

JANUARY–FEBRUARY 2021

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The Gospel Magazine

The background of the cover features a full moon in a dark, starry night sky. Below the moon, there is a thick layer of golden, billowing clouds that fill the bottom half of the image.

Walking in the light • Jehoiachin • The gospel of sovereign free grace

Contents

1	Our times	<i>The Editor</i>
3	Walking in the light	<i>The Editor</i>
8	A sermon on Isaiah 1:2–3, pt. 12	<i>C. Tuinman</i>
9	This is the way	<i>Carine Mackenzie</i>
11	Jehoiachin.....	<i>J.E. North</i>
16	Of the right knowledge of Christ crucified, pt 2	<i>William Perkins</i>
18	The Gospel of Sovereign Free Grace, pt 2	<i>William T. Foley</i>
23	‘Yea, he is altogether lovely’ pt 2.....	<i>John Flavel</i>
26	Former Days, Being a summary of past issues from <i>The Gospel Magazine</i>	
30	Book Reviews.....	<i>Various</i>

1766–2021

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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OUR TIMES

‘My times are in thy hand’ (Psalm 33:15)

HOW often do we read the cry, ‘How long’ in God’s word? It comes fifteen times in the Psalms alone. At times it is the cry of doubt, as John 10:24. Mostly, it is the cry of faith sorely tried, wrought from the hearts and lips of the righteous in the midst of their many and sore afflictions. It is a cry that we are hearing today, and we can well understand why it is offered up.

How long before we can return to normal life, to proper congregational worship with the singing of psalms and hymns, and that true expression of Christian fellowship that is such a comfort to many of our members?

How long before the much-vaunted vaccine gives us that protection craved by so many, by which their fears will be lifted and their old habits be able to be revisited?

There were some in Amos’s day who cried, ‘How long?’ The prophet spoke of those that complained, ‘When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat,

making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit?’ (Amos 8:5). The desire of some to return to normal is no doubt based on the same high principle of profit at any cost, and they view the present restrictions as unwarranted barriers to lining their own pockets.

Others may be more concerned by the ban on attending sporting venues as spectators, of going to the cinema or theatre, or to other places of entertainment. Families and individuals who take foreign holidays are anxiously awaiting the day when they can fly away to their destination of choice.

And there are others yet whose cry of ‘How long?’ refers to the seemingly endless delays to routine but necessary hospital appointments and procedures. We are aware of increases in serious but untreated health conditions while the health service focuses all its attention on one issue only. One can only feel for those who are left to suffer in such cases.

The child of God is by no means immune from some of these concerns. Our health is no less affected by delays than that of unbelievers. Our businesses and jobs are no less affected by the lack of customers than those of unbelievers. Our legitimate desire for rest is no less affected than that of the godless. And yet our hope does not lie in the same place as that of the world. Our hope lies with the Lord our God: as the psalmist declares, 'My times are in thy hands.'

In the first place, our destiny is in the Lord's hands. This is the thrust of the psalmist's cry. His very life is in danger, and his only hope of survival is the Lord. His enemies seek to take away his life, v. 13, but he trusted in the Lord, v. 14. He confesses that his times are in the Lord's hands, who alone can deliver him, v. 15. He desires the Lord's favour towards him, and pleads for it, v. 16. In this we see the vast difference between the child of God and the unbeliever. The former trusts in the Lord to save him, whereas the latter trusts in himself or some other fallible creature to save him. The salvation of man is limited to what is in the power of man, which is very little indeed. Only the power of Almighty God can truly save. Our future is better with the Lord our Father than with any of his creatures.

In the second place, our days are in the Lord's hands. Our times are present, and they tick away with the second hand on the clock. Rudyard Kipling famously counselled, 'If you can fill the unforgiving minute with sixty seconds' worth of distance run, Yours is the Earth, and everything that's in it...' Far better the counsel of the blessed Apostle, who warned, 'The night is far spent, and the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day...' (Ro 13:12f). We are to do so,

'redeeming the time, because the days are evil' (Eph 5:16). How many wasted opportunities will we regret, when we look back on the years allotted to us. How shall we answer for these things? If we would learn that our times are in the Lord's hands, we would use time for him.

In the third place, the times in which we are living are in the Lord's hands. The desire of so many of us, to return to normal, needs to be had in the light of God's sovereignty. Our Lord Jesus Christ is our King, and our duty and service is of him. When we look at the frantic efforts of politicians, scientists and church leaders to explain the current crisis, and to offer hope to us in that crisis, we see just how weak man is. An objective view of the health crisis would admit that it is not a great problem: in terms of deaths, it is—at present—a long way from being a great threat to mankind. But the effect it has had on this world is immense. Fear, panic and desperation have seized many people. In this, we are to see the Lord's hand. He governs all things according to his perfect will and pleasure. He has brought these days on us, and we are to learn to trust him, and to remain faithfully obedient to him, in these days. We are not to despair, or to hope in princes. Our times are in the Lord's hands.

The world can offer nothing when compared with the blessings of the Lord. The only salvation worthy of the name is what we have in and through our Lord Jesus Christ. A vaccine may save us from a particular virus, but it cannot save us from hell. Money in the bank may protect us from the ravages of poverty, but it cannot save us from the wrath of God. We are taught in Scripture to hope in those things which are from above. Safety lies not in the schemes of men, but in the blessings of God's countenance. Look to him in faith, and trust him today and every day. ¶

WALKING IN THE LIGHT

A SERMON BY THE EDITOR

‘O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD’ (Isaiah 2:5)

IN this short passage the Lord reveals the glory of the gospel age, in which the word will go to all nations, and they will flow to him. One effect of this will be the peace of God’s kingdom, that will come to all nations. At the end, the prophet calls on the house of Jacob to begin now to walk in the light of the Lord, rather than to delay until that day. That the obedience of Israel is a testimony to the world is declared in Deuteronomy 4:5–8;

Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?’

Here, Isaiah reminds them of their place in God’s purposes, and calls on them to be obedient. It is an obedience from which they have fallen, and for which they are under the judgment of God. But it is an obedience that is entirely reasonable, given their history. Had not the Lord brought them into being by his own power, making a great nation from one man who was too old to father

children? Had not the Lord given them the land in which they lived, and his laws and his word, as well as his prophets? Had the Lord not blessed them with unspeakable blessings, and shown mercy and grace towards them many times before? Their present disobedience, therefore, was not excusable, but the call to obedience is very gracious. Given the present state of the church in our nation, it is a call we need to hear in our day.

He calls them ‘house of Jacob,’ the chosen of the chosen of the chosen—Jacob is the second son of the second son of the man whom God called. He does not call them Israel, the name Jacob came to be was, but Jacob, the name he had when he was yet a deceiver. This is a call to a nation that has forgotten its place in the Lord’s will and purposes.

He says ‘come ye, and let us walk...’ He would gather them, and motivate them to action. See similar calls in 1:18, ‘Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.’ Again, in 2:3, ‘And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.’ Or 48:16, ‘Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent me.’ Or in 55:1, ‘Ho, every

one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.' These are tender invitations, and show the patient mercy and love of a heavenly Father for his wayward and foolish children.

'In the light of the Lord,' that is, of his presence, Psalm 27:1, and of his truth, Psalm 43:3, and of his word, Psalm 119:105.

Doctrine: the church is to walk before the world in the light of the Lord.

1. The church has a public duty

How do we understand The Church? We ought to know enough not to think of it as a building, even if we call such edifices, churches. We ought to know enough to understand that the church is the gathering, the congregation, the meeting together of those who have been called out of the world apart, to worship and serve the Lord God. This is how Scripture defines the church, as the household of God—all who believe his promises and live by them. It is not a secret organisation, nor even a private one, but it is a public one, visible and audible to the world. If we consider the church as it first appeared, in the days following the fall of man, we find it to consist of all who were then living. It is true that not every member of the church shared the true faith, for Cain did not have a right regard for the Lord or his promise when he brought his offering. At the re-launch of the creation, if one may so term the aftermath of the flood, we see that, once again, the church comprised all who then lived—even if one of them was not of the same faith as his brethren. When the Lord God called Abraham to forsake his family home, and to go to a land he would be shown, that man went as a stranger and pilgrim. Yet for

all that his witness was public, as his dealings with various important persons shows. Come the exodus, we find Rahab confessing that the report of God's dealings with other nations for the sake of Israel was spreading abroad, and she, having heard the reports, placed her trust in Israel's God. However we take the matter, we find that there was a clear public aspect to the witness of those who walked with the Lord. The church is not a private matter, to be kept hidden except on Sundays and high days, but is a public matter to be set before the world at all times. And it is the failure of the church to maintain this public witness that is part of the reason why it is so weak and ineffectual today.

Christ speaks of believers as light and salt, Matthew 5:13ff, and of the kingdom of heaven as leaven, or yeast, Matthew 13:33. The light is to be set up, and to give light to all in the house. The salt is to savour all the food, else it is good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot. The leaven, or yeast, is hidden in a measure of flour, and very quickly gives evidence of its presence by the effect it has on the dough. Given the nature of the images our Lord Jesus uses, we cannot think that the church is to be kept behind closed doors. There was a time when it did keep behind closed doors. That was between the death of Christ and the confirmation of his resurrection. That was the time of fear, when the disciples, not understanding all that Christ had taught, believed that they had been in error, and were abandoned by God. But when the Holy Spirit was poured out on them, they threw off the shackles of fear, and went out into those highways and byways of which Christ had spoken, to compel men to come into the kingdom. If the coming of the Holy Spirit had left the apostles in the upper room, with the door shut for fear of the Jews, then we would be justified in

thinking that the church is a private, even a secret, matter: it is not.

The apostles were sent out as witnesses, Acts 1:8. Paul and his fellow labourers preached in the open, Acts 17:17. That is, they were to preach Christ publicly. A witness does not whisper his evidence to one and another, but stands up before the court and declares it, affirming it to be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. How much more, when we are dealing with eternal verity, must we make a public profession of that truth. And we do not do so individually only (although we must do it individually) but we are to do it as the body of Christ. It is that corporate aspect of witness that is so powerful to the world. When one Israelite or another obeyed the law, and put his trust in the Lord his God, the nations round about were unmoved. When the nation as a whole obeyed the word of God, and trusted openly in the Lord, then those nations had to take notice. It is not the weight of numbers that is convincing, but the identity of faith and practice, showing the divine origin of the Christian faith.

This duty of public faith is fulfilled in three things, which together make up the public demonstration of our common faith. They are: public prayer, 1 Timothy 2:1–8; public preaching, Isaiah 6:8f; and public obedience to the word of the Lord, Matthew 5:16. For how can the witness of the church to the spiritual needs of all men be known, except in public prayer? For when our prayers are public, we witness to those for whom we pray that we understand their needs better than they do. It is not that we are more clever than they are, but that we are acting in obedience to the revealed truth of God in Scripture. And if we would be governed aright, and have good laws and wise rulers, we must obey the apostolic injunction, and

pray for those in authority. The same may be applied to those whom the Lord has set over us in our churches. And as for public preaching, we do so, not to fulfil a duty as if the mere act of preaching has absolved us of responsibility to name Christ before the world, but we do so in the firm belief that by the foolishness of preaching sinners are saved. Preaching is God's appointed instrument in this respect, the means of communication, and the effectual means of awakening the spiritually careless and dead. If preaching is silenced, as the enemies of truth desire, then souls shall perish in ignorance. And what is our public obedience—our attending public worship on the Lord's Day, and our living holy lives as our Father requires, and as our new nature delights in—but our giving evidence of the truth and power of the gospel we preach and believe.

The church is under this duty whether society will accept or reject, whether we have liberty or not: for how do we show our faith in the Lord if we will not act when opposition is on us? We are not to seek the permission of sinners before we fulfil our duty, but we are to know that the Lord has already revealed what we are to do, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear.

2. The church is to walk in the light of the Lord

That is, the church does not make its own way through the world, in the same way that Israel did not make her own way through the wilderness, but was led by the pillars of cloud and fire, Exodus 13:21. In short, the church may possess its candlestick, Revelation 2:5, but it is not therefore free from the requirement to be obedient. Rather, it is to walk in the light. It is a feature of light that it only goes a certain distance. The brighter and larger the light, the greater that distance:

when the sun shines onto the earth, a whole hemisphere is lit up, but when a lamp is lit, only a small pool of light goes forth. When David confessed, 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path,' he was not saying that he could see the end of the path, nor every danger in all directions. Rather, he could see as far as the light permitted, but he was confident to walk in that light. The one who carries the light is always in the light, and any who travel with the lamp-bearer will do well to stick close by.

In what light is the church to walk? In the light spoken of here, which is, first, God's presence, Psalm 27:1. 'The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?' All who are in the presence of the Lord are under the protection of the Lord. It cannot be otherwise, in the same way that Ruth, being covered by Boaz's cloak (Ruth 3:8f), was delivered both from debt and from shame. Taking light for joy, we can see quite readily how being in the Lord's presence is light to us. 'Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore' (Psalm 16:11). See how many sought out the Lord Jesus Christ, especially the outcasts and sinners, the hungry, the sick, the sorrowing and those who felt their deep need of his love and grace. See how few who believed themselves to be righteous sought him out, for they were content to bask in the false light of their fellow hypocrites' praise. To be in God's presence is to be in the light.

Light may be taken for truth, Psalm 43:3. 'O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacle.' These are not two separate things, but one, where the light is truth and the truth is light. See Isaiah 8:20. 'To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because

there is no light in them.' It is the quality of truth to reveal error, and of light to reveal good and bad. So declares the Apostle Paul, in Ephesians 5:13. 'But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.' There is no truth but of God, and all he reveals, declares and makes known is truth. Anything that contradicts the truth revealed by Almighty God is not greater than him, but is contrary to him, lesser than him, and is not in any way to be trusted. Walk in the light. Walk in the truth. If the church would do so, it would give that clear, unmistakable sound (1 Corinthians 14:8).

Light may also be taken for word, as Psalm 119:105, quoted above. It may be objected that there is no intrinsic difference between God's truth and God's word, which is so. Yet we draw this distinction: God's word is true because it is his word, for he is truth. God's character is true, in that he is constant, unchanging, trustworthy, faithful. His word is all these things because it is his word. God is true, and his word is true. To hear or read his word is to hear or read God himself. Therefore we know God by his word, and so we regard it as absolute truth. We need no further prophets, no further Gospel writers, and no further apostles. All we need is set forth in the Scriptures, which God breathed out and caused to be written. This is an important point today, when science or philosophy work tirelessly to undermine and contradict the truth of God's word by rational and supposedly unanswerable arguments. If we must maintain this point: the word of God is true and is our light, and without it we are in darkness. This light is no false light, but is the only safe light, guide and comforter we will have in this world. It is so because the same Holy Spirit who inspired the authors also opens our eyes to

behold wondrous things in the law, and our hearts to receive the same.

Yet there are not three separate things, but one, for God is not divisible into parts, as if either his presence, or his truth, or his word were sufficient. Rather, to have one truly is to have all. And this is shown to us in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. He declared, 'I am the light of the world' (John 8:12), and we know that the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not' (John 1:5). Concerning that light, we are told, 'In him was life, and that life was the light of men' (John 1:4). Thus the connection between light and life is established, and without the true light we have no spiritual life. Our spiritual life is the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the way, truth and life, John 14:6.

Jesus Christ is the Head of the church, and he bought her with his own blood. He bought her to save her, that she might be without spot or wrinkle, and that it should be holy and without blame, Ephesians 5:26f.

Therefore, when the prophet calls on the house of Jacob to walk in the light, he is calling them to the faith of Jesus Christ. If that sounds improbable, know that the true Israelite looked for the promised seed of the woman, who is Jesus Christ. He offered his sacrifice of atonement on the basis of the greater sacrifice that would take away his sin. He looked for redemption, and for reconciliation with his Maker. He longed for the true Israel, that eternal rest, a city with foundations, whose builder and maker is God (Heb 11:10). And what is the church, but the household of faith, the true Israel of

God? Let us therefore walk in the light; that is, with our Lord Jesus Christ.

Application

Meaning, first, that the church walks in the faith of Jesus Christ: we believe in him as Saviour, in whom and through whom alone we have redemption from our sins. We cannot save ourselves, and we are liars if we believe we need no Saviour. Have we felt the burden of our sins to be intolerable? Do we recognise ourselves in the words of the hymn, 'Foul, I to the fountain fly:/Wash me, Saviour, or I die?' Unless we recognise our own sinfulness, and the justice of divine wrath, we have not understood our need of the Saviour. And when the church ceases preaching salvation from sin in Jesus Christ, be assured that it has ceased to see its sinfulness, or the justice of divine wrath. The true church will ever walk in the faith of Jesus Christ, confessing him to be the only Saviour.

Secondly, that the church walks in the rule of Christ, who sits on David's throne to rule his people Israel, the chosen of God. Where the church is disobedient, it admits that it has rebelled against its King. This was Israel's sin, for which it suffered long. The true church shows its love for Christ and his word by being willingly obedient to that word, as a mark of faith and trust.

Thirdly, that the church walks in the joy of Christ, praising his name and delighting in his presence, power, grace, love and goodness. Examine the contents of your praises. Are they just thanks for material blessings, or do we give thanks for spiritual blessings? Divide the true from the false. AMEN. ¶

Prayer appeases God, but a tear compels him: that moves him, but this constrains him.

Jerome

A SERMON ON ISAIAH 1:2–3

REV. C. TUINMAN (1659–1728)

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

Part 12

And yet the Lord hath made us great, and let us grow and rise from a small and despised beginning. Our neighbouring nations are amazed and envious. What kind of matters are there, by which God nourished and brought up children, which we have not enjoyed? Yea, many in different ways. I will not try to count every act and benefaction by which means the Lord hath raised us. Yea, that is impossible. ‘Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered’ (Psalm 40:5).

Even more, he hath raised us, so that our Republic has become great and even esteemed by kings. O, such a big difference to the beginning, when our fathers were in such lowness, that they could not find a lord, because France and England refused to have us as their subjects, because they were afraid of the hostility of Spain.

How much gratitude we are indebted to our Benefactor. Should not everyone of us say: ‘What shall I render unto the LORD for all the benefits towards me?’ (Psalm 116:12). ‘For of him, and through him, and to him,

are all things, to whom be glory for ever’ (Romans 11:36). But oh shame, oh wickedness! God may say about us: and they have rebelled against me. How has the apostasy become so general and how great is the rebelliousness of great and small, young and old? Compare Jeremiah 5:1–5. How few is the holy seed? ‘Help, O LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men’ (Psalm 12:1). If Abraham walked through our streets and saw the behaviour of men, would he have no reason to say, ‘Surely the fear of God is not in this place?’ (Genesis 20:11).

And if Jeremiah had lived in our day, no doubt he would have renewed his complaint: ‘Oh that my head were waters, and that mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people and go from them! For they are adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men. And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the LORD’ (Jeremiah 9:1–3).

TO BE CONTINUED

Justification is an act of grace: sanctification a work of grace. Justification is by a righteousness without us: sanctification by holiness wrought in us. Justification proceeds as a cause: sanctification follows in nature as an effect. Justification is perfect at once: sanctification is perfecting by degrees.

Isaac Chauncy

THIS IS THE WAY

by CARINE MACKENZIE

WE were recently given a gift of a very interesting book, listing details and instructions for 40 different walks in and around our home town. Many we had already known and done numerous times but several were new suggestions.

We decided to try a new one which took us through a large forested hill up to a rocky outcrop from where we had great views over the surrounding country.

There were several paths in this forest but we knew we were on the right route when we noticed the wooden posts with a strip of green paint. These appeared at regular intervals and proved most helpful.

Sometimes we could go for a spell without seeing a post. Had we made a mistake? Did we miss something? Were we still on the right path? How reassuring to find one again. If we had missed a post or deliberately ignored one, we could be in trouble or even danger.

The Christian life is like a walk. God tells us to walk in love (Ephesians 5:2), to walk honestly (Romans 13:13), to walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:25), to walk in wisdom (Colossians 4:5). Walking is the metaphor used to describe the Christian life. The Christian walk is a narrow path—'narrow is the way that leadeth unto life' (Matthew 7:14), Jesus tells us in the Sermon on the Mount.

God gives us an instruction book to guide us on the walk. 'Thou wilt show me the path of life' said David (Psalm 16:11). 'Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path,' he prayed (Psalm 27:11). I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go,' God promised him (Psalm 32:8). Our instruction book, of course, is the Bible which should be our constant companion and reference in our Christian walk.

God has also given us regular signposts where we can check if we are on the right path. What are they? We should regularly be using the means of grace—Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, God's promises, worship at home and in God's house.

Do we read the Bible regularly? The people of Berea were commended because 'they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so' (Acts 17:11).

Are we often at prayer? 'Pray without ceasing,' Paul advised the Thessalonian Church (1 Thessalonians 5:17). When a problem arises do we immediately think about praying and committing our cares to God or do we try to solve the matter in our own wisdom or phone a friend?

Do we love going to God's house to worship him and meet with his people? Can you sing with David, 'I joyed when to the house of God, Go up, they said to me' (Psalm 122:1, metrical)? In recent months we have not been able to meet together in God's house because of Covid restrictions. It was a real joy to be able to come together again, even with masks and social distancing. The desire for fellowship with God's people, is another marker on the Christian journey. 'We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren' (1 John 3:14)

Sometimes a walking companion will suggest going off the path. 'Let's go down this way. It looks like a short cut.' But that is not a wise course to follow. Sometimes we are tempted to

deviate from God's narrow way by the suggestion of a friend. 'You don't need to go to church today.' 'Why do you read the Bible every day?'

We must keep to the narrow way that leads to life. Jesus himself tells us that he is the way. (John 14:6). The Lord will lead us and guide us on the right path. 'And thine ear shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk he in it, when you turn to the right hand, and when yes turn to the left' (Isaiah 30:21)

Deviating from the path, especially in a forest, can mean getting completely lost and ending up at the wrong destination. Keeping to the right path which is the Lord Jesus Christ, trusting in him and his finished work on the cross, is the only way to reach our final destination of heaven, to be forever with the Lord.

Bible Search

Find the missing words from the verses. The initial letters of the correct answers will spell out a phrase found in the story.

1. There is a way which seemeth right unto a _____, but the end thereof are the ways of death. (Proverbs 14:12)
2. And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way _____. (Psalm 139:24)
3. Ananias ... said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that _____ unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightiest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. (Acts 9:17)
4. Because strait is the gate and _____ is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. (Matthew 7:14)
5. Thou wilt _____ me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. (Psalm 16:11)
6. And as _____ was in the way, behold Elijah met him. (1 Kings 18:7)
7. And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee _____ years in the wilderness, to humble thee... (Deuteronomy 8:2)
8. Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the _____ and the right way. (1 Samuel 12:23)
9. As ye have therefore _____ Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him. (Colossians 2:6)

10. Behold, I send an _____ before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. (Exodus 23:20)
11. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the _____ of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. (Psalm 1:1)
12. I go the way of all the _____ : be thou strong therefore , and shew thyself a man. (1 Kings 2:2)

JEHOIACHIN

by J.E. NORTH (LANDFORD WOOD)

'And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, in the five and twentieth day of the month, that Evilmerodach king of Babylon in the first year of his reign lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah, and brought him forth out of prison, And spake kindly unto him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon, And changed his prison garments: and he did continually eat bread before him all the days of his life. And for his diet, there was a continual diet given him of the king of Babylon, every day a portion until the day of his death, all the days of his life' (Jeremiah 52:31-34)

THE above words are the words with which Jeremiah concludes his prophecy. They are very similar to the last verses of Second Kings. The time is about six hundred years before the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a time of rebellion against Almighty God and the forsaking of his law and worship. Josiah had led the nation in repentance and turning back to the Lord, but after his reign his son, Jehoahaz was made king by the people (2 Chronicles 36:1), Pharaoh Neco replaced him with his brother Jehoiakim (2 Chronicles 36:4). He (Jehoiakim) also did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord. After his death Jehoiachin became King of Judah. We are told that he came to the throne when he was eighteen

years old and did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord (2 Kings 24:9). After three months the Babylonish armies came up against Jerusalem; to prevent a long siege against Jerusalem, Jehoiachin capitulated immediately. It seems that because he had done this, he was not put to death but was allowed to continue on the throne as Nebuchadnezzar's vassal king for upwards of eight years when he was taken to Babylon where he remained a prisoner for thirty-seven years. Zedekiah, his uncle, was made king after him. He (Zedekiah) rebelled against the Babylonian Empire, was captured and was taken to Babylon where his eyes were put out after he had seen his sons executed and there he died.

It is, however, Jehoiachin that I would like to consider, and the resemblance of his life to the spiritual experience of the child of God. It may seem strange to liken the experience of a child of God to the life of a king who did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, but as we read through this passage of Scripture we can see a number of parallels with the experience of the child of God which we will consider in order. Our warrant for taking such passages and applying them to the church and people of God is to be found in the twenty-fourth chapter of the Gospel according to Luke: the Walk to Emmaus. In that passage of Scripture we are told that the Lord Jesus, himself, drew near to those two bitterly disappointed disciples who had left Jerusalem with all their hopes and expectations shattered, 'But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel' (Luke 24:21), they said to the Lord Jesus Christ the knowledge of whom was withheld from them. But the Lord Jesus patiently explained how that the Lord Jesus Christ should come from the glory and save his people from their sins. 'Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself' (Luke 24:25-27). Notice the Lord Jesus said, 'And all the prophets' which includes Jeremiah! We cannot agree with one who says of Dr Robert Hawker who says that he, Hawker, sees Jesus where he is not legitimately to be seen. We therefore look for Christ in all the Scriptures.

'As we look, then, at this passage of Scripture we see a wonderful picture of the blessed Saviour and his glorious work of Salvation in the following ways:

1. Jehoiachin did that which was evil in God's eyes,
2. Jehoiachin was taken out of the prison by the King,
3. Jehoiachin was set on high,
4. Jehoiachin clothed by the King, and,
5. Jehoiachin was provided for by the King

What a mercy it is for the children of God that 'Where the word of a king is, there is power: and who may say unto him, What doest thou?' (Ecclesiastes 8:4). We see his state, his liberty, his clothing and his provision all made by the king and as we apply this to the child of God we see all these things applicable to them and provided for them by their glorious Surety, the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Jehoiachin did that which was evil in the sight of God

'And he (Jehoiachin) did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done' (2 Kings 24:9). We can notice in this verse two things concerning wickedness and evil. Firstly that a sinful nature is inherited and, secondly, sin is also the willing action of the sinner. We are told that Jehoiachin committed the evil in the sight of God because he learned it from his father: 'According to all that his father had done.' We have a saying in the English language, 'Like father, like son.' He inherited his wickedness from his father who had himself done that which was evil in the sight of God. But also we are told that he actually did those things which his father did: 'And he did that which was evil.' He not only inherited his father's characteristics, but he delighted in following that pathway which his father had chosen, and he chose it for himself.

Now this is a picture of the child of God in his unregenerate state. He inherited a fallen nature from his first father, Adam. The

Apostle Paul tells us, 'Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned' (Romans 5:12). We gain our fallen nature by inheritance from our father Adam. When Adam sinned, as the head of the whole human race, he plunged the whole of humanity into sin and spiritual death. And like Jehoiachin, we follow the sinful path of our father. Adam disobeyed Almighty God and as the true sons of Adam, we disobey the command of God. God has set the standard which must be followed in the Ten Commandments which the Lord Jesus Christ summed up as 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' (Matthew 27:37-39).

Just as Jehoiachin delighted in his sinful ways, so sinful man delights himself in sinful practices. All our actions, if they do not proceed from a love to Almighty God, and a love towards the Lord Jesus Christ, taking into account that they should be undertaken for the glory of God, are sinful. Paul tells us, 'Whatsoever is not of faith is sin' (Romans 14:23). And what a standard this is! A standard that none can attain. Is there any wonder that Paul could write, 'For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23). Can anyone keep the standard as set by the Lord Jesus Christ? Obviously not! The rich young ruler thought he could but when he was shown the real, spiritual understanding of the law, he went away sorrowful because his riches were more important to him than a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Pharisee who went into the temple to pray at the same time as the Publican thought he could make his boast in his own endeavours. But all these things were in vain,

not being mixed with faith (Hebrews 4:2).

And that sin has brought mankind into the prison of sin. It is a place of bondage for 'whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin' (John 8:34), and the real understanding of the word 'servant' is that of a slave; one with no freedom but to do what his master commands. Paul also describes the child of God prior to his call by grace as being, 'At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world' (Ephesians 2:12) and 'Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others' (Ephesians 2:3).

But what a mercy it is that there is one who delivers from sin, even the Lord Jesus Christ. When he was in the synagogue at Nazareth he read from Isaiah 61 of the anointing of the Spirit of God upon him, and one of the blessings he bestows is 'to preach deliverance to the captives' (Luke 4:18).

So we come, in the second place to consider

2. Jehoiachin was taken out of the prison by the King

'And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, in the five and twentieth day of the month, that Evil-merodach king of Babylon in the first year of his reign lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah, and brought him forth out of prison, And spake kindly unto him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon' (Jeremiah 52:31, 32).

What a mercy it was that after so long a time held in the prison Jehoiachin was set free. How much more an elect child of God

who has been bound in the prison of sin, set free by the King of Kings who speaks kindly to the former prisoner and gives him a throne. What a mercy!

Zechariah also speaks of the deliverance of the prisoner: 'Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope' (9:12). Notice the description which is given. It is a stronghold. Usually one would think of the prison as being the stronghold, but here the place of liberty is a stronghold which means that it is a place of safety. 'The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him' (Nahum 1:7). The covenant God of Israel is the Stronghold for the people of God. Then Zechariah calls the prisoners 'prisoners of hope', that is, they have hope in their deliverance 'Which hope,' says Paul, 'we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil' (Hebrews 6:19).

We read that the king who succeeded Nebuchadnezzar spoke kindly to Jehoiachin. Much more the words of the Lord Jesus Christ to his people. Look at the Gospel invitations in the Word of God: 'Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David' (Isaiah 55:3); 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest' (Matthew 11:28); 'In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink' (John 7:37), and we could continue with many more similar invitations of the gospel which speak kindly to the sinner who is a prisoner of hope.

The Lord Jesus in the gospel records speaks kindly to certain individuals. In Mark's Gospel we have the kind words spoken to the one who was sick of the palsy: 'Son, thy sins be forgiven thee' (Mark 2:5 &

9). To the thief on the cross, he says, 'Today thou shalt be with me in paradise' (Luke 23:43). And so we could continue with such 'kind words' to the child of God when called by his grace into the kingdom of light from the kingdom of darkness (Colossians 1:13).

But it does not end there, being brought out of prison means that there is liberty. 'He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound' (Isaiah 61:1). There is liberty for the child of God. But that liberty is not licence to do as we wish. Jehoiachin was not free to go back to his homeland of Judah. He remained in Babylon until the day of his death in the presence of the king Evilmerodach. But even here there is a lesson to be learned. The child of God is constantly in the presence of his King. Indeed never out of his sight. 'Thou God seest me' (Genesis 16:13ff.). What a comfort it is to know that we can never go beyond the presence of God (cf. Psalm 139). The promise of the Lord Jesus Christ is 'Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world' (Matthew 28:20).

Just as Jehoiachin was brought into liberty, so the Child of God is likewise brought into the liberty of the Children of God. 'Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God' (Romans 8:21). Being made free by the Lord Jesus Christ for 'If the Son therefore make you free, ye shall be free indeed' (John. 8:36). How, then, is this freedom obtained?

This peace and freedom is obtained in the decree of God. No-one would be saved and have liberty were it not for the mercy of God as displayed in his decree. The Decree of God is that he determined to save a multitude which no man could number. He gave them to Christ in covenant bond, and every one will

be brought to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and will attain to that liberty in the gospel. Hymns are used infrequently in today's churches and congregations, and the church is poorer for its so doing. There is a hymn by John Kent which is very rarely sung today which speaks of the decree of God as follows:

There is a period known to God
When all his sheep redeemed by blood
Shall leave the hateful ways of sin
Turn to the fold, and enter in.

Glory to God—they ne'er shall rove
Beyond the limits of his love;
Fenced with Jehovah's shalls and wills
Firm as the everlasting hills

Th' appointed time rolls on apace
Not to promise, but call by grace
To change the heart, renew the will
And turn their feet to Zion's hill

This peace and freedom is obtained in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. We would be eternally lost and in the prison of hell for all eternity were it not for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. We see his coming from time to time in the Old Testament. These pre-incarnate manifestations of the eternal Son of God are called Theophanies. We see the Lord Jesus Christ mainly in his incarnation, his life, his ministry, his death and resurrection. But we also obtain this liberty and freedom in the Priestly work of Christy in heaven 'seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them [us]' (Hebrews 7:25).

Now this peace and liberty is purchased by the blood of the everlasting covenant (Hebrews 13:20). The marginal reading of the verse in Zechariah 9:11 to which we referred earlier is quite interesting. The reference to the covenant in that verse has the alternate reading of 'Whose Covenant is by blood.'

This would infer that the price of the covenant of grace has been paid in blood. Under the Old Testament Covenant, the Mosaic covenant, the blood of bulls and goats was sacrificed to make atonement for sins, but Paul tells us that 'it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins' (Hebrews 10:4). 'But we see Jesus' who, as the Lamb of God, the sacrificial Lamb made atonement and thus purchased the peace and freedom of his own dear children. He shed his precious blood that sinners might go free, a freedom which is far superior to that given to Jehoiachin. Joseph Irons sums it all up in the following words:

What sacred Fountain yonder springs
Up from the throne of God,
And all our covenant blessings brings?
'Tis Jesus' precious blood.

What mighty sum paid all my debt,
When I a bondman stood,
And hath my soul at freedom set?
'Tis Jesus' precious blood.

What stream is that which sweeps away
My sins, just like a flood,
Nor lets one guilty blemish stay?
'Tis Jesus' precious blood.

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

What theme, my soul, shall best employ
Thy harp before thy God,
And make all heaven to ring with joy?
'Tis Jesus' precious blood.

When that peace and freedom is obtained the child of God has a hope. When Jehoiachin was released from the prison in

which he had dwelt for over thirty years he had little hope. What could he hope for but peace and a measure of freedom for the remainder of his life. But he was still under the dominion of Evilmerodach. The child of God has a greater hope than that of Jehoiachin. Zechariah speaks of the children of God as 'Prisoners of hope'. What is this hope of the child of God? The Hebrew word here translated 'hope' also means 'expectation'. We could therefore ask the question: 'What is the expectation of the Child of God?' Is not

his hope, his expectation that he will be forever with the Lord Jesus in the glories of heaven and there to worship and praise his name for ever. The Christian's hope, then, is the hope of the forgiveness of sins, the hope of mercy in Christ Jesus our Lord, the hope of heaven and the hope of Christ's return to this earth to take his people to be with himself through all eternity. This is the hope of the child of God and the blessings of being released from the prison house of sin and an expected hell.

TO BE CONCLUDED

OF THE RIGHT KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST CRUCIFIED (PART 2)

by WILLIAM PERKINS (1558–1602)

The following article appears in Volume 9 of the RHB edition of the Complete Works of William Perkins. The text below is taken from the 1626 edition (not 1637 as stated incorrectly in Part 1).

Thus much of our knowledge. Now follows the second point, how Christ is to be known. He must not be known barely as God, or as a man, or as a Jew, born in the tribe of Judah, or as a terrible and just Judge, but as he is our Redeemer, and the very price of our redemption: and in this respect as the common treasure and storehouse of God's Church, as Paul testifieth when he saith, 'In him are all the treasures of knowledge and wisdom hid.' And again, 'Blessed be God, which hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ.' And St John saith, that of his fulness, we received grace for grace. Here then let us mark, that all the blessings of God, whether spiritual or temporal; all, I say, without exception, are conveyed unto us

from the Father, by Christ: and so they must be received of us, and no otherwise. That this point may be further cleared, the benefits which we receive from Christ, are to be handled, and the manner of knowing them. The benefits of Christ are three, his *Merit*, his *Virtue*, his *Example*.

The *merit* of Christ, is the *value* and *price* of his death and passion, whereby any many is perfectly reconciled to God. This reconciliation hath two parts, *remission* of sins and *acceptance* to life everlasting. Remission of sins is the removing, or the abolishing both of the *guilt* and *punishment* of man's sins. By *guilt*, I understand a *subjection* or *obligation* to punishment, according to the order of divine justice. And the *punishment* of sin, is the

malediction or *curse* of the whole law, which is the suffering of the first, and second death. *Acceptation* to life everlasting, is a giving of right and title to the kingdom of heaven, and that for the merit of Christ's obedience imputed. Now this benefit of reconciliation, must be known, not by conceit and imagination, nor by carnal presumption; but by the inward testimony of God's Spirit, certifying our consciences thereof; which for this cause, is called the *spirit of revelation*. And that we may attain to the infallible assurance of this benefit, we must call to mind the promises of the gospel, touching remission of sins, and life everlasting. This being done, we must further strive and endeavour, by the assurance of God's Spirit, to apply them to ourselves, and to believe that they belong unto us: and we must also put ourselves often to the exercise of invocation and true repentance. For in, and by our crying unto heaven to God for our reconciliation, comes the assurance thereof, as Scriptures and Christian experience makes manifest. And if so it fall out, that any man in temptation, apprehend and feel anything but the furious indignation and wrath of God; against all reason and feeling, he must hold to the mercy of Christ, and know a point of religion hard to be learned, that God is a most loving Father to them that have care to serve him, even at that instant, when he shows himself a most fierce and terrible enemy.

From the benefit of *reconciliation* proceed four benefits. First, that excellent *peace of God* that passeth all understanding, which hath six parts. The first is, *peace* with God, and the blessed Trinity. Romans 5:1, 'Being justified, we have peace with God.' The second, *peace* with the good angels, John 1:51, 'Ye shall see the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.' And that angels, like armies of soldiers encamped

about the servants of God, and as nurses bear them in their arms, that they be neither hurt by the devil and all his angels, nor by his instruments, it proceeds of this, that they being in Christ, are partakers of his merits. The third is, *peace* with all such as fear God, and believe in Christ. This Isaiah foretold when he said, that the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them, etc, 11:6. The fourth is, *peace* with a man's own self, when the conscience washed in the blood of Christ, ceaseth to accuse and terrify: and when the will, affections and inclinations of the whole man, are obedient to the mind, enlightened by the Spirit and word of God, Colossians 3:15, 'Let the peace of God rule in your hearts.' The fifth is, *peace* with enemies, and that two ways: first, in that such as believe in Christ, seek to have peace with all men, hurting none, but doing good to all. Secondly, in that God restrains the malice of the enemies, and inclines their hearts to be peaceable. Thus God brought Daniel into love and favour with the chief of the eunuchs (Daniel 1:9). The last is, *peace* with all creatures in heaven and earth, in that they serve for man's salvation, Psalm 91:13, 'Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.' Hosea 2:18, 'And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven.' Now this benefit of peace, is known, partly by the testimony of the Spirit, and partly by a daily experience thereof.

The second benefit, is a recovery of that right and title, which man hath to all creatures in heaven and earth, and all temporal blessings, which Adam lost to himself, and every one of his posterity, 1 Corinthians 3:22, 'Whether it be the world, or life, or

death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours.' Now, the right way of knowing this one benefit, is this. When God vouchsafeth meat, drink, apparel, houses, lands, etc., we must not barely consider them as blessings of God, for that very heathen men, which know not Christ, can do: but we must acknowledge and esteem them as blessings, proceeding from the special love of God the Father, whereby he loves us in Christ: and procured unto us by the merit of Christ crucified: and we must labour in this point to be settled and persuaded: and so oft as we see and use the creatures of God for our own benefit, this point should come to our minds. Blessings conceived apart from Christ, are misconceived: whatsoever they are in themselves, they are no blessings to us, but in, and by Christ's merits. Therefore this order must be observed touching earthly blessings. First, we must have part in the merit of Christ: and then secondly, by means

of that merit, a right way before God, and comfortable use of the things we enjoy. All men that have and use the creatures of God otherwise, as gifts of God, but not by Christ, use them but as flat *usurpers* and *thieves*. For this cause it is not sufficient for us generally and confusedly, to know Christ to be our Redeemer, but we must learn to see, know and acknowledge him in every particular blessing of God. If men, using the creatures of meat and drink, could, when they behold them, withal by the eye of faith, behold in them the merit of Christ's passion, there would not be so much excess and riot, so much surfeiting and drunkenness as there is: and if men could consider their houses and lands etc, as blessings to them, and that by the fountain of blessing, the *merits* of Christ, there should not be so much fraud and deceit, so much injustice and oppression in bargaining as there is.

TO BE CONTINUED

THE GOSPEL OF SOVEREIGN FREE GRACE (PART 2)

by WILLIAM T. FOLEY

THE beauty of the gospel is that Christ has done all the work for us. As a result of our justification we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1). Jesus said: 'I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do' (John 17:4). Mission accomplished! Mission completed! 'It is finished,' is Christ's final statement on salvation, and that statement was uttered before He dismissed his spirit on the Cross. Listen

to what Jesus said on the Cross. 'When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost' (John 19:30). Christ didn't say, 'I'm finished'. He said, 'It is finished'. Salvation has been achieved by Christ alone on the Cross, without our help. It is Christ who defeated Satan and Hell, endured the wrath of God in the penalty and punishment of sin, and opened Heaven to all God's elect.

Christ voluntarily died, and took our guilt and shame and suffered vicariously, and victoriously rose from the dead and ascended to Heaven and reigns in glory now and forever. Christ will return as he promised (John 14:1–3). Oh how wonderful! It is a perfect redemption, we are purchased by God, and with the riches of his grace we must declare it, and in doing so, we must preach and teach it faithfully and accurately.

Unfortunately, for millions of Roman Catholics, the Church of Rome has got the Gospel so terribly wrong. It is a counterfeit gospel. The ‘sacrificing priest’ seeks to bring Christ down from heaven, in a further act of humiliation, and put him into the waver and wine to recreate Christ’s death as an unbloody sacrifice (they say) to be perpetuated on the altar, surrounded by idolatrous images and statues of so-called saints. The process is called transubstantiation. They teach that in sacred mystery the waver and wine are the literal body and blood of Christ. The whole process of the mass is a public statement that Christ did not complete the work of a full redemption, as a vicarious sacrifice, but that a ‘sacrificing priest’ has a major part to play in ‘repeating’ the sacrifice, thus giving the distinct impression to sinners that ‘something extra’ is required such as penance and purgatory and good works. In other words, in their view, Christ didn’t pay the full price for sin, but it was only partial and only can last for a time: it needs to be supplemented by a further financial contribution to the Roman Church, and by additional works. To add insult to injury, they alleged that Mary is Co-Redemptrix with Christ in our salvation and therefore should be worshiped, thus breaching the second commandment in Exodus 20. According to Rome’s view a supplementary work is required to release souls from the prospect

of hell fire. They use a text from a non-canonical book, Second Maccabees (12:41–46) to support their doctrine of Purgatory as a place to purge venial sins. They have ignored the fact that Christ by himself fully purged our sins (Hebrews 1:3).

Simply, in Rome’s teaching, Calvary is not adequate to remove all sin but there has to be additional effort included in the equation to get souls out of the place of purification called Purgatory. Rome is attacking the atonement of Christ as a fully redemptive work, and in doing so is damaging or demeaning the penal substitutionary, blood propitiation, and vicarious death of Christ. They ignore the fact that the blood of Christ removed and atoned for all the sins of God’s elect. The fires of the fictional place called purgatory cannot add to the effectiveness or efficiency of the death of Christ on Calvary. For such a place does not exist in reality! Praying for the dead or to the dead is another fiction of counterfeit Christianity and false religions. What an utter blasphemy and a dangerous deceit is the whole baggage of Rome’s false doctrines.

We therefore cannot and should not attempt in any way to add or take away from the work of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ lived the perfect life for us, and shed His sinless blood as an atoning sacrifice for us on the Cross of Calvary. Christ died ‘for’ us—that is substitution!

Faith in Christ is resting and trusting in Christ for his righteousness and full forgiveness because of his blood redemption ‘for’ us. God’s work, or the life of God in the soul, causes us to come to Christ empty handed recognising that Christ alone has done it all. No one can get to heaven or get into heaven without the righteousness of Christ and the efficacy of his blood atonement. We have nothing to offer God for his righteousness or

the glorious death of Christ.

Two verses of the following well-known hymn capture so wonderfully the necessity of the Cross and God's work of salvation.

Not the labours of my hands
Can fulfil thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to thee for dress,
Helpless, look to thee for grace;
Foul, I to the Fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.

Augustus Montague Toplady (1740–1778)

God saves, and permanently saves by grace alone. Law keeping, being zealous and enthusiastic and endlessly shedding tears, or beating one's body as a religious discipline will never atone for anyone's sins. Truly the humble repentant and trusting sinner in Christ will forever abandon their efforts and works to save their soul. Christ gives me his righteousness, so why would I seek to add or take away from that righteousness? It is an insult to Christ to undermine or add anything, or any aspects, to his glorious righteous life or perfect and complete work on Calvary. What can I bring to God to pardon me for all my sins? The clear answer is Christ, and Christ alone. He alone is my Mediator and Saviour. I've nothing good in me to commend myself to God. God be merciful to me a sinner must always be my cry before a holy God.

What did Abraham, Job, Isaiah, Daniel, Peter, and Paul think of themselves before God? Let us see, as follows:

- Abraham said, 'Behold now, I have taken

upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes' (Genesis 18:27).

- Job said, 'Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes' (Job 42:6).
- Isaiah said, 'Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts' (Isaiah 6:5).
- Daniel included himself with his people and acknowledged, 'We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments' (Daniel 9:5).
- Peter 'fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord' (Luke 5:8).
- Paul said about himself, 'For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not' (Romans 7:18).

These saints didn't suffer from delusions about their greatness; grace made them humble, and aware of their need of a perfect righteousness that was not to be found in themselves, but in Christ. They were fully aware that they were sinners, in the presence of a holy God. Paul likewise renounced his own righteousness that he might have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ and that he might win Christ and be found in him, not having his own righteousness. Paul writes, 'Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which

is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death' (Philippians 3:8–10). Note the term, 'the righteousness which is of God by faith'. Through God's righteousness, imputed to us by God, is the way to be saved, not by our will, or ways or religious activities. God's righteousness is a gift, and it cannot be merited or earned.

Religion will never make you right with God, or grant you access to Heaven. Listen to Paul, who was supremely religious until he was converted to Christ. He writes, 'If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ' (Philippians 3:4–7). Paul knew his flesh or his sinful nature was a hindrance to getting right with God. He knew his sin was stopping him from being right with God. So, he renounced his confidence in himself. God caused him by his Holy Spirit to look to the Lord Jesus Christ.

On the day of Judgment our sinful nature and our practices will condemn us. That's why it vital to have a perfect Saviour, and Jesus is the only person in history to have been totally righteous in his person, his life and death.

All God's saints are saved by the same method, which is the Cross, but they are still sinners; they are justified by God's grace, yet they are sinners until they go to glory. We are simultaneously righteous before God but still a sinner. *Simul justus et peccator* means that a Christian is at the

same time both righteous and a sinner. Dr Martin Luther (1483–1546) got it right, but the Roman Church got it wrong, in his day, and it still has got the gospel wrong in our time. The Council of Trent (1545–1563) was the embodiment of counter-reformation theology. It got the Gospel wrong! Its errors are still with us today. We must 'earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints' (Jude 1:3). The stakes are high! The souls of men and women are at stake.

Do you think for one moment that God would have sent his only Son to die on the Cross of Calvary if there was some 'ability' in human beings to save themselves? Presenting 'faith or repentance' as if they are a work done by us or a deposit to secure our salvation is to deny the gospel. The gospel is of God, and it is all of God, and it is his Work, from beginning to end, from eternity to eternity. Repentance and faith are gifts granted to sinners by God.

The Bible assures us that our salvation is for all eternity and can never be undone. Yet, in this life, we sin. We have to resist sin and the devil. John says, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness' (1 John 1:9). The blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7)

We respond to the gospel as good news, because God regenerates us by his Holy Spirit, not because of our works of righteousness. This is all according to God's undeserved mercy. Paul wrote to Titus, 'But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost' (Titus 3:4–5). What immeasurable kindness and love has been

shown to undeserving sinners in God giving Christ on the Cross for us.

The gospel is trinitarian in its very nature and each member of the Godhead has a vital and key part to play in our salvation and will continue to play. Peter wrote, 'Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ' (1 Peter 1:2). We can deduct from this verse that each member of the Godhead is involved in the elect's salvation. For example, the Father planned salvation, the Son purchased salvation and the Holy Spirit regenerates sinners. We must uphold the unity of the Godhead in our salvation. As Christians we must faithfully defend and declare that sovereign free grace includes the full agreement of all members of the eternal trinity. For example, we clearly see from the Bible that there is an unchangeable and unchanging plan, and we specifically see that Jesus was foreordained to the office and role of redeemer of God's elect, before the foundation of the world, and that included the Lord Jesus Christ shedding his blood as the spotless Saviour, the Lamb of God (1 Peter 1:18-21).

Furthermore, we see that the Lord Jesus Christ was 'delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain' (Acts 2:23). In this verse we see divine sovereignty and human responsibility at work. Moreover, in the implementation of the divine plan wicked human beings were instrumental in God's hands.

So, unquestionably, the Gospel was designed and devised in eternity before the universe or humans were created by the full involvement of each member of the Trinity. The gospel is God's (Father, Son and Holy Ghost), not man's. It is a revelation of God

to man, who is powerless and in a terrible plight, as a result of the plague of sin. The Gospel is not a development or creation of man in any way. See Galatians chapter 1 for Paul's defence of the gospel. We discover the everlasting gospel in the Bible, not in any other book. In the Bible alone we find the doctrines of sovereign free grace.

For those of us who are the vessels of honour, mercy and love, God gives us spiritual eyes to see, and spiritual ears to hear and a new heart. Supernaturally we believe and trust Christ alone for our salvation. Believing is a fruit granted by the Holy Spirit of God. The fact that we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ is evidence of sovereign free grace at work. God creates the life of God in us, and we are born anew of God by the Holy Spirit (John 1:12, 13). Why did God save any of the human race; why didn't he send us all to Hell? The answer is: in the ages to come God will show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ (Ephesians 2:7). What a gospel! It truly is good news. No sinner will ever be saved without Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4:12), for Christ is the Gospel.

Always remember that God was in Christ reconciling his elect people to himself: 'For he (God) hath made him (Christ) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' (2 Corinthians 5:21). We cannot boast in God's presence and we need to remember too 'That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him (God) are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption' (1 Corinthians 1:29-30).

Let us rejoice, and be thankful for sovereign free grace so admirably demonstrated to us poor wretched and unworthy sinners. Moreover, it is new life in Christ that has

made the difference in our relationship and fellowship with God. We owe everything to the love, mercy and lovingkindness and compassion of God in Christ: 'Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature:

old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new' (2 Corinthians 5:17). Loose sight of the Lord Jesus Christ and you lose the most precious gift that God ever gave to the elect of God. ¶

‘YEA, HE IS ALTOGETHER LOVELY’ (PART 2)

A sermon on Song of Songs 5:16

by JOHN FLAVEL (1628–1691)

Thirdly, Christ is altogether lovely, in the relation of an Advocate. 1 John 2:1. 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the Propitiation;' it is he that pleads the cause of believers in heaven; appears for them in the presence of God, to prevent all new breaches, and continues the state of friendship and peace betwixt God and us. In this relation Christ is altogether lovely. For,

i. He makes our cause his own, and acts for us in heaven, as for himself, Hebrews 4:15. He is touched with the tender sense of our troubles and dangers, and is not only one with us, by way of representation, but also one with us in respect of sympathy and affection.

ii. Christ our Advocate, follows our suit and business in heaven, as his great and main design and business; therefore, in Hebrews 7:25 he is said to 'live for ever to make intercession for us,' as if our concerns were so minded by him there, as to give up himself wholly to that work, as if all the glory and honour which is paid him in heaven would not satisfy him or divert him

one moment from our business.

iii. He pleads the cause of believers by his blood; it satisfies him not, as other advocates, to be at the expense of words and oratory, which is a cheaper way of pleading; but he pleads for us by the voice of his own blood, Hebrews 12:24 where we are said to be come 'to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.' Every wound he received for us on earth, is a mouth opened to plead with God on our behalf in heaven. *Quot vulnera, tot ora.* And hence it is, that in Revelation 5:6 he is represented standing before God, as a lamb that had been slain; as it were, exhibiting and opening in heaven those deadly wounds received on earth, from the justice of God, on our account. Other advocates spend their breath, Christ his blood.

iv. He pleads the cause of believers freely. Other advocates plead for reward, and exhaust the purses, while they plead the causes of their clients.

v. In a word, he obtaineth for us all the mercies for which he pleads; no cause miscarries in his hand, which he undertakes,

Romans 8:33, 34. O what a lovely Advocate is Christ for believers!

Fourthly, Christ is altogether lovely in the relation of a friend, for in this relation he is pleased to own his people, Luke 12:4, 5. There are certain things in which one friend manifests his affection and friendship to another, but none like Christ. For,

i. No friend is so open-hearted to his friend as Christ is to his people: he reveals the very counsels and secrets of his heart to them. John 15:15. 'Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doth; but I have called you friends for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.'

ii. No friend in the world is so generous and bountiful to his friend, as Jesus Christ is to believers; John 15:13, he parts with his very blood for them; 'Greater love (saith he) hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' He hath exhausted the precious treasures of his invaluable blood to pay our debts. O what a lovely friend is Jesus Christ to believers!

iii. No friend sympathizes so tenderly with his friend in affliction, as Jesus Christ doth with his friends: 'In all our afflictions he is afflicted,' Hebrews 4:15. He feels all our sorrows, wants and burdens as his own. Whence it is that the sufferings of believers are called the sufferings of Christ, Colossians 1:24.

iv. No friend in the world takes that complacency in his friend, as Jesus Christ doth in believers. Canticles 4:9. 'Thou hast ravished my heart, (saith he to the spouse) thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.' The Hebrew, here rendered ravished, signifies to puff up, or to make one proud: how is the Lord Jesus pleased to glory in his people! how is he taken and delighted with those gracious ornaments which himself bestows upon them!

No friend so lovely as Christ.

v. No friend in the world loves his friend with so fervent and strong affection as Jesus Christ loves believers. Jacob loved Rachel, and endured for her sake the parching heat of summer and cold of winter; but Christ endured the storms of the wrath of God, the heat of his indignation, for our sakes. David manifested his love to Absalom, in wishing, 'O that I had died for thee!' Christ manifested his love to us, not in wishes that he had died, but in death itself, in our stead, and for our sakes.

vi. No friend in the world is so constant and unchangeable in friendship as Christ is, John 13:1. 'Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.' He bears with millions of provocations and injuries, and yet will not break friendship with his people. Peter denied him, yet he will not disown him; but after his resurrection he saith, 'Go, tell the disciples, and tell Peter,' etc. Let him not think he hath forfeited, by that sin of his, his interest in me; though he have denied me, I will not disown him, Mark 16:7. O how lovely is Christ in the relation of a friend! I might farther shew you the loveliness of Christ in his ordinances and in his providences, in his communion with us and communications to us, but there is no end of the account of Christ's loveliness: I will rather chuse to press believers to their duties towards this altogether lovely Christ, which I shall briefly dispatch in a few words.

Use. First, Is Jesus Christ altogether lovely, then I beseech you *set your souls upon this lovely Jesus*. Methinks such an object as hath been here represented, should compel love from the coldest breast and hardest heart. Away with those empty nothings, away with this vain deceitful world, which deserves not the thousandth part of the love you give it; let

all stand aside and give way to Christ. O did you but know his worth and excellency, what he is in himself, what he hath done for, and deserved from you, you would need no arguments of mine to persuade you to love him.

Secondly, Esteem nothing lovely but as it is enjoyed in Christ, or improved for Christ. Affect nothing for itself, love nothing separate from Jesus Christ. In two things we all sin in love of creatures, viz. in the *excess* of our affections, loving them above the rate and value of creatures; and in the *inordinacy* of our affections, i.e. in loving them out of their proper places.

Thirdly, Let us all be humbled for the baseness of our hearts, that are so free of their affections to vanities and trifles, and so hard to be persuaded to the love of Christ, who is altogether lovely. O how many pour out streams of love and delight upon the vain and empty creature; whilst no arguments can draw forth one drop of love from their obdurate and unbelieving hearts to Jesus Christ! I have read of one Joannes Mollius, who was observed to go often alone, and weep bitterly; and being pressed by a friend to know the cause of his troubles; O! said he, it grieves me that I cannot bring this heart of mine to love Jesus Christ more fervently.

Fourthly, Represent Christ, as he is, to the world, by your carriage towards him. Is he altogether lovely; let all the world see and know that he is so, by your delights in him and communion with him; zeal for him, and readiness to part with any other lovely thing upon his account; proclaim his excellencies to the world, as the spouse here did; convince them how much your beloved is better than any other beloved; display his glorious excellencies in your heavenly conversations; hold him forth to others, as he is in himself, altogether lovely. See that you 'walk worthy of him unto all well-pleasing,' Colossians

1:10. 'Shew forth the praises of Christ,' 1 Peter 2:19. Let not that 'worthy name be blasphemed through you,' James 2:7. He is glorious in himself, and will put glory upon you; take heed ye put not shame and dishonour upon him; he hath committed his honour to you, do not betray that trust.

Fifthly, Never be ashamed to own Christ: he is altogether lovely he can never be a shame to you; it will be your great sin to be ashamed of him. Some men glory in their shame; be not you ashamed of your glory: *if you be ashamed of Christ now, he will be ashamed of you when he shall appear in his own glory, and the glory of all his holy angels.* Be ashamed of nothing but sin; and among other sins, be ashamed especially for this sin, that you have no more love for him who is altogether lovely.

Sixthly, Be willing to leave every thing that is lovely upon earth, that you may be with the altogether lovely Lord Jesus Christ in heaven. Lift up your voices with the spouse, Revelation 20:20. 'Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.' It is true, you must pass through the pangs of death into his bosom and enjoyment; but sure it is worth suffering much more than that to be with this lovely Jesus. 'The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and the patient waiting for Jesus Christ,' 2 Thessalonians 3:5.

Seventhly, Strive to be Christ-like, as ever you would be lovely in the eyes of God and man. Certainly, my brethren, it is the Spirit of Christ within you, and the beauty of Christ upon you, which only can make you lovely persons; the more you resemble him in holiness, the more will you discover of true excellency and loveliness; and the more frequent and spiritual your converse and communion with Christ is, the more of the beauty and loveliness of Christ will be stamped upon your spirits, changing you

into the same image, from glory to glory.

Eighthly, Let the loveliness of Christ draw all men to him. Is loveliness in the creature so attractive? And can the transcendent

loveliness of Christ drawn one? O the blindness of man! If you see no beauty in Christ why you should desire him, it is because the god of this world hath blinded your minds. ¶

FORMER DAYS

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

250 years ago: January & February 1771

A Preface is added to the bound volume for the year, from the pen of Joseph Gurney, the Editor. In it he sets out the purpose of *The Gospel Magazine*. 'The ground work and principles upon which this valuable publication is founded, are, The free everlasting love of God to sinners, which disposes him to shew mercy; convinces the sinner he wants it; inclines him to take it freely, and receive it by precious faith; and forms in him a vital union with Christ his mystical head, who by the Holy co-equal Spirit's almighty operation applies the whole work of Jesu's great and precious salvation.'

The first half of the January issue is given over to an account of the life and ministry of George Whitefield, who died in September 1770. Consisting for the most part in extracts from his Journal, it nevertheless captures of the essence of the man, and the blessedness of his ministry.

Then there follows an extract from a letter, translated from Danish, in which a witness to the recent confirmation service for that nation's Crown Prince recounts his experience. It is evident that the young man was well taught in the Protestant faith, and had a clear grasp of the doctrines of grace. His examination before the bishop lasted two hours, of which about ten minutes was

spent in asking questions; the rest, in answering them viva voce.

Two letters from George Whitefield follow, neither of which are in the volume of letters published by Banner of Truth in 1976—they post-date that collection.

Pages 35 and 36 list various names given to our Lord Jesus Christ in Scripture. A letter from a Christian under the afflicting hand of the Lord concludes the issue proper. The final pages are given to a review and to poetry. The review is of the sermon preached by John Wesley on the death of George Whitefield, and it could hardly have received a worse review. Wesley is accused, among other things, of grossly under-representing Whitefield's theology. Much of the poetry is occasioned by Whitefield's death.

The magazine for February opens with a letter to a Friend, on 'The present safety and eternal security of all Christ's sheep considered.' It is based on John 10:28, and the portion for this month considers the identity of the Good Shepherd, and the gift he gives. Then follows the Biography, this time of Stephen Charnock. It will be continued later. George Whitefield's will and testimony is published, which begins with his confession of Christ as his only hope. It is followed by further letters from the great evangelist. Then comes a letter sent to a reader by

a young man on hearing of Whitefield's death. The letter shows something of the love in which Whitefield was held by those who thanked the Lord for raising him up. The same readers offers a short sketch of Whitefield's character, sent to him from Georgia. This too is reproduced.

A list of names by which the Church of Jesus Christ is known in Scripture is followed by some thoughts on marriage. John Ryland Snr provides a list of some prophecies concerning Christ from the Old Testament, with their New Testament fulfilments. This is followed by a review of another Whitefield funeral oration, this time by the Rev. Henry Venn of Bath: 'a very animated and judicious discourse.' Further funeral sermons are reviewed, and found to be most acceptable. Clearly the death of George Whitefield touched many people, and brought to heart the state of true religion at that time. The situation has hardly improved in the succeeding generations. Three pages of poetry conclude the issue.

200 years ago: January & February 1821

There is again a Preface attached to the bound volume for the year. It is a warning to readers that the state of true religion in Britain is at low ebb. One phrase stood out, because it could have been written about our day. 'The Laws of our forefathers are deemed no longer available to the immoral condition of society, insomuch, that new laws are promulgated.' How we lament the truth reported here.

The January issue begins with the substance of an address to the church from the pen of the Rev. Dr. Robert Hawker. An Old Believer (Samuel Eyles Pearce) provides some thoughts on Philippians 1:20, a verse suitable as a New Year motto. James attempts to cheer the Lord's Family

from Revelation 7:17. Myra provides some Explanatory Observations on a paper published in the previous issue, in which he and Amicus were accused of 'sneering.' Myra protests his innocence.

Eliezer offers skeletons of sermons prepared by the Rev. Samuel Barnard. The first is on Mark 16:15, a verse which today would be controversial, simply for being in the disputed end of Mark's Gospel. Barnard's closing thought is worth repeating. 'Hence we may observe, that it is the minister's work to preach the gospel, but it is God's work to make it effectual, to the salvation of his people.' To which we can only say, Amen. Further skeletons of sermons are on Philippians 1:16, Romans 6:22 and Psalm 116:7.

The subject of the Jews' restoration to Israel is further considered, and poetry ends the issue.

The February issue opens with an exposition of Proverbs 8:23. Christ's deity, personality and essential oneness with the Father are so clear here that the Arians, Socinians and Sabellians must make the passage speak about natural wisdom, in order to deny the plain truth. Given that so much error hangs on the revealed nature, divinity and perfect manhood of our Saviour Christ, such articles continue to have a pressing relevance.

Further sermon skeletons from the pen of Samuel Barnard cover Ephesians 1:4, John 6:45, Isaiah 3:10-11 and Genesis 6:9. The restoration of the Jews to their homeland is further explored, and appears to be concluded. Readers will recall that the author's main point was that the prophecies taken by many to speak of the return after the Babylonian exile, in fact refer to the future restoration of the Jews during the gospel age.

Tomlinson resumes his attempt to rescue Scripture from ridicule. His focus this time

is on the actual meaning of the word translated 'God'—*elohim*, or, as he prefers, *Aleim*. The argument would be much weakened by using the pointed Hebrew text, rather than the unpointed.

Jeremiah's calling and ministry provide thoughts with which to compare modern views of ministry. The question posed in the December issue, on the identity of the one who draws the soul to Christ (John 6:44) is answered. The correspondent is decidedly of the opinion that it is the Father who draws, and not the Holy Spirit, as is often supposed. The drawing by the Holy Spirit comes after the Father has begun the work: the correspondent is clear that our being drawn to Christ is the work of the Trinity as a whole.

The genuine piety of Queen Maud (wife of King Henry I) is described, without hiding the errors of the times in which she lived. The writing style of Miletus is criticised by 'A few readers of *The Gospel Magazine*.' They conclude, 'Miletus complains in his application of the great prevalence of ignorance; but if all writers were as obscure as himself, it would be much greater.'

The Review section begins with a lengthy review of a sermon. It provides the Editors the opportunity to explain why, as Protestants, we should defend our liberties. At the same time, the Editors argue that it is not the place of preachers (or Editors) to be involved in party politics, nor to trust the arm of flesh. The second item reviewed is a sermon against the use of human forms in prayer. Examples criticised by the preacher include people saying their eyes have seen the salvation of the Lord, or who confess that the burden of their sins is intolerable. Such are deemed hypocrites by the preachers, but the reviewer is not convinced of the argument. Two poems conclude the month.

100 years ago: January & February 1921

A Preface once more appears at the beginning of the bound volume. Among the expressions of thanks to God and to the generosity of supporters, the Editors make the following observation.

The need for faithful testimony to the old truths was never greater. The Bible is no longer regarded as the inspired Word of God. Men occupying high positions in our colleges and in our pulpits daringly speak of large parts of Scripture as mere myths, legends, and fables. The old truths of the Fall, Redemption, Regeneration, Election, and Eternal Punishment are rarely heard or taught. The inspiration of the New Testament is equally denied with that of the Old. Evangelical Societies are more or less leavened with Higher Critical fallacies. Large numbers of men who still retain the name Evangelical have openly abandoned the old paths.

There is therefore a loud call for all who value distinctive Evangelical and Protestant truth to rally together for the cause of God and his truth.

The January issue opens with a repeat from the previous year for further donations due to rapidly rising costs. Psalm 77:10 is the Editor's text for a New Year sermon. The same verse provides the text for Wayside Notes, on Jehovah's Right Hand. A short piece by Dean Burgon demonstrates the way in which Scripture is interwoven. 'The Evangelists quote one another times without number. In the Epistles, the Gospels are quoted upwards of fifty times; and St. Peter quotes St. Paul again and again. It is a favourite device of these last days to hint at the allegorical character of the beginning of Genesis. But I find upwards of thirty

references in the New Testament to the first two chapters of Genesis.'

The loving condescension of our heavenly Father in graciously inviting his children to come before him and to plead with him is considered, from Genesis 18:22. A sermon on Psalm 150:3, 'the beauty of holiness' is followed by Part XII of *Some Fundamental Truths*. The subject is Salvation by Grace. The significance of having Abraham as our father is demonstrated. Adolph Saphir is quoted on the divine offering of Hebrews 9:14. Nettie writes on *Ordered Steps*—those that follow in the footsteps of Christ—and *Follower-On* considers the dying charge delivered by some of those with whom we meet in Scripture. A lecture on Spiritualism and Scripture shows the very grave danger of pursuing the former. The essay on Prayer is continued from the December 1920 issue. One or two small pieces of correspondence, and two lengthy obituaries, lead into the *Protestant Beacon*. Here, a new series is introduced, on *Protestant Points*. The meaning of Protestant is discussed. Reviews and Notices conclude the month.

The February issue begins with a sermon on Psalm 120:1–2, on the blessedness and safety of those who trust in the Lord. The refusal of some to sing the words, 'Foul, I to the fountain fly;/Wash me, Saviour, or I die' is answered by one who, having been of that persuasion, was moved to sing them with humility through reading *The Gospel Magazine* and through the witness of his minister. The hymns is quoted by another contributor on p. 20 of this issue.

The advance of the theory of evolution and the denial of the fall of man occasions

an article in favour of holding onto the plain meaning and authority of Scripture. The persecution of the church and her hope in the Lord is addressed from Isaiah 33:2. This is followed by a sermon on being a soldier of Christ, from 2 Timothy 2:4. The sermon on the beauties of holiness is concluded from the January issue. The development of Palestine gives rise to thoughts on the mystery of Christ. The author points out that vague hopes of Christ's return in connection with this work are very far from real faith in the only Saviour of sinners. True contentment, which is to be had only in Christ, and not in money, is the subject of another short piece. This is followed by the conclusion of the essay on prayer. *Follower-On* writes on those who are inheritors of the promises. It is a call to living, active faith, following on after those who are the inheritors.

Two obituaries, one of which was begun the previous month, are followed by *The Protestant Beacon*. The series begun in January, on *Protestant Points*, is not continued owing to an accident suffered by the writer. Instead, an extract is reproduced from the *English Churchman* newspaper. The article paints a bleak but accurate picture of the state of society and of the church. Given that the article appeared in the final *English Churchman* for 1920, and that it bears a strong resemblance to the Preface quoted on the previous page, one suspects that the Editors of both publications had been in correspondence or discussion on the subject. Romanism and Liberalism are the great threats faced by lovers of Christ and his truth. Brief notices and a review conclude the issue.

TO BE CONTINUED

BOOK REVIEWS

Sermons preached 1917–1931, Vols 1 & 2

Ernest Roe

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In publishing the Sermons of Ernest Roe, the Gospel Standard Trust Publications have brought to the attention of the Christian reading public some of the public ministry of a minister of a former generation who was little known outside the confines of his own denomination.

Ernest Roe was born 19th December, 1883 and died 4th February, 1967. He spent all his years within the same denomination, not seeking great things for himself. A small volume of twenty-five of his sermons was published shortly after his death. Ten of the sermons in this first volume are included in the two volumes recently published. There is a short biographical sketch of his life and ministry included in the volume published in 1973, and from which we take our information of Mr Roe's life and ministry. We regard it to be a pity that more biographical details are not given in the present publication. But we glean the following details: After a period of deep conviction of sin, he was brought into the liberty of the gospel and, as the writer of the short biography says, 'from early days Mr Roe had a persuasion that one day he would preach.' He was in due time called by various circumstances in providence to speak in the name of the Lord in a chapel near March, Cambridgeshire.

After his call by grace and particularly whilst exercised about the ministry, Mr Roe gave attendance to reading the Word of God and other good books ... He also passed an examination in theology, set by one of the Bible Colleges.

He served a number of churches, firstly as an itinerant minister then as pastor. He became pastor of the Surrey Tabernacle in 1916 and later the Brixton Tabernacle when the two churches merged, and continued his ministry there until 1931. Mr Roe kept a record of the sermons he preached over the years which records that during his ministry of 65 years he preached 10,312 sermons.

It is from the time that he was pastor of the Brixton Tabernacle. Eighty-one of these sermons were preached and originally published in the 'Brixton Tabernacle Pulpit' series from 1917 to 1931. There are a total of 86 sermons, and 6 of the pulpit prayers which were recorded at the time they were uttered. The sermons have been slightly edited to remove complex sentences and bring the language into more up to date English usage.

In a time when sermons are not generally the subject of modern Christian reading, it is good to have this material set before the Christian reading public. A former generation would often read a sermon on a Saturday evening as a preparation for the Lord's Day; a habit that would be of spiritual profit to the churches of today. These sermons are also ideal to use in a service when there is no minister appointed. It was my privilege to attend such a reading service some few months ago when the deacon of the church actually read one of Mr Roe's

sermons. The sermon was the 7th sermon in volume 1 preached from 2 Thessalonians 2:16, 'A Good Hope' from which the following extract is taken:

Paul informs us that God has given us something for the present—'everlasting consolation.' And if God does not give us this we can never possess comfort. All true consolation is from the Lord. We sought comfort from the earth until we knew better. We sought it but never found it thence. Men and women are today seeking happiness, but are doomed to disappointment, for they, unborn of God's Spirit, are seeking where it cannot be obtained. It is a tremendous mercy to have a little comfort from God for we have never deserved it. We have often sought it at his free-grace hands, and the little we hope we have had of it is a foretaste of the consolation that is eternal. What a contrast between those words, 'But now he is comforted, and thou art tormented'! (Luke 16:24). (page 59).

We welcome the publication of these two volumes and recommend them to the readers of *The Gospel Magazine*.

JEN

Brownlow North, His Life and Work

K. Moody Stuart

The Banner of Truth Trust, 2020, vi + 318pp, Price £13 (hdbk). ISBN 978-1-84871-946-0.

This is a typeset edition of a version of this biography published by Banner of Truth in 1961. This was in turn based on the popular abridged edition of 1904 with additional material from the first full-length book published in 1878, three years after the death of its subject. For those who wish to have the full text a number of reprints of the 'print on demand' variety, as well as second-hand copies, are available online.

The motivation for the 1961 edition seems to have been to bring Brownlow North before a Christian public that had largely forgotten one who had been recognised as 'one of the greatest evangelists of the Nineteenth century.' The previous year Banner had also republished his sermon series on the parable of 'The Rich Man and Lazarus' and this is still in print under the title *A Great Gulf Fixed*, price £5. Despite this, one suspects that North's ministry remains undervalued today.

He was a member of a family that produced one of our longest-serving, although perhaps least successful Prime Ministers, Lord North (later earl of Guildford) while his great-grandfather, Lord North's brother, also christened Brownlow, was successively Bishop of three dioceses, including Winchester. As a member of the aristocracy, one might compare Brownlow North junior's work as an evangelist with the life and witness of the Countess of Huntingdon in the previous century. However, while the Countess's personal witness was largely to members of her own class, North's preaching spanned the social spectrum.

What is particularly remarkable about North is the length of time it took from the first stirrings of conscience until his conversion. Up until 1854, despite at one time receiving training for ordination, he remained largely careless of his soul, living a life of ease in which such activities as hunting, shooting and dancing were prominent. Even, when the awakening came

it was not an easy process, as Moody Stuart records (p. 27): ‘His being brought through such a severe ordeal, and kept for so long travelling through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, was probably due in part to his having so long resisted the strivings of the Divine Spirit, but in part also to the design of the Almighty to fit him by his own experience to enter into the sympathies and spiritual difficulties of multitudes of anxious souls.’ Reading of this spiritual turmoil reminded me in many ways of Bunyan’s experience as recounted in *Grace Abounding*.

English by birth, North had by this time settled in Scotland and much of his ministry took place in that land, especially in the churches of the Free Church of Scotland, which in 1859 conferred on him the title of lay-evangelist in recognition of his preaching-gifts. These were used to particular effect during the second Awakening then at its height but North continued to spread the word right up until his home-call in 1875, in spite of evident dangers to his health. It is no exaggeration to state that he wore himself out in the cause of the Gospel. Just one short chapter is devoted to his preaching labours in English towns and cities and this is of sufficient interest to make one wish that the author had been able to devote more space to this aspect of North’s ministry.

Two chapters are especially concerned with the doctrinal content of North’s preaching, which was both rooted in the doctrines of scripture and the Reformation and coloured by his personal experience. The following topics are covered:

‘GOD IS’. The Existence, Personality and Presence of God. He ‘regarded atheism as the capital sin, and... showed that the man who took for granted God’s existence, and imagined he assented to it, was really denying it.’

‘IT IS WRITTEN’. The Inspiration and Divine Authority of Holy Scripture. We are told that North ‘spent hours in hard and prayerful study of’ the Bible and earned the title of ‘the man of the book’.

‘YOU ARE IMMORTAL’. The Immortality of the Soul and the Eternal duration of Spiritual Life and Death. North steadfastly opposed the Annihilationist and Universalist theories that were beginning to gain adherents among the churches at this time.

‘BORN AGAIN’. The Necessity for the Spirit’s Work on the Intellect, Affections, and Will. The author shows that Brownlow North held ‘pronouncedly Calvinistic’ views on these topics, which he obtained primarily ‘from a study of Scripture for himself’ rather than the Confessions of the church and the works of theologians.

‘FAITH AND FEELING’. The Doctrine of Justification by Faith. The Scottish people had suffered much from the moderatism and works-righteousness that had flourished during the previous century ‘and lingered in numberless hearts and minds over the land. To them the preaching that a sinner is justified by free grace through faith was news indeed, and Mr. North published it boldly and loudly in their hearing.’

However, Brownlow North’s ministry was by no means confined to the pulpit. The book contains numerous examples of his correspondence in which he gave spiritual help to many and he also made himself available to enquirers following his evangelistic addresses. His tomb in the Dean Cemetery in Edinburgh bears the words: ‘AFTER HE HAD SERVED HIS OWN GENERATION BY THE WILL OF GOD HE FELL ASLEEP.’ In summary, the book illustrates the many ways in which North served his Lord and God and it is strongly recommended to the reader.

JBD

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.

LANDFORD WOOD, WILTSHIRE: *Landford Wood Mission Hall*, Stock Lane, Landford Wood, SP5 2ES (off A36). Weekly Service on each Lord's Day at 3 pm, (God

willing) from February to December). Conservative Evangelical Worship using the AV at all services. Elder: J.E. North, phone 07500265419

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

WOLVERHAMPTON *St Silas Church of England (Continuing)*, 49 Long St, WV1 1HU. Lord's Day, MP 11 am EP 6.30 pm Holy Communion as notified. AV and BCP, *Christian* and *Anglican Hymns* used. Contact Paul Hooper (m) 07477 704921.

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