

MAY-JUNE 2019

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The Gospel Magazine



The character of a Christian • God's love to mankind • 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.

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

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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

OURS is not a happy age. It is a wealthy age, for many in the West at least. It is a healthy age, for those who are prepared to forego alcohol, tobacco and too much sugar (which, it seems, may not be that many). It is a knowledgeable age, with books and internet access providing instant answers to all sorts of questions (though not all of those answers are trustworthy, as recent reports about the rise of flat-earthism show). But it is certainly not a happy age.

There is deep unhappiness among young people. Some believe they have no future because their parents’ generation has been too careless in burning fossil fuels and discarding plastic into the oceans. Some believe they have been born with the wrong body and outward sexual identity, and are desperate to change with the help of chemicals and surgery. Some believe they have been victims of a social agenda that has suppressed one group or another for generations, and it is now time to right the wrongs, redress the balance in favour of the oppressed, and make the former rulers feel the burden of being

ruled. The present arguments taking place over Britain’s ongoing relationship with the European Union is but a symptom of the deep unhappiness that exists in our society, and the deep divisions show that many are very unhappy, but have no idea how to address their needs.

There has always been unhappiness in the world, ever since man first fell in sin. Adam was unhappy, and this is why he hid from the presence of the Lord God in the garden. His unhappiness was primarily with himself, since he knew he had sinned, but could not deal with the feelings of guilt and shame that overcame him as a consequence. Cain was deeply unhappy, especially when he was told that the consequence of his act of murder was that he was to be driven away from the rest of mankind. He was unhappy with God, with his family, and with himself. As we read on in Scripture we find unhappiness on almost every page, as fallen man struggles to come to terms with himself, with his standing before the Lord, and with the effects of sin on the created order. Unhappiness is

written into our fallen world, and will remain as long as this world continues.

There is, however, an answer to the deep unhappiness we see all around us, and may find within us. We need to make peace with God. We need to confess our sins, and admit that the life we live in pursuit of happiness is just another expression of the sinfulness of our nature. Happiness does not lie in the provision of distractions from the harsh reality of life, nor in the getting of luxuries and pleasures that would otherwise be unattainable for us. Happiness lies in our being right with the Lord who made us. Since he is the Creator, he knows what is right for us. He made us in his image, to love him, obey him and worship him. Only when we do these things will we know happiness.

And yet we are incapable of loving him, obeying him or worshipping him aright. Our nature is corrupt, and there is no pleasure in these things for those whose nature is ruined by sin. Without a new nature we will never come to these things. This new nature cannot be had by any course of medical treatment. Pharmacy and surgery are not able to do for us what we need. Something greater, deeper and more fundamental is required. We need to be born again. Until we are born again we will remain unhappy, unable to love the Lord, nor obey him, nor worship him.

The new birth causes us to have a new nature, a new heart, and a new will. We now love the things of righteousness and truth. We love the Lord for himself, as the holy and just one, who is worthy of our love and much more beside. We delight to do his will, and find in ourselves a true desire to do his will. We confess that we also find a resistance to such things within ourselves, and that the flesh wars against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. In this, we find a certain

comfort, that there is evidence here that we are indeed born again; that warfare within us did not happen before we were born again, and shows that a spiritual work has begun in us. In this we rejoice.

We are now happy, but a new unhappiness is met with. Now we are unhappy at the coolness of our love for the Lord our Saviour, and we are unhappy with the poor way in which we obey Christ and his word. We are unhappy that our pursuit of righteousness and holiness is not wholehearted at all times. We are deeply unhappy when we see the condition in which most live, and the sin in which they rejoice. We long for righteousness and truth to triumph, for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to be honoured, and for the people of God to be one flock under one Shepherd.

We are most happy in the time spent in prayer, in Bible reading, in Christian conversation, and in the worship of our heavenly Father and our Saviour Jesus Christ. These things, being precious to us, are sought out and done with joy in our hearts. We know that the day is coming when we will see Christ face to face, and we long for that day. Then shall we have true happiness, and the thought of this joy sustains us through this life.

When we have this happiness it must show from us. We cannot be happy and hide it, nor must we seek to hide it. The world around us is miserable, and we know where true joy is to be found. Let us be ambassadors for true happiness, showing others the abundant and constant blessing of knowing that our sins are forgiven, that we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and that we are blessed with spiritual blessings beyond imagination. Let us do our part in showing the grace of Christ by living joyfully as witnesses to the truth, for Christ's sake. ¶

A GOODLY REPORT

A sermon by THE EDITOR

'But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth' (1 Corinthians 14:24–25)

HOW we conduct ourselves in public worship is not a matter of fashion or preference, but is, in common with all other aspects of our lives in the sight of the holy and living God, dictated by his word. Writing to the believers at Corinth, the Apostle Paul had reason to take them to task for their failures in this matter. In their services they permitted disorder to reign by allowing people to indulge their spiritual gift of speaking in tongues in an unregulated manner. This is why Paul requires them to limit such utterances to two and no more than three persons, one after the other, and then there must be an interpretation, v. 27. If nobody is present who has the gift of interpretation, then those who could speak in tongues were to keep it between themselves and the Lord, v. 28. The effect of having many speak in tongues at the same time was to leave any unbeliever who might come into the service with the distinct impression that the congregation was mad, v. 23. Speaking in tongues in the public service was, therefore, prone to confuse and not to edify. This is why Paul had already stated, v. 1, that the gift of prophesying is the greatest we should desire. Such prophesying, v. 3, tends to the building up of the church. Tongues spoken without interpretation cannot edify, but prophesying does, v. 5. Paul does not denigrate speaking in tongues, which he acknowledges to be a spiritual gift (though we might add many things to indicate the cessation of the miraculous spiritual

gifts once the full revelation of God had been set down in the inspired Scriptures). He does, rather, promote prophesying, by which we understand preaching. The first part of the chapter shows the benefit of preaching for believers. The words of our text show the benefit of preaching for the unconverted. Paul's clear instruction to the Church, then, is that preaching is the usual means by which sinners are converted and the saints built up.

The words of our text concern the benefit of preaching for the unconverted, given here as two sorts, the unbeliever and the ignorant (one that believeth not, or one unlearned). The former is the Jew, who knows the Scriptures and prophecies of Messiah, but who does not believe that Jesus is the Christ. The latter is the Gentile, who both neither knows the Scriptures nor the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. Preaching is commended as being for the benefit of both sorts. When we see the effect of preaching, given here in six things, we see two important matters; we see, first, what the content of true preaching ought to be; we see, secondly, the proper effect of true preaching. The first part deals with the outward call of the gospel, the second with the inner spiritual calling, that which we name effectual calling.

I. The true content of preaching

This is given to us in v. 24 and the first part of v. 25. It consists of three things, declaration, exposition and proclamation.

1. *Preaching is a declaration*

Preaching is, in the first place, a declaration of the truth, no matter what the opinions or beliefs of the hearers might be. The Apostle declares that, if an unbeliever or unlearned person should come into the service and hear preaching, he will be 'convinced of all'. The phrase 'convinced of all' may mean either of two things—that he is convinced by all who preach (note Paul says, 'if all prophesy') or that he is convinced by all that he hears from what he formerly believed or thought he knew. The difference lies here; is it the preacher, or the content of preaching, that convinces? We maintain that it is the latter; clever words and well constructed phrases are no substitute for the power of the gospel. This is because preaching is a declaration of certain things, specifically it is the declaration of Jesus Christ and him crucified, 1 Corinthians 1:23, 2:2. This may be a stumblingblock to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks, but to them that believe it is the power of God unto salvation. It is only in the preaching of the gospel that the declaration of Jesus Christ as Lord and God is made to the world over which he reigns. It is only in the preaching of the gospel that necessity for a crucified Saviour can make sense. Those who seek another Messiah, or who look for salvation by a different route, will find in the gospel no encouragement for their opinions, but rather they will be disabused of their errors. The declaration of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, as the one who came into the world to save sinners, is the proper subject of the preaching office.

2. *Preaching is an exposition*

The necessity for Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour is brought close to the hearers by the faithful and uncompromising exposition of the human condition. Mankind has a long

and strong tendency to view itself in an altogether more favourable light than the one found in Scripture. The tendency is to profess themselves to be wise even when they are being foolish, to declare that God thinks well of them even when he has condemned them in his word, and to judge themselves free from constraint when conscience binds them and guilt eats away in them. The Apostle declares that they are 'judged of all'. Every part of the hearer's life, conscience and beliefs are scrutinised by the searching word of truth. The word of God discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart, Hebrews 4:12, and elsewhere declare that the human heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, and asking, 'Who can know it?

3. *Preaching is a proclamation*

'And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest.' Whatever lies within, hidden from the usual view of the individual, is brought to the surface and into the light by being exposed to the searching gaze of God's word. Preaching proclaims to us the truth of what we are, and that the charge sounded forth from Scripture—that we are guilty sinners who deserve everlasting damnation—cannot be denied. There is a great need for preachers to describe the nature of sin carefully and clearly. It must be done in such a way that none are encouraged to desire to sin, but that all may see the exceeding great sinfulness of sin. The God who made us, whose word we have, is a good and loving God. He has made only good laws, and has given us all things needful for life on earth. The life for which he has provided is both bodily and spiritual, so that the whole man is provided for. Whatever we do against the good will of such a God, whatever we do to abuse or refuse his goodness, and whatever we do in opposition to him, has the nature of sin. This

needs to be proclaimed, so that all are indeed without excuse. The one whom Paul is describing here has heard the proclamation, and knows himself to be just as Scripture describes him. This cannot be achieved by the words of men, but by the power of God, through grace, by his Holy Spirit.

II. *The proper effect of preaching*

The proper effect of preaching is seen once the word of God has spoken to the sinner through his ear, and once the Holy Spirit is working in his heart, mind and soul. In such cases, where the two parts of effectual calling are found—the outward and the inward—three things will follow, repentance, faith and confession.

1. *Repentance*

Seen in his reaction, 'falling down on his face.' The one who has heard the declaration of the truth, and to whom his heart has been exposed, and who has heard the divine proclamation, is brought to repent of his sins. Repentance is not to be confused with a strong emotional response to the gospel. Some people are moved by accounts of the crucifixion, and become tearful when they consider Christ suffering on the cross, and his mother standing by and watching, and hearing the cruelty and hatred of the passers by. Such tears are not tears of repentance, for they arise from a sentimental view of Christ's death, and not from a true view of Christ's death as the atonement for their sins.

Some become tearful and emotional when they see that they are indeed sinners, and understand that they are guilty before God. Judas knew such tears, but they were not tears of repentance. Rather, they were tears of despair, and he went and hanged himself.

True repentance requires a change of mind (which is the literal meaning of the

Greek word, *metanoia*), whereby we acknowledge that our opinions of God, Christ, truth and ourselves have been false up to now. True repentance requires a change of heart, whereby the affections are moved off the world, self and sin to Christ, holiness and truth. True repentance requires a change of will, whereby we no longer live to ourselves but to Christ, and delight to do his will in its fulness. Of course, such changes cannot be made by us but are worked in us by the Holy Spirit as fruits of our election. Nevertheless, where true repentance is worked in us, there we will humble ourselves before the Lord.

2. *Faith*

Seen in the next thing, 'he will worship God.' Hitherto he did not worship God, or such worship as he offered was according to his own view of God. Now, he is turned to worship the God whose word has convinced him out of his error. He now confesses God to be the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. He confesses Jesus Christ to be his Saviour, Advocate, Propitiation, Surety, High Priest and King. The Jew is brought to believe that Jesus is the Messiah. The Gentile is brought to see that his gods are no gods, and that the true and living God has revealed himself in these last days through his Son. More particularly, both the Jew and the Gentile are brought to see that their eternal happiness depends on atonement being made for their sins, and that no sacrifice can be made by anyone other than the Son of God. All their hope is in Christ crucified, and in this they are moved by the manifestation of God's love in so sending his Son. Preaching is provided for this very purpose. Paul had determined to know nothing else among the Corinthians than Jesus Christ and him crucified. He wrote to the Galatians that Jesus Christ had been evidently set forth, crucified among them. The atonement was

the great matter of apostolic preaching, and by it the Church began to be established. Indeed, it is the preaching of the atonement more than anything that builds up the believer, for once we know by faith that our life is hid with Christ, and that we have died with him and been buried with him in baptism, then we begin to understand how it is that we now live in him. We live, and yet not we, but Christ in us, as Paul wrote to the Galatians. Faith, coupled with repentance, is that evidence that we are elect of God, predestined to eternal life. Our being brought to repentance and faith is the fruit of our election, and is the beginning of the fulfilment of the promise contained in it—a promise that also includes our justification, sanctification and glorification. This faith leads us to worship God, for what other response can we make but to fall down before him who has saved us with such great salvation?

3. Confession

Seen in the thing spoken, that he will 'report that God is in you of a truth.' Writing to the Romans, Paul states, 'with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation' (Romans 10:10). That confession is our declaring in public that we repent of our sins and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Every time we speak or act as believers we reaffirm this confession, especially when our actions are explained by us as being the consequences of our faith. The person Paul is describing to the Corinthians, whether Jew or Gentile, makes this public declaration in the congregation, as a consequence of the preaching he has heard.

Confession must be consistent with the witness of our lives. 'He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him' (1 John

2:4). The public affirmation alone is not a safe guide to the state of the heart, just as occasional acts of obedience cannot demonstrate the presence of that inward work of grace. Those who are regenerate are obedient and consistent in their confession, and that despite our inability to always do as we ought or speak as we know we should.

Here, the confession is that 'God is in you of a truth.' That is, God is to be seen in the preaching of the word, and among those where the gospel is preached, believed and loved. This means that those who profess to be gospel preachers must be as consistent in their living as they are in their preaching. Those who profess to love the gospel must likewise be consistent in their living.

This also shows that true gospel preaching is the work of God and not of men; men might be the spokesmen of God, and the ambassadors of Christ, but their authority is not their own. Where the gospel brings forth the fruit of repentance and faith, there the power of God is seen. This authenticates the gospel that is preached, and shows that the preacher is faithful and obedient. Let gospel preachers consider the importance of this point.

Application

From this we learn several things.

In the first place, *we learn that every aspect of our public worship is to be carried out with this end in mind, that we seek both to edify the believers and instruct and convince the unbelievers and ignorant.* There is much unbelief and ignorance today, and few of those who are so afflicted will come in to a Christian place of worship. When they do, whether by the leading of the Holy Spirit, carnal curiosity, or as a consequence of a friendly invitation, what will they find? All too often they find the regular attenders indulging themselves in self-centred forms

of behaviour, under the guise of divine worship, that are really about doing what pleases them. This can be as true of modern forms of worship as of older, more traditional forms, though it is undoubtedly a greater danger for the more modern form. Musical forms that are irregular, and that do not give the newcomer a real chance to learn the tune; Bible versions that differ from person to person; prayer styles that do not address the Triune God in language that is consistent with the scriptural revelation; the use of forms of ritual that exclude the uninitiated—these all contribute to making services difficult for visitors. And where preaching—or what passes for preaching today—is merely addressing the felt needs of the congregation rather than declaring divine truth, this difficulty is made worse. The world is full of people telling other people how to feel good about themselves. Very often, those who come into a church service for the first time have heard all this, and they have not found anything to satisfy their condition. Only the gospel provides this satisfaction, not because the preacher can supply answers, but because Christ is set forth as the only Saviour and Lord of sinners. Let us therefore think carefully about our worship, and ask whether we are contributing to the opinion that Christians are mad, or whether we are causing the unbeliever and the ignorant to say that truly God is in us.

In the second place, *we learn that all preaching is to set forth Jesus Christ.* This does not mean that every sermon is on the atonement, or that all our texts must be taken from one of the four Gospels or Isaiah 53. This does not mean that we cannot speak of any other subject. It does mean, however, that in all our preaching we are to relate the doctrine we teach to Jesus Christ. We are to show that all our hopes, and every blessing

we enjoy or look to enjoy, and each trial and difficulty we face, are had in connection with Jesus Christ. Of course, many reading this will not be preachers; how ought such to take this point? Consider the witness we are called upon to make. When we speak of our lives, and of the experiences we meet, and the trials and joys through which we pass, how readily do we connect these things with our Lord and Saviour? How quickly do we give Christ the glory for bestowing blessing on us, and for bearing us up under the weight and burden of trials? Do we seek to show that we live as we do because of Christ? The more we learn to see how our life is lived in and through the Lord Jesus, the more readily we will speak of him and his glory with a natural joy and delight. This is a powerful testimony to divine grace, and honours Jesus Christ aright.

In the third place, *we learn the necessity of a right response to the gospel.* Falling down before the Lord and worshipping him may not seem to be natural responses for us. Humbling our hearts before him and sending up praise to him must be. The humble heart is most unnatural to the natural man, and if we cannot or will not humble ourselves before the Lord, then the plain implication is that we are still natural and not spiritual. To offer praise to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is not natural to the natural man. Some are happy to speak of God, but not to speak of Christ or the Spirit. Let us examine the language of our worship—not that formal worship whereby we repeat the words of others in hymns and psalms, but that which comes readily to our minds and lips. Do we set forth Jesus Christ, and praise him for his saving love and majestic glory? Do we give thanks to Father and Son for the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, whose work it is to bring us to repentance and faith? Do we

seek to live in the power of the Holy Spirit, as those who are temples of God, and who are directed in all things by the Spirit of the living God? Let our mouths declare his praise also.

Paul shows us that a powerful testimony to gospel truth is to be had wherever true gospel preaching brings forth repentance

and faith in the hearers. Let those who are already saved by grace add to this testimony, by adding our continual praises, and by showing forth in obedience and love the truth of saving grace. The world needs to see and hear this testimony. Let it come forth readily from all who love the Lord in sincerity and truth. ¶

THE CHARACTER OF A CHRISTIAN

In paradoxes and seeming contradictions

from *THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE* for May and June, 1769

1. A CHRISTIAN is one who believes things which his reason cannot comprehend.
2. Who hopes for that which neither he, nor any man alive ever saw.
3. Who labours for that he knows he can never attain.
4. Yet in the issue, his belief appears not to have been false. Hope makes him not ashamed. Labour is not in vain.
5. He believes Three to be One, and One to be Three; a Father not to be elder than his Son, and the Son to be equal with his Father, and one proceeding from both to be fully equal to both.
6. He believes in one nature three persons, and in one person two natures.
7. He believes a virgin to have been a mother, and her Son to be her Maker.
8. He believes him to be born in time, who was from everlasting, and him to be shut up in a narrow room, whom heaven and earth could never contain.
9. He believes him to have been a weak child carried in arms, who is the Almighty,
- and him to have died, who only hath life and immortality in himself.
10. He believes the God of all grace to have been angry with one who never offended him; and the God that hates all sin, to be reconciled to himself, though sinning continually, and never making, or being able to make him satisfaction.
11. He believes the most just God to have punished a most innocent person, and to have justified himself, though a most ungodly sinner.
12. He believes himself freely pardoned, and yet that a sufficient satisfaction is paid for him.
13. He believes himself to be precious in God's sight, yet he lothes himself in his own sight.
14. He dares not justify himself, even in those things wherein he knows no fault in himself; yet he believes God accepts even those services, wherein himself is able to find many faults.
15. He praiseth God for his justice, and fears him for his mercies.

16. He is so ashamed, as he dares not open his mouth before God; yet comes with boldness to God and asks any thing he needs.
17. He is so humble as to acknowledge himself to deserve nothing but evil; yet so confident as to believe God means him all good.
18. He is one that fears always, and yet is bold as a lion.
19. He is often sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; often complaining, yet always giving of thanks.
20. He is most lowly-minded, yet the greatest aspirer; most contented, yet ever craving.
21. He bears a lofty spirit in a mean condition; and when he is aloft, thinks meanly of himself.
22. He is rich in poverty, and poor in the midst of riches.
23. He believes all the world to be his, yet dares take nothing without special leave.
24. He covenants with God for nothing, yet looks for the greatest reward.
25. He loses his life and gains by it, and even while he loses it, he saves it.
26. He lives not to himself, yet of all others is most wise for himself.
27. He denies himself often, yet no man that mostpleaseshimself,loveshimselfso well.
28. He is the most reproached, and most honoured.
29. He hath the most afflictions and the most comforts.
30. The more injury his enemies do to him, the more advantage he gets by them.
31. The more he himself forsakes of worldly things, the more he enjoys of them.
32. He is most temperate of all men, yet fears most deliciously.
33. He lends and gives most freely, yet is the greatest usurer.
34. He is meek towards all men, yet inexorable by men.
35. He is the best child, brother, husband, friend, yet hates farther, and mother, and wife, and brethren, &c.
36. He loves all men as himself, yet hates some men with perfect hatred.
37. He desires to have more grace than any hath in the world, yet he is truly sorrow when he sees any man have less than himself.
38. He knows no man after the flesh, yet gives to all men their due respects.
39. He knows, if he please men, he is not the servant of Christ, yet for Christ's sake he pleases all men in all things.
40. He is a peace-maker, yet continually fighting, and an irreconcilable enemy.
41. He believes him to be worse than an infidel that provides not for his family, yet he himself lives and dies without care.
42. He is severe to his children, because he loves them; and being favourable to his enemies, revenges himself upon them.
43. He accounts all his inferiors his fellows, yet stands fiercely upon his authority.
44. He believes the angels to be more excellent creatures than himself, and yet counts them his servants.
45. He believes that he receives many good turns by their means, yet he never prays their affiances, nor craves their prayers, nor offers them thanks, which yet he doth not disdain to do to the meanest Christian.
46. He believes himself a king, how mean soever he be, and how great soever he be, that he is not too good to be servant to the poorest saint.
47. He is often in prison; yet always at liberty, and a free man though a servant.
48. He receives not honour from men, yet highly prizes a good name.
49. He believes God hath bidden every man that doth him any good to do so; yet he

- of any man is the most thankful to them that do ought for him.
50. He would lay down his life to save the soul of his enemy; yet will not venture upon one sin to save his life that hath saved his.
 51. He swears to his own hindrance and changes not; yet knows, that his mouth cannot tie him to sin.
 52. He believes Christ to have no need of any thing he doth, yet makes account he relies Christ in all his deeds of charity.
 53. He knows he can do nothing of himself, yet labours to work out his own salvation.
 54. He confesses he can do nothing; yet as truly professes he can do all things.
 55. He knows that flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God; yet believes he shall go to heaven body and soul.
 56. He trembles at God's word, yet counts it 'sweeter to him than the honey and the honey-comb, and dearer than thousands of gold and silver.'
 57. He believes that God will never damn him; and yet he fears him for being able to cast him into hell.
 58. He knows he shall not be saved by his works, and yet cloth all the good works he can, and believes he shall not be saved without them.
 59. He knows God's providence orders all things; yet is he so diligent in his business, as if he were to cut out his own fortune.
 60. He believes beforehand God hath purposed what shall be; and that nothing can make him alter his purpose; yet prays and endeavours as if he would force God to satisfy him however.
 61. He prays and labours for what he believes God means to give him, and the more assured he is, the more earnest.
 62. He prays for that he knoweth he shall not obtain, and yet gives not over.
 63. He prays and labours for that which he knows he shall be no less happy without.
 64. He prays with all his heart not to be led into temptations, yet rejoices when he is fallen into it.
 65. He believes his prayers to be heard, even when they are denied, and gives thanks for that which he prayed against.
 66. He hath within him the flesh and the spirit; yet is not a double-minded man.
 67. He is often led away captive by the law of sin, yet it never gets the dominion over him.
 68. He cannot sin, yet he can do nothing without sin.
 69. He can do nothing against his will; yet he doth what he would not.
 70. He wavers and doubts, and yet obtains; he is often troubled and shaken, and yet like mount Zion.
 71. He is a serpent and a dove, a lamb and a lion, a feed and a cedar.
 72. He is sometimes so troubled, that he thinks nothing is true in religion; and yet if he did think so, he could not be at all troubled.
 73. He thinks sometimes God hath no mercy for him, and yet resolves to die in the pursuit of it.
 74. He believes like Abraham, in hope and against hope; and though he can never answer God's logic, yet with the woman of Canaan he hopes to prevail with the rhetoric of importunity.
 75. He wrestles with God and prevails; and though yielding himself unworthy the least blessing he enjoys already, yet, Jacob-like, will not let God go without a new blessing.
 76. He sometimes thinks himself to have no grace at all; and yet how poor and afflicted soever he be besides, he would

- not change conditions with the moil: prosperous upon earth that is a manifest worldling.
77. He thinks sometimes the ordinances of God do him no good at all, and yet he would rather part with his life than be deprived of them.
 78. He was born dead; and yet so, as it had been murder to have taken his life away.
 79. When life was first put into him, is commonly unknown; and with some, not until they had learned to speak, and were even grown up to the stature of a man; and with others, not till they were ready to drop into their graves for age.
 80. After he begins to live, he is ever dying; and though he have an eternal life begun in him, yet he makes account he hath a death to pass through.
 81. He counts self-murder a most heinous sin, yet he is continually busied in crucifying his flesh, and putting to death his earthly members.
 82. He believes that his soul and body shall be as full of glory as theirs that have more, and not more full than theirs that have less.
 83. He lives invisibly to those that see him, and those that know himself do but guess at him; yet they sometimes see further into him, and judge more truly of him than himself doth.
 84. The world did sometimes count him a saint, when God counted him an hypocrite; and after, when the world branded him for an hypocrite, God owned him for a saint.
 85. In fine, his death makes not an end of him: his soul, which was created for his body, and is not to be perfected without his body, is more happy when it is separated from it, than it was all the while it was united to it: and his body, though torn in pieces, burnt to ashes, ground to powder, turned into rottenness, shall be no loser. His advocate, his surety, shall be his judge; his mortal part shall become immortal; and what was sown in corruption, shall be raised in incorruption and glory; and his spiritual part, though it had a beginning, shall have no end; and himself, a finite creature, shall be possessed of an infinite happiness. *Amen.* ¶

Believers have experience of the power and efficacy of indwelling sin. They find it in themselves. They find it as a law. It hath a self-evidencing efficacy to them that are alive to discern it: they that find not its power, are under its dominion. Whosoever contend against it, shall know and find, that it is present with them, that it is powerful in them. He shall find the stream to be strong, who swims against it, though he who rolls along with it be insensible of it.

John Owen

If we are drawn 'with the cords of love, with the bands of a man,' it is because we are objects of love. If we come to Christ, approve of him and cleave to him, it is a certain consequence of our having 'seen, and heard, and learned of the Father;' and therefore it must necessarily be an evidence, that we are passed from death to life, and that we shall not come into condemnation.

John Brine

AN OPEN DOOR

by CARINE MACKENZIE

We are needing to get a new back door. Some of the wood trimming has fallen off. The wood has shrunk a bit over the years and when the weather is wild, there is a great draught coming into the house. There are many options for us to choose from—different materials, colours, designs, with or without glass panels.

But all the options, although looking different, have the same purposes. When the door is open, it is to let us and our visitors into the house. When it is closed and locked, it is to keep us safe from bad weather, or intruders or anything that would do harm or damage.

The Bible speaks many times about a door, sometimes literally as an entrance to a house or building, and sometimes figuratively as giving entrance or opportunity to something.

Jesus gives the illustration of the door of the sheepfold in John chapter 10. The sheepfold in eastern lands in those days was a safe place enclosed by high walls, with a gate or door guarded by a porter. It was through this door that the sheep entered every night to be kept from wild animals and thieves, and reach a place of safety.

Jesus tells us, 'I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture' (John 10:9). Our sin has separated us from God and the only access to God is through the Lord Jesus Christ (our door). He has opened the way to the Father. No one can come to the Father but by him (John 14:6).

This door is open to the chief of sinners, but we must use it. It is the only door to the safety of salvation. We must trust in Jesus Christ. His finished work on the cross has opened the door to provide pardon and peace for sinners.

But there will come a day when the door is shut.

Jesus told a very solemn story about ten girls who took their lamps and waited for the bridegroom to come to the wedding. Five were wise and took oil for their lamps but five were foolish and did not think about the oil until it was too late. They went off to buy some but while they were away the bridegroom came. The five wise girls went in to the marriage. Then the door was shut. The other five begged to get entry but to no avail.

Jesus used this story to warn us to be ready for death and the judgement. We do not know when that day will be, so we have to be ready today, trusting in Jesus who died on the cross to take the punishment for sin.

Jesus has set before us an open door and no man can shut it (Revelation 3:8). This open door gives us communion with God. We can pray to him at any time. We have an open door in the Bible too. God in his word teaches us about himself. He gives us precious promises and explains amazing doctrine. At last he gives his people an open door into heaven, to be safe there for all eternity.

Another lovely picture of a door is given to us in Jesus' letter to the church at Laodicea in Revelation chapter 3. But this time he is referring to the door of the heart of the sinner. 'Behold I stand at the door and knock,' says Jesus. 'If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me' (Revelation 3:20). By nature our heart

is shut against God and his Son. But Jesus graciously come and knocks at the door of our heart and makes himself known to us. Through the influence of the word and Spirit, the sinner is enabled to open the door and Jesus comes in to show his love and grace to the sinner. What wonderful fellowship we enjoy with Jesus Christ and with the Father (1 John 1:3). That fellowship makes a difference in our lives. Peter and John preached the Gospel boldly. Their listeners were amazed because they knew that Peter and John were not scholarly men. They realised that they had been with Jesus and that made all the difference.

BIBLE SEARCH

Find the missing words from the verses. The initials of the correct answers will spell out the subject of the story.

1. But the _____ of the Lord by night opened the prison doors and brought them forth. (Acts 5:19)
2. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other _____ under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. (Acts 4:13)
3. Furthermore when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was _____ unto me of the Lord. (2 Corinthians 2:12)
4. Blessed is the man that hearth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the _____ of my doors. (Proverbs 8:34)
5. For a great door and _____ is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries. (1 Corinthians 16:9)
6. Because strait is the gate, and _____ is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. (Matthew 7:14)
7. I had rather be a _____ in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. (Psalm 84:10)
8. I have set before there an _____ door, and no man can shut it. (Revelation 3:8)
9. To him that _____ will I grant to sit with me in my throne. (Revelation 3:21)
10. For everyone that asketh _____; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. (Luke 11:10)

GOD'S LOVE TO MANKIND

by JOHN DAVENANT (1572–1641)

'O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help' Hosea 13:9

THE general love of God towards mankind is so clearly testified in Holy Scripture and so demonstrated by the manifold effects of God's goodness and mercy extended to every particular man in this world, that to doubt thereof were infidelity, and to deny it, plain blasphemy. Yet for all this, if any man shall go about to magnify the common love of God extended promiscuously to all men, that thereby he obscureth the special love and mercy of God prepared from all eternity, and bestowed in due time upon elect men, this shall lead the ignorant and unlearned into a dangerous error. And therefore obliquely to oppose the eternal, free and absolute decree of Predestination or Election under colour of disapproving an absolute decree for any man's damnation, befitteth not any Divine who acknowledgeth the truth of that doctrine which the Scriptures have delivered, Augustine cleared, and the Church of England established in her XVIIth Article. But if the author of this treatise* had no other aim of overthrowing such an eternal decree of Predestination and Election as is fondly supposed will save all men whether they repent or not repent, believe or not believe, persevere or not persevere; and such an absolute decree of Reprobation as will damn men though they should repent and believe, or will hinder any man from repenting and believing, or will cause and work any man's impenitency or infidelity; we both wish, and shall endeavour together with him to root such erroneous fancies out of all Christian minds.

The place cited out of Hosea, with many others which might be alleged, will easily prove that man is the author of his own sin, and the procurer of his own damnation, and God only the Judge and punisher. But withal they prove as clearly that man is not the procurer of his own predestination, nor the deserver of his own salvation by his foreseen faith and perseverance. But God is he who according to his absolute and infallible purpose giveth in time that grace unto his elect which before all time he decreed should be an effectual means to bring them to glory.

* *The Treatise referred to was 'God's love to mankind' and was published by the Rev. Samuel Hoard, an ultra-Arminian and a creature of the Ritualist Archbishop Laud. Under the pretence of helping an enquirer who raised an objection against absolute reprobation, Hoard sought to expose the whole Reformed doctrine of absolute predestination to the charge of being unscriptural, illogical and contrary to the teaching of the Fathers. Davenant's response is a classic statement of Reformed theology, and, in spite of the difficulty in following the layout of the book (in that it is not always easy to tell what he is reproducing from Hoard or what he is saying himself, or where he is replacing Hoard's words with his own) is well worth reading. A scanned copy of the 1641 edition is available on archive.org.*

The punctuation in the extract above has been modified slightly to make the sentences shorter where possible. (Ed.)

THE SYNOD OF DORT

By THE REV. SAMUEL MILLER (1769–1850): Part 4

THE Synod of Dort continued to sit from the 13th of November 1618 to the 29th of May 1619. It held, in all, one hundred and eighty sittings, and was conducted entirely at the expense of the States General.

Dr Mosheim speaks with more than his usual candour when he treats of the heat and violence which broke out on various occasions, in Holland, in the course of the Arminian controversy; and especially of the political animosity which unfortunately became intimately connected with that theological and ecclesiastical dispute, and which led to the beheading of Oldenbarnevelt, and to the banishment of Grotius, Hoogerbeets and others. The truth is, in a number of cases the political aspect of the subject became the prominent one. The consequence was, that many men became implicated in it who laid no claim to piety; hence the frequency with which the affair had the appearance of a contest among politicians rather than Christians. Still it is believed that even these secular struggles have been magnified for the sake of blackening the anti-Arminian body, who happened to be connected with the strongest political party.

In the Church of Holland, the majority against the Remonstrants, and in favour of orthodoxy was very large. Judging from the number of ministers reckoned in the established church, and among the Remonstrants, the latter did not constitute more than a thirtieth part of the population. And the proportion remains pretty much the same still: for although since that time the number is greatly increased among the ministers of the Dutch churches, of those who embrace

Pelagian and Semi Pelagian sentiments, yet many who agree with the Remonstrants in doctrinal opinions, and even some who go much farther in heresy than they, do not take their name or unite with their societies, as the Remonstrants labour under civil disabilities, which multitudes who substantially agree with them in sentiment do not choose to incur by openly joining their ranks.

After the death of the Prince of Orange in 1625 the Remonstrants began to be treated more mildly. The ministers were recalled from their banishment, and restored to their functions and churches; and from that period to the present have been tolerated in the United Provinces, and more lately since the change of government in the kingdom of Holland. Indeed, it is melancholy to say, that for a number of years past, in the kingdom of Holland Pelagian and Unitarian sentiments have obtained such currency in the church of that country, that the only difficulty has been for the friends of truth to obtain permission to preach, unobstructed, the pure gospel.

Although the many and great evils which always result from the civil establishment of religion may not have been so strongly exemplified in the Church of Holland as in some other countries, yet through the whole of the controversy now in question, as well as on various occasions since we have seen that this unhallowed connection, however coveted by worldly minded ecclesiastics in all cases, stands in the way of the simple and pure dispensation of the gospel, and never fails to be a curse rather than a blessing. And this, we may confidently say, has been

substantially the judgment of the best men in all ages in which any just sentiments on this subject have prevailed or been cherished at all. Mr. Gibbon, if I mistake not, has somewhere observed with a sarcastic sneer that he is sorry to say, that the earliest and most zealous advocates of religious liberty have ever been *laymen*, and not ministers of religion. However well informed that learned infidel may have been on other subjects, he is here under a mistake which, however, may be easily accounted for. The character of his mind, and the habits of his life, led him to a much more intimate acquaintance with the writings of laymen and worldly minded ecclesiastics, than with the works of evangelical and orthodox ministers. No wonder, then, that he was ignorant of some testimony on this subject which, had he been acquainted with it, would have led to a different judgment. When the Priscillianists, in the fourth century, were persecuted and delivered over to the secular arm to be punished with death, who lamented and opposed the cruel oppression which they endured? Martin, Bishop of Tours, an eminently pious man, with a number of others of like spirit, mourned over the treatment which they received, remonstrated against it, and pronounced it a *novum et inauditum nefas*. And in regard to the writers on the subject of religious liberty in the seventeenth century, to whom there was probably a special reference in the remark which it now combatted, the simplest statement of facts will show that the earliest and most-thorough going advocates of religious liberty, at that period, were all ecclesiastical men; and all of that class with which Mr. Gibbon would be neither likely nor disposed to have much acquaintance. In 1614, the Rev. Leonard Busher, a zealous Brownist, or ultra Independent minister, presented to king James I and his parliament, *Religious Peace*

or a *Plea for Liberty of Conscience*. The leading object of this treatise is to show that the true way to make a nation happy is 'to give liberty to all to serve God according as they are persuaded is most agreeable to his word; to speak, write, print, peaceably and without molestation in behalf of their several tenets and ways of worship.' In a few years afterwards the Rev. John Robinson, a divine of the Church of England, who had been bred at the University of Cambridge and fled from persecution in his native country to Holland, where he cast in his lot with the Independents, published two works, one entitled, *A Justification of Separation from the Church of England*, and another in explanation and defence of the first, entitled, *A Just and Necessary Apologie &c.* In these works he contended with no small force, both of learning and argument, that Christ's kingdom is not of this world; that it is entirely spiritual, and he its spiritual King; and that civil magistrates have no right to interfere, in any wise, or in any case, with liberty of conscience. In 1644 the celebrated Roger Williams, a native of England, a graduate of the University of Oxford who had received orders in the Established Church of England, who came to New England in 1630, and there cast in his lot with the Independents, and ultimately becoming a Baptist, withdrew from Massachusetts to Rhode Island, where he became the pastor of the first Baptist church in the American Colonies, and established a separate government, published a work under the following title, *The Bloody Tenet of Persecution for the cause of Conscience*, in which he plead for liberty of conscience on the broadest and most liberal principles. In short, he carried the doctrine to the utmost length, and maintained that the civil magistrate has no right to enforce any of the precepts contained in

the first table of the Decalogue. And, what is still more to the honour of Roger Williams, as he was, in a sort, the civil ruler, as well as the spiritual guide, of the colony of Rhode Island, it deserves to be recorded that he was the first Governor who ever practically acknowledged that complete liberty of conscience was the birthright of man and who really and consistently yielded it to those who widely differed from him, when he had the full power to withhold it.

In 1649, the Rev. Dr John Owen, educated in the University of Oxford, and afterwards Vice Chancellor of that University, universally known to have been an eminent Independent minister, and one of the greatest theologians of his age, published a work on *Toleration*, which does honour to his memory, and deserves to be ranked among the best publications on that subject. He does not, indeed, in his theory, go quite so far as Roger Williams; yet he explicitly states, and by a variety of arguments maintains, that the civil magistrate has no right to meddle with the religion of any person whose conduct is not injurious to society, and destructive of its peace and order. And it ought to be stated, to the honour of this great and good man, that he acted on the principles which he had avowed, when his own party was triumphant, and he had it in his power to oppress. It is also further worthy of notice, that, some years after the publication of this work, when the Puritans in New England were most inconsistently persecuting the Baptists and Quakers, Dr Owen at the head of a body of Nonconformist ministers in London, sent an address to them remonstrating against their conduct, and entreating them to cease from their persecuting measures, which, accordingly, they soon did. The language of this address is striking and to the point. Among other things it is said, 'We make it

our hearty request that you will trust God with his truth and ways, so far as to suspend all rigorous proceedings in corporeal restraints or punishments on persons that dissent from you, and practise the principles of their dissent, without danger or disturbance to the civil peace.'

Perhaps the learned reader will be apt to ask why the name of Bishop Jeremy Taylor has not a place assigned in this list of advocates for religious liberty. The reason for not giving him a conspicuous place in this honoured catalogue will appear from the following statement. In the year 1647, that great and eloquent man, who has been strongly styled the Shakespeare of the English pulpit, published his *Liberty of Prophesying*, in which a great deal of important truth on this subject is communicated with a power for which the author was distinguished in all his works. The writer however, argues chiefly from considerations which do not hold a legitimate, and certainly not a primary place among the arguments on this subject. For example, he reasons in favour of religious liberty, from the difficulty of expounding the Scriptures so as to arrive at any certain conclusion on some points; from the incompetency of Popes, Councils, or the church at large, to determine articles of faith; from the innocence of error, where there is piety; and from the antiquity and plausibility of sentiments and practices generally held to be erroneous. It is more on such grounds as these that he rests his defence of toleration than on the inherent and essential rights of men, and the authority of the word of God. Such an advocate can scarcely be recognised as for the same principles with Williams, Owen and other clerical contemporaries in the same nominal field.

But there is another and still more serious objection to our assigning to Jeremy Taylor

an honourable place in the list of early and able advocates of religious liberty. When he wrote his work on the *Liberty of Prophesying*, he and his church were under the frown of government. He was in fact pleading for toleration for himself and for Episcopacy. When Charles II was restored to the throne; when Taylor came forth from retirement and oppression; and when he was raised to the Episcopate, he consented to become a member of the privy council of that faithless and profligate monarch, from which so many persecuting edicts against the non-conformists issued to the disgrace of their authors. And even if it be doubted whether he ever took any active part in the persecuting edicts of that monarch, as a member of his council, yet it is notorious and unquestionable, that in his diocese in Ireland, he was chargeable with much and severe persecution. If he ever entertained correct sentiments in respect to the rights of conscience, he forgot or

disregarded them all when he rose to power and was enabled to persecute. (See Orme's *Life of Owen* p.101, and the *History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland* by James Seaton Reid, DDMRSA, p.344 etc.)

While justice is done to the ministers of the gospel above mentioned, I have no desire to derogate in the least degree from the credit due to Milton and Locke, of the same century, whom it is the fashion to eulogize as the great pioneers in pleading for religious liberty. There is no doubt that both these illustrious laymen wrote nobly in defence of the cause in question; and that both ought to be held in grateful remembrance for their noble services; yet it is surely wrong to ascribe to them, meritorious as they were, all the credit of originating a doctrine which had been held, and publicly defended many years, before either of them had published or written a line on the subject.

TO BE CONTINUED

FORMER DAYS

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

250 years ago: May & June 1769

THE May issue opens with a commendation of Edward Deering's *Lectures* on Hebrews, from 1576. A number of extract from the first lecture, on Hebrews 1:1–2, are reproduced to show that the doctrine of the gospel now is what it was then. The full set of lectures is available on the digitalpuritan.net site. The biographical sketch is of John Janeway, who died in 1657, aged 24. His short life is a powerful testimony to the working of grace. He preached the new birth, and urged

the necessity of sanctification; 'Be sure to keep a conscience void of offence, and yield by no means to any known sin.' His last sickness, and his demonstrations of lively faith, are recorded in detail.

The Dialogue between Christian and Truth reaches Song of Solomon 2:14 and 15, and Casuistical Divinity, Question 51, asks, 'What are the signs, when love to Christ waxeth cold?' Much of the answer deals with the solemn reality that 'the love of many shall wax cold.'

The Miscellaneous section begins with a reflection on Genesis 3:6. The author, 'WS', wisely observes,

How precious is the word of God! These three first chapters of the Bible are dearer to me than thousands of gold and silver. What a maimed unfinished pile would this divine work be without them! This grand portico demolished, these noble gates unhinged and lost, how should we mourn and stumble at the very threshold of this beautiful temple!

The author's aim is twofold: to show that, if our first parents could not maintain their state of perfection, we have no hope of being perfect; and, secondly, to show the excellency of Christ as the only hope of fallen sinners.

The Character of a Christian in paradoxes and seeming contradictions is a thoughtful expression, drawn from Scripture, of the reality of our living in Christ in a fallen world. It is wholly reproduced on p.75.

The third letter of Gospel Comfort for Doubting Minds continues, and poetry ends the issue.

The June issue continues the lectures in Hebrews by Edward Deering, and the biographical sketch is of Thomas Halyburton, whose Works were reprinted by the James Begg Society 2003. The Dialogue resumes at Song of Solomon 2:15, and Casuistical Divinity concludes the answer begun in the previous issue.

The Miscellaneous section begins with the first part of a meditation on the first and great commandment, and the Character of a Christian is concluded. The first part of a lengthy poem on The Rainbow, comparing that covenant with the covenant made in Christ, and Gospel Comfort for Doubting Minds concludes. Poems end the issue.

200 years ago: May & June 1819

The issue for May opens with a serious meditation on the immediate and plenary inspiration of the holy Scriptures, and offers some sound arguments in favour of this view, which any who doubt the inspiration of Scripture would do well to weigh. Lamentations 3:26 is the text taken to consider true and false hope.

The convoluted correspondence between Impartial Observer and Constant Reader continues, this time with an attempt to defend the doctrine of eternal justification. The attempt is grounded on certain supposed consequences of denying the doctrine, none of which can be shown to actually exist, but only to be logically possible.

The ongoing exchange between Myra and A Child has A Child asking whether Myra's real reason for stepping aside from the fight is not weariness but an unwillingness to fight the good fight of faith.

Thoughts on Acceptance with God, from Ephesians 1:6, 'accepted in the beloved', provide a more edifying read, and are continued later in the issue, no doubt due to a lack of other material.

Further correspondence continues the question of progressive and bodily sanctification from previous issues. The views of Dr Robert Hawker are critiqued by one who holds to traducianism (the belief that the soul is created by the parents in procreation). There is discussion of the nature of man, and of the difference between soul and spirit; there is also a discussion of what is regenerated—soul and spirit, or the body as well.

A further letter on regeneration, another on the absolute necessity of basing all our doctrine on Scripture, and a third prefacing an extract from Thomas Goodwin on the Trinity, lead to an acrostic poem on the Trinity.

The **June** issue begins with the last part of Christian's Help in Time of Trouble, from the March issue. Impartial Observer answers his own letter, which appeared in the January number, asking for comments on the crooked serpent of Isaiah 27:1. He treats it as typical of Rome's civil and ecclesiastical power. An extract from 'an old Divine' on original sin is followed by further comments on progressive sanctification. The writer does not earn the approval of the Editors.

A testimony of the life of the Rev. John Barker, with a letter he wrote, is supplied with a poem that pokes fun at the Wesleys. Susannah writes on the joy and beauty of grace, and Myra carries on his war of words with A Child. A similar tone is evident in the next piece, which continues an article from the November 1818 issue. Mary submits a sermon on Ephesians XIX. 20, which ought to be Ephesians 2:19-20 (typographical errors are not new in *The Gospel Magazine*!).

100 years ago: May & June 1919

The issue for **May** begins with an exposition of Matthew 11:28, and is followed by a brief extract from *The English Churchman* on the Sabbath:

The Sabbath is not merely a Jewish institution, as so many thoughtlessly affirm. It is not merely an enactment of the ceremonial law belonging to those types and shadows which gave place to Christian liberty. We have it on the highest authority that 'the Sabbath was made for man.' Its beneficent intention was not limited to any tribe, race, or season, but was co-extensive with toil-worn humanity. The dedication of one-seventh of time to rest from common labour and to higher service belongs to the origin of human history. God gave his own day that it might be kept for

his glory and man's best welfare, and his blessing has always rested upon its faithful observance. His promises have been realized by those who have duly used it. His warnings have been experienced by those who have treated it with contempt. No doubt harm has been done by the imposition of restraints and obligations unwarranted by the Bible, but this harm has been trifling in comparison with the mischief caused by the opening of the worldly floodgates, through which God's precious gift has been swept away.

Christian unity is considered, from Acts 4:32, and in particular the abuse of the Articles and Protestantism by certain Church of England clergymen is shown to be no fault of the Church, but of those who are to administer discipline. An anecdote from Toplady concerning God's dealings with perishing sinners leads to a sermon from Ruth 2:12. This is followed by notes from a sermon on Proverbs 14:10, and another from Zechariah 12:10 (concluded from a previous issue). A meditation on Psalm 104:34 and another on Revelation 14:12, are followed by Memories of the late Rev. George Hewitt.

The word 'Help' is explored from Cruden's Concordance. Notices and obituaries include a short piece on proposed Prayer Book revision to permit the notion of a sacrifice to be introduced.

The **June** issue begins with a meditation on the voices of the three persons of the Trinity, and the provision of clothing for Adam and Eve is shown to teach us about the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is followed by a meditation on Psalm 71:17-18. A sermon on Revelation 21:23, and the war between and the war against from 2 Samuel

3:1, 6 and Galatians 4:17, are followed by thoughts on 2 Chronicles 26:27. Jonah and Simon the son of Jonas are compared, and notes of a Bible reading in 1 Peter 1:1-12, are followed by a poem, 'Behold, he cometh.' There is a meditation on the Philippian gaoler, who is shown to have been in fact the prison governor. Some thoughts on not judging before the time are followed by notes on a sermon from Zechariah 13:7.

Letters and notices include a piece warning against the proposal to make the Church of England self-governing. This became law when the Church Assembly (later Synod) was formed in 1919. Concern is expressed

that such a change would place all the power in the hands of the bishops, who had already proved themselves incapable of imposing discipline and order on those who had introduced Romish practices. Another contributor shows how Daniel's enemies sought an Enabling Bill as the means to destroy him, meaning the law against petitioning any but the king for thirty days. The new Enabling Bill being sought by the Church of England would be the weapon with which to overthrow those who hold fast to the Thirty-Nine Articles. In particular, the doctrine of Article 31 is defended.

Two brief notices conclude the issue.

TO BE CONTINUED

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

'The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God' (Mark 1:1)

By J.E. NORTH (Totton, Hants)

I WOULD like, with the Lord's help to consider these opening words to The Gospel according to Mark. It is important that, before we actually look at this text of Scripture, we consider what we know both about the Gospel as written by Mark, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost (cf. 2 Timothy 3:16), and also consider what the Scriptures have to say about Mark himself.

Firstly, then, Mark, or John Mark as we see him called in the Scriptures. In Acts 15:37, we read, 'And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.' But Paul disagreed with Barnabas and we are told that 'And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and

so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus' (15:39). We can understand why the contention was so great as John Mark was Barnabas' nephew. 'Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;)' (Colossians 4:10). He was also mentioned by the Apostle Peter, and called a son in the gospel: 'The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son' (1 Peter 5:13). Perhaps that relationship commenced when Peter was brought out of prison as recorded in Acts 12. The angel brought him out of the prison and he went to Mary's house who, we are told was mother to Mark: 'And

when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying' (Acts 12:12, cf. Colossians 4:10). John Mark may well have been the young man who is solely mentioned in Mark's Gospel: 'And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him: And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked' (Mark 14:51,52).

It is generally accepted that this Gospel is, in the main, Peter's 'Gospel', dictated by him to Mark, his son in the gospel, his amanuensis. In accepting this view, we must always remember Paul's words to Timothy that 'ALL scripture is inspired of God,' and is not the fruit of man's ingenuity. It may well be that Peter spoke to Mark of all that he had experienced during the time prior to the ascension of Christ into heaven (Acts 1:11) and Mark was led of the Spirit of God to write down some of the things he had heard at the mouth of Peter.

What we can say about Mark's Gospel is that he is concentrating of the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God—three times Christ is called the Son of God in this Gospel; here in 1:15, in 3:11 and in 15:39. It is important to notice that it was the devil who cried out that Jesus is the Son of God and then it was a representative of the Roman Empire, the centurion who was commissioned to undertake the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. Matthew was writing to the Jews to show that the Lord Jesus is the Messiah, Luke was writing to the Gentiles to show that Christ Jesus is the only Saviour of sinners, but Mark was setting forth that Jesus is the Eternal Son of God. These three Gospels, together with the fourth Gospel, that written by John present us with a picture, a true picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is important

that we are correct in our view of him. John Newton in one of his hymns writes:

What think you of Christ? is the test
To try both your state and your scheme;
You cannot be right in the rest,
Unless you think rightly of Him.
As Jesus appears in your view,
As He is beloved or not;
So God is disposed to you,
And mercy or wrath are your lot.

Mark is a man in a hurry. He uses the words 'Immediately' and 'Straightway' on numerous occasions in this Gospel record. He is eager to show and share the good news that Jesus is both Lord and Christ, that he is the Son of God and, as such, he gave his life a ransom for many.

'The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God' (Mark 1:1).

There are five particulars I would like us to consider: the gospel is

1. a gospel that is *promised*
2. a gospel that is centred in a *person*
3. a gospel that is *prepared*
4. a gospel that is *proclaimed*
5. a gospel that is *professed*

1. It is a gospel that is promised

Turn with me, if you would to the opening verses of the Epistle to the Romans where we read Paul greeting the Christian's in Rome: 'Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead' (Romans 1:1-4). Particularly note those words in v. 2: 'Which

he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures'; it is an ancient promise. But before we consider the promises of God, it is necessary we consider why it was necessary for the promise to be made. Indeed, was there any necessity for the gospel of God's grace? Indeed there was and is, and will always be the need for the gospel until time is no more and every one of those for whom Christ died are safe in heaven.

But why is the gospel necessary? Because of the sinfulness of man. We read in Ecclesiastes 7:29 'Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.' At the creation God saw all that he had made and said of it that it was very good (Genesis 1:31). But although he was created good, man was not created infallible. He had the capability of falling, of committing sin. The Lord Jesus Christ, being the Eternal Son of God, the second person of the Holy Trinity, being the God-man, was infallible and incapable of sin. He was and is impeccable in his human nature. Man, then being capable of sin, sought out many inventions, and we read of those inventions in the early chapters of Genesis. In Psalm 106:29 & 39 we read again of the inventions of men: 'Thus they provoked him to anger with their inventions: and the plague brake in upon them.' 'Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions.' The context of these two verses implies that the inventions were connected with idolatry.

It is in that context that we can look at the fall of man. Satan contradicted the word of God. He denied the truth of God and said, 'Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes

shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil' (Genesis 3:4,5). He appealed to the pride of the human heart and caused them to raise up the idol of self. And man is the greatest idol there is! Man has withstood God at all times. He considers that he is greater than the Most High!—we read of this in Psalm 2. We have examples of this in human history. Canute thought he could stop the tide by his own command!¹ Man raises himself up in the greatest of all idolatry, SELF! And because of this, he became a sinner. And that is why the promise of the gospel is needed.

So the gospel is promised in the Word of God. Right from the beginning there has been the promise of the gospel of redeeming grace. As soon as man disobeyed God, there was the promise of God. 'And 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' (Genesis 3:15). The promise was made that the Seed of Satan would bruise the heel; of the Seed of the woman, but that seed would crush the head of Satan. When Cain was born, Eve took that child to be the seed of the woman who would destroy Satan. She was, of course, incorrect. The seed of the woman was and is the Lord Jesus Christ. He it was who was bruised/crushed in the head of Satan while Satan bruised the heel of Christ in the crucifixion. Satan was and is finally defeated for all the people of God.

We do not have time to look at the great number of promises made in the Old Testament, but we will look at just one more promise which is to be found in Zechariah 12:10 'And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of

¹ The apocryphal story of Cnut attempting to turn the tide was first told by Henry of Huntingdon in the 12th century. In the story, courtiers attempt to flatter the king by telling him he had power over nature. His grandiose gesture was his way showing the utter folly of their words. (Ed.)

Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.' Oh, what a mercy that the Lord Jesus came from the glory of heaven, that he 'being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross' (Philippians 2:6–8). He was pierced for sinners. He shed his life's blood that sinners might go free. 'Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it' (Ephesians 5:25).

The promises that are in the Word of God concerning the coming of Christ and the work which he undertook to do were made by God; the sovereign God; the Almighty God! Look again at that verse from Paul's Epistle to the Romans from which we quoted a short while ago. 'Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,).' Paul

tells us that he was separated unto the gospel of God which he had promised. It is God's promise. He is the only one who could make such a promise and fulfil it! He is the living God! He is the God of Truth! And only he can infallibly deliver on his promises.

We all have bank notes. On each of those notes there is a promise made by the chief cashier of the Bank of England: 'I promise to pay the bearer on demand the sum of...' He promises it. But there is a problem. Whilst that promise is made in good faith, because we are no longer as a country based on the gold standard, it is possible that the cashier may fail to deliver on his promise—highly improbable, but it is possible.

But it is impossible for our God to fail in his promise. And that promise is integral to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Paul tells us that 'But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons' (Galatians 4:4,5). The Lord delivered on his promise! Christ made himself of no reputation, died upon the cross in the room and stead of sinners, that we might be adopted into the family of God.

TO BE CONTINUED

SHADOWS OF HEAVENLY THINGS (PART 2)

by JOHN HOOPER (Saltash)

OF course, in themselves the types were imperfect and ineffectual, but those very imperfections were means under God to direct

his people to the true, the heavenly, and pre-eminently to the One who fulfilled perfectly the will of his heavenly Father. We could

demonstrate this with many examples but five will suffice.

The mediator

Moses knew himself to be a flawed and imperfect mediator who could not even begin to carry the heavy burden of the children of Israel. When they complained and hankered after the pleasures of Egypt Moses cried out to God, 'I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me' (Numbers 11:14).

Again, after their great sin of making and worshipping the golden calf (Exodus 32:30) the people needed one to intercede before God on their behalf. Moses understood very well their need for a mediator and even put himself forward as an atonement for their sin, but this was something that could never be acceptable to God. A better mediator than Moses was needed, one who was able to bear such great sin as the children of Israel had committed and also able to bear the great penalty that their great sin demanded (v. 27–28). That better mediator must be God himself for he alone, as the man Christ Jesus, is able both to bear the full penalty for sin and to keep perfectly the righteous precepts that the law required. He is the 'one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus' (1 Timothy 2:5).

Thus Moses could never be a mediator for the people, but as a type, with all his imperfection and weakness, he pointed them away from himself and to the one and only Mediator who would carry the full weight of all his people's sin and rebellion, and on whose behalf he would bear fully the righteous judgment of God ... alone.

The kings

All the prophets, priests and kings of Israel and Judah were types of the Lord Jesus

Christ by virtue of the office they bore. Of these the kings especially present us with a problem. Each one of them was a disappointment and failure to one degree or another, including David of course. Solomon too started well but ended badly. A godly Hezekiah was succeeded by an evil Manasseh, a pattern that repeated itself many times over, teaching the people from one generation to the next that they were not to put their confidence in earthly kings but only in their heavenly King. The David, Asaph and others who wrote the Psalms, together with the believing Israelite who sang them, knew from the heart that their true King was not seated on an earthly throne in Jerusalem but reigning in the heavens. 'The LORD reigneth' (Psalm 99:1); 'sing praises unto our King, sing praises' (Psalm 47:6); 'let the children of Zion be joyful in their King' (Psalm 149:2).

They were not to put their trust in the fading and failing shadows but in faith to look beyond them to Christ the reality, the King of glory (Psalm 24:7–10).

The land

Although the land of Canaan was portrayed as a good land, flowing with milk and honey (Exodus 3:8, 17; Deuteronomy 6:3; Joshua 5:6; Jeremiah 32:22), it was a difficult land with enemies to be fought and conquered. This taught the people that physical Canaan was not and could not ever be the fulfilment of God's promise, but rather pointed them onwards and upwards to 'a better country, that is, an heavenly' (Hebrews 11:16) where there would be no more suffering, no more trials, and no more sin. Canaan was only a shadow, never the substance, and Abraham, for one, knew that.

The temple

Our fourth example is the one that above all others identified the children of Israel as the people of God and set them apart from every other nation and people on earth. God had made David a promise: 'And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. *He shall build an house for my name...*' (2 Samuel 7:12–13). And Solomon did indeed build a 'house of habitation' for the Lord his God (2 Chronicles 6:2) but it has to be said that the temple he built was not and could not ever be the true fulfilment of the promise God had made to his father. How so? Because it was handmade.

At the temple's dedication Solomon acknowledges this in prayer with these profound words: 'But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?' (1 Kings 8:27). Repeatedly over the course of his prayer Solomon cries to the LORD God of Israel, 'hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place...' (vv. 30, 39, 43). He is under no illusion as to the heavenly reality of the true temple, like David his father: 'The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD's throne is in heaven' (Psalm 11:4). 'For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the LORD behold the earth' (Psalm 102:19). 'Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens' (Psalm 123:1).

In Isaiah 66 it is as though we have the divine confirmation of this truth: 'Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? And where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath my hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD' (Isaiah 66:1). From these

Scriptures it is clear that Old Testament saints had a firm understanding of all this but of course the New Testament confirms it when Stephen, in his final address, declares, 'Solomon built [the God of Jacob] an house. Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands' (Acts 7:48; cf. Mark 14:58; Acts 17:24; 2 Corinthians 5:1; Hebrews 9:11, 24).

Time and again Scripture asserts that buildings made by hand, including even Solomon's grand and beautiful temple, are totally inadequate as dwelling places for the God of heaven. Old Testament history is proof sufficient that they will become defiled with idols and cannot last. They are but shadows and feeble pictures of the true. To find the fulfilment of God's promise to David there must be a looking upward and a looking forward. There must be a looking forward to the temple that God himself would build throughout the New Testament age and that He would consummate at the end with the ushering in of a new heaven and new earth (John 2:19–22; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:19–22; Revelation 21:3). We are told that in that new creation there will be no temple because God himself and the Lamb are the temple and the throne of God will be there for ever (Revelation 21:22; 22:3). The holy of holies will finally and everlastingly have burst forth from its typical, shadowy confinement to occupy the entire cosmos where the light and glory of God will permeate all. 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God' (Revelation 21:3).

The sacrifices

Finally, the repetition of offerings and sacrifices involving priests 'daily ministering

and offering the same sacrifices' sent a powerful message to the children of Israel that in themselves those sacrifices had no power to save. 'For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins' (Hebrews 10:4, 11). In Psalm 40:6–8 we have a 'most momentous passage' (Robert Hawker) in which Christ himself speaks to his Old Testament people. The expression 'sacrifice and offering' in verse 6 encompasses the whole of the ceremonial, sacrificial system, but it was a system in which the Lord saw nothing that was either desirable or beneficial, except in one respect. It pointed the people to the only acceptable sacrifice that would one day be offered by the Son of God himself in obedience to the will of his God and Father. The constant round of animal slaughter showed the people their need for that one truly effective substitute who would offer 'one sacrifice for sins for ever' (Hebrews 10:12; cf. 7:26–28). To such a sacrifice the true Israelite looked by faith and in it he placed his hope.

Literal but not physical

In 'spiritualising' the types and promises in this way, are we denying them a literal fulfilment? This is where misunderstanding arises in that literal is sometimes confused with physical, as though the land and temple promises of the Old Testament *must* point to a physical land and a physical temple for their literal fulfilment. G.K. Beale is very helpful in putting this misconception to rest. In reference to the temple he writes:

[T]he 'figurative' sanctuary is the earthly one, and the 'literal' sanctuary the heavenly one. Part of the reason for this

lies in the meaning of 'true' (*alēthinos*). The reference to the tabernacle as 'true' in Hebrews 8:2 and 9:24 connotes both (1) that which is 'genuine' or represents 'the real state of affairs' and (2) prophetic fulfilment...

He goes on to say,

Hebrews refers to the heavenly tabernacle as 'true' because it is the fulfilment... of everything the imperfect and temporary Old Testament tabernacle and temples foreshadowed. All of these physical temples were intended to be but models and copies of the coming true, eternal temple (see again Heb. 8:5).¹

So for the true, literal fulfilment of the temple we are not to look to yet another hand-made earthly building to be constructed at some future point in world history. That would be a reversion from the new covenant back to the old, what Beale calls rather memorably 'a redemptive-historical hiccup'.² Rather, for the literal fulfilment of the old temple and the temple prophecies we look to the eternal temple that encompasses the whole of the redeemed and glorified cosmos in Christ, as it is revealed to us in Revelation 21 and 22. 'To believe that Israel's temple or one rebuilt by human hands would last for ever is a false view because it mistakes the symbolic temple (Hebrews 9:8–10) for the real one (Hebrews 9:11).'³ At its consummation the real temple will be spectacular indeed. It will be the eternal abode of the divine glory. And yes, there is a sense in which it will be physical because it will not be insubstantial and ethereal but will

¹ G.K. Beale; *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A biblical theology of the dwelling place of God*, (Leicester: Apollos, 2004), pp.295–6.

² *Ibid.*, p.384.

³ *Ibid.*, p.297.

be a new creation. It will be a new cosmos in which the people of God will dwell in physical, glorified bodies like the body of their risen Saviour, and there they will serve him as priests for ever.

Similarly the land promised to Abraham and his seed is a land that will extend far beyond the borders of Canaan to encompass the whole earth because Abraham is 'the heir of the world' (Romans 4:13).

Pictures and covenant

Throughout the Old Testament, then, the truths of the gospel were revealed in picture form, as is appropriate for teaching a little child. The infant church of God understood the gospel through the temporal earthly types and figures of animal sacrifices, ceremonies, feast days, the Levitical priesthood, and so on. But when the fulness of the time was come and God sent forth his Son, that picture-book 'mode of dispensation' of his covenant changed. The church was no longer a child 'under tutors and governors' but had reached her maturity. The types and shadows therefore fled away as no longer apt or relevant. God's people had emerged out of the shadows and into the full and glorious light of gospel truth. The covenant had been made *new*.

To understand the relationship between old covenant and new there is no better place to look than Hebrews 8 and 9 where the contrast being made is exactly as we have described. It is not a contrast between two distinct realities, two covenants that are different in substance, but between the intimately connected earthly type and the heavenly anti-type, between the temporal picture and the one eternal reality, the shadow and the substance. For example, the writer speaks of an earthly high priest making way

for a high priest in the heavens; repeated offerings and sacrifices making way for the once and for all sacrifice for sins of the Lord Jesus Christ; the blood of bulls and goats making way for the blood of Christ; the tabernacle made by hands making way for the true, the greater and more perfect tabernacle in the heavens not made with hands; the faulty and the impotent making way for the perfect and the mighty to save. It is not difficult to see why the new is called a 'better' covenant. But the differences are in form, not in reality. Just as it is not possible to have the shadow of an object without the object itself being close at hand, so all the old covenant shadows of good things to come owed their existence and efficacy to the presence of the spiritual reality. The saints of those days could only see the reality in the shadows it cast, but even so the *power* of the reality was present with them, and it was the power of God to their salvation.

Thus the old and new covenants are united as one in their underlying substance, just like the old and new commandments⁴ (see John 13:34; 1 John 2:7; 2 John 5). What has changed is the form of their outward administration, or to use Calvin's term, their 'mode of dispensation.'

Geerhardus Vos sums it all up most movingly in his *Hebrews: Epistle of the Diatheke*:

[T]hat same world of heavenly spiritual realities, which has now come to light in the Person and work of Christ, already existed during the course of the Old Covenant ... [T]he bond that links the Old and the New Covenant together is not a purely evolutionary one, inasmuch as the one has grown out of the other; it is, if we may so call it, a transcendental bond: the New Covenant in its pre-existent, heavenly state reaches back and

stretches its eternal wings over the Old, and the Old Testament people of God were one with us in religious dignity and privilege; they were, to speak in a Pauline figure, sons of Jerusalem above, which is the mother of us all.

This is a profounder solution than is offered in the well-known formula of Augustine: 'the New Testament is latent in the Old, the Old Testament lies open in the New.' More profound because, together with the statement of the fact, it gives the reason for the fact. The latent existence of the verities and potencies of the Christian religion in the old

dispensation are due to no other cause than that the Christian religion lived even at that time as redemptive truth and redemptive power in the heavenly world and from there created for itself an embryonic form of existence in the life of Israel. The writer of Hebrews would have subscribed to the belief that Christianity is as old as Abraham and as old as Moses, nay as old as Paradise, because it is heaven-born and not a child of earth.⁵

Amen indeed! ¶

GOSPEL THOUGHTS ON SALVATION

by W.T. FOLEY

THE way of salvation taught in the Bible is the only way. Paul wrote to Timothy, 'the holy scriptures, ... are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus' (2 Timothy 3:15).

Salvation is a free gift, and is by grace or unmerited favour (see Ephesians 2:8,9). Christ is the grand theme of the holy scriptures, and it is the Holy Spirit that unlocks the Bible.

The Bible reveals salvation is of God alone. God provides his elect people deliverance from sin and spiritual death, and punishment in eternal Hell through the life and death of Christ on the cross. All this is to glorify God. The elect with all the angels will enjoy God forever in Heaven. In

Israel's deliverance from Egypt in the Book of Exodus the concept of salvation as deliverance is shown.

Salvation is only and exclusively through the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Salvation is not by religious attainment!

Salvation is not by a self-determining will or human exertions (Romans 9:16). Penance, or pilgrimages to so-called holy sites, do not bring salvation.

Salvation is of the Lord (Jonah 2:9) and according to his own sovereign will.

Grace is not earned. Mercy is not earned. Forgiveness is not earned. Election is not earned. It is unconditional. Regeneration is not earned. Justification is not earned. God's love is not earned. Faith and repentance are

⁴ Notwithstanding the arguments of New Covenant Theology.

⁵ Vos, Geerhardus. *Hebrews: Epistle of the Diatheke*. The Princeton Theological Review, Vol. 14, No. 1 (1916), p.12.

not earned. Redemption and reconciliation are not earned. God's calling is not earned. Salvation is not earned. Christ alone earned by his life and death our full salvation. Christ alone in his doing and dying merited our complete and comprehensive salvation.

The gospel is not earned, it is God's way of salvation purposed in Christ Jesus, and implemented by the Triune God alone.

The gospel is free of man's intellectual or philosophical devising. Paul says, 'But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man' (Galatians 1:11). It is revealed from God. God is the cause of the gospel and we are the objects of the gospel to be saved. God's freedom to choose some to salvation by the gospel does not imply that he is unfair in his choice, as Exodus 33:19 shows. Being children of God is by God's promise and election, not based on God's foresight of human works, good or evil, that we may do (see Romans 9:11). We are sinners by nature and by choice. The objects of his mercy were prepared in eternity to show forth his glory. It is God's exclusive prerogative to show mercy on whomsoever he chooses, and he may harden the heart of whomsoever he chooses (see Romans 9:18).

Beware of the bondage of self-salvation!

Beware of the self-esteem rhetoric and dilution of gospel truth!

Feelgood theology is worldly and profane!

Beware of heretical teaching which is driving church growth movements that are fuelling multimillionaire apostate evangelicals' lifestyles. Prosperity gospel teaching must be rejected.

Sin, mercy, forgiveness, repentance, love must be preached as part of biblical revelation. The biblical gospel must be presented, preached, announced, proclaimed, propagated, heralded as good news to every creature of the human race (see Mark 16:15). The

gospel is the power of God into salvation (see Romans 1:16). 'But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost' (2 Corinthians 4:3).

Justification is a fundamental part of the gospel. We can only be justified—judicially declared righteous—in God's sight by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and his shed blood. The atonement is vital and necessary for salvation. Christ is the gospel himself, he is the great redeemer of God's people.

For Christ to be our redeemer he had to have a virgin birth, a sinless life, and had to be both human and divine.

Christ's deity is fundamental to the gospel.

Therefore, in connection with salvation, it is imperative we understand that Jesus is God. Listen to these aspects asserting the deity of Christ.

If you believe in Christ, you believe in God, for 'Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me' (John 12:44).

If you receive Christ, you are receiving God, for Jesus said 'whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me' (Mark 9:37).

If you honour Christ, you are honouring God, for Jesus said, 'that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him' (John 5:23).

If you hate Christ, you hate God, for Jesus said, 'He that hateth me hateth my Father also' (John 15:23).

If you know Christ, you know God, for Jesus was asked a question, 'Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also' (John 8:19).

Our Saviour is truly both God and man. Remember, Jesus never preached salvation

through any religion of any kind. God the Father never ever accepted any other personage in history as the Saviour. Jesus is only the way to God, the truth from God and has the power to give eternal life (see John 14:6). Ecumenical and multi-faith initiatives have no place in the salvation of God's elect, as they demean, deny, dishonour the Saviour, as the only and exclusive Saviour. There is no other name—we must be saved through Christ alone (Acts 4:12). All religious leaders or followers of other pagan religions are blind and deaf to God's way, dead in their sins, and will die in their sins and reap the rewards of their folly.

Christ is fundamental to the preaching of the gospel. Christ took our sin and stands in our place before God. He is our Prophet, Priest and King. He is our true Mediator, not Mary or the so-called man-made saints. He took the curse and shame, rejection and beatings for us. His perfect sinless body hung upon a tree. He was crowned by thorns, pierced by sword and nailed for us. He suffered ignominy and terrible pain in his flesh to bring us to God.

Christ's blood sacrifice for sin is fundamental to the gospel. Many today do not like Christ's blood atoning sacrifice for sin, but the substitutional, redemptive, voluntary, propitiatory, reconciling and efficaciously accomplished work of the Saviour must be proclaimed unapologetically to today's generation. Slain animals in the Old Testament era never removed sin but they prefigured the sacrifice of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The sacrifice of Christ is penal (Galatians 3:13; 2 Corinthians 5:21).

Christ's death, burial and resurrection are fundamental to the gospel (see 1 Corinthians 15:1–4). The resurrection is God's demonstration to the human race that there is a resurrection of every individual in

the human race, and that Christ's satisfaction for sin was accepted and God's wrath was permanently placated. Mercy and grace kissed each other at Calvary. God's justice was satisfied in Christ alone.

Every man and woman is very far gone from righteousness, and in their very own sinful nature prone to evil. Everyone deserves God's wrath and damnation. The wrath of God is revealed in scripture against all ungodliness and unrighteousness (see Romans 1:18).

I am a Christian because God made me a Christian. I was unable to make myself a Christian. Indeed, if it were left to me in my evil nature, I would never choose or decide to be a Christian.

So, my conclusion, is that God chose me, in Christ, before the foundation of the world, with an everlasting love, to draw me to himself, and declare me a Christian believer, but only and exclusively in Christ alone, without any condition or contribution from me. I was an enemy of God, helpless and powerless, wretched and blind, a sinner and ungodly, disobedient and dead in my sin. But God called and saved me for his glory alone.

Why did God enact salvation this way? He shows salvation is all of Free Sovereign Grace alone, for his Glory alone, as part of the eternal blood covenant of redemption; planned by the Father, purchased by the Son, and effected and applied in regeneration by the Holy Spirit.

God has graciously granted me free and full forgiveness, and the gift of the righteousness of God, because of Christ and his glorious blood redemption on Calvary.

God has graciously granted me the gift of faith and repentance; and thankfulness by his great mercy, and superabundance of goodness.

God has graciously granted me the gift of the Holy Spirit—as he does to every believer in Christ!

What a glorious inheritance gifted to us in Christ Jesus, our Lord, because of the penal substitutionary death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, the Lamb of God.

All of the plan of salvation was predestined and purposed in Jesus Christ (see Ephesians 1.) Only in the Bible is the true way of salvation revealed, but Rome and her

cohorts teach and preach another gospel, which is contrary to the gospel of God.

Beware of counterfeit teachings in the church and ‘try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world’ (1 John 4:1).

Error comes in different and beguiling ways. Live and walk in the Holy Spirit. Read, meditate and obey God’s word, and beware of false doctrine, and trust God’s way of salvation, as set forth in the scriptures of truth. ¶

BOOK REVIEW

Revivals in the Highlands

Angus MacGillivray

2016 65pp p/b £8 Reformation Press ISBN 978-1-872556-20-8 Available from lulu.com and amazon.co.uk in print and e-book format

Accounts of revivals should have a special place in the hearts of all who know and love the Lord Jesus Christ. This is true both of the famous and the little-known outpourings of spiritual blessing. Angus MacGillivray (1805–73) had the privilege of being a minister of the gospel in Scotland and of knowing some of the people who had been involved in the revival of the eighteenth century. Names such as Cambuslang and Kilsyth will be familiar to students of Church history. MacGillivray wrote about the hamlets and villages of Ross and Sutherland, and of men and women whose names are not usually found in the records of revivals. He knew them as elderly folk, full of love for Christ, and deeply desirous of gospel blessing to come again.

It is striking that the religion of these dear folk was doctrinal and practical. It was rooted in the knowledge of the love of Christ, who died for wretched sinners such as they. It worked itself out in their giving themselves to prayer and the study of the word, and in their constant witnessing for Christ among their neighbours.

The book is short, and can be read in under an hour. The impression it makes will last considerably longer. May we be encouraged to so live for Christ, and so bear witness to his dying love, that others may be awakened to their need of salvation.

EJM

MINISTRY

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

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

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

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

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