3:22; Psalm 84:5). But for whom was also all acknowledgement and

obedience (1 Chronicles 29:11; Joshua 24:18; Psalm 99:7–9). This name is only ascribed to him (Exodus 3:14–15; Psalm 83:18; Isaiah 42:8). The LORD is his memorial (Hosea 12:5). And hereby he is separated from the idols (1 Kings 28:21). However, those rebellious were fallen away from the LORD. See Jeremiah 2:11–13 and 5:7.

Has spoken

Now, this LORD hath spoken by his ambassador and servant Isaiah, because the prophets were God's mouth and God spoke in and by them by his Spirit (2 Samuel 23:2; Jeremiah 1:9, 17). Their usual speech was therefore: 'Hear the word of the LORD' and 'Thus saith the LORD.' Here also applies: 'He that hath ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches' (Revelation 2:7). Everyone should say with Samuel: 'Speak, for thy servant heareth' (1 Samuel 3:10). And with the Church: 'I will hear what God the LORD will speak' (Psalm 85:8).

But what had to be heard here was God's

accusation against his ungrateful people. We have there. 1. His benefactions. 2. The villainess of the people.

God expresseth the benefactions powerfully by these words: 'I have nourished and brought up children.' Notice: 1. The Benefactor. 2. The favoured. 3. The benefaction itself.

I

The Benefactor speaketh here about himself, I have done it, Jehovah the Lord, who is brought here speaking and must be heard by heaven and earth. He may say very well 'I'. See Deuteronomy 32:39. He could say: 'I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine' (Isaiah 3:23). In him was Israel's salvation (Jeremiah 3:23). He hath done that immediately and mediately and his hand should have been seen and glorified in everything (Deuteronomy 8:16, 17; 1 Chronicles 29:14). But they did not acknowledge this (Hosea 2:7). Yet everything good flows from him (Hosea 2:22).

TO BE CONTINUED

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

By CARINE MACKENZIE

Have you ever seen a shepherd at work—perhaps on a visit to the countryside or on a television programme? The shepherd's work is varied and interesting and sometimes difficult, looking after his flock in all weathers, making sure they have enough food, treating them when they are sick and protecting them from danger.

Jimmy was a shepherd in the Highlands of Scotland, looking after a large flock which roamed over a vast area of hill country. One hard winter the snow came thick and fast, blanketing the area in a deep covering. Jimmy knew the sheep would be in danger if they were trapped by the drifts of snow, so he left his house and ventured out to the hill to make sure the sheep were safe. Many hours later Jimmy had not returned. His wife summoned help and two

men agreed to go out to look for him. Eventually they came across Jimmy digging into a snow drift with his bare hands which were raw and bleeding. 'There are still some sheep trapped in this hollow and if I don't get them out they will perish.' Jimmy put his own comfort and safety aside in order to save his sheep. We can certainly call Jimmy a good shepherd.

The Bible tells us about THE Good Shepherd, who laid down his life for his sheep. The Lord Jesus Christ gave his life on the cross for his own people, his sheep. The church of God is his flock which he has 'purchased with his own blood' (Acts 20:28).

A good shepherd cares for his sheep in many ways. When they are in danger he seeks them out to bring them to safety. The Lord God told the prophet Ezekiel that he was the good shepherd. 'Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep and seek them out' (Ezekiel 34:11). He promised to gather his flock together to good pastures. 'I will feed my flock and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord' (Ezekiel 34:15).

David who was a shepherd himself knew that the Lord was his shepherd. 'He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters' (Psalm 23:2). David remembered how he protected his sheep from the lion and the bear, and knew that God protected him through many dangers.

We too can have confidence in the Lord to keep us, for we cannot keep ourselves. He will feed us with his word, the Bible. His word meets our every need and satisfies our souls.

A good shepherd knows his sheep and they know him. When he comes to the field with a bag of feed they will run immediately to him. If a stranger approached them they would run away. The Lord Jesus knows his own people and draws them to himself. The person who trusts in the Lord is drawn to the Saviour and to his word and longs to spend time with him and with his people.

When a sheep becomes sick the shepherd takes special care, giving medicine or treating its sore feet. When we are in trouble with sickness or sadness or bereavement we can be sure that our good shepherd will care for us specially. In his word he gives us many precious promises of his care and compassion. 'I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God' (Psalm 40:17).

The Lord our shepherd cherishes his flock tenderly. 'He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young' (Isaiah 40:11). The Lord wants all who are weak and burdened to come to him, and he will give them rest.

The Lord Jesus told a story about a shepherd looking for one lost sheep. He left the other ninety-nine in the wilderness to go after the one who had strayed. When he did find it he carried it home rejoicing and called his friends and neighbours to tell them his good news (Luke 15:3-7).

Jesus tells us that there is joy like that in heaven when one sinner repents. The Lord Jesus will never lose one of his own sheep. He has come to seek and save the lost. 'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out' (John 6:37).

Our good shepherd's care is for all eternity. 'They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand' (John 10:28).

Bible Search

Search the Bible to find the missing words. The initials of the correct answers will spell out two words from the story.

1. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of _____.
(John 10:14)
2. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with _____. (Isaiah 40:11)
3. Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: _____ the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. (Zechariah 13:7)
4. But he that is an _____, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. (John 10:12)
5. Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the _____ covenant. (Hebrews 13:20)
6. To him the _____ openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. (John 10:3)
7. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are _____ laden, and I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28)
8. But he that _____ in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. (John 10:2)
9. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall _____ a crown of glory that fadeth not away. (1 Peter 5:4)
10. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so I will seek out my sheep, and will _____ them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. (Ezekiel 34:12)

EXPOSITION OF JUDE 1

Part 3 – Of Sanctification (continued)

By WILLIAM PERKINS (1558–1602)

6. The sanctification of *appetite* stands in the holy ordering of our desires, in meat, drink, apparel, riches, etc, and in the practice of three main virtues; sobriety, chastity, contentment, by which the appetite must be governed.

7. Sanctification of life stands principally in three things; first, in an endeavour to do the will of God, that herein we may testify our thankfulness; secondly, in testifying our love to God in man; thirdly, in denial of ourselves, which is, first, when we hold God to be wiser than we are, so that we should be both directed and disposed by him. Secondly, when we account him more careful of us than we ourselves can be, so rest well satisfied with what condition of life soever he sets us in. Thus are we to practice this grace through our whole conversation; so we may not measure it, nor judge of it by one action good or bad, but look to the whole course of life; if that be good, the heart is sanctified.

The fifth point here is how sanctification is ascribed to God the Father, seeing all our outward works are common to the whole Trinity. *Answer.* Sanctification is attributed, and that truly, to all the three persons, who have all stroke in the work of it, but diversely. The Son sanctifieth by meriting sanctification. The Spirit sanctifieth by working it, and by creating the new heart; the Father sanctifieth by sending his Son to merit, and giving his Spirit to work it. And here the work is ascribed unto him, as being the ground and first author of it.

Use. Labour for the special grace of God. The means we are to use is laid down in Romans 6:1–14, namely to believe that we are crucified with Christ, buried with him, yea, and rose again with him; because he was upon the cross, in the grave, as also in rising from thence in our stead and room, sustaining our persons upon him: this is the foundation of our holiness. Some will ask, How can this be a ground of our holiness? I make it plain in this comparison: as a traitor arraigned and hanged according to the law, is then freed from his fact, the judge ceaseth to punish him, and he ceaseth to be a traitor, committeth no more misdemeanour: so the sinner being arraigned at the bar of God's justice, and attained of high treason, is according to God's law condemned and executed in Christ's condemnation and execution, is now as a dead man unto sin and cannot thenceforth live thereunto any more.

Now follows the third degree of life eternal in these words: *and reserved to Jesus Christ.* The meaning of which words is plain in 1 Peter 1:5, where he saith that the elect are 'kept by the power of God unto salvation.' In the adding of which words to the former, we are taught that, with the gifts of true faith, calling and sanctification, is joined unseparably the grace of perseverance unto the end: of which truth we will consider four main grounds.

The first ground is, the *election* of God; that is, his decree whereby he setteth some apart to life. This decree is as unchangeable as

God himself is: and as election is unchangeable, so is the fruit of it in us, in respect of the ground: and hence followeth it that faith and sanctification are unchangeable. Romans 8:30, the predestinate are glorified. Matthew 24:24, the exception sheweth it impossible the elect should be deceived.

The second ground is the *promise* of God in the Evangelical Covenant, which is largely propounded in Jeremiah 32:40, where is promise made of two things: first, the Lord promiseth that he will not turn from them to do them good, which is a promise of eternal mercy, showing the pardon of sin, being once given, is given for ever. Secondly, that he will put his fear into their hearts, there is promised continuance of faith, and sanctification, for they shall not depart from it.

The third ground is *the office of Christ.* In it consider, first, his priesthood, secondly, his Kingly office. First, he was a priest, partly to offer sacrifice, partly to make intercession for every believer, for so he did for Peter, Luke 22:32, that his faith might not fail, and not only for him, but as appears in that worthy prayer recommended in John 17 for all the disciples, and not for them only, but for all believers through their word. The same request is in that chapter repeated thrice. Secondly, for his Kingdom; as he is the head of his Church, his office is, first, to keep all that are given him unto life, John 10:28, I give unto them life, and none can pluck them out of my hands. Secondly, to give spiritual life to his members, Romans 6:8–9. If Christ the head died *but once*, and liveth for ever, then all his members die but once to sin, and after always live to righteousness; for this life admits of no corruption, either in nor out of temptation.

The fourth ground is the *quality of grace*, as of faith, sanctification, etc, whose nature is

to endure to life everlasting. For he that once believes remains ever a believer, 1 John 3:9, 'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him.' Now, if that remain whereby he is born of God, himself must also still remain born of God, upon which four grounds we may persuade ourselves of the gift of perseverance.

Objection. It is alleged, nothing is unchangeable but God, therefore grace is changeable.

Answer. Every gift is changeable in itself, so man considered in himself may fall away. But God hath promised a second grace confirming the first, by virtue whereof a man cannot fall away.

Objection. It will be further said that the child of God, when he falleth into a grievous sin (as David did) is guilty of death, and therefore is not justified, and consequently falleth away.

Answer. When David fell he was guilty of death, but only in regard to that sin in which he was now fallen, all his former sins being pardoned: yea, that sin also was pardoned (though not actually to him, before his repentance, yet) in God's counsel, so that the sin being on God's part pardoned, he remains still in the favour of God.

Objection. But in time of persecution many fall away.

Answer. If any fall quite away, they never had true faith, which stands in three things: first, knowledge; secondly, assent; thirdly, apprehension of Christ. The two former they might have, but the third was wanting unto them. Again, those that fall off in persecution, if they have true faith, they fall not wholly, because the seed of God remains in them; nor finally, because in time they shall return unto the Lord again.

Objection. But this doctrine leads men to security.

Answer. No, it leads a man from security unto a new life and watchfulness, seeing grace is added unto grace to keep us in the state of grace.

Use. First, that the gift of perseverance is joined with true faith, I gather that the doctrine of the Papists is not of God, but a doctrine of devils, that teacheth that he which is chosen of God, who hath true faith, and is justified, may in regard of his present right fall away, for how can that be if he that be chosen be called, sanctified, and preserved unto life?

Secondly, it is false that a man truly justified may lose his grace, seeing with justification is joined preservation: neither that which teacheth that a true believer may fall wholly, but not finally, is true.

Thirdly, those also are deceived who think that man's salvation is pinned upon his own sleeve, and hangeth upon his own will; for God would have all saved, Christ died for all; the Holy Ghost giveth grace to all: why then are some saved, some not? It is, say they, from their own will, grace in some prevails against flesh, and they are saved; but flesh against grace in other, who therefore are damned. But this, Scripture shows to be but a device of man, seeing whosoever are once elected, are called, sanctified, and preserved unto life: and what malice is able to resist this will of God?

Use 2. Note here the unspeakable goodness of God in the work of regeneration, in that he not only gives us a new life, but preserves it in us. Adam had once this life of grace entrusted unto him, and had it in keeping, but quickly lost it from himself and his posterity. Now God hath restored

this life again to believers, but that they might be sure of it, he keepeth it for them himself.

And reserved unto Christ. That is, to be presented and set before Christ, and that partly in the day of death, partly in the day of judgment, wholly and without blame, Ephesians 5:27. Whence note first, believers need not fear the day of death or judgment; nay, rather, they may rejoice in it as in the day of their redemption, yea, and of triumph. What an honour was it for Pharaoh's daughter to be presented to Solomon, and Esther to become the spouse of Ahazuerus? Much more glory is it for the faithful to be able to stand before Christ at that day.

Secondly, we must all our life long prepare and fit ourselves to be presented as pure spouses to our Bridegroom. Both these duties are laid down, Revelation, 19:7, 'Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.' This preparation stands into things. First, we must betroth our souls to Christ. This is done when God gives Christ, and we receive him by faith, cleave unto him alone, depend on him as the Spouse on whom her soul loveth. Secondly, we must beautify our souls, having given them to Christ. This is done when the Holy Ghost sanctifieth the same, and we daily labour in the renewing of our own hearts.

Thirdly, we must hence be stirred up to prayer for this gift of preservation to life everlasting, and reservation to Christ, hungering for grace after grace, to be strengthened in temptation, especially in this last and declining age, wherein the gospel takes little place in our hearts.

TO BE CONCLUDED

THE SYNOD OF DORT

By THE REV. SAMUEL MILLER (1769–1850): Part 3

THE Synod convened, agreeably to the call of the States General, in the city of Dort, on the 13th day of November, AD 1618. It consisted of thirty nine Pastors, and eighteen Ruling Elders delegated from the Belgic churches, together with five Professors from the Universities of Holland; and also of Delegates from all the foreign Reformed churches which had been invited to send them, excepting those of France before spoken of. The delegates from the foreign Reformed churches on the Continent, all of whom were Presbyterian, were nineteen. The delegates from Great Britain were five, viz: George Carleton, Bishop of Llandaff; Joseph Hall, Dean of Worcester, and afterwards Bishop, successively, of Exeter and Norwich; John Davenant, Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge, and afterwards Bishop of Salisbury; Samuel Ward, Archdeacon of Taunton, and Theological Professor in the University of Cambridge; and Walter Balcanqual, of Scotland, representing the Established Church of North Britain.

The Synod thus constituted, consisted, in all, of eighty-six members. No Arminians, it would appear, were elected members of the Synod, excepting three from the Province of Utrecht; and of these only one was admitted to a seat.

...

But to return to the Synod of Dort. It was opened on the 10th of November, 1618. John Bogerman, one of the deputies from Friesland, was chosen moderator, or president; and Jacobus Rolandus, one of the ministers of Amsterdam, and Herman Faukelius,

minister of Middleburg, his assessors, or assistants. The two secretaries were Sebastian Dammannus, minister of Zutphen, and Festus Hommius, minister of Leyden.

Each of the members of the Synod, before proceeding to business, took the following solemn oath, or engagement: 'I promise before God, in whom I believe, and whom I worship, as being present in this place, and as being the Searcher of all hearts, that during the course of the proceedings of this Synod, which will examine and decide, not only the five points, and all the differences resulting from them, but also any other doctrine, I will use no human writing, but only the word of God, which is an infallible rule of faith. And during all these discussions, I will only aim at the glory of God, the peace of the church, and especially the preservation of the purity of doctrine. So help me, my Saviour, Jesus Christ. I beseech him to assist me by his Holy Spirit!'

It was some time before the delegates of the Remonstrants, or Arminian party, made their appearance. At the twenty-second session of the Synod, Episcopius, and his twelve colleagues, who had been summoned for this purpose, presented themselves to make their explanation and defence. In undertaking this task, they manifested the same disposition to delay, to elude inquiry, and to throw obstacles in the way of every plan of proceeding that was proposed. Episcopius was their chief speaker; and with great art and address did he manage their cause. He insisted on being permitted to begin with a refutation of the Calvinistic doctrines, especially that of reprobation, hoping that,

by placing his objections to this doctrine in front of all the rest, he might excite such prejudice against the other articles of the system, as to secure the popular voice in his favour. The Synod, however, very properly, reminded him that they had not convened for the purpose of trying the Confession of Faith of the Belgic Churches, which had been long established and well known; but that, as the Remonstrants were accused of departing from the Reformed faith, they were bound first to justify themselves, by giving Scriptural proof in support of their opinions.

To this plan of procedure they would by no means submit. It disconcerted their whole scheme; but the Synod firmly refused to adopt any other plan. This refusal, of course, shut the Remonstrants out from taking any part in the deliberations of the body. Day after day they were reasoned with, and urged to submit to a course of proceeding ecclesiastically regular, and adapted to their situation, but without success. They were, therefore, compelled to withdraw. Upon their departure, the Synod proceeded without them.

The language of the President (Bogerman) in dismissing the Remonstrants was rough, and adapted to give pain. He pointedly charged them with fraudulent proceedings, with disingenuous acts, with falsehood, &c. For this language, however, he alone was responsible. It had not been dictated or authorized by the Synod. And a number of the members, we are assured, heard it with regret, and expressed their disapprobation of it. (Hales's *Works*, vol. iii. p. 123) And yet, while this language was severe, and for an ecclesiastical assembly unseemly, was it not substantially according to truth?

The Synod does not appear to have accomplished its work by referring different portions of it to different committees; but the

plan adopted was to request the divines from each country represented in the Synod to consult together, and bring in their separate opinions or judgments in regard to the main points in controversy. So that the sentence, or opinion of the Dutch divines, of the English divines, of the Genevese divines, &c. &c., were separately obtained, and distinctly recorded in the proceedings of the Synod. This method of conducting the business was probably less favourable to dispassionate and perfectly calm proceedings than if committees had matured in private every part of the work.

The Synod examined the Arminian tenets, condemned them as unscriptural, pestilential errors, and pronounced those who held and published them to be enemies of the faith of the Belgic churches, and corrupters of the true religion. They also deposed the Arminian ministers, excluded them and their followers from the communion of the church, suppressed their religious assemblies, and by the aid of the civil government, which confirmed all their acts, sent a number of the clergy of that party, and of those who adhered to them, into banishment. From a large part of their disabilities, however, the Remonstrants, after the lapse of a few years, were relieved.

It is probable that all impartial persons, who make up an opinion with that light, and those habits of thinking with regard to religious liberty which we now possess, will judge that some of these proceedings were by far too harsh and violent. To suppress the religious assemblies of the Remonstrants, by secular authority, and to banish their leaders from their country, were measures which we cannot, at this day, contemplate but with deep regret, as inconsistent with those rights of conscience which we must regard as indefeasible. But when we consider that those rights were really understood by no branch

of the Christian Church at that day; when we recollect that in the Church of England, during the reign of the same James I, who sent representatives to this Synod, more than twenty persons were put to death for their religion, at least two of whom were burnt alive, viz. Bartholomew Legate, at Smithfield, by the direct influence of Dr. King, Bishop of London, and Edward Wightman, at Lichfield, by the equally direct influence of Bishop Neill, of Lichfield and Coventry; and that many hundreds were banished their country;—and when we recollect that even the pious Puritans, who migrated from their own country to America, that they might enjoy religious liberty, persecuted, in their turn, even unto death for the sake of religion; and especially when we remember the disingenuous, provoking, unworthy course by which the Remonstrants had divided and agitated the Belgic Churches for a number of years, and also the highly unbecoming language which they employed even before the Synod; when all these things are considered, it is presumed no impartial man will wonder, though he may weep, at some of the proceedings of that far-famed and venerable Synod. After all, however, there can be no doubt that a large part of the violence popularly ascribed to that Synod existed only in the imaginations, the complaints, and the books of the Remonstrants, who were not, of course, impartial judges. The learning, piety, and venerable character of the great and good men who composed it, ought to be considered as an ample guaranty of the decorum of their proceedings. But, more than this, if the Synod had not been entirely decent in its mode of conducting business, can we imagine that Bishop Hall, one of the English delegates, a man remarkable for the piety, benevolence, and amiableness of his character, would have said, “ There was no place upon

earth which he regarded as so like heaven as the Synod of Dort, or in which he should be more glad to remain?” Surely the testimony of such a man is more worthy of confidence than the statements of men who were smarting under the discipline of the Synod.

I have said that the Synod condemned the Remonstrants. In this they were unanimous. The Canons of the Synod, which contain their decisions with regard to the five Arminian articles, and which are presented in this volume, were adopted without a dissenting voice. We are not, however, to suppose from this fact, that all the members of the Synod were entirely of one mind in regard to all the points embraced in those articles. This was by no means the case. There was much warm discussion during the transactions of the Synod. Some members of the body, such as Gomarus, and others, were advocates of the most high-toned supralapsarian Calvinism; while another portion of the members were not disposed to go further than the sublapsarian hypothesis; and though all agreed in condemning the Remonstrants, yet a very small number of the delegates appear to have occupied ground not very different from that which we commonly call Baxterian. The Canons, however, were such as they could all unite in. The praise which Dr. Scott bestows on the Formulary of Faith drawn up by the Synod, as a wise, moderate, well digested, and well expressed exhibition of theological principles, is well merited. It is worthy of high commendation. It must be confessed, indeed, that, as a monument of ecclesiastical wisdom, taste, sound learning, judgment, and singular comprehensiveness, the results of the Westminster Assembly, a few years afterwards, not a little exceed those of Dort; but the latter stand next in order, on the scale of Synodical labours. Among all the uninspired theological compositions of the

seventeenth century, many of the best judges are of the opinion that the 'Confession of Faith' and 'Catechisms' framed by the Westminster Assembly hold the very highest place. The writer of this page is free to

confess that he has never seen any human document of that age, or indeed of any other, public or private, which in his estimation is quite equal to them for the purpose which they were destined to answer.

TO BE CONTINUED

A BRIEF HISTORY OF WISE MEN

By EDWARD MALCOLM (Reading)

The substance of an address at a weekly meeting of the Bite-Size School of Theology, run by the Protestant Truth Society in London

THE coming of the wise men to Jerusalem, seeking the one who had been born King of the Jews, is the culmination of a long process set out in Scripture. My intention is to trace that process through the Old Testament and into the New, before showing something of its significance. On the way, I intend to say something about the nature of wisdom, and about the use and abuse of a God-given gift. My intention is to encourage us to seek, possess and use wisdom, but in a way that is God-honouring, Christ-glorifying, and Spiritually edifying.

The beginning of wisdom

'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom' declared Solomon, Proverbs 9:10, and his Proverbs are full of wisdom, and all of it tending to the spiritual well-being of the one who reads with understanding. But our enquiry into the beginning of wisdom must reach back further in time.

Wisdom before the Fall

In Genesis 1 and 2 we read of two sorts of wisdom. First, we see the wisdom of God in

creating the world. With each act of creating, we read that God 'saw that it was good' (Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). That is, the thing that resulted from the creating decree was pleasing in his sight, a fully satisfactory manifestation of what he had willed. This is wisdom in action, since it is easier for us to imagine the result of any creating act on our part than it is to achieve it. Of course, in this context, wisdom must be accompanied by ability, and with the Lord both are present without limit.

More importantly, everything that the Lord God made was able to live in the world he had made. Everything flourished, and the command to man to be fruitful and multiply showed that the environment into which he had been placed was intended to assist. This includes man's rule over the created order.

The second aspect of wisdom is as it is found in man, the male and the female. In a word, wisdom in man is confined to one thing, obedience. There is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, as well as the tree of life. In that state of innocence, man is meant to be wise by obeying the Lord's

command not to eat of that tree, 2:17. This is the wisdom Solomon sets before us; the wisdom to be instructed by the Lord, and not to seek after any other kind of wisdom.

Therefore in the pre-Fall world, wisdom is found in the Lord God, and man exercises wisdom in obeying him.

Wisdom after the Fall

That situation did not last, and very soon we find man outside the Garden, living under the curse. We know that unbelief rose up against faith, and Cain murdered his brother Abel. For this, Cain was driven out to live as a nomad, 4:12; but he had a son who built a city, 4:17. This was an exercise of wisdom, but it was contrary to the command of God.

In a later generation a son was born named Jubal, who learned to make and play musical instruments. The AV calls them 'harp and organ' but more accurately they are the lyre and the flute. These would have been instruments of wood or reed, perhaps with strings of animal gut for the lyre. It was the godless line of Cain that first made music, and in time David would use it to praise the Lord God of heaven, while Nebuchadnezzar would use it to force his people to bow to his image.

Jubal had a brother, Tubal-cain, who was a smith, and who made ploughing instruments of brass and iron. This, again speaks of wisdom, for the smith can only work what the miner and the smelter can produce. Therefore we see that wisdom was in the world from the beginning, and that man was able to do amazing things. And yet for all that it was a world heading for ruin, as the imagination of the thought of man's heart was only evil continually in the Lord's sight, 6:5.

Of course, the Flood did not deter mankind from exercising wisdom in a godless way. It would have required great wisdom and skill to raise a tower to heaven. We do

not know how high the tower of Babel rose before the Lord intervened and ended the work by making people speak different languages. The wisdom of the Lord is far wiser than the wisdom of man.

The rise of wisdom

When Moses was raised as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, he was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, Acts 7:22. Egypt was a great civilization, capable of producing fine art and architecture, with a fully developed society, and laws, and customs. This was by no means the limit of their wisdom, for there were in Pharaoh's court two men, Jannes and Jambres, 2 Timothy 3:8, who withstood Moses. These were the wise men and sorcerers of Exodus 7:11, who were able to replicate the first few of Moses' signs. When Aaron threw down his staff and it became a serpent, they were able to do the same; but Aaron's staff swallowed the others, showing where the true power lay. Then, the Lord sent Moses back, armed with the same staff, to pour out water and turn it to blood. Again, the magicians of Egypt replicated the sign, 7:19-22, and again Pharaoh hardened his heart and refused to obey the Lord. Once more, the Lord sent Moses to raise a plague of frogs on the land, 8:5, and the magicians did the same, 8:7. But when the plague of lice came, 8:16, the magicians could not replicate the sign, and were then brought to affirm that 'this is the finger of God', v. 19.

How the magicians were able to replicate those first three signs we cannot say. Whether there was an element of illusion, or of the use of chemicals, or whether this was of the devil, we are not told. What is plain is that the power of these men was finite, for it was not from above. Their wisdom was not from above either, and though they were brought to confess that it was God who

was at work, they only made this confession when they had been defeated. This shows something of the limit of their wisdom.

This was not the first time Egypt had benefitted from heavenly wisdom. When Joseph was brought out of prison to interpret Pharaoh's dream, he gave the glory to God, Genesis 41:16. By the exercise of wisdom, and by Pharaoh's humbling himself before the Lord's wisdom, actions were taken that saved both Egypt and the surrounding nations when the terrible famine struck.

That same wisdom would be seen again. The book that speaks most frequently of wise men is Daniel. This is our next section of enquiry.

Wisdom in Daniel

When Nebuchadnezzar carried away certain children of the royal line, and from the chief families of Judah, he included Daniel among them. Together with Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, God 'gave knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams' (Daniel 1:17). If we ask why these four should be especially blessed, we must note the determination of Daniel and his three companions to avoid the unclean food set before them, 8-16. They acted in this way, not because they were Pharisees, but because they feared the Lord. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and when we see that fear in anyone, we should expect a degree of wisdom to be present. Of course, these four had been taken to the king's palace because they had already proven themselves to be educated, intelligent lads, v. 4. Such education cannot by itself explain their fear of the Lord; that was something else entirely.

I say that because of course these were not the only wise men of Nebuchadnezzar's court. When the king had his dream, 2:1, he

called all the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, to tell him what his dream had been, and what it meant. They could not, and pleaded that it was beyond the ability of any man to say what another had dreamed. Whether in fact the king had forgotten his dream is a matter of doubt, for if he had forgotten it, how could he know that anyone spoke the truth when they told him what he had dreamed? It is possible that he did remember, though perhaps not in perfect detail; his refusal to say anything about the content of the dream was really a way of testing the trustworthiness of any interpretation, for if the interpreter could not say what his dream had been, how could the king know that the interpretation was true? If this suspicion is well founded, it means that the king had some wisdom himself, and knew that even clever people can lie. Therefore he kept back the content of the dream, so he could measure the real wisdom of the interpretation.

It is evident that Daniel and his friends were ignorant of all this, for only when the soldiers came to carry out the sentence of death, v. 13, did Daniel discover the problem, and approach the king with a solution. For whatever reason, the king trusted Daniel, and gave him the time he requested. Through prayer, the Lord answered Daniel, and told him the dream and its interpretation. In this way Daniel was recognised as better than all the wise men of the land, and was promoted above them, 2:48f.

Here we see the triumph of true wisdom over false. Whereas there had been a contest in Pharaoh's court, there was no contest in Nebuchadnezzar's. The power of God was recognised, and one feature of the Book of Daniel is the continual theme of the sovereignty of God, even over the Babylonian and then the Persian Empires. Cyrus would be

held up as an example of a wise ruler, because he would be moved by the Lord to decree the return of the exiles, with their temple treasures, and with instructions to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem. True wisdom is obedience to the Lord's will.

Wisdom in the New Testament

The word for wise men in the New Testament is *magi*. The Septuagint, the Greek Old Testament, uses the word several times to speak of the wise men of the Babylonian court. In the New Testament it is Eastern sages, or wise men, who come to Jerusalem, seeking the one who has been born King of the Jews. We now turn to consider them.

Just how the wise men knew that the appearing of the star signified the birth of the Jewish King is not certain. Some point to Numbers 24:17, the Star arising from Jacob. Just what the star was is also not certain. Some suggest a conjunction of planets, others an angelic appearance, and so on. What is certain is that the wise men, understanding the significance of what they saw, journeyed to Jerusalem. No doubt they came to Jerusalem first because the palace is the logical place to find a new-born King. Instead, they found confusion and fear. Herod was not pleased to discover that there was a rival to his throne. He had to consult his own wise men, the scribes and chief priests of the people, Matthew 2:4, who were able to tell him where the King of the Jews should be born. Going to Bethlehem, the wise men found the child, and fell down and worshipped him, and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

And what of Herod's wise men? What do we read of their response to the declaration that the Hope of Israel had been born? They had sufficient wisdom to know where

to direct the magi, but they had not wisdom to go themselves and worship Christ.

Application

And so we see the difference between worldly wisdom, and true wisdom. No doubt there is much wisdom in this world. It is able to discover and improve many things, and our lives are bettered by it. Since the days of Jubal, with his musical instruments, and of Tubal-cain, with his smithing skills, our lives have been greatly helped by art and science. We would not be without the benefits of wisdom, both personally and socially. Wise rulers surround themselves with wise advisers, and the best laws are those enacted by governments who apply the best standards of wisdom. There is an argument to be made here about the place of the chief magistrate and the relationship between the chief magistrate and the Church in the Commonwealth. This is the position of both the Thirty-nine Articles, and of the Westminster Confession of Faith.

However, the most pressing area where the application of wisdom is necessary is in our spiritual instruction. That we speak of instruction shows how highly we value wisdom, for who would be instructed in folly? But what wisdom will we follow? I mentioned a short while ago some different opinions on the nature of the star followed by the wise men. Apparently all such opinions are academic because, according to the most recent scholarship, there were no wise men, and anyway, Christ was not born at Bethlehem. This is now the standard view among New Testament scholars. But among which scholars? Not all. Only those whose wisdom is from below, and not among those whose wisdom is from above. And this points us to the source of true wisdom, the Word of God.

Here is the single most important matter facing the Church today. What is our attitude to the Word of God? Is it, translational problems aside, the clear and unambiguous revelation of the divine will, or not? Do we have in our hands the lively oracles of God, or the musings of men? Does Scripture only contain the Word of God, or is it the Word of God? The scribes and chief priests of Herod's court trusted the content of the Word sufficiently to direct the wise men to Bethlehem in order to find Christ. Do we trust the Word that much? The wise men of Herod's court would not go to Bethlehem themselves, nor would they worship the Christ. True wisdom is that which is described in Proverbs 8:1-9:12, that which hates evil, and will have

nothing to do with pride, or arrogance, or evil ways, or perverse scheming. If we would be wise, let us seek after wisdom, and let us live by it, for 'by me kings reign, and princes decree justice.' 'I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment: that I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasure.' Daniel declared, 'They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament: and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.' Eternal life is the reward of the righteous, and true wisdom is to fall before the Lord Jesus Christ, and to worship and serve him in faith and love. May we all have this wisdom, now and ever more. AMEN. ¶

SHADOWS OF HEAVENLY THINGS (PART 1)

By JOHN HOOPER (Saltash)

A LITTLE child, listening to its mother teaching it many new and exciting things about the world around it, needs help. At such a tender age the child finds the language of words to be a mystery. It has not yet learned how to read and is struggling even with the letters of the alphabet, so to help her child the mother turns to pictures. The child can understand pictures. It can relate to pictures.

Likewise the church in Old Testament times was the church as a child, and she was just such a child as I have described (Galatians 3:24-4:7). To bring her to knowledge of the wonders of the gospel and the meaning of his glorious promises, God

spoke to her by way of a beautiful book filled with pictures painted in the most vibrant of colours. These pictures included many historical events, sacred ordinances and godly characters, all of them ordained by God to serve him in this way. They were what we tend to refer to as the types of the Old Testament, and while I am not sure that the word 'type' is always helpful, it is rooted in the Bible. The Greek word from which it is derived, *tupos*, is used by the apostle Paul in Romans 5:14 where he declares Adam to be 'the figure [*tupos*] of him that was to come.' The reality that corresponds to the type is the *antitype* or antitype, a word used in Hebrews 9:24¹ and 1 Peter 3:21.

Now it is true that the types may be described as pictures, likenesses or illustrations of gospel realities, but only up to a point. E.A. Litton, in his Bampton Lectures of 1856, defines a type as 'a prophetic symbol' that 'can only proceed from God.'² That too is true but still it fails to do justice to the full significance of those glorious Old Testament pictures. It may be as far as many are prepared to go but Scripture takes us further.

The inspired New Testament writers speak of the Old Testament types as being 'figures of the true' (Hebrews 9:9; 24; cf. Romans 5:14), 'patterns of things in the heavens' (Hebrews 9:23), and shadows of heavenly things and of good things to come (Hebrews 8:5; 10:1; cf. Colossians 2:17). These passages teach us that the types had a dual purpose. Firstly, they were to point Old Testament believers *forward* to Christ and to the 'good things to come.' Secondly, and this is what we are going to focus on in this and a further article, the types were given to point them *upward* to heaven itself. The types were pictures or patterns of 'things in the heavens' and shadows of 'heavenly things' (Hebrews 9:23; 8:5). In other words their purpose in Old Testament times was not only to point the people *forward* to coming realities, but to spiritual and redemptive realities that

existed already in heavenly places, so that through the type they might believe the gospel. It is a mistake to think that Old Testament typology was written for our learning alone (cf. Romans 15:4). The picture-book was given to God's Old Testament people for them, for their use, their blessing, even their salvation.

The Gospel in pictures

The types were no less than shadows of Christ himself cast from heaven across the entire Old Testament age, beginning at Genesis 3:15. They were *gospel*, fitting 'plainly into the scheme of redemptive history.'³ That is to say, the system of types and shadows constituted the 'mode of dispensation'⁴ that God had ordained for his covenant throughout Old Testament times, and the substance of that covenant was nothing less than the glorious gospel of mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

Here I believe we hold the key for unlocking the treasures of Old Testament typology, while at the same time guarding against the speculation and carelessness that can sometimes mar our treatment of these things. Every true type 'is necessarily a symbol ... but not every symbol is necessarily a type,' wrote Litton. We need to take care and learn 'mentally at least, [to] separate the symbol

New Testament. The author 'speaks of the Old Testament as the antitype. An antitype, of course, always has a type lying back of it as its model. To find the original type ... we must go back of the Old Testament to heaven. This heavenly type was shown to Moses on Mount Sinai' (Geerhardus Vos, *The Teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, p.58).

2 Edward Arthur Litton; *The Mosaic Dispensation Considered as Introductory to Christianity*, (London: 1856), p.83. Viewed on-line.

3 Oswald. T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, undated), p.22.

4 'Mode of administration' is a term coined by Calvin. He wrote: 'The covenant made with all the patriarchs is so much like ours in substance and reality that the two are actually one and the same. Yet they differ in the mode of dispensation' (*Institutes*, II. X. 2). Similarly the Puritan John Ball wrote, 'For manner of administration this Covenant is divers, as it pleased God in sundry manners to dispense it: but for substance it is one, the last, unchangeable and everlasting' (*A Treatise of the Covenant of Grace*, p.23). William Ames spoke simply of the 'form' of the covenant, describing the New Testament as, 'new in relation to what existed from the time of Moses and in relation to the promise made to the fathers. But it is new not in essence but in form' (*The Marrow of Theology*, p.206).

¹ In this text and elsewhere in the letter to the Hebrews these terms are used differently to elsewhere in the

from the type.⁵ Geerhardus Vos is wise in sounding a similar warning:

The bond that holds type and antitype together must be a bond of vital continuity in the progress of redemption. Where this is ignored, and in the place of this bond are put accidental resemblances, void of inherent spiritual significance, all sorts of absurdities will result, such as must bring the whole subject of typology into disrepute. Examples of this are: the scarlet cord of Rahab prefigures the blood of Christ; the four lepers at Samaria, the four Evangelists.⁶

Yes, there is a grave danger, if we do not take care, of descending into allegory, of going off on flights of fancy and speculation that may appeal to the fertile imagination but have no basis whatsoever in Scripture. There is more than enough to amaze us in the types without going beyond the bounds of Scripture.

We tend to think of the days in which we live, these post-Pentecost days, as the gospel age, and certainly we have the gospel in the full light and glory of New Testament revelation, but we should not think of those living in Old Testament times as being without it. For example, the New Testament specifically states in Galatians 3:8 that the promise God had given to Abraham, 'In thee shall all nations be blessed,' was the gospel. Then again, in Hebrews 4:2 we have these striking words: 'For unto us was the gospel preached, *as well as unto them*,' referring to the generation who perished in the wilderness. Whatever else this verse is saying it is telling us at least this: that the gospel had been preached to those who perished. The preaching came to them not in the form that we would recognise today

as preaching but in the form of picture sermons—the types and shadows—and we learn from the New Testament that the preacher of those sermons was Christ himself.

Earthly pictures of heavenly realities

The Old Testament age was very physical. It was a time when the gospel was revealed in things that could be seen and touched, handled and tasted. Even the gospel promises were couched in physical and earthly terms, which again is why we need to take such great care in interpreting them. It is a serious mistake to view the earthly and the physical as promises in their own right, somehow distinct in the purposes of God. We need to hold firmly in our minds that God's old covenant promises were always gospel promises belonging to God's one everlasting covenant of grace. That which was being promised was the spiritual and heavenly reality of redemption in Christ and the believer's eternal rest in the true tabernacle not made with hands. The earthly was only and always the figure, the picture, the fleeting shadow, of which the substance was always the heavenly and eternal. The earthly was but the figure of the true and the Old Testament believer understood that and believed it.

Let us suppose for a moment that we are walking down a country lane and find the shadow of a tall tree, perhaps a majestic copper beech, falling across our path. The shadow is not telling us that the tree is some way off but that it is very close at hand. We need only to look up and we will see it towering above us at our side. Likewise the believing Israelite not only saw the shadow but by faith he looked up and saw Christ, albeit dimly. In this way the types and shadows were much more than mere illustrations and pictures.

They were the means of grace for the Lord's people. In them Christ himself came to, preached to, and revealed himself to his Old Testament church.

Perhaps the clearest example we have of this in Scripture is the rock that followed the children of Israel in the wilderness and out of which came forth water (Exodus 17:6; Numbers 20:10,11). Paul tells us with all the authority of inspired revelation, 'that rock was Christ' (1 Corinthians 10:4). The tragedy was that being without faith, the majority of the people saw the rock but not Christ. They even slaked their thirst with the water that came out of the rock but they did not drink from the fountain of living waters. They heard the gospel even from Christ himself in typical form but it was in unbelief, and it was for this reason that their carcasses fell in the wilderness and they could not enter into God's rest (Hebrews 3:17–19). Still today, even in the fullness of New Testament light, there are many who come face to face with Christ in the hearing of the gospel week after week but the hearing is not mixed with faith, and without faith sinners cannot enter into the eternal rest that remains.

The presence of Christ and the wonders of the gospel in the Old Testament types open up for us a rich seam of instruction. Those types were figures 'for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect' (Hebrews 9:9), but they led the people to the one gift and sacrifice that would make them perfect, the Lord Jesus Christ. Abraham and his seed knew that the reality and substance of their faith were not to be found in an earthly country but a heavenly one and they died in faith seeking it (Hebrews 11:8–16). The reality was not in the shadow but in that which cast the shadow; not something earthly and physical but

something heavenly and spiritual. Likewise Moses forsook Egypt and endured 'as seeing him who is invisible,' ie, in the heavens (Hebrews 11:27).

We need to keep in mind that when Old Testament believers looked to Moses and all the ceremonies of the Aaronic priesthood, and the structure and furnishings of the tabernacle, they were being directed not merely forwards to future millennia but upwards to the heavenly and present realities portrayed. In their own time and experience, for their own eternal salvation, they looked heavenwards. They trusted in the One who was to come and there and then by faith they knew in their hearts the mercy and forgiveness of the Lord their God.

They looked to Moses and by faith saw in shadowy form Christ the true Mediator between God and men. They looked to the paschal lamb and by faith saw a shadow of Christ the Lamb of God slain, in their very midst. They looked to thousands of sacrificed bulls, goats, lambs and turtledoves, and by faith saw shadows of Christ the one offering and sacrifice for sin. They looked to priests who first had to make sacrifices for their own sins, and then repeatedly for the sins of others, and by faith they saw dimly Christ who through the eternal Spirit would one day offer himself without spot to God once and for all. In the wilderness they were provided by God with quails and manna to sustain them day after day throughout their wanderings, and they received this provision as their spiritual meat for it was Christ, the bread of life to their souls. And so we could go on. Every type was a gospel sermon, a sermon in pictures, but a sermon nonetheless preached by Christ concerning himself, and in them his saving grace and power were mightily at work for the salvation of the elect of those days.

⁵ Litton, pp.82–3.

⁶ Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology*, (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, repr. 1996), p.146.

Christ was the true Ark, having the covenant and law of God fully in his heart and bowels; Christ was the true Mercy-seat, covering the curse of the law; Christ was the true sacrifice, purging away sin and making atonement by his own blood; Christ was the true table of shewbread whereon all his Israel are daily presented as acceptable to the Lord. Christ was the true veil by which, rent, we have an open entrance made into the holy of holies, Heaven itself.⁷

The very fact that there were so many varied types and shadows teaches us that there are many facets to the person and work of Christ in the gospel, and no one type could ever begin to portray them all. They have been recorded in Scripture for our learning and it is to our great loss if we neglect them, but we should not lose sight of their first and primary purpose, which was to preach Christ to an Old Testament people. And if they by faith were able to see him and how he would fulfil their greatest need, how much more should we. ¶

TO BE CONTINUED

FORMER DAYS

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

250 years ago: March & April 1769

The **March** issue begins with an examination of the implications of an important truth—that true religion is of a divine original. This means that man, having fallen in sin, could not possibly know the truth unless God had graciously revealed it. Revealed religion is not merely external, but internal. Lively impressions of God, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, are made on the soul. He not only points out the way of life, but he grants new life in regeneration. The whole piece is quite lengthy, but it speaks comfort to us, as it sets out the fundamental difference between religion and true religion. How this knowledge is needed today!

The biography is of John Bradford, who was martyred under Queen Mary. Attention is paid to his examination, in which he was falsely accused by Bishop Bonner,

and denied even a semblance of justice. Bradford's *Works* were published by the Parker Society, and have been reprinted by Banner of Truth.

The Miscellaneous section continues the review of Archbishop Secker's *Lectures*. The previous issue was rightly critical of Secker's denial of the Trinity (one supreme God, and two subordinate Gods), as set out in his exposition of the first great commandment. Turning now to the second of them ("Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself") the writer shows that, in Secker's theology, this amounts to salvation by works. The act of loving our neighbour is a means of salvation, and this is rendered necessary by the denial of Christ as Redeemer, in that he is not God of God. Errors regarding Trinitarian theology may appear of little consequence; in fact, they are among the most serious into which

any can fall. Errors regarding the nature of saving faith may also seem, to some, to be minor, but any teaching that leads us to think that we are saved for our good works is a denial of Christ's work of redemption.

Three further publications are reviewed. The first two arise from the aftermath of the controversy that surrounded the expulsion of the six students from Oxford (see Arnold Dallimore's *George Whitefield*, Vol 2, pp.469–70. Banner of Truth, 1980). In the first, *Goliath Slain*, 'a member of the Church of England' answers the Rev. Dr. Nowell's defence of the expulsion of those students. In short, the suspicions raised against their preaching are answered by an examination of the Articles of the Church of England. The second piece is of a similar vein, being a defence of regeneration by a true member of the Church of England.

The third is connected to the first two. Its title, *The Church of England Vindicated from the charge of Arminianism*, sounds very much like Toplady's great treatise of a similar title. His may be found in his *Complete Works*, pp.46–279.

Gospel Comfort for Doubting Minds takes up certain errors concerning righteousness. In this section, the error under scrutiny relates to the law, and the relationship of the law to the believer. Are we to substitute sincerity for perfect obedience? Are we to seek to be perfect in the law of love, but not according to the moral law? Is sanctification what we labour to achieve, or is it communicated from our union with Christ? The root of the modern error of New Covenant Theology is exposed, and chopped, in this piece. As the title states, 'Christ is the believer's sanctification.'

Poetry concludes the issue.

In **April** we find the continuation of the implications of religion being of a divine

original. Here, we read that the Christian religion is a living principle in the souls of good men. One of its properties is that it springs up in us unto everlasting life. The nature of vital or living religion is one that is not so commonly met with today, and yet it is one that needs to be taught more frequently.

The biography is of the Scottish minister and martyr, George Wishart (given here as Wiseheart). His grace and wisdom are very much in evidence, as well as the influence he had in life, and in death, over the people of Scotland.

The Dialogue between Christian and Truth continues to explore some of the metaphors in the Song of Solomon, spiritually understood. The first part is 2:10, 'My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.' This shows the end of Christ's coming, to call the Church to himself. The language of rising up and coming away shows that either the Church is at ease and must be aroused, or is under a burden of sin and must be relieved. To come away is to depart from carnal lusts and the pull of this passing world. The fairness and loveliness of the Church is her imputed righteousness, and not any worth of her own. Similar treatment is given to the end of v. 13.

Casuistical Divinity asks, and answers, Question 50, 'How doth God furnish his people with matter of praise, under the various discouragements wherewith they are exercised in the night of distress, and in the view of death and judgment?' This is answered in four brief paragraphs.

A lengthy poem on the spirit of prayer in the believer attempts to show how dependant we are on grace and the Holy Spirit in prayer, and what blessings there can be for those who learn to pray.

Gospel Comfort for Doubting Minds

⁷ Francis Roberts, *The Mystery and Marrow of the Bible*, (1657), p.767.

continues, at some length, the piece on Christ our Sanctification, and two pages of poetry conclude the issue.

200 years ago: March & April 1819

The issue for **March** begins with a long discourse on the nature of divine sovereignty in all the affairs of men. There is much in it to comfort us in these doubtful days of 'Brexit.' To know that the outcome is in the hands of the One who knows the end from the beginning, and who rules in all the affairs of this world, is a great comfort.

A brief—and probably well-known—anecdote about George Whitefield is recounted, and a letter is published from Julius, complaining that he has not been allowed to speak in his own defence over a matter that has been taking up space in the *Magazine* for some time. This concerned a controversy over the personality of the Godhead, and in particular a denial of the personality of the Holy Spirit. In a few words Julius demonstrates the weakness of the position as set out by its proponents. Such views are far from uncommon today. An Editorial note draws attention to a statement in a previous issue saying that Julius's correspondence had been mislaid or lost.

Notes of a sermon on 1 Peter 3:13, and an exposition of John 8:56 are followed by some extracts from the writings of John Wesley (here called Westley) on bodily and progressive sanctification. The correspondent is not in favour; this is the same point that is being made in the piece 'Christ our Sanctification' from the previous century.

'Thoughts on Acceptance with God' shows the inability of unregenerate human nature to be acceptable to God; we are only accepted in Christ. Dr Priestly is once again the subject of a critical review of his writings in the Christian faith. He and his fellow Deists

disliked that form of Christianity that called heresy by its true name, and that insisted on separating truth from error. It is pointed out, in a Editorial note, that there had been three series of replies to Dr Priestly published in *The Gospel Magazine*, and that the man had never once attempted to answer a single one.

A short letter expresses thanks to the Editor for calling the correspondent a Sabellian in his earlier writings. The writer declares that a consideration of the charge has led him to see his error, and to declare his embracing the orthodox view of the Trinity. Sabellianism is Modalism, the teaching that there is one Divine Person who appears, at different times, as either Father, Son or Spirit. It is an ancient heresy, and is a denial of the Trinity. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was called High Unitarianism. Unitarian heresies had plagued much of non-conformity since the late seventeenth century, and, arguably, marked the death of Puritanism.

An issue arising from an acceptance of the doctrine of eternal justification arouses the pen of the next writer, to ask why we are to forgive our debtors if we would be forgiven, if in fact our sins have been forgiven already.

The concluding part of *Christ Believing and Repenting for his People* and a letter on The Everlasting Love of God are followed by extracts on the State of Calvinism under Elizabeth, and is taken directly from the writings of Augustus Toplady (*Works*, p.198f). Myra writes to 'A Child', the two having entered into controversy with each other previously. Myra writes to explain why he will not be answering 'A Child' and gives five reasons: the unkind attitude of 'A Child', Myra's tiredness, the belief that enough has been said already, the apparent weakness of the opponent ('A Child'), and the hope

that 'A Child' will mature and leave behind childish things.

Two pages of poetry conclude the issue.

For **April** we are shown Christ the Captain of our Salvation, appearing as a champion to save his people. Then, we see why the unconverted heart is averse to God; 'the carnal mind is enmity against God.'

A useful piece on the role of God the Holy Spirit in the covenant of redemption is followed by an examination of the difference between purchase and gift as it relates to the Church being purchased by Christ's blood and given to him.

Trinitarian errors are once more examined, with an enquiry into the term *hypostasis* as used both in Scripture and in theological writings. Two anecdotes relating to Toplady's ministry follow.

A review of a book on prophecy allows the reviewer to publish a lengthy extract that is highly critical—to the point of being defamatory—of the Wesley brothers and Andrew Fuller. Dr Hawker's *Lectures on the Person, Godhead, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost* are reviewed favourably. Among the other titles reviewed, two stand out. The first is a sermon, preached at St Paul's Cathedral, in which the hearer is told to be passively obedient to Christ, and all will be well. The review is highly critical. Similarly, a volume addressed to the Irish clergy by a Church of England clergyman is also given a drubbing. In it, the author claims to show how to expel the doctrine of predestination from the Church; given that this doctrine is plainly stated in the Articles, and underlies all the services (including the service for the Baptism of Infants), this would be difficult.

A book that speculates on the date and nature of the millennium is reviewed with some amusement; apparently the millennial period was to have started in 1866.

One or two further reviews and a short poem end the issue.

100 years ago: March & April 1919

Christ the satisfaction his people is the subject of the opening paper in the **March** issue. A sermon on 'Be mindful', from 2 Peter 3, follows. Many advocate 'mindfulness' today; here is something far better. Interestingly, the writer (the Editor) leans on the Revised Version on a number of occasions, seemingly preferring its translation to that of the AV.

Wellsprings looks at Paul's greeting of Priscilla and Aquila in Romans 16:3–5, enquiring into their history, faith and service, and that of the Apostle who greets them.

Sermon notes on Isaiah 65:24, A Father's Ear, and the conclusion of an exposition of Deuteronomy 4:30–31 follow, and then we have a reflective piece on the text, 'The Lord reigneth: let the earth rejoice.' The troubles of the time are compared with the peace the Lord gives, and comfort is set forth.

Luther's writings against Higher Criticism and against the Papacy are mined for ammunition. Of course, in the minds of some, it is Luther himself who is responsible for Higher Criticism, with his rejection of (or at least his doubtful attitude towards) certain New Testament books. In these extracts, Luther's high view of the Word of God is made clear, as well as his condemnation of the Papacy. The fruit of such errors, which Luther prophesied, are seen as having been fulfilled in the recent years of European conflict.

'A Remedy against Worldliness in the Church' and a comparison of some of the things we love compared with our being loved of the Lord lead to notes of a sermon, two obituaries of godly women, an extract from *The English Churchman* on German Lutheranism and the First World War, and

correspondence. The conclusion of the piece on recovering the Communion Service, correspondence and notices end the month.

The **April** magazine opens with an exposition of Ephesians 3:15, and, for the first time, there is criticism of the RV translation, which is seen to tend towards universalism. The overall tone of the piece is positive. A sermon on the Lord's Cup of Suffering examines the nature and contents of that cup.

Wellsprings considers the feeding of the five thousand, a sermon on Pilate's words, 'What is truth?' and another on The Pierced One (Zechariah 12:10) lead to a piece on the progressive nature of divine teaching. In this

piece the author shows that our understanding should increase with our years, and the conclusion is important: 'It needs a crucified man to preach a crucified Christ.'

The good day of Esther 8:16-17 offers some comforting thoughts, as does 'All waiting for him' from Luke 8:40. Another extract from the *English Churchman* on the historicity of the Flood is linked to a meditation on the troubled state of the world in the post-war years. Our comfort is in the Lord of the years.

A few short pieces, including an obituary and correspondence conclude the April issue.

TO BE CONTINUED

The righteousness by which a sinner stands just before God, or in the light of God, from the curse, is a righteousness of God's providing; so also it is of his putting on. Thus therefore a man is made righteous even of God by Christ, or through his righteousness. Now if, as was said, a man is thus made righteous, then in this sense he is good before God, before he has done any thing which the law calls good before men, for God maketh not men righteous with this righteousness, because they have been, or have done good, but before they are capable of doing good at all. Hence we are said to be justified while ungodly, even as an infant is clothed with the skirt of another while naked as touching itself. Works therefore do not precede, but follow after this righteousness; and even thus it is in nature, the tree must be good, before it bear good fruit, and so also must a man. It is as impossible to make a man bring forth good fruit to God before he is of God made good, as it is for a thorn or bramble-bush to bring forth figs or grapes. But again, a man must be righteous before he can be good, righteous by imputation, before his person, his intellectuals, can be qualified with good, as to the principle of good. Neither faith, the Spirit, nor any grace is given unto the sinner before God has made him righteous with the righteousness of Christ. Wherefore it is said, that after he had spread his skirt over us, he washed us with water, ie with the washing of sanctification. And to conclude otherwise, is as much as to say, that an unjustified man has faith, the Spirit, and the graces thereof, which to say is to overthrow the gospel. For what need of Christ's righteousness, if a man may have faith and the Spirit of Christ without it, since the Spirit is said to be the earnest of our inheritance, and that by which we are sealed unto the day of redemption. But the truth, is the Spirit that makes our person good, I mean, that which sanctifies our natures, is the fruit of the righteousness which we have by Jesus Christ. For as Christ died and rose again, before he sent the Holy Ghost from heaven to his; so the benefit of his resurrection is by God bestowed upon us, in order to the Spirit's possessing of our souls.

John Bunyan

BOOK REVIEWS

Ten Little-known Reformers

John M. Brentnall

2018 126pp pbk £10.00 (incl. p&p) from Dr John M. Brentnall, 5 Rosier Crescent, Swanwick, Derbyshire DE55 1RS

This book is a welcome addition to the works of the author on church history. The title itself is perplexing since the front cover has an image of the Reformation Wall monument of the four most well-known Reformers who operated in Geneva, two of whom (Farel and Beza) appear in the book with dedicated chapters. Moreover, another Reformer with a dedicated chapter, Zwingli, is described as among 'the big three' along with Luther and Calvin (p.90). We suspect that many readers of The Gospel Magazine will know something of the lives of many of the Reformers covered in the book, with the exception of Aonio Paleario. The others, in addition to the aforementioned, are Bullinger, Vermigli, Zanchius, Diodati, Hamilton, and Jewel. Diodati (1576-1649) is perhaps a little late to be considered as a 'Reformer', but as Dr Brentnall rightly observes, 'Diodati fulfilled a very important role in the history of Protestantism in Italy and served the cause of the Reformation in Europe', and we are pleased to find his inclusion.

There is much profit in being reminded of the lives of these saints. It can be a daunting (and expensive!) task to read multiple full-length biographies of the Reformers, and the cameos here averaging around 11 pages per Reformer, assist in keeping fresh in mind the works of God through them, or as an introduction to seek further. They will be helpful for any Christian seeking to know more about Reformation history and theology through its proponents. In his short but excellent introduction, Dr Brentnall teaches us that 'theology is inseparable from history' and that 'our theology is forged in the fires of God's dealings with us', (p.5). He identifies the advantages of his approach to historical theology, that it dispels 'ignorance of our precious Reformation heritage'; that it steers us away from purely academic preoccupations with 'theological systems'; that it helps us to resist secular humanism and false religion, which are 'hacking souls away from their Reformation roots'; and that it helps us to see that 'there is a unified core to Reformation theology' (p.6).

Dr Brentnall takes a varied approach to describing the lives of the Reformers: sometimes it is straight biography; in other cases there are extensive extracts from their writings. The latter is the case with the little-known Paleario, which has an extract from his Benefit of Christ Crucified. His method of proceeding is an excellent way to display Reformed theology and piety by attaching them to accounts of human interest, and having the doctrines repeated through the expressions of the individual Reformers. So we have the doctrines of Scripture, justification, predestination and the Lord's Supper from Vermigli; Scripture, God, man, predestination, salvation, the law, the church, the sacraments, and civil government by Zwingli; the knowledge of God, the saving work of Christ and the church by Farel; Scripture, the Covenant of Grace, faith, justification and assurance, election, the sacraments and the law by Bullinger; predestination and the Lord's Supper by Zanchius; predestination, covenant, the church, and the state by Beza; Scripture, justification, the church, and the ruler by Jewel, and Holy Scripture by Diodati. All these set in the context of their lives and, in the cases of Hamilton and Paleario, their deaths as martyrs. Zwingli is briefly mentioned as having died in the battle of Kappel.

Our author quite rightly points out how Beza's reputation was traduced, and his work misrepresented by the enemies of Calvinism. Thankfully, several scholars in the last thirty years, including Andrew Woolsey, have done much to dispel these errors, and we are pleased to see aspects of this re-appraisal found in this present work. With regard to Bullinger, Dr Brentnall is also correct to point out that though he was of towering importance to the Reformation, inexplicably his life and work was largely neglected and underestimated when it came to writing up Reformation history; thus we are always pleased to see outlines of his life, work and thought, here with sixteen pages dedicated to the same. Unfortunately, the virtual absence of secondary source material for comparison 40 years ago, together with Bullinger's primary works being out of print for well over a century, enabled Charles McCoy and Wayne Baker in the 1980s and 90s to do with Bullinger what could never be done with a Reformer having an extensive corpus of works in print: seriously to misrepresent him and thereby claim him as the 'primary source' of American federalism, and the prototype for their own political activism in the civil rights movement. McCoy's portrayal of Bullinger is worse than useless: it is manifestly wrong, so we reiterate Dr Brentnall's very apt warning in his Introduction that 'we need to beware of reading back into the Reformers' teaching our own presuppositions. This would be to misunderstand them and perhaps even use them for our own ends'. Accordingly, we very much regret having to point out a few occasions where secondary sources have slipped through this net.

McCoy, a confessional Arminian, continually described Calvinism as a 'rationalistic' system based on 'impersonal necessity', and his anti-Calvinistic bias is nowhere more evident than in his description of the Synod of Dort, whose canons are said to be 'dubious', and whose outcome 'a scene of monumental shame'. It should be obvious that, having quoted Bullinger's description of those who are 'predestinate to life' and those who are 'predestinate to death' (p.68), the suggestion that Bullinger did not teach 'double predestination' must be doubtful, though McCoy laboured hard to have his readers believe otherwise. Bullinger, however, wrote not only of predestination both to life and to death as cited above, but also that 'God by his eternal and unchangeable counsel hath fore-appointed who are to be saved, and who are to be condemned', and that 'the predestination of God is the eternal decree of God, whereby he hath ordained either to save or destroy men; a most certain end of life and death being appointed unto them'. If these are not expressions of 'double predestination' then that term has lost all meaning.

Likewise, McCoy and Baker's central thesis that the covenant idea in Bullinger is 'conditional, mutual and contractual' (p.66) was a misrepresentation by them. It was to McCoy and Baker's purpose to re-make Bullinger in their own image as the 'real' covenant theologian (unlike Calvin, whom they declare was not a covenant theologian), the proponent of the 'bilateral, conditional covenant', and the precursor to political federalism and the social contract. Those who have read Bullinger will know that the notions that he sought 'separation of Church and State' (p.59) and taught that nations ought to be ruled 'by the people, for the people' (p.63) are anachronistic. Bullinger never envisioned church and state as separate, but as parts of a single entity with complementary functions. Andreas Mühling is correct in his observation that Bullinger's conception of the relationship between church and state was 'fundamentally shaped by his view of the unity of the prophetic office and the magistrates', a view from which he never resiled throughout his life. Bullinger, like Calvin, taught that 'the care of religion' was the civil magistrate's primary duty, and wrote that doctrine into The Second Helvetic Confession, one of the most widely used Reformed confessions of faith.

Patrick Collinson, we are told (p.97), held that Calvin never sanctioned the right of magistrates to resist tyrants, and that Beza was the first to do so. However, an inspection of the

Institutes shows that Calvin affirmed that 'Far am I from forbidding [magistrates] officially to check the undue licence of kings' (IV. XX. 31). There Calvin himself traces such practice back to antiquity, but in respect of defending their right (under God), Calvin not only anticipated Beza but was himself anticipated by Bucer and Luther, and we can without difficulty trace the origins of all their ideas back at least as far as the twelfth century.

The above examples highlight some of the dangers of relying on secondary sources, but there are also a few occurrences where our author's own opinions contra individual Reformers are liable to be misunderstood as aberrations by them from mainstream Reformed teaching, which is not the case. For example, Dr Brentnall avers that it was for Beza 'inadmissible' (pp. 97, 99), for Diodati 'disgraceful' (p.120), and for Calvin 'shameful' (p.98) to maintain that the evildoers for whom the magistrate bears the sword as God's agent to execute wrath on God's behalf (Romans 13) included blasphemers. These rather isolated value judgments add nothing of value to the narrative as a whole, but are distractions that cry out for a proper context, understanding and commentary.¹

¹ Like Servetus before him, Nicholas Antoine was arrested, charged, tried, condemned and executed by the Genevan state, not the Church, and that by strangulation, his corpse being subsequently reduced to ashes. Antoine was a grievous wolf in sheep's clothing, who entered the sacred office of minister under oath to the civil authorities that he would teach and uphold the Reformed faith, and came into the employ of the family of John Diodati as tutor. After long course of conduct of blasphemy and heresy in the official guise of a minister, Antoine was eventually arrested and charged with 'uttering horrid blasphemies against our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ', persisting in 'blasphemies against the Holy Trinity and the Person of our Blessed God and Saviour, maintaining as well by word of mouth as writing, that Jesus Christ was an idol, and that the New Testament was but a mere fable', from which he could not be induced by the most earnest entreaties by church or state to desist, and which he insisted he would persist in unto death. His guilt on all charges is incontestable. He wilfully broke the law of the land, and suffered its civil penalties accordingly.

Today, of course, we live in societies where the civil magistrate no longer concerns himself with prosecuting those who publicly promote some of the most abominable infractions of God's holy law, but it is far from the case that civil punishment of blasphemers 'lacks the authority of both Christ and His apostles' (p.99), and such a view is explicitly repudiated in the Second Helvetic Confession, which enjoins the duty of the civil magistrate to 'draw forth his sword against all ... blasphemers ... whom God has commanded him to punish or even to execute. Let him suppress stubborn heretics ... who cease not to blaspheme the majesty of God'. Even the much later Westminster Confession expressly deals with this matter of authority and states that 'God, the supreme Lord and King ... hath ordained civil magistrates ... and ... hath armed them with the power of the sword', and that the magistrate 'hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order ... that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed'.

Attempts to sidestep this teaching by asserting that crimes of a 'spiritual' nature must only be 'punishable by spiritual sanctions' (p.97), which is no business of the civil magistrate, are inapposite. Even if this be granted merely for the sake of argument, it does not follow that those who exercise themselves in promoting immorality in the public sphere should gain immunity from public prosecution by pleading that their offences are purely 'spiritual' in nature because, in fact, they are not.

Due firstly to the Anabaptists, and then to Enlightenment philosophy, it has increasingly become a commonplace in Evangelicalism to assert that a separation of church and state requires that the state lay down the sword against public infractions of the first table of the Decalogue. But such is mere sophistry. The agency of the state in punishing malefactors against all the commandments in the Decalogue is not suspended on a particular belief about the relationship between church and state. The consistent biblical position has always been that since both church and state are under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, both have responsibilities in upholding all his moral law as summarized in the Decalogue, whatever the actual (or desirable) relationship between church and state at any point in time. Until recently, Reformed theologians who favoured a separation of church and state retained the knowledge of God that the suppression of blasphemy, Sabbath-breaking, perjury etc belonged to the state as a civic duty, which was not lacking in divine authority for the same. Thus R.L. Dabney: 'The legitimate state exists only by virtue of the will of God as Maker and providential Ruler; and therefore can ground its authority only in its recognition of him', so that 'he who assails

There are not a few typographical issues that appear to stem from scanning papers with optical character recognition. We would nevertheless urge readers to overlook them since the work is very readable, and the value of this delightful little work far exceeds any blemishes. Recommended.

KMcG

Grace

John M. Brentnall

£8 (5 or more £6 each, 10 or more £4 each) 40pp bklt
from 5 Rosier Crescent, Swanwick, Derbyshire, DE55 1RS

The brief title of this booklet belies the breadth of the content, which is a description of the various components of our salvation. The author has looked at the component parts, and shown from the Scriptures the wonderful works of God in the salvation of sinners.

The underlying—and overarching—theme is grace, and the writings of various authors are used to help define grace. It is by grace that we are saved, having been chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. It is by grace that we are saved, Christ having come into the world to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. It is by grace that we are saved, since the grace made known to believers distinguishes them from unbelievers. It is by grace that we are saved, because the Spirit of grace dispenses grace to the elect of God. It is by grace that we are saved because grace is invincible, there being nothing that can thwart God's grace. It is by grace that we are saved because grace works conversion in us, and not the operation of our own wills that makes us ready to accept salvation. It is by grace that we are saved because we are justified by grace, adopted by grace, sanctified by grace, preserved by grace—and we shall one day be glorified by grace.

A number of the sections are headed by extracts from the questions and answers of the Westminster Shorter Catechism. This is very much in keeping with the general tenor of the author, whose writes in the Reformed tradition. Yet the aim is not to foster a tradition but to encourage us to recognise, confess and give glory to God for the grace by which we are save. Those of an Arminian position will find aspects of their theology critiqued here. Those of a Reformed position will find the warmth of true gospel preaching here, as we are encouraged to rejoice in the free grace of a merciful, faithful and loving heavenly Father more than in a mere form.

This is not a hard read, nor a long one. Get a copy, read it, and pass it on to someone else.

It would have been helpful to have included references to those works and authors cited, or at least to have had a bibliography.

There are a few typographical errors in the text, affecting spelling and punctuation. On p.22–23 the sense is obscured by a wrong full stop.

EJM

the being ... of God thereby attacks the very existence of the state'. Since 'the right of the state to exist must imply its right to preserve the essential conditions of its own existence ... The state has a ... right to restrain the public propagation of ... blasphemy of Almighty God ... She has the civil right, as a secular institute, to suppress this personal licence'.

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