

**JULY–AUGUST 2021**

**£1.50**

# **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.

Good memories • Covenant communion with God • The Syrophenician Woman

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## 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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# THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE

*Incorporating the Protestant Beacon and the British Protestant*

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

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

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

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JULY—AUGUST 2021

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## The Protestant Beacon

The Protestant Beacon has not been lit in the pages of this *Magazine* for many years. A regular feature since the 1840s, it alerted readers to the Romeward tendencies of the Church of England, and of papal interference in national secular and spiritual affairs. Given the almost wholesale surrender of the Established Church to the principle of papal supremacy, the need for the Beacon has largely lapsed: we have already been invaded. A matter has come to our attention, however, that requires the lighting of the signal fire.

This year marks the 500th anniversary of the ‘conversion’ of Ignatius of Loyola. A career soldier, the wounds he sustained at the battle of Pamplona meant he had to give up the military life. He found instead a different sort of military service, working assiduously for the Count-reformation. He was, of course, the founder of the Society of Jesus, better known as the Jesuits.

This anniversary is being marked with some energy by the Jesuits, and there is a special website devoted to Loyola. There, one can read the following statement.

On the occasion of the jubilee of the 500th anniversary of the conversion of St. Ignatius and the 400th anniversary of his canonization, the Holy See, in response to a request from Father General [of the Jesuit Order], has granted a plenary indulgence to the faithful who will visit the churches and oratories of the Society of Jesus during the jubilee year.

Those responsible for issuing it have pointed out that ‘the Church certainly no longer wishes to monetize indulgences’. They acknowledge that Martin Luther was justified in condemning their sale in his day.

Luther’s diatribe against the sale of indulgences looked at far more than the fact of their sale. It is true that he said the Pope was wealthy enough to fund the rebuilding of St Peter’s Basilica (the justification for selling indulgences in 1517) out of his own pocket. It is true that he decried the lie being sold (literally) to the common folk, many of whom spent more than they could afford in the hope of obtaining forgiveness.

Luther's real complaint, however, was over the doctrine of indulgences itself. Even today, Rome claims that this doctrine is well founded, and points to *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* to show that the practice is perfectly legal (by its own light). The sale of an indulgence, however, presumes that men in holy orders have the authority to sell remission of sin to whoever can afford it. The question is: who has authority to forgive

sins, but Jesus Christ?

It is true that the Church of Rome considers John 20:23 to be definitive in the matters, but our Lord was not granting what Rome says he was granting. The forgiveness of sins is only to be had through faith in the shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, who alone is the propitiation for our sins. To seek forgiveness from or through any other is, in the end, a denial of Christ. ¶

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# ‘BUT YE HAVE NOT LOOKED UNTO THE MAKER THEREOF’

by PHILIP LIEVESLEY (Frinton-on-Sea)

*A sermon on Isaiah 22:8–14, preached on 11 April 2021*

IN 2020 at the start of a new decade the United Kingdom, as we all know, was suddenly and without warning plunged into a distressing national crisis—perhaps arguably the greatest crisis that this country, and the world too has faced since the Second World War because of its widespread impact on many areas of our way of life. The 56-year-old Prime Minister began his speech to the nation in September 2020 announcing further coronavirus restrictions by saying that, ‘the struggle against Covid is the single biggest crisis the world has faced in my lifetime.’ The Covid virus with no known cure as we all know originating from the Chinese city of Wuhan towards the end of 2019 spread alarmingly throughout the world and became officially a pandemic within a matter of a few months. All hopes of our country remaining relatively unaffected by the virus were soon dashed as it spread rapidly

throughout all parts of the United Kingdom, and the Government reluctantly enforced a national lockdown in a desperate attempt to counter it. Who would have guessed that just over a year on from the Prime Minister's announcement of the first national lockdown in March 2020 that our nation is only just tentatively emerging from a third lockdown?

But unlike the Second World War the United Kingdom's response to the Covid pandemic so far has exposed how much our nation has declined spiritually since then. If we had not quite realised it before we should surely now know that we live today in a post-Christian age, where secularisation is in the ascendency. In other words, our nation, which is still legally a Christian nation, has turned its back upon God, having been a Christian nation privileged to have been specially favoured by God for so many centuries for which we ought to give thanks. On

the night of 8 May 1945 King George VI began his broadcast to the nation on V.E. Day which marked the end of the Second World War in Europe by saying, 'Today we give thanks to Almighty God for a great deliverance...I ask you to join me in thanksgiving.' In the concluding words of his broadcast the King said, 'In the hour of danger we humbly committed our cause into the hand of God, and He has been our Strength and Shield. Let us thank him for his mercies.' On the same day Field Marshal Montgomery acknowledging Divine Providence said of this great victory quoting from Psalm 118:23: 'This is the LORD's doing, it is marvellous in our eyes.' This national faith in God was also true of our country at the end of the First World War. King George V, Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, and Admiral of the Fleet Sir David Beatty all testified that the Lord was the giver of victory. In contrast the national response to the Covid crisis can be summed up as a 'godless prudence.' The Prime Minister's closing remarks in his TV broadcast to the nation announcing the first lockdown on 23 March 2020 were these: 'We will beat the Coronavirus and we will beat it together.' Her Majesty the Queen said in her speech to the nation on 5 April 2020: 'We will succeed—and that success will belong to every one of us.' Both speeches were compassionate rousing rallying cries, but sadly with no mention of any dependence on Almighty God for his help or any acknowledgement of Divine Providence. The measures taken by Her Majesty's Government for the preservation of life from the virus are undoubtedly commendable; not least the speedy production of a vaccine in the form of the Oxford Astrazeneca vaccine, and the national inoculation rollout. When we compare our response as a nation to Covid compared to Brazil, we ought to be extremely thankful to

our civil government for the measures taken. The Oxford vaccine should also contribute to the safety from the virus in other parts of the world. But these prudent measures were taken without acknowledging Almighty God and his providential governance of our nation. Believing Christians though, ought to acknowledge the gracious hand of a merciful God not only in our nation's improving situation but also being able to be of help to other nations, remembering 'the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive' (Acts 20:35).

Additionally, the top priority in every crisis is to return to God in genuine penitence and contrition. This is the reason why God in his wisdom and providence sends trials and testing times. As the prophet Joel said: 'Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning' (Joel 2:12). God can today speak to a nation through his word and a crisis just as clearly as he did to Israel through the Old Testament prophets. If we were in any doubt before 2020 as to the Divine displeasure at our nation's apostasy from the Christian faith and rejection of his moral laws that he has set before us surely those doubts no longer remain. When God brings about a crisis whether personal or national our appropriate response is to be brought back to him. We should humbly acknowledge that we have grieved God and dishonoured his holy name. Where has the call to national repentance and prayer been from the powers that be in this crisis? Where has been the warning from the national church that if national sins are not broken off, but wilfully persisted in, then we can expect further and more severe national judgments with no deliverance possible apart from a turning to the Lord in true repentance? When Britain was close to defeat during the

Second World War, and the entire British Army was trapped at Dunkirk, in desperation King George VI called for a National Day of Prayer to be held on 26th May 1940. In a national broadcast he instructed the people of the United Kingdom to turn back to God in a spirit of repentance and plead for Divine help. As a result, about 335,000 soldiers were evacuated rather than the estimated 20–30,000. From then on people referred to what happened as ‘the miracle of Dunkirk.’ 9 June 1940 was officially appointed as a Day of National Thanksgiving. National Days of Prayer were held at various critical times throughout the Second World War. After each one, God responded with his blessing and protection. Reflecting on the events, the Bishop of Chelmsford, Dr H.A. Wilson, wrote, ‘If ever a great nation was on the point of supreme and final disaster, and yet was saved and reinstated it was ourselves...it does not require an exceptionally religious mind to detect in all this the Hand of God.’

The 22nd chapter Isaiah contains the ‘burden of the valley of vision.’ This is a prophecy of the grievous distress that Judah and in particular the city of Jerusalem would experience by the attempted invasion of a formidable army. God wanted Judah and Jerusalem to heed the call to prayer and repentance and to depend upon him for their safety and security and his blessing upon their defence measures. Although this text is admittedly talking specifically about the defence of a nation against an aggressor let us apply the Scriptural principles to the situation faced by the United Kingdom in our present crisis of this pandemic.

**Firstly, this passage shows the crisis exposed a contempt of God’s power to help them. *The prudent measures they took for their safety (vv. 8–11)***

A council of war was immediately called by the city of Jerusalem. They resolutely determined to fight against the enemy with all their strength and not to surrender. They agreed amongst themselves in this council to take all necessary prudent measures to defend themselves against the military threat. Firstly, they inspected the magazines and stores to find out if they had enough arms and ammunition. Secondly, they inspected the fortifications of the city and repaired the breaches. Thirdly, they made sure there was plenty of water for the inhabitants of the city and decided on the best way to deprive the besiegers of it. Fourthly, they numbered the houses of Jerusalem to send in a quota of men for the war effort. Fifthly, some houses were destroyed presumably to provide the necessary materials to help repair the breaches of the city wall. Sixthly, they made a ditch between the outer and the inner wall of the city to provide greater security from the enemy and deprive the enemy of much-needed water.

***How they ignored God in all these prudent measures (v. 11)***

‘But ye have not looked unto the maker thereof.’ These measures Judah and especially the city of Jerusalem had taken yet she had ignored God who had brought about the crisis in the first place. This was strange because Jerusalem was ‘the valley of vision’. In other words, they had the oracles of God and the prophets. They should have known so much better. The holy city should have seen, but here Jerusalem did not even look. They lacked spiritual discernment. It seems that they were well on their way down the slippery slope of apostasy. Verse 11 stand in contrast to the statement in v. 8, that they looked to weapons, but they did not look to God. Jerusalem’s inhabitants can only see what they can hold tangibly with their hands.

Additionally, they failed to acknowledge

the great things that God had done for them to preserve them in the past in previous times of trouble. 'Neither had respect unto him that fashioned it long ago' (v. 11). Jerusalem had been remarkably preserved by the hand of Almighty God in the past which should have been remembered. They should have said, 'Ebenezer,...Hitherto hath the LORD helped us' (1 Sa. 7:12). But they did not. Instead, it seems they trusted in their defence measures and said, 'hitherto our sword has helped us and will help us now.' The Litany in the 1662 BCP contains the following prayer: 'O God, we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have declared unto us, the noble works that thou didst in their days, and in the old time before them.' The response from the congregation is, 'O Lord, arise, help us, and deliver us for thine honour.'

They did not depend upon God for his blessing upon their endeavours. In their pride they trusted in their own ability and policies to save them from defeat.

**Secondly, this passage shows that the crisis showed a contempt of God's displeasure in striving with them.**

*They failed to acknowledge why this crisis had come.*

'And in that day did the Lord GOD of hosts call to weeping, and mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth' (v. 12). The reason that God in his providence had allowed a formidable enemy to besiege the city was because he wanted to humble the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The reason why God had brought about this distress and perplexity was to bring them to sincerely lament of the abominable sins through which they had brought judgment upon the land. It was to bring them to their knees in repentance. To this end God had raised up his servant the prophet Isaiah perhaps over a hundred years

before to remind them that in times of national crisis God calls to national repentance and prayer.

*They failed to respond appropriately to the crisis.*

When they had made all the necessary prudent precautions for their defence against the enemy they carried on in life as normal. They trusted in the prudent defence measures. They did not believe in God but trusted in their idols. They ignored the call to repentance and prayer that the one true God had called them to.

The spiritual decline it seems had become very pronounced. To be ungodly it seems had become the norm in society. Life was all about this earthly life and today in particular. There was no belief in the God who had graciously revealed himself through the pages of the sacred Scriptures and through his holy prophets. It seems that there was no concern for the honour and glory of God. It seems that there was therefore no fear of the God who has revealed himself in the Scriptures. There was therefore no calling upon God for his gracious and merciful help. It seems that there was a denial of the supernatural and the things that belong to eternity. It seems there was therefore no concern for what lay beyond the grave. There was no setting of the affections on things above in heaven or any fear of eternal punishment in hell. All these things it seems were treated with scorn and unbelief.

*They failed to perceive of God's displeasure at their carnal response to the crisis.*

'Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord GOD of hosts' (v. 14). God resented the unbelieving response of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. They were an incorrigible people that should have known so much better, but it seems were

insensible to their spiritual situation. God in his infinite goodness and mercy wanted to heal their land through the distress of the crisis but they sinned against the remedy. God through this crisis was calling them to repentance and prayer. But in their increasing hardness of heart, they remained obstinate, incorrigible, and impenitent and therefore remained sadly unforgiven. Here in v. 14 the prophet states generally that nothing is so displeasing to God as impenitence. The apostle Paul says in Romans 2:5 that in so doing we heap up for ourselves the treasures of God's wrath and shut out all hope of pardon.

### Lessons to learn

The United Kingdom's response to the coronavirus pandemic has exposed our nation to be no longer a bible believing nation but sadly an unbelieving post-Christian secular nation. Of course, to the godly believing remnant in our nation this has been all too sadly apparent for many years now, but this crisis has surely clearly exposed it. Throughout the covid coronavirus pandemic crisis so far, our nation has not looked unto the Lord for deliverance. Civil government have sought scientific and medical guidance and taken measures accordingly. No blame can be laid against the powers that be for the measures they have taken and enforced. But there has sadly been no beseeching Almighty God to help us and bless us in our endeavours. There has sadly been no call to national repentance for our sins. Although there has been the call to pray from the Queen and the national church there has been no call for contrite prayer to God to heal our land and to deliver us. That is what has been missing.

Let the godly believing remnant in our nation respond in godly wisdom to this 'time of our visitation.' This crisis has been a call to contrite prayer and repentance for the

church and nation over the last year. God promises in 2 Chronicles 7:14, 'If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.' Who knows how much the sincere prayers of God's elect in our once God-fearing land of ours may have moved the infinitely gracious and merciful God during this Covid crisis so far? God has moved in gracious deliverance in our nation in the past and can do so again. Let us take heed from our text and believe in the power of prayer. Maybe too, it has been a time to fast and pray. In a time of crisis not only heartfelt contrite prayer is needed but fasting too. May we, like the First and Second World War generations before us, turn to God in a true spirit of repentance and continue to plead for Divine help for our country.

To those who do not know Christ savingly and are therefore still exposed to the Justice of God, please do not treat the visitation of the grace of God with unbelief and scorn as did the inhabitants of Jerusalem in our text. Please do not regard the gospel today as something not to be taken seriously. Please do not believe in the lie that this life is all there is and that there is no God or an eternal destiny of either heaven or hell. With the utmost urgency I plead with you to stop believing in yourselves and come to the foot of the cross and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as your only Saviour now in the time of this mortal life. Repent and believe the gospel. 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved' (Acts 16:31). 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD; and he will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon' (Isa. 55:7). 'For God so loved the

world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life' (John 3:16).

### Summary

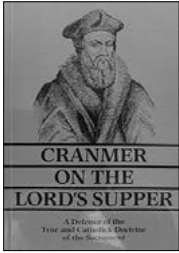
Measures taken by our nation to stop the spread of the highly contagious covid coronavirus throughout the United Kingdom have so far been prudent. Credit must be given where credit is due. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to our civil government and their scientific advisors. They have truly cared for our safety. We are thankfully not in the same plight as those in Brazil. It has nevertheless been a godless prudence. Our nation has not turned to God for help and blessing upon her endeavours. The response has been one of self-reliance and self-sufficiency. The charge laid at the door of the city of Jerusalem through the prophet Isaiah was self-sufficiency as their response to the crisis in our text. God had delivered them from calamities in the past and preserved Jerusalem, but this had been conveniently forgotten by a backslidden and incorrigible people. They trusted in their own ability to save themselves. Our nation needs to acknowledge its dependence upon the Divine Providence. Additionally, our nation so far does not seem to have attributed this national crisis to the Divine Providence. Our nation does not seem to have acknowledged that the fundamental reason for covid coronavirus being allowed in the Divine Providence to spread throughout the whole country rather than being preserved from it was to bring us as a nation to our knees in repentance and prayer. In the Divine Providence it is 'a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity, by the Lord God of hosts in the valley of vision, breaking down the walls, and of crying to the mountains' (Isaiah 22:5). The inhabitants of Jerusalem were unconcerned

about how they had grieved God. They were not brought to their knees in contrite repentance but continued in ungodliness. The consequences of this appalling attitude of turning their back upon God was that they sealed their own doom. If Edward J. Young's considered interpretation of our text is adopted Isaiah uttered this prophecy about 138 years before its fulfilment in the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar as is recorded in 2 Kings 25:4 and Jeremiah 52:7. I believe our nation has been called by God to repentance over the last year. That means we have needed to say sorry to God with the utmost urgency for the appalling ungodliness that now characterises our nation. We needed to say sorry to God for the abominable sins that have been committed among us as a nation for a while now. We need to amend our ways as individuals and as a nation. We need to ask for God's forgiveness as a nation which has grievously departed from him in many ways, not least in non-observance of the Lord's Day and the slaughter of millions of innocent children, who are really the most vulnerable in society. If our nation, once again sought God's help as it did during Wartime, now, just as then, miracles of blessing and protection could begin to happen. At the very least let the godly remnant who do know better call upon God to heal our land in this time of national distress.

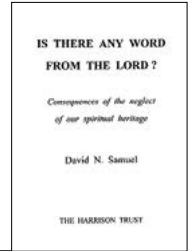
From lightning and tempest; from plague, pestilence, and famine, from battle and murder, and from sudden death,  
*Good Lord, deliver us.*

That it may please thee to give us true repentance; to forgive us all our sins, negligences, and ignorances; and to endue us with thy Holy Spirit, to amend our lives according to thy holy Word,  
*We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord. ¶*

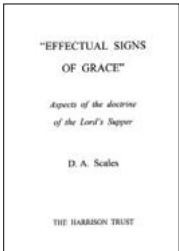
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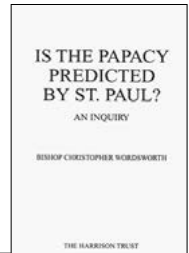
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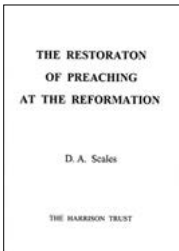
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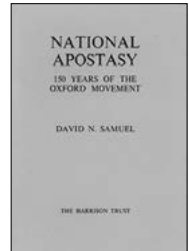
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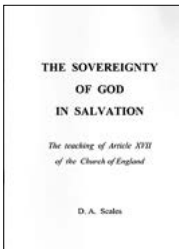
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# A SERMON ON ISAIAH 1:2–3

REV. C. TUINMAN (1659–1728)

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

## Part 15

This, beloved, should be taken to heart by us all and this in such a special way on this solemn thanksgiving and fasting day, where the Lord still calleth to us: ‘turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning. And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God’ (Joel 2:12–13). Although, not now, because the Lord saith in another place: ‘Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and a day acceptable to the LORD. Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?’ (Isa. 58:5–6). It is not enough that we would look at the sins of our fatherland in general, but let us search our ways and complain about our own sins (Lam. 3:39–40). Let every man know the plague of his own heart (1 Ki. 8:38). Let every man ask: Is it I? (Matt. 26:22). Because every one of us shall give of himself to God (Rom. 14:12). Let nobody be a hypocrite and see fully from himself to another as in Matt. 7:3–5.

Especially, let us rightly practice and make use of what is in our verse:

1. *Let us turn our eyes to heaven and earth and recognize them to be God’s glorious creations to glorify the Maker* (Pss 8:1; 19:1; Isa. 40:26, 27; Job 12:7). ‘The heaven is my throne, the earth is my footstool’ (Isa. 66:1). The earth is given to us in order to use

and to live on (Isa. 45:18; Ps. 115:16). O, let us not defile it like Israel did. Whereof is complained. ‘The earth is also defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant’ (Isa. 24:5). Do not be too much rooted to the earth, like those whose portion is in this life (Ps. 17:14). But let your conversation be already in heaven with the saints of the most high places (Phil. 3:20; Dan. 7:18). Otherwise these creations would sigh and testify (Rom. 8:20; 22).

2. *The Lord speaketh still.* He doth not speak secretly. His speaking created heaven and earth (Ps. 33:9). His speaking lets even the creature without reason hear (Ps. 29:5). O, that it would work so deep in our hearts. ‘Is my word not like a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?’ (Jer. 23:29). ‘For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piecing, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and the intents of the heart.’ (Heb. 4:12). Let us hear, and that now, as the Holy Ghost saith, and harden not your hearts (Heb. 3:7, 8). ‘If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land. But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword, for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it’ (Isa. 1:19, 20).

3. *If you want to be seen as children of God, and to assure yourself of this happiness:*

a. You must bear the nature and image of

your Father (Matt. 5:48). Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children and walk in love (Eph. 5:1, 2).

- b. You must let yourself be guided by the Spirit of childhood. For as many are led by the Spirit of God, they are sons of God (Rom. 8:14).
- c. You must love your Father and put everything that strives against it away (Jno 2:15–17).
- d. You must honour and fear your Father. (Mal. 1:6; 1 Pe. 1:17).
- e. You must obey him and seek to become holy in all your walk (1 Pe. 2:14–16).
- f. You must walk in another manner than the children of this world and of the devil. This means: Blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world. (Phil. 2:15).

Take unto this the example of your first-born Brother, and follow his footsteps, to be conformed to his image (Rom. 8:29).

4. *Who should not agree that our fatherland has transgressed?* Yes, who must not be persuaded that he is the man. This obliges us:

- a. To be affected by contriteness in the inner part, shame and sorrow about our transgressions and apostasies from the Lord (Joel 2:12; Neh. 9:6).
- b. To humble ourselves, like the publican, deeply before God (Lk 18:13; comp. Dan. 10:12).
- c. To make a sincere and humble confession of our sins before God, like Daniel and others (Dan. 9:4; Ps. 32:5; Isa. 59:12, 13; 2 Sam. 24:10, 17).
- d. By taking refuge by earnest prayers and faith in Christ to God's throne of mercy to desire forgiveness (Heb. 4:16; Dan. 9:19).
- e. By exercising a sincere and enduring repentance from our transgressions and

apostasy (Jer. 3:22; 8:4; 2 Chron. 7:14).

These matters must be especially be exercised this day, but also be our occupation our whole life.

5. *O, let us see whether the ox and the ass persuade us and shame us.* Worse than such beasts are these wicked men, whom God in his mercy daily feedeth and doeth good, but deny and blaspheme him, and acknowledge no other God than nature. They are monsters unworthy of standing on earth and beholding heaven. Yet such are known and their books behold the sunlight. How should the government exercise their power according to their office against such! O, Christians, loathe and shun such enemies of God and pests for the soul. I say together with Paul: 'From such turn away' (2 Tim. 3:5).

6. *Let us also seek sanctified knowledge and spiritual understanding about God's will and ways* (Col. 1:9; Isa. 41:20; Hos. 14:10). So that we might have Christ and know the truth as the truth is in Christ. (1 Cor. 2:14, 15; Eph. 4:21). 'Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men' (1 Cor. 14:20).

To this end:

- a. Exercise yourself in the word of God, making the simple wise (Ps. 19:7). See what is there (2 Tim. 3:16; Col. 16:16).
- b. You must pray earnestly to God for his Spirit, so that he may give you the Spirit of revelation in the knowledge of him, that is the eyes of your understanding being enlightened' (Eph. 1:17; comp. 3:17; Isa. 9:1; Jas. 1:6).
- c. Labour about the fear of the Lord, because this is, as Solomon says, the beginning of knowledge (Prov. 1:7; comp. Ps. 25:14).
- d. Strive to have spiritual experience (1 Pe. 2:3).
- e. Try continuously to increase in the knowledge of the Lord and seek go unto perfection. This is the reason of all these

exhortations we find in 2 Pe. 3:18; 1 Pe. 2:2; Heb. 5:12; 1 John 2:12; Heb. 4:1; 2 Pe. 3:18; 1 Cor. 13:9.  
f. But add unto your knowledge the practice,

because Jesus called to you: if you know these things, happy are ye if ye do them (John 13:17). Look also at Jas. 3:17; Lk 12:47; Jas. 1:22; 4:17; Titus 1:16; Isa. 58:2.

*TO BE CONTINUED*

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## GOOD MEMORIES

by CARINE MACKENZIE

We were able to meet up with some old friends recently over coffee. Soon the conversation turned to old times and one memory led to another. One story jogged another memory and we were talking about people and events we had not thought of for ages—things that happened at school, or when our children were small, advice we were given from a relative who is no longer in this world.

It is good to recall what has happened in the past—to be grateful to friends who have helped us, to learn from mistakes made, to encourage one another.

As we remember fondly what others have done for us over the years, and talk about them when we meet up with friends, how much more important to remember what God has done for us and to talk about him and his kindness to us.

Asaph in Psalm 77 tells of how he remembers God's mighty power to help in time of trouble. 'I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High' (v. 10). 'I will remember the works of the Lord: surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.'

God encouraged his people to remember his saving work in taking them out of bondage in the land of Egypt. The angel of death passed over the houses of those who had put the blood of a lamb on the lintel and doorposts of their home. So that they would never forget this great deliverance, they were instructed to hold a special feast every year—the Passover Feast. When their children asked in years to come why they celebrated this feast, they were to tell them of how God saved them from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 12:26f). Each year their memories would be jogged to think and talk about God's goodness.

Another means used to jog the memory of God's people was the testimonies and statutes and judgements that the Lord gave to his people. When a son would ask in times to come what these meant, he would be told again about the mighty hand of God that brought his people out of Egypt and took them into the land promised to their fathers. It was for their good to remember God's mighty power and kindness to them. If we remember and think about God's blessings in the past, it gives us confidence that he will bless us still (see Psalm 115:12).

God again showed his care and mighty power to his people as they drew near the promised land. The Lord caused the waters of the river Jordan to be cut off so that the ark of the covenant and the people could cross safely on dry land. When all had safely passed over, the Lord

instructed Joshua the leader to tell twelve men (one from each tribe) to take a stone from the middle of the river bed and carry it to the bank and build them into a memorial. If in years to come a child asked his father ‘What do these stones mean?’, he would hear about the time when God cut off the waters of the Jordan to allow the ark of the covenant of the Lord to pass over the river on dry land. What an amazing story for a child to hear. We hear stories of God’s kindness and mercy often—every time we read the Bible or hear the Word preached. How amazed we should be too.

The Bible tells us not to forget all the benefits that the Lord gives us (Psalm 103:2). He is merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquities and healing diseases, redeeming our life from destruction and satisfying all our needs (v. 3ff). To help us to remember what the Lord Jesus has done for his people, on the cross as he died to take the punishment for their sins, the church has been instructed to celebrate the Lord’s Supper. The Lord Jesus ate the supper with his disciples on the night he was betrayed. He took the bread and broke it and said to them, ‘This is my body which is for you. This do in remembrance of me’ (Luke 22:19). He then did the same with the cup of wine, which was a symbol of his blood shed for sinners.

The Lord’s Supper celebrated in church is a reminder to us of what the Lord has done. An onlooker might ask ‘What does that mean to you?’ The believer should then be ready to tell of God’s mighty power that delivered him from the bondage of sin and brought him to faith in Christ.

John Newton, (1725–1807), was converted to Christ from a very wicked life style. As he neared the end of his life, his friend came to visit him. ‘How are you?’ he asked.

‘My memory is very bad,’ he replied, ‘but there are two things I will never forget. The first is that I am a great sinner. And the second is that Christ is a great Saviour.’

## Bible Search

Find the words missing from the verses. The initial letter of the correct answers will spell out one of the attributes of God mentioned in the story.

1. The peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and \_\_\_\_\_ through Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:7)
2. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine \_\_\_\_\_; who healeth all thy diseases. (Psalm 103:2–3)
3. And I looked and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not afraid of them: remember the Lord, which is \_\_\_\_\_ and terrible, and fight ... (Nehemiah 4:14)
4. Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me. This I recall to my mind, therefore have I \_\_\_\_\_. (Lamentations 3:19–21)

5. All the ends of the world shall remember and \_\_\_\_\_ unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. (Psalm 22:27)
6. Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy \_\_\_\_\_. (Ecclesiastes 12:1)
7. By which (i.e. the Gospel) also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I \_\_\_\_\_ unto you. ( 1 Corinthians 15:2)
8. Remember the days of \_\_\_\_\_, consider the years of many generations. (Deuteronomy 32:7)
9. I will remember the works of the Lord: surely I will remember thy \_\_\_\_\_ of old. (Psalm 77:11)
10. Remember the former things of old: for I am God and there is none \_\_\_\_\_; I am God and there is none like me. (Isaiah 46:9)
11. And they remembered that God was their \_\_\_\_\_, and the High God their redeemer. (Psalm 78:35)

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## GOD'S INCARNATION IN HUMAN FLESH (PT. 2)

by WILLIAM T. FOLEY

### 2. The Incarnation of God

*...God was manifest in the flesh...*

The genealogy of Jesus Christ sets forth his precise ancestry in Matthew, right back to Abraham and his royal line through King David. He was called Jesus—it means Jehovah saves (Matt. 1:21). Jesus is 'Immanuel, which is interpreted, God with us' (Matt. 1:23). This account covers fourteen generations. Matthew emphasises Jesus' Jewish parentage for Jewish readers. Lk 3:23–38 gives Jesus' ancestry through the forebears of Mary. The virgin birth of Christ, a fundamental doctrine, is upheld by

Lk 3:23. Those who deny the virgin birth of Christ also tend to deny his deity. There are key prophecies regarding Christ in the Old Testament, Micah 5:2; Is. 7:14; 9:6,7; Dan. 9:24–27, and so forth. Our salvation rests upon the incarnation, and the cross-work. Christ is fully God and fully human. The Godhead is not like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device (see Acts 17:29). The eternal power and Godhead are visible throughout creation, so that people of all nations are without excuse (see Ro. 1:20). For in Christ 'dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily' (see Col. 2:9).

Paul confirms that Jesus was promised by the prophets in the holy scriptures and made of the seed of David according to his flesh (see Ro. 1:2-4). Jesus' human nature was through Mary, and sinless. His divine nature was of the Father.

Without the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ there is no salvation. Islam cannot and will not receive the truth that Jesus is God, and that he is the Son of God manifest in the flesh. They believe Jesus is just another prophet like Moses and Mohammed. In their view, it is inconceivable that God is a Trinity: Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Muslims are offended with such teaching. Neither does Judaism believe that Jesus is God, but like Muslims they look for a messiah figure. The saints of God believe that the Messiah has come, but he will come again for his people and to judge the world in righteousness.

In addition, many so-called intellectuals throughout history have sought to deny the deity of Christ and his incarnation in the name of modern propaganda and education. We live in an age of postmodernism, post-truth and scientific and educational foolishness that seeks to deny that Christ is God. The Messiah had a prior existence, and that is assumed in this statement, 1 Tim. 3:16, and that he is the eternal Son of God, and he is the second person of the Holy Trinity. Paul sets forth a vivid and powerful description of Christ in his first advent, in his humiliation and exaltation, in Phil. 2.

'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God

also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father' (Phil. 2:5-11). In a sense 1 Tim. 3:16 is the same approach. What is common to both is that Jesus is God, in his 'being' or essence, and that he gave up his glory while on earth. He was still God even in his flesh, but his glory was veiled. We get a glimpse of his glory at the transfiguration (see Lk 9:28-36). Peter and John were 'eyewitnesses of his majesty' (2 Pe. 2:16). We cannot completely conceive of what Christ gave up in leaving heaven, and the extent of his humiliation, but it is clear from Scripture it was everlasting love that motivated him. The Trinity was not made in the incarnation. Christ, the second person, the Son of God was born of a godly woman, Mary. After full and proper development in her womb, with flesh and bones, Christ was born. He is the Son of God; he did not become the Son of God.

At Christmas we focus on the incarnation of Jesus Christ as per the Gospels, but here is one very important and strong verse in Holy Scripture. 1 Tim. 3:16 shows us the incredible mystery, Christ, that dwells in the Godhead and he was before the foundation of the world.

The incarnation led to the cross. Jesus came to die. There is a proper biblical theology to Christmas, and it is the opposite of the world of glitter and entertainment. Christmas should be about remembering the humbling of the King of Kings to save sinners. But Calvary was intended by God, as part of his strategic purpose, to save sinners. The substitution of Christ for sinners was the Trinitarian plan from the beginning. Part

of God's plan was the everlasting covenant of blood redemption to address the plague and power of sin and to provide an effective remedy. Calvary is a perfect blood redemption that defeated the devil, death, sin, and hell, and brought pardon and forgiveness for God's Elect.

### 3. The Life of Christ in the Spirit

*...justified in the Spirit...*

Justified in this verse means vindicated. The Holy Spirit confirmed Jesus in his true nature, as it was disclosed, and his messianic claims were substantiated in every respect.

Jesus lived in the power of the Holy Spirit from the cradle to the Cross, from the crib to the Crown. Christ Jesus was conceived and born supremely and supernaturally of the Holy Spirit from a virgin's womb. Christ Jesus performed miracles in the power of the Holy Spirit. He preached in the guidance and glory of the Holy Spirit. He ultimately was justified in the Spirit by his resurrection which was first seen and verified by the angels at the tomb.

The divine nature of Christ and His two natures are clearly set forth by the Holy Spirit in scripture. The Holy Spirit 'vindicated' Christ in all the aspects of his extraordinary life and ministry. His vicarious death dealt permanently with the sin of God's elect.

Christ was cursed for us. God was angry with Christ for our sake. God punished Christ for us. Jesus came to make a sacrifice of blood atonement and redemption to propitiate the wrath of God (see Ro. 3:25).

He did not need 'justification' in the sense that he was a sinner, needing acquittal before God, for he was impeccable in his doing and dying. We, as sinners, are declared justified [righteous] (Ro. 1:17), because of the doing and dying of Christ, and it is effective to us by faith, through the imputation of Christ's

righteousness to us, never to be cancelled or revoked.

Although the term 'justified in the Spirit' is written by Paul, yet it was written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit's inspired statement. Truly Christ in every aspect of his person and nature, character and ministry, is now, and shall be forever vindicated by the Holy Spirit.

### 4. The Life of Christ in the Eyes of Angels

*...seen of angels...*

The bottom line is that angels witnessed every aspect of Jesus' earthly life and ministry. He was raised from the dead by the Spirit of holiness (see Ro. 1:4).

An angel was present at his birth, Lk 2:13, 14. With the angel there was a multitude of the heavenly host that was praising God. The evidence clearly suggests that they were all angels. An angel warned Joseph to leave Egypt and return to Israel, as Herod was dead, Matt. 2:19, 20. Angels came and ministered to Christ after his temptation, Matt. 4:11. An angel ministered to the Lord Jesus in Gethsemane and gave him strength, Lk 24:43. Christ could have called twelve legions of angels at the time of his betrayal, but he didn't, Matt. 26:53. Christ ascended into heaven with the angels present, Acts 1:10.

At Jesus' resurrection the angel rolled away the stone, and declared: 'He is risen.' The Bible says, 'And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the

place where the Lord lay' (Matt. 28:2-6). So, Christ was first seen of angels at his resurrection, 1 Pe. 1:12. They are observant as angels of our wonderful redemption. On the other hand, we are blessed and privileged to experience actual redemption as sinners.

Christ could have been called for angels' help during his rejection, suffering and when he was dying on the Cross. Christ was visible to all the angels and the hierarchy of angels.

The doctrine of angelology in relation to the person, and work of Christ is a phenomenal study. There are Elect angels (1 Tim. 5:21). These are: Archangel Michael (Jude 9), Cherubims' roles, and so forth. Michael and Gabriel (Dan. 8:16; 9:21; Lk 1:19, 26) are specifically mentioned by name in the New Testament. Gabriel told Mary of the birth of Jesus, Lk 1:30-33. The saints shall judge angels (1 Cor. 6:3).

Satan led angels in rebellion against God, the Trinity. He was looking for equality—a term often used today. He was created as one of God's highest angels (see Is. 14:13-23; Ezek. 28:2, 13-15, 17), and sought to be like God. He sinned greatly against the Almighty God and was cast out from the presence of the Lord.

Satan tempted Jesus and misquoted Scripture to achieve his aim, Matthew 4. Jesus defeated the Devil on every occasion.

Seraphim are the highest angelic class

and they provide Holy service to God's throne. For example, Isaiah 'saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims [angels]: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory' (Is. 6:1-3).

However, carefully note, without the resurrection of Christ the proof of the Messiahship of Jesus would have been incomplete, and his death would not have had its saving efficacy. The testimony of the angel at the tomb, sitting on the stone he rolled away, is glorious news.

Moreover, the clear fact is that angels were present throughout Jesus' life and ministry.

At the future second coming, Christ will send his angels to gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to another, Matt. 24:31. When Christ comes again, angels will carry out his will and execute his judgment, 2 Thess. 1:7. Angels will separate the evil from the righteous, Matt. 13:41, 49.

One evidence or testimony of Jesus' deity is the involvement of angels in his life and ministry. Everyone who acknowledges Christ before others, will be publicly acknowledged by the Lord, before angels, Lk 12:8.

### TO BE CONCLUDED

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Touching the mysteries of God revealed in God's word, in themselves, or in their own nature, they cannot be seen with bodily eyes: and therefore are called things not seen. But this faith, by giving light to the mind, doth in the heart perceive them, even as they are set forth in the word of God. Faith, therefore, according to the definition of Paul, is in the mind a most evident seeing, and in the heart a most certain perceiving of things invisible, that is, of things eternal: of God, I say, and all those things which he in his word setteth forth unto us concerning spiritual things.

*Henry Bullinger, The Decades, 1st Decade, Sermon iv*

# OF THE RIGHT KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST CRUCIFIED (PART 5)

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.*

The common Protestant likewise cometh short herein for three causes. First, whereas in word they acknowledge him to be their Saviour that hath redeemed them from their evil conversation, yet indeed they make him a patron of their sins. The thief makes him the receiver, the murderer makes him his refuge, the adulterer (be it spoken with reverence unto his Majesty) makes him the bawd. For generally men walk on in their evil ways, some living in this sin, some in that, and yet for all this they persuade themselves that God is merciful, and that Christ hath freed them from death and damnation. Thus Christ that came to abolish sin is made a maintainer thereof, and the common pack-horse of the world, to bear every man's burden. Secondly, men are content to take knowledge of the merit of Christ's passion for the remission of their sins, but in the mean season the virtue of Christ's death in the mortifying of sin, and the blessed example of his passion which ought to be followed and expressed in our lives and conversations, is little or nothing regarded. Thirdly, men usually content themselves generally and confusedly to know Christ to be their redeemer, never once seeking in every particular estate and condition of life, and in every particular blessing of God, to feel the benefit of his passion. What is the cause that almost all the world live in security, never almost touched for their horrible sins? Surely

the reason is because they did never yet seriously consider that Christ in the garden lay grovelling on the earth, sweating water and blood for their offences. Again, all such as by fraud and oppression, or any kind of hard dealing suck the blood of poor men, never yet knew that their sins drew out the heart blood of Christ. And proud men and women that are puffed up by reason of their attire, which is the badge of their shame, and never cease hunting after strange fashions, consider not that Christ was not crucified in gay attire, but naked, that he might bear the whole shame of the law for us. These and such like, whatsoever they say in word, if we respect the tenor of their lives, are flat enemies of the cross of Christ, and tread his precious blood under their feet.

Now then, considering this so weighty and special point of religion is so much neglected, O man or woman, high or low, young or old, if thou have been wanting this way, begin for very shame to learn, and learning truly to *know* Christ crucified. That thou mayest attain to this, behold him often, not in the wooden crucifix after the Popish manner, but in the preaching of the word, and in the sacraments, in which thou shalt see *him crucified* before thine eyes, Gal 3:1. Desire not here upon earth to behold him with the bodily eye, but look upon him with the eye of true and lively faith, applying him and his merits to thyself as thine own, and

that with broken and bruised heart, as the poor Israelites stung with fiery serpents even to death, beheld the brasen serpent. Again, thou must look upon him first of all as a glass or spectacle, in which thou shalt see God's glory greater in thy redemption, than in thy creation. In the creation appeared God's infinite wisdom, power and goodness: in thy redemption by the passion of Christ, his endless justice and mercy. In the creation thou art a member of the first Adam, and bearest his image: in thy redemption thou art become a member of the second Adam. In the first thou art indued with natural life, in the second with spiritual. In the first thou hast in the person of Eve, thy beginning of the rib of Adam: in the second thou hast thy beginning as thou art born of God, out of the blood of Christ. Lastly, in the first God gave life, in commanding that to be which was not: in the second he gives life, not by life, but by death, even of his own Son. This is the mystery, which the angels themselves desire to look into, 1 Peter 1:12. Secondly, thou must behold him as the full price of thy redemption, and perfect reconciliation with God: and pray earnestly to God, that he would seal up the same in thy very conscience by his Holy Spirit. Thirdly, thou must behold Christ as an example, to whom thou must confirm thyself by regeneration. For this cause give diligence, that thou mayest by experience say, that thou art dead, and crucified, and buried with Christ, and that thou risest again with him to newness of life: that he enlighten thy mind, and by degrees reforms thy will and affections, and gives thee both the will and the deed in every good thing. And that thou mayest not fail in this thy knowledge, read the history of Christ's passion, observe the parts and circumstances thereof, and apply them to thyself for thy full conversion, When thou readest that

Christ went to the garden, as his custom was, where the Jews might soon attack him, consider that he went to the death of the cross for thy sins willingly, and not of constraint; and that therefore thou for thy part shouldst do him all service freely and frankly, Ps 110:3. When thou hearest that in his agony his soul was heavy unto death, know it was for thy sins, and that thou shouldest conceive heaviness of heart for the same; again, that this sorrow of his is joy and rejoicing unto thee, if thou wilt believe in him: therefore Paul saith, 'I say again, rejoice in the Lord.' When thou readest that in the garden he prayed lying grovelling on his face sweating water and blood, begin to think seriously what an unspeakable measure of God's wrath was upon thy blessed Saviour, that did prostrate his body upon the earth, and cause the blood to follow: and think that thy sins must needs be most heinous, that brought such bloody and grievous plains upon him. Also think it is a very shame for thee to carry thy head to heaven with haughty looks, to wallow in thy pleasures, and to draw the innocent blood of thy poor brethren by oppression and deceit, for whom Christ sweat water and blood; and take an occasion from Christ's agony, to lay aside the pride of thy heart, to be ashamed of thyself, to grieve in heart, yea even to bleed for thine own offences, casting down and humbling thyself with Ezra, saying, Ezra 9:6, 'O my God, I am confounded and ashamed to lift up mine eyes unto thee, my God: for mine iniquities are increased, and my trespass is grown up to heaven.' When thou readest that Christ was taken and bound, think that thy very sins brought him into the power of his enemies, and were the bonds wherewith he was tied: think that thou shouldest have been bound in the very same manner, unless he had been a surety and pledge for thee: think also that

thou in the self same manner art bound and tied with the chains of thine own sin, and that by nature thy will, affections, and whole spirit is tied and chained to the will of the devil, so as thou canst do nothing but that which he willeth: lastly, think and believe that the bonds of Christ serve to purchase thy liberty from hell, death and damnation. When thou hearest that he was brought before Annas and Caiaphas, think it was mete, that thy surety and pledge, who was to suffer the condemnation due unto thee, should by the high Priest, as by the mouth of God, be condemned: and wonder at this, that the very coessential and eternal Son of God, even the very sovereign Judge of the world, stands to be judged, and that by wicked men; persuading thy self that this so great condemnation comes of thy sins. Whereupon being further amazed at thy fearful estate, humble thyself in dust and ashes, and pray God to soften thy stony heart, that thou mayest turn to him, and by true faith lay hold on Christ, who hath thus exceedingly abased himself, that his ignominy may be thy glory, and his arraignment thy perfect absolution. When thou readest that Barabbas the murderer was preferred before Christ, though he exceeded both men and angels in holiness; think it was to manifest his innocency, and that thy very sins pulled upon him this shameful reproach; and in that for thy cause he was esteemed worse than Barabbas, think of thyself as a most heinous and wretched sinner, and (as Paul saith in I Tim 1:15) the head of sinners. When thou readest that he was openly and judicially condemned to the cursed death of the cross, consider what is the wrath and fury of God against sin, and what is his great and infinite mercy to sinners: and in this spectacle look upon thy self, and with groans of heart cry out, and say, O good God, what settest thou before mine

eyes? I even I have sinned, I am guilty and worthy of damnation. Whence comes this change, that thy blessed Son is in my room, but of thine unspeakable mercy? Wretch that I am, how have I forgotten myself, and the also my God? O Son of God, how low hast thou abased thyself for me? Therefore give me grace, O God, that beholding mine own estate in the person of my Saviour thus condemned, I may detest and loathe my sins that are the cause thereof, and by a lively faith imbrace that absolution which thou offerest me in him, who was condemned in my stead and room. O Jesus Christ, Saviour of the world, give me thy holy and blessed Spirit, that I may judge myself, and be as vile and base in mine own eyes, as thou wast vile before the Jews: also unite me unto thee by the same Spirit, that in thee I may be as worthy to be accepted before God, as I am worthy in myself to be detested for my sins. When thou readest that he was clad in purple, and crowned with thorns, mocked and spit upon, behold the everlasting shame that is due unto thee, and be ashamed of thy self; and in this point confirm thyself to Christ, and be content (as he was) to be reproached, abused, and despised, so it be for a good cause. When thou readest that before his crucifixion, he was stripped of all his clothes, think it was, that he being naked, might bear thy shame on the cross, and with his most precious and rich nakedness cover thy deformity. When thou readest the complaint of Christ, that he was forsaken of his Father, consider how he suffered the pangs and torments of hell as thy pledge and surety. Learn by his unspeakable torments what a fearful thing it is to sin against God, and begin to renounce thyself, and to detest thy sins, and to walk as a child of light, according to the measure of grace received. When thou comest to die, set before thine eyes Christ in the midst of his

torments on the cross: in beholding of which spectacle to thine endless comfort, thou shalt see a paradise in the midst of hell; God the Father reconciled unto thee, thy Saviour reaching out his hand unto thee to receive thy soul unto him, and his cross as a ladder to advance it to eternal glory. Whereas he cried aloud with a strong voice at the point of death, it was to show that he died willingly without violence or constraint from any creature, and that if it had so pleased him, he could have cast his very enemies to the very bottom of hell. When thou readest that he commended his soul into the hands of his Father, consider that thy soul also (so be it thou wilt believe in him) is delivered up into the hands of God, and shall be preserved against the rage and malice of all thine enemies, and hereupon thou mayest be bold to commend thy spirit into the hands of God the Father. When thou readest of his death, consider that thy sins were the cause of it, and that thou shouldest have suffered the same eternally, unless the Son of God had come in thy room: again, consider his death as a ransom, and apprehend the same by faith as the means of thy life: for by death Christ hath wounded both the first and second death, and hath made his cross to be a throne or tribunal seat of judgment against all his and thine enemies. When thou readest of the trembling of the earth at the death of Christ, think with thyself, it did in its kind as if were groan under the burden of the sins of men in the world: and by his motion then, it signified that even thou and the rest deserved rather to be swallowed of the earth and to go down into the pit alive, than to have any part in the merit of Christ crucified. When thou readest of his burial, think that it was to ratify his death, and to vanquish death even to his own den. Apply this burial to thyself, and believe that it serves to

make thy grave a bed of down, and to free thy body from corruption. Lastly, pray to God that thou mayest feel the power of the Spirit of Christ weakening and consuming the body of sin, even as a dead corpse rots in the grave till it be resolved to dust.

When thou hast thus perused and applied to thyself the history of the passion of Christ, go yet further and labour by faith to see Christ crucified in all the works of God either in thee or upon thee. Behold him at thy table at meat and drink, which is as it were a lively sermon, and a daily pledge of the mercy of God in Christ. Behold him in all thine afflictions, as thy partner that pitieth thy case and hath compassion on thee. Behold him in thy most dangerous temptations, in which the devil thundereth damnation, behold him, I say, as a mighty Samson bearing away the gates of his enemies upon his own shoulders, and killing more by death than by life, crucifying the devil, even when he was crucified, by death killing death: by entrance into the grace, opening the grave and giving life to the dead, and in the house of death spoiling him of all his strength and power. Behold him in all the afflictions of thy brethren, as thou he himself were naked, hungry, sick, harbourless, and do unto them all the good thou canst as to Christ himself. If thou wouldest behold God himself, look unto him in Christ crucified, who is the engraven image of the Father's person; and know it to be a terrible thing in the time of the trouble of thy conscience, to think of God without Christ, in whose face the glory of God in his endless mercy is to be seen, 2 Cor 4:6. If thou wouldest come to God for grace, for comfort, for salvation, for any blessing, come first to Christ hanging, bleeding, dying upon the cross, without whom there is no hearing God, no helping God, no saving god, no God to thee at all. In a word, let Christ be all

things without exception unto thee, Col. 3:11. For when thou prayest for any blessing either temporal or spiritual, be it whatsoever it will be or can be, thou must ask it at the hands of God the Father by the merit and mediation of Christ crucified. Now look as we ask

blessing at God's hand, so must we receive it of him; and as they are received, so must we possess and use them daily, namely, as gifts of God procured to us by the merit of Christ: which gifts for this very cause, must be wholly employed to the honour of Christ. ¶

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# COVENANT COMMUNION WITH GOD

by JOHN HOOPER (Saltash)

## 3. GOD WITH US

IT is clear from our necessarily brief and limited historical survey that the language of a covenant relationship, bond and communion runs like an ever present thread through the writings of the older divines. They may not have developed it, but it was there nonetheless. It is not a novelty to understand the covenant in these terms.

We see in the Scriptures repeatedly, in connection with the covenant, God addressing his people with endearing words of promise and commitment such as these: 'I will walk among you, and be your God, and ye shall be my people' (Lev. 26:12).<sup>1</sup> So much is this true that writers often refer to this promise as 'the covenant formula.' Clearly such an idea takes us beyond the mere notion of a promise to the glorious content of the promise, and from a mechanistic agreement or arrangement to a bond of love. Two human parties may agree and sign a contract, or two nations sign a treaty, but that

agreement and that contract or treaty will not necessarily establish between them a union of friendship and love.

Of course, the ideas of agreement and promise are not to be abandoned. They are integral to the Biblical covenant idea and to the establishment and continuation of the covenant bond. After all, 'Can two walk together, except they be agreed?' (Amos 3:3). 'What communion hath light with darkness?' (2 Cor. 6:14).

Among the dictionary definitions of agreement are these: 'Accordance in sentiment ... absence of dissension ... mutual conformity ... affinity.'<sup>2</sup> In the sense being conveyed by these definitions, perhaps we could call it a passive sense, it is true that God's covenant consists in agreement in the very best understanding of the word. There is agreement at the very highest level, even as it exists within the Godhead himself between the three persons of the holy trinity. There is perfect accord and harmony between Father,

<sup>1</sup> See also, eg., Ex 29:45; Ps 95:7; Jer 7:23; 30:22; 31:33; Ezek 36:28; 37:26, 27; Zech 13:9; 2 Cor 6:16; Rev 21:3.

<sup>2</sup> *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* Vol. I (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 39.

Son and Holy Spirit. Likewise, between the triune God and his chosen, redeemed and believing people in Christ there is nothing any more to cause dissension. This covenantal agreement is a moral, ethical affinity of the purest kind such that God and his people live, say, think and do only and always those things that are pleasing to each other. In this covenant,

what God likes, that do we like; and  
what our God loves, that do we love; and  
what our God hates, that do we hate;  
and what our God wills, that do we will;  
and what God would have done, that  
would we have done.<sup>3</sup>

It is agreement in righteousness and holiness, agreement that is proclaimed in the gospel and accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of those who otherwise are at enmity against God. For the moment, as we battle with remaining sin, our fellowship is incomplete, the agreement is in principle only, the principle of 'already but not yet' that is very much at work in us, but in heaven it will reach its glorious consummation.

Likewise promise too is integral to the biblical covenant idea. Israel had been given 'the covenants of promise' (Eph. 2:12), and the One at the heart of those promises was the promised Messiah himself. A covenant bond that is sealed by promise, by oath even, is a covenant bond that is firm, sure, and cannot be broken. It is therefore unbreakable and everlasting, and is most precious (Heb. 6:13–15).

What we find in Scripture, then, is that not one of these terms is sufficient in and of itself to describe God's covenant. The ideas of agreement, promise and bond are all included. More than that, the Spirit of God takes

them and enriches them beyond measure, raising them to levels that far exceed anything we can ever know in this life. Of the three, it is the idea of a bond or relationship of friendship that is most prominent in Scripture.

There is a delightful picture of God's covenant in the covenant between Jonathan and David. We read, 'the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. ... Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul' (1 Sa. 18:1–3). Similarly, the covenant between God and his chosen people in Christ is a covenant based on love, but love of the purest possible kind and on the highest possible plane. Thus, we find in Scripture that the covenant is not only the way and the means but also the end; not only the promise but also the fulfilment; not only for now but also for ever.

This theme of the covenant as the bond of love, peace and friendship between God and his people is one that the Scriptures emphasize and develop throughout. We find it already in the garden of Eden where, before their Fall, Adam and Eve lived in the presence of the LORD God as his friend-servants with whom he walked and talked (Gen. 2:8; 2:15; 3:8).

The covenant in Eden is often presented as something separate from creation but on reading the Genesis account it becomes clear that Adam was created already in covenant with Almighty God. As he stood upon his feet, having come forth from the dust of the ground, he was already at one with his Creator as one who was his son (Lk 3:38) and his friend. If we are going to speak in terms of parties then these two, God and Adam, were not two parties but one.

To conceive of the covenant relationship as something that came later, as though Adam and Eve became God's friends by common

<sup>3</sup> Obadiah Sedgwick, *The Bowels of Tender Mercy Sealed in the Everlasting Covenant*, 1661, p. 25.

consent and agreement or by a subsequent formal arrangement, is not supported by the record of Scripture. Adam and Eve walk and talk with God in the garden in the cool of the day, being at peace and in perfect harmony with him even from the first moment of their creation. Their very nakedness teaches us this (Gen. 2:25). They knew no shame or embarrassment before God but were open with him as those who were one with him in righteousness, holiness and truth (cf. Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10). All were agreed and walked in the garden together (cf. Amos 3:3).

[T]here was nothing of variance or enmity betwixt God and man; that estate was an estate of love and kindness, and friendship; God was Adam's friend, and Adam was a friend of God; they agreed together, and conversed as loving friends.<sup>4</sup>

Eden was 'the garden of God' (Ezek. 28:13). It was the place where God tabernacled, and he did so with the man whom he had created. Together they would dwell in the garden, enjoying a relationship with one another of perfect love, peace and friendship. The earth, and particularly the Garden of Eden, was to be a Paradise in which God and man would walk and talk with one another in unalloyed communion.

In Paradise man enjoyed the familiar fellowship of his God: and in this sense Paradise might also be styled the garden of God, as God dwelt there, delighting himself in the work of his hands, and especially in man himself. As it was a pleasure to man to be thus near and familiar with his Maker, so it was a delight to God.<sup>5</sup>

Dr. Robert Letham writes of there being 'an inherent compatibility between God and man' rooted in man's creation in the image of God. '[Man] was made for communion with his Creator ... He was constituted by God a covenant partner ... He was made for God.'<sup>6</sup> Witsius speaks of Adam as 'acquiring an intimate and immediate union' with God, 'delighting in the fellowship of his God,' and 'panting after further communion.'<sup>7</sup> And of course, as we know from Rom. 5:12–19 and 1 Cor. 15:21–22, Adam was in covenant with God not simply as an individual, but as the head and representative of the entire human race.

So, while it is true that the word 'covenant' does not appear in the early chapters of Genesis, we may not hesitate to use it. We know from Hos. 6:7 that the relationship existing between God and Adam, God and man, was a covenant relationship. It was a bond of like with like, of mutual love and communion between the Creator and the created.

Yes, the first Biblical mention of the word 'covenant' is not until Gen. 6:18 where God addresses Noah with the words, 'with thee will I establish my covenant,' but we should hesitate before jumping to the conclusion that since this is the first direct mention of God's covenant in Scripture it must be the first time it appears in human history. The covenant idea is present too in the so-called proto-evangel of Gen. 3:15, a promise described by Herman Bavinck as 'the announcement and institution of the covenant of grace.'<sup>8</sup> Also in the history of Noah there

<sup>4</sup> Sedgwick, *The Bowels of Tender Mercy*, p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Herman Witsius, *Oeconomy of the Covenants*, Vol 1, p. 63.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Letham, *Union with Christ in Scripture, History, and Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2011), p. 16.

<sup>7</sup> Witsius, *Oeconomy*, Vol. I, p. 54.

<sup>8</sup> Herman Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith—A Summary of Christian Doctrine* (Scarsdale, NY: Westminster Discount Book Service, 1984), p. 271.

is ample evidence that the covenant idea was not new at that point. Even the expression ‘my covenant’ (Gen. 6:18) suggests that this was an already known, pre-existing covenant bond.

The word translated ‘establish’ can also be rendered ‘confirm,’ a word that fits neatly into the context of a passage presupposing an already existing covenant relationship. How else can we explain the testimony of Scripture that Noah ‘found grace in the eyes of the LORD’ and that he was ‘a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God’ (Gen. 6:8–9) if not that he was in a covenant relationship with God? The very idea of *walking* with God, or of God walking with man, is a covenant idea<sup>9</sup> and far from new at this point in redemptive history. Enoch too, remember, had ‘walked with God’ (Gen. 5:22, 24).

The idea of relationship occurs again in the covenant with Abraham, for he is called ‘the Friend of God’ (2 Chron. 20:7; Is. 41:8; Jas. 2:23). In the covenant with Israel God speaks of himself as the father (Ex. 4:22) and the husband (Isa. 54:5; Jer. 3:14, 20; Ezek. 16; Mal. 2:14) of his people. God spoke with Moses ‘face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend’ (Ex. 33:11). Likewise, the Book of Psalms is testimony to the close bond of covenant fellowship between God and his royal servant. Always the principle of relationship is paramount. And as we shall see, it is supremely evident in the new covenant too.

By creation God bound himself to man in covenantal relationship. After man’s fall into sin, the God of all creation graciously bound himself to man again by committing himself to redeem a people to himself from lost humanity. From creation to consummation the

covenantal bond has determined the relation of God to his people. The extent of the divine covenants reaches from the beginning of the world to the end of the age.<sup>10</sup>

The covenant imparts a blessing the substance of which is, as Prof. John Murray put it, ‘the characteristic promise of the Old Testament, “I will be your God, and ye shall be my people”’. In a word, this consists in union and communion with the Lord.’<sup>11</sup> This idea of relationship Prof. Murray places at the very heart of the definition of the covenant: ‘The covenant is a sovereign dispensation of God’s grace. It is grace bestowed and a *relation established*.’<sup>12</sup> On the basis of the evidence of Scripture, I believe Murray is right.

But the next question, of course, is how is this relation established? We have a pointer to the answer even in the garden of Eden. Adam, we have contended, was in covenant with God by virtue of his creation. Likewise, new covenant believers are in covenant with God by virtue of their being made new creatures in Christ Jesus. ‘Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature ... And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ’ (2 Cor. 5:17–18). We are ‘created in Christ Jesus’ (Eph. 2:10). We are ‘created in righteousness and true holiness’ (Eph. 4:24). And by virtue of this re-creation in Christ, we are reconciled to God. The covenant union is established whereby we are no more two parties but we are of the party of God, walking and talking with him as his friends in daily communion and fellowship.

When tracing what one of the Puritans called ‘the gradual breakings out of

<sup>10</sup> O. P. Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1980), p. 25.

<sup>11</sup> John Murray, *The Covenant of Grace*, (London: The Tyndale Press, 1956), p. 17.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19. Emphasis added.

<sup>9</sup> See Gen 17:1. Also Gen 24:40; 48:15; Ex 18:20; Lev 18:4; Deut 13:4; Job 1:1; Ps 1:1; Lk 1:6.

Gospel-grace from Adam to Christ,<sup>13</sup> we find that the ‘covenants’ are the gradual unfolding throughout history, according to God’s sovereign and gracious hand, of his one gracious covenant. We are compelled to agree with A.W. Pink that, yes, the covenants really are ‘substantially one.’<sup>14</sup>

13 John Ball, *A Treatise of the Covenant of Grace : wherein The graduall breakings out of Gospel-grace from Adam to Christ are clearly discovered, etc.*, (Tain, UK: Peter and Rachel Reynolds, repr. 2012), title page.

14 A. W. Pink, *The Divine Covenants*, (New Ipswich,

They were all of them revelations of God’s gracious purpose, exhibited at first in obscure form, but unfolding according to an obvious law of progress: each renewal adding something to what was previously known, so that the path of the just was as the shining light, which shone more and more unto the perfect day, when the shadows were displaced by the substance itself.<sup>15</sup>

NH: Pietan Publications, repr. 2003), p. 71.

15 Ibid.

### TO BE CONTINUED

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## THE SYROPHENICIAN WOMAN

by J.E. NORTH (LANDFORD WOOD)

*‘Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. And Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there.’ (Matthew 15:21–29)*

THE account of the Lord’s meeting with the Syrophenician woman is recorded only in two of the Gospels, here in Matthew 15 and also in Mark 7. There are significant details omitted by Mark, but there are also other matters which are included by him. The account seems completely out of place in the Gospel records as if it was placed there by the authors as an after-thought. But this cannot

be the case for, as we read in the fourth chapter of John’s Gospel that there was a ‘needs must go through Samaria’ (Jno. 4:4) to meet the woman of Samaria at Jacob’s well, so there was a ‘needs must’ for the Lord Jesus Christ to travel to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon to meet that woman whose daughter was ‘grievously vexed with a devil’ (Matt. 15:22). Every step of the Lord Jesus Christ was mapped out

from eternity. Later on in this passage we read that the Lord Jesus was sent to seek and to save the 'lost sheep of the House of Israel' (v. 24). The Psalmist also tells us that the steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD (Ps. 37:23); how much more the steps of the Lord Jesus Christ. The storm that blew up after the feeding of the five-thousand could not drown the Lord Jesus (Matt. 14:22-33). The Scribes and Pharisees could not stop the Lord Jesus from going into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon to meet the Syrophenician woman. No-one could stop that appointment which had been made by Almighty God in eternity past when she was given to Christ in covenant bond! What a mercy!

So the Lord Jesus left the Scribes and the Pharisees licking their wounds after a bruising encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ. He had charged them with pure hypocrisy, in that they refused to keep the commandment of God to honour their fathers and mothers (cf. Ex. 20:12; Matt. 15:6ff). Those funds which should have provided for their parents in their old age had been declared under the tradition of the Elders as Corban (Mk. 7:11), and as such it was to be given to the Temple and they, rather than their parents would benefit from those funds. 'In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men' (Matt. 15:9). After this encounter with the Scribes and Pharisees, he warns the multitude and the disciples of their hypocrisy. From this incident we are told that the Lord Jesus went immediately into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. Mark tells us that he went into a house in that region and that he 'would have no man know it' (Mk. 7:24).

But as the fame of Jesus had gone abroad (cf. Matt. 14:1; Mk. 6:14) no doubt it had spread towards Tyre and Sidon so he could not be hid from the people of that area. Hearing of the Lord Jesus she came to him

as one of the lost sheep of the House of Israel. Who was this woman? What do we know about her? Very little! But what we do know tells us much of her faith. We know neither her name nor that of her husband nor that of her daughter. All we are told is that she was a Canaanite (v. 22). Mark tells us that she was a Greek (Mk. 7:26). There is no contradiction here. The Israelites used the title 'Greek' interchangeable with the word 'Gentile'. Both Gospel writers are telling us that here is a woman whose racial origin was outside the covenants and promises which were given to the Children of Israel. But what a mercy it is that there have been down the ages those who, being born outside the Covenants of Israel were drawn in by the grace of God. We can think of Rahab the harlot who is mentioned as a great woman of faith in Hebrews 11; we can think of Ruth the Moabitess who left her kindred and family in Moab and said to her mother-in-law, 'Thy people shall be my people and thy God shall be my God'; we can also think of the woman of Samaria who met Jesus at Jacob's well and who told her of all that she had done and gave her to drink of the living water flowing from his lips and heart towards her. It was these and myriads of other to whom the Lord Jesus Christ referred when he spoke to his disciples who wanted the Lord Jesus to send her away, 'And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us' (v. 23) to whom he replied by way of rebuke. They had been with the Lord Jesus for sufficient a time that they should have known both the love of Christ Jesus and his mercy. 'But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (v. 24). He was telling his disciples that this poor woman, this woman in anguish was one of the lost sheep whom he had come to find and redeem. She was indeed one of the House

of the Spiritual Israel, 'For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel' (Rom. 9:6). Whilst the disciples failed to understand the Lord Jesus, this woman could understand and she ventured forth in the hope of that word of the Lord Jesus.

Venture on Him; venture wholly,  
Let no other trust intrude.  
None but Jesus, none but Jesus  
Can do helpless sinners good.

*(J. Hart)*

There are three things for us to notice:

1. The Trial of Faith
2. The Perseverance of Faith
3. The Reward of Faith

### 1. The Trial of Faith

The coming of this woman to the Lord Jesus was a trial of her God-given faith. Peter speaks of the trial of faith: 'That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ' (1 Pe. 1:7). Faith has to be tried to prove that it is genuine. It is often tried in the fires of the Lord's chastisement of his people, 'For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth' (Heb. 12:6, cf. Prov. 3:12). The Lord will refine his people in their growth in grace: 'And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness' (Mal.3:3). John Newton writes in one of his hymns of the trial of faith and the growth of grace:

I asked the Lord that I might grow  
In faith, and love, and every grace;  
Might more of his salvation know,  
And seek more earnestly his face.

I hoped that in some favoured hour,  
At once he'd answer my request;  
And, by his love's constraining power,  
Subdue my sins, and give me rest.

Instead of this, he made me feel  
The hidden evils of my heart,  
And let the angry powers of hell  
Assault my soul in every part.

'Lord why is this?' I trembling cried;  
'Wilt thou pursue thy worm to death?'  
'Tis in this way,' the Lord replied,  
'I answer prayer for grace and faith.

'These inward trials I employ,  
From self and pride to set these free;  
And break thy schemes of earthly joy,  
That thou mayest seek thy all in me.'

*(J Newton)*

There are so many today who know nothing of the trial of faith but this woman in her constant coming to the Lord Jesus had her faith tried. The Lord Jesus was not ignoring her though he spoke not a word, he was showing her there was no help in anyone or anything else, no, not even her cry. Christ Jesus must be her all in all.

This woman came in anguish of soul. Her daughter was grievously vexed with a devil (v. 22). Mark tells us that she had an unclean spirit (Mk. 7:25). Even within her pagan surroundings she had been given the ability to see her state as the mother of one who was possessed of a devil. What a mercy it is to be brought by the Spirit of God to see our own spiritual state! This woman was sensible of her state and with that knowledge she came to the Lord Jesus Christ. She recognised who he was: 'Have mercy upon me, O Lord, thou Son of David' (v. 22). She recognised One who was able to dispense mercy.

She recognised that he was Lord and, as Paul says: 'Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost' (1 Cor. 12:3).

No man can truly say  
That Jesus is the Lord,  
Unless thou take the veil away;  
And breathe the living word.

*(C. Wesley)*

When and how the work of regeneration occurred in this Syrophenician woman we are not told, but she knew that Jesus was the Lord Jesus. And this coming to Jesus was the trial of her faith. 'But he answered her not a word' (v. 23). Why did the Lord Jesus not answer her? Her faith was tried to prove that it was genuine faith. It is the same with Christian believers today. We need to be taught of God that our faith is genuine. There are so many who 'take up religion' and, it being taken up in their own ability find it easy to lay it down. How do we stand? Is our faith just notional or is it real and genuine? 'Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall' (1 Cor 10:12).

But when the child of God is truly called by grace and is brought in anguish by the Spirit of God to the Lord Jesus Christ he perseveres at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ. He goes forth like Esther: 'And so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish' (Esther 4:16), but if I perish it will be at the feet of Jesus, but none ever did perish there and none ever shall! Oh she came craving a crumb of mercy, but Jesus answered her not a word!

A crumb of mercy, Lord, I crave,  
Unworthy to be fed  
With dainties such as angels have,  
Or with the children's bread.

Have pity on my needy soul;  
Thy peace and pardon give;  
Thy love can make the wounded whole,  
And bid the dying live.

Behold me prostrate at thy gate;  
Do not my suit deny;  
With longing eyes for thee I wait;  
O help me, or I die.

When thou dost give a heart to pray,  
Thou wilt incline thy ear;  
From me turn not thy face away,  
But my petition hear.

So shall my joyful soul adore  
The riches of thy grace;  
No sinner needed mercy more,  
That ever sought thy face.

*(J Fawcett)*

## 2. The Perseverance of Faith

So we come in the second place to consider the perseverance of this woman. She does not go away as a disappointed soul, but she clings close to the Lord Jesus. She hopes in that word, 'If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious' (1 Pe. 2:3 cf. Pss. 111:4; 145:8). She listens to ever word spoken by the Lord Jesus as he speaks to the disciples. They cry to the Lord for her to be sent away. She is almost making a nuisance of herself! She will not be put off! She persists just as Bartimaeus did: 'And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me' (Mk. 10:48). His perseverance was rewarded: 'And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee' (Mk. 10:49). She will persevere and she hears the Lord Jesus speak to his disciples, 'I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (v. 24). She hears and faith is stirred in

her heart for 'faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God' (Rom. 10:17). Is there any hope here? So she comes and worships the Lord Jesus Christ. She falls at his feet and as her tears flow she cries unto him, 'Lord, help me' (v. 25). It is as if she says, 'There is no help to be found in anyone else. Where else can I go?'

Lord, I cannot let thee go,  
Till a blessing thou bestow;  
Do not turn away thy face;  
Mine's an urgent, pressing case.

No; I must maintain my hold;  
'Tis thy goodness makes me bold;  
I can no denial take,  
When I plead for Jesus' sake.

*(J. Newton)*

This time the Lord Jesus answers her. Was it a dismissive rebuke or a word of encouragement? 'It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs' (v. 26). This woman will not be put off. She will not be turned away. She takes it as a word of hope, a word of encouragement. But why? Was she not called 'a dog'? Ah, but herein lies an encouragement. The Jews of that time would often call the Gentiles, 'Gentile Dogs', likening them to the wild dogs which roamed the wild places outside the towns and cities, the scavengers, but here the Lord Jesus uses the word which means 'a little dog' or a puppy. No, she is not one of those unclean animals, but she is, as it were, a member of the family, she is the family's pet. So she takes encouragement and replies, 'Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table' (v. 27). And here she also uses the same Greek word used by the Lord Jesus Christ. She clings to that one word and lays it before the Lord. Her faith has been tried, she has persevered and receives the reward

of faith. 'O woman, great is thy faith' (v. 28).

So we come to the final thought on this passage of Scripture:

### 3. The Reward of Faith

'Be it unto thee even as thou wilt' (v. 28). Her faith has been tried; her faith has been tested but it has not failed. Why is this? Because it was God given faith and therefore it cannot fail. And so she perseveres in that God given faith. She came in anguish of soul. She came with a great burden upon her soul and she goes away with that faith having been rewarded: 'Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.' What was it she required? Nothing short of the deliverance of her daughter. 'And her daughter was made whole from that very hour' (v. 27). We are not told whether her daughter was with her at the time, therefore we presume she was not! But the Lord Jesus spoke the word and it was done. The child was delivered from demonic possession and the woman was delivered from her burden. What a mercy it is to be able to cast our burden upon the Lord and experience that sustaining grace.

Hannah was in a similar position to this Syrophenician woman. She had a burden and came before Almighty God at the door of the tabernacle. Such was her burden she was unable to utter her prayer audibly but spoke within her heart, only her lips moved. Eli thought she was drunk. He called her a daughter of Belial. Oh, there was little tenderness there on the part of Eli the priest, not like the Lord Jesus Christ, our Great High Priest in his dealing with the Syrophenician woman and with the whole of the people of God. He deals with them in tenderness.

Touched with a sympathy within,  
He knows our feeble frame;  
He knows what sore temptations mean,  
For he has felt the same.

*(I Watts)*

Eli rebuked her, but when Hannah had explained her anguish of soul and the burden she carried at that time he changed in his attitude towards her, saying to her, 'Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him' (1 Sam. 1:17).

The Lords Jesus Christ, our Priest, knew all about this Syrophenician. He knew all the hidden depths of her heart; he knew the burden and met with her and she went on her way rejoicing just as Hannah had done so

many years before. She received the reward of that God given faith and went on her way rejoicing in the Lord.

What a mercy it is if we have that faith. It may be little faith; it may be weak faith; it may be doubting faith ['Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief' (Mk. 9:24)]; it may be faith as a grain of mustard seed (Matt. 17:20), it is faith nonetheless, and remember, it is God given! God grant that when our faith is tried we will be able to persevere and receive the reward of faith. ¶

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## FORMER DAYS

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

### 250 years ago: July & August 1771

The **July** magazine continues the series on Heresies, with a history of Arius and his errors. The concluding part of the life of Hanserd Knollys is followed by reflections on 1 Corinthians 3:9, 'Ye are God's building.' One S. Fisher of Norwich provides a very helpful answer to a question posed in a previous issue, 'Why Christ is called in Scripture "the Word" and "the Word of God."' Another letter considers whether or not believers will have their sins declared before the world at the day of judgment, comparing 2 Cor 5:10 with Romans 14:12. Another correspondent proposes two reasons why mankind in general will not readily embrace the gospel: the legalistic expectation of earning salvation, and the refusal to part with some particular sin. Three short anecdotes are followed by Points of Divinity and Cases of Conscience proposed and answered. The first asks why a believer in Christ should strive to study and obey the law, since he will never be saved by

it. Nine brief reasons are stated. The second gives 6 short reasons why there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ. The third deals an issue in assurance, namely how a believer whose conscience is free in Christ can at the same time labour under a troubled conscience. The poetry section includes the hymn, 'Jesus, and shall it ever be.' The heading states that the hymn was 'spoken extempore by a minister immediately after preaching on Mark 8:38.'

The magazine for **August** opens with the next instalment of the Heresies series, this time taking up Pelagianism. Next comes a lengthy letter to a woman recently bereaved. It is full of comfort in the face of loss. Omicron writes on family worship. The first part of an article states the importance of sinless obedience over repentance in the believer. This sinless obedience is found in Christ alone. The Review section first takes up a writing that seeks to vindicate the Church of England from the charge that it

holds to absolute predestination. It is really an attack on *The Gospel Magazine* and various contributors, including Toplady, Elisha Coles and James Hervey. The second piece is Paraphrases on the first eleven chapters of Romans, and highly commended. The controversy aroused by the publication of Wesley's minutes (see the last issue) continues. The matter features in the Poetry section, where the hymn, 'Hark, my soul! it is the Lord' is also to be found.

### 200 years ago: July & August 1821

For **July**, the first piece speaks to the union between Christ and his Church, from John 15:5. The Action and Power of Christianity, from Phil 2:12, follows. A Dwarf writes on the Church's title to glory distinguished from her right to deliverance. It is a defence of election as the moving cause of the atonement. 'God sought no cause out of himself why he should love his people: it was neither their foreseen goodness, nor the merit of the Saviour's blood that excited his infinite complacency towards them; but it was all of grace that his purpose according to election alone might stand.' Juvenius revisits his question about whether God can punish sin in the redeemed *and* in the Redeemer: he complains that the answer offered in the previous number missed the point. For Juvenius, the trials we undergo as the redeemed in Christ are but the means by which we are made 'sick of self and fond of Christ.' A letter from a reader commends some contributors and is critical of others. A letter from John Bradford the martyr is reproduced, followed by a second in which the godly martyr declares his mind on the subject of election. The Christian Remembrancer provides expositions of Hebrews 10:26–27, Psalms 139:15 and 115:12, and Isaiah 66:2. Several pieces of correspondence continue controversies from

previous articles. A poem ends the issue.

The **August** issue begins with an address to Christian believers, exhorting them to know the joy of the day-spring from on high in their hearts, and to live out the consequences. A plea to those who have yet to know Christ is added. The glorification of Christ from John 13:1–32 precedes several more brief expositions from the Christian Remembrancer. These take in Matthew 22:29, 2 Corinthians 5:14, 1 Corinthians 4:7 and Isaiah 35:10. An Observer writes to warn readers that Dr Robert Hawker was being denied pulpits where he had been accustomed to preach. The reason for the change in attitude is noted: Dr Hawker's theology was not acceptable to men who were making much of their unity in the gospel while denying one key doctrine or another. Dr Hawker was willing to warn against such things, and so former friends would not associate with him. Love for the world takes many forms: let us all be warned. The Review section begins with a very long and critical article on two sermons preached by Daniel Wilson on the death of Thomas Scott. Scott is well known as a commentator, whose association with John Newton was important in his conversion. Wilson became Bishop of Calcutta and wrote an excellent defence of the Lord's Day. Neither man is well regarded by the reviewer, Scott not least for his aversion to both Toplady and Romaine. The review of Hawker's notes on *Paradise Lost* is continued. A tract advocating support for foreign missions is not well received, and the whole subject of missionary work is questioned—at least, in the form presented by the authors of the tract. They strongly imply that God can do nothing abroad until the folk at home hand over their money, in sufficient quantity, to fund the work. The criticism of this attitude is relevant today. Poems end the issue.

### 100 years ago: July & August 1921

The **July** magazine starts with a meditation on Hebrews 4:16, the throne of grace. Wayside Notes asks, Is the New Testament inspired? This is in response to the claim of the Higher Critics that the Old Testament is mainly unhistorical. Once a person discounts any part of the Old Testament, he is forced to abandon all the New Testament teaching and doctrine premised on that part. A case in point is given: Canon Barnes of Westminster said that Christian thinkers, abandoning acceptance of the Fall, then abandon all the teaching of the Apostles from Paul on, on the subject. The article is a warning that has lost none of its impact in the intervening century. Reject any part of the Old Testament and we lose the foundation of the New. A sermon on Christ's love for the Church, from Ephesians 5:25–27, is followed by an account of Easter in Nazareth. The Rev F. Harold Peacock of Holy Trinity Buxton (and formerly of St Mary's Castle Street, Reading) describes his visit to Palestine, and many of the sites of biblical events (though he is not willing to accept everything his guide tells him, knowing his Bible better than the guide!). The reason why John records the time when Jesus met the disciples, John 1:39, is considered in a heartfelt and heart-warming piece, which also opens up some of the wonder of that first chapter. Hebrews 10:32 provides the text for another piece, in which the reminiscences of grace and mercy, and of men of grace, is commended. It is occasioned by the recent death of the Rev. W.J. Pollock. The calling of the Gentiles is considered from Romans 9:2. 'A crumb of mercy' considers the first reference to the Lord's mercy in Scripture, finding it in Genesis 19:16, the drawing of Lot out of Sodom. A letter by the late Mr. Alexander

examines the decretive will of God, from Luke 22:22. He argues that to hold to a permissive will in God without also a decretive will is to rob God of the glory and honour due to his name. It is worth reading, and is found on p. 316. Protestant Points shows the fallacy of transubstantiation. Brief items conclude the issue.

The **August** magazine starts with a sermon on Hebrews 4:14, on the Priesthood of Christ. The Editor points out that no other book of the New Testament states this matter, although it is implied elsewhere. The second and final article on the inspiration of the New Testament is followed by a short piece on the cost of the recent miners's strike, estimated to be £257 million. One wonders what the financial cost of the Covid response will turn out to be, let alone the social cost. Exodus 19:19 provides an unusual text for a sermon on the providences of our Sovereign God. Christ's prayer for his people from John 17:9–10 is shown to be a wonderful ground of strength and comfort for the believer. Christ's times of joy and gladness are meditated upon, as is the matter of our looking forward in faith. The reminiscences of grace and mercy continue from the previous month, and that summer's drought is considered from 1 Kings 18:41. Mr. Alexander's meditations on the mercy and grace of God leads to a consideration of the question found in Nahum 1:9, What do ye imagine against the Lord? The reference is incorrectly printed as Nahum 1:1. All who resist the Lord face the fate of Nineveh. Brief items, including the account of the death of a godly woman, are followed by the next Protestant Point, on Sacrifice. Again, Rome's errors are in view. Those errors have never gone away, and only a right view of Christ, as set forth in Scripture, will preserve us in God's truth.

**TO BE CONTINUED**

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**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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