

APRIL, 1964

*The*  
**Gospel Magazine**  
and Protestant Beacon:

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

**The British Protestant**

EDITED BY THE REV. H. M. CARSON, B.A., B.D.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
<i>Editorial</i> . . . . .	145
<i>Biography—Andrew Melville: C. Walker</i> . . . . .	147
<i>Christ our Sufficiency: J. A. Motyer</i> . . . . .	156
<i>From Buddha to Christ: J. R. Bowen</i> . . . . .	160
<i>Vatican Vistas: H. Farrell</i> . . . . .	163
<i>Reformation—Then and Now: W. M. Smyth</i> . . . . .	171
<i>Sermon: H. M. Carson</i> . . . . .	174
<i>Christian Hospitality: L. Samuel</i> . . . . .	183
<i>Young People's Page</i> . . . . .	186
<i>Book Reviews</i> . . . . .	190

GOSPEL MAGAZINE OFFICE:

60 FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.4

May be obtained of any Bookseller.

ESTABLISHED A.D. 1766

One Shilling Monthly

(By Post — 14/6 per Annum)

THE  
**GOSPEL MAGAZINE**

"COMFORT YE, COMFORT YE MY PEOPLE, SAITH YOUR GOD"

"ENDEAVOURING TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE."

"JESUS CHRIST, THE SAME YESTERDAY, AND TODAY, AND FOR EVER"

---

No. 1339  
New Series

APRIL, 1964

No. 2339  
Old Series

---

## **EDITORIAL**

---

Nervous breakdown and mental troubles are a prominent feature of this rather feverish twentieth century. It is a significant comment on the situation that such a high proportion of hospital beds in the National Health service are given over to patients receiving psychiatric treatment. Nor are Christians immune, as doubtless most of us know those who are thus afflicted.

Now clearly there is a mental condition which is as much a sick state as one due to any physical ailment. Such a person requires medical care just as much as a man with tuberculosis. But even here the Christian has certain facts to bear in mind. The grace of God is not limited by an impaired reason. Sovereign grace can bring the light of the gospel even to one who by human standards seems completely unbalanced. Having recently heard a Christian testifying to the way God met her in a mental hospital, I feel we must recall ourselves to our responsibility to pray for those in mental darkness.

But the biblical injunction to "weep with them that weep" surely calls us not only to pray but, where the opportunity arises, to show active sympathy. Obviously not everyone is in a position to visit someone in a mental hospital, but it does seem to be a sad fact that whereas patients in a normal hospital for the physically sick usually have a stream of visitors, those who are mentally sick are often left alone. It is, of course, not so easy to visit them. Conversation does not flow so readily. But when the Lord speaks of those who in visiting the sick visit Him, He surely refers to mental as well as bodily sickness.

There are, of course, many who do not go over the brink of what we call a nervous breakdown. Yet for them depression is a frequently occurring experience. They can echo the Psalmist's cry, "Why are thou cast down, O my soul?" Indeed, Psalm 42 seems to fit their situation completely. Here is a man who is deeply depressed. What makes things worse is the memory of past days of enjoying fellowship with God's people. To complete the blackness of the situation is his feeling that he is failing before others who look on in mockery as they ask, "Where is now thy God?"

But the Psalmist not only describes a condition only too familiar to many a troubled Christian, he also points the way towards an answer. It is no easy glib answer—such answers in times of depression are only a mockery—for we find him three times returning to his acknowledgment of his depressed state. Victory is only slowly gained for him, and has to be sustained.

He begins with a vigorous attitude of detachment. He, as it were, stands back from his soul and addresses himself in strong words. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" He calls on his soul to muster the reasons for the depression; and how valuable it is to begin here, for many of the unformulated anxieties which lurk below the surface are more easily faced when they are forced into the light of day.

But one senses not merely a command given to his soul, but a word of rebuke. He is saying as he stands back and looks at himself, "What right have I to be depressed? I who have such a God. I who have so often proved the faithfulness of this God; I who know He will never leave me nor forsake me—why art thou cast down, O my soul?"

This leads him on to the answer: "Hope thou in God." Turn your eyes away from the difficulties and from your own weaknesses and look away to your God. It is the same thought as in Hebrews 12 : 1—we are to "look away" unto Jesus.

There is a significant change in the wording of the Psalm. At first he says, "I will yet praise Him for the help of His countenance." He has glimpsed through the cloud of depression the smile of his heavenly Father and the "help His countenance" is his support. But later he can say, "I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance." Here the picture is surely this—before, we see a man with a worried anxious face and tense expression, but now there is a healthy countenance, a face on which calm begins to show and where the peace of God is evident. Having seen the face of God, the peace he has learnt now shows in his own face.

# ANDREW MELVILLE

by

C. WALKER

The only apologia required for writing about Andrew Melville is that his life was a great one, and that it does us good to read about it.

He was born in 1545 into a Protestant family near Montrose, a district where the majority of the people had for some time been in sympathy with the Reformed Faith. His father was killed at the Battle of Pinkie two years later. His mother gave him the best education available until her death in 1557, after which he was taken into the household of his eldest brother, Richard, a Reformed minister who had studied at Wittenburg under Melancthon. From his earliest years, Melville 'took pleasure in nathing so meikle [much] as his book,' and at the age of fourteen he entered the University of St. Andrews. The education offered there could scarcely be called liberal. The only text-books used were the Works of Aristotle, and Melville was soon able to read them in the original. This was more of an accomplishment than it sounds, for none of the professors at that time could do it.

## A STUDENT IN GENEVA

It was then the custom of Scottish students to augment the meagre education which Scotland could offer them, by further studies on the Continent. When he was nineteen, Melville went to study at the University of Paris, then the most famous seat of learning in Europe. There he continued his study of Latin and Greek, and began the study of Hebrew, Philosophy and Rhetoric. About two years later he went to the University of Poitiers to learn Jurisprudence and in 1569 to Geneva to complete his education by studying Theology. He was warmly received by Beza, who, after Calvin's death, was the leading figure there. Melville's ability to converse fluently in Greek was a source of astonishment to the Genevan scholars and he was soon appointed to the Chair of Humanity at the College. He spent five happy years at Geneva, being at the same time a professor and a student. He studied theology and perfected his knowledge of Hebrew, Chaldee and Syriac.

Melville might well have been content to spend his life in the peaceful academic atmosphere of the Genevan College. He had to a great extent lost touch with his friends in Scotland during the ten years he spent on the Continent, but in 1574 a Scottish visitor to

Geneva returned home with news of Melville's work and reputation. A request soon followed from the Scottish Kirk asking him to return to give Scotland the benefit of his learning. He felt the call of duty and asked to be released from his engagements in Geneva. "The graitest token of affection the Kirk of Genev could schow to Scotland," wrote Beza, 'is that they suffered themselves to be spoiled of Mr. Andro Melville, whereby the Kirk of Scotland might be enriched."

#### A PROFESSOR IN SCOTLAND

Melville returned to Scotland in 1574 with the object of devoting his life to improving the state of education. Although he devoted the next thirty-two years to raising the standards of the Universities, this is not the work by which he is chiefly remembered. It was a work, however, which he himself regarded as important, and which greatly influenced the subsequent history of education in Scotland. Melville's reputation, when he returned from the Continent, was so great that both the Universities of St. Andrews and Glasgow wanted him to be Principal. He decided that the condition of Glasgow University was the worse of the two and went there, with his nephew James, in October, 1574. There were no students to teach and scarcely anyone capable of teaching any who might come. Melville began by training a number of young men to become regents (professors) and the astonishing list of subjects which he trained them to teach included Dialectics, Rhetoric, Greek, Latin and Oriental languages, Mathematics, Physics, History, Geography, Philosophy and Theology. It was not a case with Melville of being "jack of all trades and master of none." It is claimed that in each subject he took his classes as far as the highest standard of any University in Europe, and this claim has for its support the fact that within a few years there was a reversal of the "brain drain" to the Continent, and Continental students came flocking to Glasgow in crowds too great to be accommodated. Melville introduced to Scotland a system of specialisation, to replace the old system under which students received instruction on the entire curriculum from one professor.

In 1580 Melville left Glasgow to become Principal of St. Mary's College, St. Andrews, which had been set apart for theological studies. He introduced reforms there very much on the same lines as he had done in Glasgow. He worked in St. Andrews for twenty-six years, and this period saw a revival of learning in Scotland, not only in the Universities, but in the country as a whole. It was a time in which there was a great increase in the publication of books, not only on religion but on general subjects. It was, in fact, a much needed period of enlightenment.

The work which Melville accomplished in the Scottish Universities up to 1606 might well be regarded as being sufficient to occupy his entire time and attention. If it had, he might well have remained there until his death in 1622. In 1604, however, he was summoned by King James to London to discuss the affairs of the Church and he was never again permitted to return to his native land. It is the circumstances which led to his final clash with the King, his imprisonment and final exile, that bring out Melville's true greatness and nobility. One would have to go back to the time of the prophet Daniel before one could find a character bearing a close resemblance to him. Like Daniel, Melville was a man of great intellect, a scholar with the breadth of mind required to make a great statesman. Daniel's memory, however, is not held in reverence for his wise and good government, but for the way in which godly principles became part of his being so that, even in the face of angry tyrants, he could not deny them, or indeed refrain from proclaiming them. It is this same high moral force, begotten of the Word of God, that worked in Andrew Melville and made him stand head and shoulders above his fellows.

#### A LEADER IN THE CHURCH

When Melville returned to Scotland in 1574 the Church was in dire need of a leader. Knox had died in 1572 and a form of episcopacy was coming back into the Church. The Roman hierarchy had been allowed to remain in Scotland and to retain their titles and the greater part of their revenues, although when any of them joined the Reformed Church they had to do so on the same basis as other members. The new Church, although established by law, was allotted only a portion of one-third of the ecclesiastical revenues and naturally wished that all or a greater part of these revenues should be transferred for her own use. Some of the nobility, however, seeing the prospect of rich pickings, opposed the Church's claim to the revenues and bestowed the benefices upon themselves. They then appointed to these benefices bishops who soon became known as Tulchan bishops. A "tulchan" was a stuffed calf which was often placed near cows to induce them to give more milk. These bishops were prepared to accept office and receive a fraction of the benefice, the lion's share being claimed by the lords temporal. The Regent Morton was one of the chief instigators of this simoniacal order of bishops, and his object as well as to acquire a fortune ("he was wonderfoilly giften to gather gear") was to be able to exercise control over the Church through the bishops.

These bishops soon began to feel that their titles gave them greater authority than other ministers, and the whole Tulchan scheme began

to cause dissatisfaction in the Church. On hearing of the growing dissatisfaction, the Regent threatened the freedom of the Assembly and claimed for the Crown supreme authority within the Church. At this point the issues became clear and battle was joined. The matter at issue was, as William Morison put it in his life of Melville published in 1899: "Was the Church to be essentially the Church of Christ in Scotland, or was she to be the religious department, so to speak, of the Civil Service?"

It was to this situation that Melville returned in 1574 and he immediately exerted all his influence to strengthen the hands of his brethren. In August, 1575, a General Assembly was held and a resolution was proposed which questioned whether the office of bishop had scriptural authority. Melville made a speech which left no one in doubt of the way his mind was working. "Prelacy," he said, "had no foundation in Scriptures and, viewed as a human expedient, its tendency was extremely doubtful . . . the words 'bishop' and 'presbyter' are used interchangeably in the New Testament . . . from ecclesiastical history it is evident that for a considerable time bishops were parochial and not diocesan . . . that the corruptions crept into the state of bishops were so great that unless the same were removed, it could not go well with the Church, nor could religion be long preserved in purity." A committee was appointed to consider the question further, and in the following April the Assembly resolved that all bishops "at large" should have to take charge of a particular congregation.

#### UNDER ATTACK

The Regent found the Assembly's attitude unpalatable and soon came to the conclusion that he would find the Church more manageable if Melville could be silenced. He offered him a Court Chaplaincy with the promise of the Archbishopric of St. Andrews, and when bribery failed, he was foolish enough to try intimidation. After a dispute with Melville one day, the Regent said: "Ther will never be quyetness in this country till half a dozen of you be hangit or banished the country." "Tushe, sir," was the reply, "threaten your courtiers in that fashion. It is the same to me whether I rot in the air or in the ground. The earth is the Lord's. My fatherland is wherever well-doing is. I have been ready to giff my life when it was not halff so well wared [spent] at the pleasure of my God. I lived out of your country ten years as well as in it. Yet God be glorified, it will not lye in your power to hang nor exyll His treuth." Melville's opposition to the bishops and to royal interference in the government of the Church continued, and in 1578 the Assembly resolved that no more bishops be elected. In that same year a fresh

constitution was adopted. This was called the *Second Book of Discipline* and was mainly Melville's work. It superseded Knox's *First Book of Discipline* and acted as a guiding light to subsequent centuries of Scottish Presbyterianism. The old office of superintendent, which had been used as a means of re-introducing bishops, was abolished by this new constitution, and in 1580 the Assembly required all the bishops to give up office. Within a year all but five of the bishops had given up their sees.

The opposition which the Church received from Morton was little when compared with the open hostility of his successors, the Duke of Lennox and the Earl of Arran. These men exercised the strongest influence over King James, who, in 1578, in his twelfth year, had taken over the government. Lennox soon showed his colours. When a vacancy occurred in the See of Glasgow he took over the benefice and appointed Robert Montgomery, minister of Stirling, as Archbishop. The Church reacted at once. Montgomery was put on trial for contumacy and was deposed and excommunicated. Montgomery attempted to inhibit the proceedings against himself by appearing at one stage of the case before the Presbytery of Glasgow with an interdict signed by the King against the case proceeding. Realising that the King's interdict might not be enough, Montgomery was supported by the presence of the magistrates and an escort of soldiers. The Presbytery ignored the visitors, and although the Moderator was removed from his chair and taken to prison, it carried on with its business. A number of ministers were proceeded against by the Crown for their concurrence in the Church's treatment of Montgomery and for their opposition to Lennox.

Because of the violent form that the opposition to the Church had taken, a special meeting of the Assembly was called in 1582. Melville denounced the "bludie gullie [knife] of absolute authority, whereby many intended to pull the crown off Christ's head and pull the scepter out of his hand." A statement of the Church's complaints was drawn up and Melville and some others were delegated to present it to the King. They duly appeared before the King and his Council. The diary of Melville's nephew, James (from which all the quotations in this article are taken; to make the reader's task a little easier I have anglicised some of the quotations), shows that the Earl of Arran, like Morton, was foolish enough to risk losing face by trying to intimidate Melville. "Arran began to threttin with frowning brow and bosting language. 'What,' says he, 'wha dare subscribe these treasonable articles?' 'We dar and will subscribe them,' was the reply, 'and render our lives in the cause.'" He then took the pen from the clerk and signed his name. The other delegates also

signed. Lenox and Arran had not reckoned on such a reaction and the delegates left unmolested.

Arran could not forgive Melville for this incident and in 1584 he accused him of using treasonable words in one of his sermons at St. Andrews. Melville was summoned before the Council, but declined to accept their jurisdiction on the ground that if he had spoken improperly, he should in the first instance be tried by the presbytery. The King and Arran were furious, but "Mr. Andro, never swerving nor abashed a whit, with magnanimous courage, mightie force of spirit and abundance of evidence of reason and language, plainly tauld the King and Council that they presumed over boldly in passing by the pastors, prophets and doctors of a constitute Christian Kirk, to tak upon them to judge the doctrine and controll the ambassadors and messengers of a King and Council graiter than they, and far above them! 'And that,' says he, 'your weakness, oversight and rashness in taking upon you what ye neither aught nor can do' (lowsing a litle Hebrew Byble from his belt and clanking it down on the board before King and Chancelar), 'thair is,' says he, 'my instructions and warrant.' The chancelar, opening the book, findes it Hebrew, and putes it in the King's hand, saying, 'Sir, he scornes your majestie and counsall.' 'Na, my lord,' sayes Mr. Andro, 'I skorn naught; but with all earnestness, zeall and gravitie, I stand for the cause of Jesus Christ and his kirk.'" The case against Melville was not proved, but he was condemned for the boldness of his defence, and shortly afterwards ordered to retire to the Castle of Blackness. He decided instead to make a speedy exit to England and remained there for two years, until the overthrow of Arran made his return possible.

In his absence presbyterianism was overthrown and a state-controlled Church was set up. The "Black Acts" of 1584 made it treasonable to speak evil of bishops, in whom the jurisdiction of the Church was to be vested. The King was to be supreme in all matters, civil and ecclesiastical, and all rejection of his authority in either sphere was to be accounted treasonable. No assembly was to be held except when called by the King. Ministers of the Church were required to sign an act of submission to the bishops on penalty of losing their office. During the ensuing year many of the ministers did submit to this indignity.

When Arran fled the country in 1585, and Melville and other ministers returned, it was thought that the "Black Acts" would soon be repealed. The King was conciliatory to the Church, but at first made no alteration in the substance of these Acts. The Church, however, so much rejected the law which made it treasonable to

speaking evil of bishops, that in 1586 one of them, Archbishop Adamson, was excommunicated. The power of episcopacy, however, was not broken until the following year, and it was James himself who put an end to it. He then reached the age of twenty-one and took advantage of a law in force to revoke grants of Crown lands made while he was a minor. The Church lands were thus taken over by the Crown and the bishops lost not only their benefices but their legal status. It was not, however, until 1592 that an Act was passed repealing all the previous enactments in favour of Episcopacy and establishing the Church again with the Second Book of Discipline for her constitution, and the right to manage her own affairs. For the first time, presbyteries had the right to present ministers to vacant livings. Christ was acknowledged at last, by the law of the land, to have the sole right of ruling His own household.

#### CHALLENGING THE KING

The passing of this Act did not arise out of a change of heart towards the Church on the part of James, and by 1595 he was beginning to show himself openly hostile again. Melville more than once crossed swords with the King. It would be unpardonable for even the briefest account of Melville's life to omit James Melville's account of the delegation from the Kirk to the King, asking him to reconsider the decision to restore the Popish lords who had been involved in a plot to assist Philip of Spain in the event of the forces of the Armada landing in Scotland.

"Mr. Andro Melville, Patrick Galloway, James Nicolson and I, cam to Falkland, where we found the King verie quyete. The rest relied upon be to be speaker, alleaging I could propound the matter substantiallie and in a myld and smooth manner which the King lyked best of. And, entering in the Cabinet with the King alane, I shew his Majestie, that lae Commissioners of the Generall Assemblie, with certain other brethren, ordained to watch for the welfare of the Kirk in so dangerous a tyme, had convened at Cowper. At which word the King interrupts me and crabbedly quarrels our meeting, alleaging it was without warrant and seditius, making ourselves and the countrey to conceive fear where was no cause. To the which, I beginning to reply, in my manner, Mr. Andro could not abyde it, but broke off upon the King in so zealous, powerful and unresistable a manner, that howbeit the King used his authoritie in maist crabbit and colerik manner; yet Mr. Andro bore him down, and uttered the Commission as from the mightie God, calling the King 'God's sillie vassall'; and taking him by the sleeve, sayes this in effect, through much hot reasoning and many interruptions: 'Sir, we will humblie reverence your Majestie alwayes,

namlie in publick, but since we have this occasion to be with your Majestie in private, and the truth is ye are brought into extreme danger, both of your lyfe and crown, and with you the countrey and Kirk of Christ is lyke to wreck for not telling you the truth and giving you a faithfull counsell, we must discharge our duty therein, or else be traitors both to Chryst and you. And, thairfor, sir, as divers tymes before, so now again, I must tell you, thair is two Kings and two kingdomes in Scotland. Thair is Christ Jesus the King, and his Kingdom the Kirk, whose subject King James the Sixth is, and of whose kingdom not a king, nor a lord, nor a head, but a member. . . . And, sir, when ye were in your swaddling-cloutes, Chryst Jesus reigned freely in this land in spyte of all his enemies.’ ”

The King gave way and promised that the Popish lords would “get no grace at his hands till they satisfied the Kirk.” It was not long, however, before they were restored to their former positions.

#### IMPRISONMENT

The next ten years of Melville’s life were taken up by a relentless struggle between James and the Church. James could never leave an area which was not subject to his absolute authority, and Melville could never keep quiet when the Kingship of Christ was being attacked. In May, 1606, Melville and his nephew, with six other ministers, received a summons from James to confer with him in London about the affairs of the Church. The King hoped that the conversation and the sermons of the bishops of the Church of England might make the Scots better disposed towards episcopacy. Failing that, he waited until Melville could stand the empty sermons and Romanising rituals no more, and then called him to account for writing an epigram in Latin, satirising a service in the Royal Chapel. Melville was ordered to remain in the custody of the Dean of St. Paul’s. A few months later he was ordered to transfer to the custody of the Bishop of Winchester, but, although he left the Dean, he did not go to the Bishop and he lodged for two months with his other brethren. On Sunday morning, the 26th April, 1607, Melville received an urgent letter to meet the Earl of Salisbury at Whitehall. Melville went at once, but as the Earl did not keep his appointment, he got tired of waiting and went to an inn in Westminster, where he knew his nephew was to dine with two other ministers. While the table was being spread, he expounded to them from the second Psalm and they prayed together. Melville was fairly sure that he was to be brought before the Council because of his satirical verses. It is interesting to hear him speak his mind on the prospect of being tried, not this time in the heat of the battle, but to his friends before it commenced. “My heart is full and burdened, and I will be glad

to have an occasion to disburden it and speik all my mynd plainly to them for the dishonouring of Chryst." Melville never had to "screw up" his courage to testify to the truth. The truth had so much taken hold of him that he was always looking for opportunities to declare it.

In the middle of his lunch, Melville was summoned before the Council, and within the hour he was taken to the Tower. During his first year there he was treated very severely and was not even allowed writing materials. The need to express himself was too strong to be inhibited, however, and the wall of his room was covered in verses written with his shoe-buckle. After the first year, however, the rigour was relaxed and he was permitted to write. His main recreation was in writing poetry, and he used to send many of his compositions to his closest friend, his nephew James, with whom he kept up a regular correspondence. Melville remained in the Tower for over three years, and it was not until a request was made to the King by a French nobleman to release him to fill the Chair of Divinity at the University of Sedan, in France, that James reluctantly let him go.

Little is known of the last years of Melville's life. He remained at Sedan, happy in his work and, in spite of the increasing blows aimed at the Church by James, he was cheerful and full of hope. It must have been some consolation to know that his educational work had not been fruitless. He had constant reminders in France of the fruits of his labours, as many of the professors in the French Universities were his former pupils. His health remained excellent until he was well advanced in years, but it finally broke down in 1620 and he died in 1622 in his seventy-seventh year. Exile had not been pleasant to him, but he could bear it better than many another man. As he said himself: "My fatherland is wherever well-doing is."

---

"Now remember that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone. Looking at our own shining faces is the bane of the spiritual life and of the ministry. Oh, for closest communion with God, till soul, and heart shine with Divine brilliancy! But oh, for a holy ignorance of our shining!"  
—W. C. Burns.

# CHRIST OUR SUFFICIENCY

by

J. A. MOTYER

Romans 13: 14: "*Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.*"

Strange as it seems to say it, there is hardly anything easier for the Christian than to forget the Lord Jesus Christ! For example, in honesty how often during the day are we really aware of the presence of the Lord with us, and how often are we completely forgetful of Him? This is not our testimony to others. In our words we rejoice in the promise: "Lo, I am with you always"—and, thank God, in spite of our unworthiness and disregard of Him, the promise is unfailingly kept, and He, for His part, never leaves us and never forsakes us. But we go through the day often without conscious enjoyment of this great spiritual reality.

Or take the case of the Christian student at his books—much occupied with the things of God, wrestling with the great problems of the faith, storing up information and knowledge—but consciously aware of the Lord? Consciously enjoying Him? Consciously relating all he reads to the reality of His blessed personal nearness? Very often it is not so.

And even at the Lord's Table, when we meet purposely to remember Him, according to His command—even at the very moment when we take into our hands the outward symbols which He intended should point vividly to Himself, is it not so that our minds are frequently a blank? No doubt they are a spiritual blank! But how easy it is to forget the Lord rather than to remember Him!

It was not for this that the disciples were called Christians! A nickname fastens on to a notable characteristic. How much the Lord Jesus Christ must have been the centre of the life and talk, and experience of those early believers that they should have been called Christians! Paul was no exceptional case in that company when he said, "To me to live is Christ." But somehow we rather feel bound to admit that he is talking of an experience of the Lord Jesus about which we know very little.

Against this background of our admission that we need a much richer experience of our Saviour, let us examine Paul's exhortation that we should put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and let us draw out of it two broad lessons:

I. *The sole-sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ for daily life.*

These chapters of the epistle to the Romans in which Paul is

dealing with the problems and duties of everyday life are insistent the Christian needs no other solution to his needs than Jesus. He is the focal point of Christian unity (12: 5); it is His lordship which sweetens and makes possible the tiny and often vexing duties of the day (12 : 11); it is He who is Lord of the Church and Judge of the individual believer (14 : 10) and the great Example of that self-submission which ought to be the mark of relationships between church members (15 : 2-3). And in Romans 13, the chapter with which this study is concerned, the Lord Jesus is displayed as the key to holy living in pagan society. In verses 1-7, Paul is concerned with the relation of Christians to their rulers in worldly society; and in verses 8-14 he turns to the life of the Christian in the company of his fellow members of this dark world. Now, here, in the world, is the source of many of the snares which beset us, the temptations which daunt us, the problems of personal relationships which puzzle us. But Paul has only one solution: Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. It is his sole recipe for the living of the Christian life in this world. Jesus is enough!

Let us try to see the greatness of Paul's claim for his Saviour a little more clearly. In verse 12, he proclaims, "The day is at hand." In verse 13, he calls his fellow Christians to "walk . . . as in the day." In other words he is saying to them: You are not yet enjoying the full glory that is yet to be, but you must live as if you were! You do not yet know the splendour which the day will bring when it dawns; you are held in the deepening shades of night; but you must live the life that is proper to the day; you must display on earth the characteristics of heaven. And his sole recipe for this is to put on the Lord Jesus Christ!

Paul is very realistic in this matter. He is not giving pious but useless information. He knows the problems of life. Firstly, he reminds them of the need of *holiness of the body* (verse 13): "not in revelling and drunkenness; not in chambering and wantonness." There is a terrible possibility of doctrinal soundness cohabiting with bodily impurity. The people to whom he wrote were capable of receiving Paul's greatest doctrinal writing, but they needed to be warned about revelling and drunkenness, debauchery and licentiousness. The words the apostle used are all in the plural, as though he were saying to them to keep clear of bodily excess and indulgence in every shape and form. Doubtless we, as Christians, would concur in the condemnation of major bodily excess, but at the same time cherish our pet (and, as we would have it, small) indulgences. But if we are to be Christians of the apostolic mould we need to "buffet our bodies and bring them into subjection." And very likely there

is not one of us without some besetting sin of the body. Paul has an answer: Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Secondly, he has the same solution for our need of *holiness of the spirit* (verse 13): "not in strife and jealousy." Truly the New Testament knows nothing of our convenient grades of sin! How horrified the average congregation would be if one of its members were found out in a gross moral perversion! But did you ever know a church where someone was not well dyed with strife and jealousy, and was not considered any the worse for it? And no one who has ever been bitten with the bug of personal animosity and bitterness will be ready to say it is a sin easily eradicated. But Paul has an answer: Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, he sees our need for *holiness of the mind* as yielding to the same treatment (verse 14): "take not forethought (make not provision) for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." The holiness which Paul desires for the Christian—the holiness which belong to "the day"—goes the whole way. It is not a mere sheen on the outside; it belongs also to the mind. And here the final citadel of sin is displayed as yielding to the same remedy, the putting on of the Lord Jesus. The very idea describes Him as an all-covering robe, an all-sufficient provision and protection.

This, then, is Christ our sufficiency. No matter whether we see ourselves as in dire need of every aspect of the holiness the apostle portrays, or whether it is in some particular sin of the body, spirit, and mind that we are conscious of failure, conscious of losing ground to the world, the Lord Jesus is the answer. Wear Him, and need no more!

But how do we wear Him? We turn to the second lesson which is discernible in the text:

## II. *The practical enjoyment of the Lord Jesus Christ in daily life.*

Clearly Paul saw himself as offering something more than a vague aspiration when he told the Romans to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. They lived in a society remarkably like ours. Every day brought its challenge to the purity of the Christian's body, the contentment of the Christian's spirit, and the godliness of the Christian's thoughts. These people needed a positive answer to a very threatening world. Paul's answer may be stated under three practical statements:

(1) We enjoy Him as "Lord" when we seek His commands and do them. This is what Lordship means. Its first-cousin is obedience! If we do not obey Jesus, there is no point in calling Him Lord, or in pretending that we are putting Him on as Lord. "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me" (John

14:21). Far too often we Christians venture out into the day without having waited on our Lord to learn what He wants of us. Consequently the day passes without any enjoyment of being the servants of the great King, and we fall into sin and failure because we are not putting Him on as Lord. We can only wear Him as Lord if we start the day with His Word and with the prayer, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

(2) We enjoy Him as "Jesus" when we meditate upon His example and follow it. Jesus is the "human" name; the name of the Man who lived the utterly perfect, spotless life. He is our model—our bodies like His; our spirits like His; our minds like His. Surely it is not without purpose that there are four gospels, four specially drawn portraits of the perfect life. Is not the divine Author of Holy Scripture telling us that there is something which is four times more important to read than anything else? Let our morning Bible reading always include a passage from the gospels, in order that we may meditate upon His example, and then wear Him throughout the day as our all-enveloping robe by modelling ourselves on Him.

(3) We enjoy Him as Christ when we rest, moment by moment, in conscious deliberate faith upon His atoning death, the "one sacrifice for sins for ever," and on His resurrection, the mighty pledge of power that we may walk in newness of life. "Christ" is the official title of God's anointed Saviour. If we are to wear Him thus, then not only must our study be much in His word, and our attention focussed on the gospel story of His life, but our constant pre-occupation must be His cross and His tomb—*both empty*, for the work of redemption has been fully and finally done, and the Risen One, alive for evermore, pledges power and victory to His people. Above all things, let us put Him on in the perfection of His saving efficacy!

Nothing more is needed. Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.

---

"There is no sympathy like that of Christ. In all our afflictions He is afflicted. He knows our sorrows. In all our pain He is pained, and like the good physician He will not measure out to us one drop of sorrow too much."  
—J. C. Ryle.

# FROM BUDDHA TO CHRIST

## The Story of a Japanese Luther

By

J. R. BOWEN

Young Tasei Michihata sat at the top of his pine tree. He took off his priest's girdle and lashed one end of it to a stout branch. The other end he had made into a noose and was about to slip it round his neck when he was startled by a voice: "Stop! Have you forgotten the vision?" He gazed around, but there was no-one in sight. Yet he felt that he was not alone: there seemed to be a higher power holding him in its control, and the time for him to die had not yet come. The girdle swung limply from the branch. Michihata climbed down from his tree and walked sadly away. His world was crumbling about him. It had been a world of religion, and his life a life of seeking for the supreme spiritual experience, a vision of Amida. Twice he had endured the prescribed 90 days of self-discipline, every day sousing his body with cold water three times, and 3,000 times repeating "Oh save, Amida Buddha!" At the end of the first period of discipline he had jumped into a ten-foot well. Instead of being welcomed into Paradise, as he had expected, by twenty-five Bodhisatvas seated upon purple clouds, he awoke to find himself, to his bitter disappointment, still in this present world, without even having seen a vision. And now this second disillusionment. His weary search must continue.

Michihata was ordained to the priesthood at the early age of six. Adopted by the priest of a village temple, he was constantly busy about the temple ceremonies, visiting worshippers and reading the sutra (the sacred writings) at the family shrines. He was utterly faithful to his original commission, which had told him to be filial to his parents and earnest in his religious life. His first disillusionment came when his father introduced into the temple a prostitute who eventually bore him three children. The adopted boy lost favour forthwith and was cruelly treated. This sorrow drove him to seek the truth even more earnestly. To attract more people to his temple he took up drinking; very soon he was a slave to the habit and his life a misery. He turned for consolation to the life to come; hence his two attempts at suicide.

The next act in the drama found the young man at the priests' training college. There he was shocked at the irreverence of his

fellow-students. The ceremonies were ridiculed, the prayers parodied and both questions and answers to the terminal examinations were distributed to the students a week in advance. Three times a day there took place the ritual sousing with buckets of cold water. What an opportunity for youthful horse-play! Three thousand times a day the invocation to Buddha was repeated . . . but the words that came from the mouths of many were no more reverent than "Hail, friend bean-curd!" During services students ate meat and drank wine, practices forbidden by Buddha's "Ten Commandments." The people hated the commandments so instead of preaching them to the living, the priests explained them to the corpses at funerals instead! Michihata tried to reform this attitude but as he preached a man cried out "We don't want to hear that stuff!" Obediently the preacher left his theme in favour of some emotional fairy-tale. Michihata tells us that as he travelled the length of Japan in his ministry he found much moral advice but no moral practice, much talk but no action, nor did he ever meet any Buddhist leader of high moral character. Depressed, he went on striving. He would sit naked for fifty nights, reading the sutra while the mosquitoes sucked his blood. No vision came, so he abandoned the college for a life of study in one of the libraries. Here his disillusionment was completed, for he found that his religion denied the existence of any being higher than man and had no belief in the immortality of the soul.

The first Christian service he attended impressed him by its reverent atmosphere. He went more often, and one day at a prayer meeting he was amazed to hear a layman praising God for saving him from drunkenness—for he knew that he, though a priest of Buddha, was powerless to overcome the craving. He therefore began to pray to Amida Buddha as he had heard the Christians pray, but at once it seemed ludicrous, for he did not really believe in his god's existence. He studied the Bible, fasted for a week on a mountain-top—he was almost beside himself in agony of soul, but still no light came to dispel his darkness.

One day, 10th May, 1910, the anniversary of his father's death, he had gone through all the usual rites for the dead, and turned at last to the Bible. The fifteenth chapter of Luke opened before him and as he read again and again, he knew that he was that lost sheep. He knew, too, that the Good Shepherd was saying to him, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "In that instant," he writes, "my heart was so filled with gratitude and joy I could scarcely speak . . . and I put my face down on the book, my eyes overflowing with tears of joy. I seemed

to be filled with various emotions: gratitude, joy and conviction of sin. The light of God's word shone into my very soul. I was filled with the fire of His Holy Spirit. I stood up new-born in the Kingdom of God. I knew I had attained salvation, I had grasped a real faith. I had gained that for which I had sought so long. I danced about, waving my arms for sheer joy, not knowing where I trod." The local pastor, to whom he hurried to give the news, declared him to be ready for baptism as soon as he left his priesthood. But his wife and all his friends opposed him. He could not earn a living any other way but as a priest. So he went on with his ceremonies and his sutra in public, but alone sang hymns, read the Bible and prayed to God through Christ. At last one evening he came to these words: "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" This wonderful truth came home to his heart, and he hurried out to his wife in the kitchen and read her the passage, saying, "Look here! the Bible says God has promised to take care of His people . . . . If I had had sufficient faith from the beginning I could have made the change at any time. One who has strong faith does not mind pulling a cart or a rickshaw or even doing rough manual labour. We will leave this place tomorrow, trusting everything in God."

Six months after his conversion, Michihata was baptised in Osaka. His Buddhist friends assumed that he had been persuaded to change his faith by the riches the foreigners could offer. When they found out that he had given all his silk robes to his brother and was living a very simple life over a Gospel hall, his priest's cotton robes dyed and made over into ordinary garments, they changed their minds and decided there could not be much in the new way of life after all. He entered Bible School and twenty-five years later was able to write in his autobiography, "From Buddha to Christ," that in that time, devoted to preaching and writing, all his material needs had been fully met.

---

"In prayer, I have been greatly troubled; sometimes I have thought I should see the Devil, nay, thought I have felt him, behind me, pull my clothes; he would be also continually at me in the time of prayer to have done; break off, make haste, you have prayed enough, and stay no longer!"  
—*John Bunyan.*

# VATICAN VISTAS

by

HUGH FARRELL

*This tape-recorded address by Dr. H. Farrell is printed by permission of the Council of the Protestant Reformation Society. The freedom of the spoken word has been largely retained.*

## AIMS OF THE VATICAN COUNCIL

The Vatican Council was primarily called in order that the Roman Catholic Church might bring itself into the present age. The last working Council of the Roman Catholic Church was four hundred years ago. The first Vatican Council, which adjourned after very few sessions a hundred years ago, really did very little other than declare the Pope infallible. So the last real working Council of the Roman Catholic Church was the Council of Trent, which was in the middle of the sixteenth century. It lasted approximately eight years in session, and it was the counter-Reformation Council. It set out to destroy the Reformation and all of the work of the Reformation. So for four hundred years the Roman Catholic Church has been acting upon the decrees of the Council of Trent. Some of these decrees, not concerning faith but concerning legislative matters, and methods of operation, are now outdated, and the Roman Catholic Church feels that it must bring its whole operation into the "space age," as we say. The Canon Law was revised and edited in 1919 and the Roman Church is acting according to that Law today. This aim to revise Canon Law was thus the first purpose for which the Pope summoned the Vatican Council Number 2.

The second purpose was in order to demonstrate to the world the power and the majesty and the worldly glory of the Roman Catholic Church. And certainly we have to own that it has been the greatest publicity effort of this century, for the Vatican Council has been able to get, for three years, publicity weekly in every newspaper possibly in the world (with the exception of Red China and very few others), as well as radio and television coverage. The third reason for which the Pope summoned the Council was in order to demonstrate the unity of the Roman Catholic Church. John mentioned this several times in his allocutions in Rome when he would have large pilgrimages there; he wanted to show how the bishops all worked as one.

## THE PRESENT POSITION

Now what is the present state of the Vatican Council and how much have they accomplished? Well, actually they have accomplished the first aim because they are in the process of revising Canon Law. Now remember Canon Law has nothing to do with doctrine. Please bear that in mind, for there is much confusion in this matter. Canon Law consists of laws that help the church to function perfectly. It has nothing to do with proclaimed doctrine.

The last meeting of the present session of the Vatican Council has just been concluded and the working of the present session has been made public. Now what is going to come out of it? First of all, the liturgy has been revised. The liturgy is going to be simplified, and the administration of the Sacraments is going to be permitted in the vernacular of the people; for the English, in English; for the French, in French; for the Germans, in German. They have also done away with some of the parts of the Mass which were eleventh-century additions. But remember this, that no matter what you read about the changes in the ceremonies of the Mass, the Mass is still the same.

Another thing that they will proclaim out of this present Session of the Vatican Council is an option for the bishops to meet together as a College, that is of each nation. For instance, here in England they will meet under the Archbishop of Westminster, who actually is not the Primate of England because they are waiting until they get back Canterbury, and therefore they have never made a Primatial See here; Westminster is merely a titular diocese in transit. They have every intention of reclaiming Canterbury, and indeed the time is very close. Now at the head of the episcopacy here in the Roman Catholic Church in England, the Archbishop of Westminster will preside. They will meet together as a College and they will decide what parts of the Mass to allow in English. They will permit also certain changes to be made in the ministration of the sacraments. I have not seen the final report, of course, and I am just surmising actually what they are going to do. Take for instance in infant baptism. As you possibly know, if you have ever seen a Roman Catholic baptism, the priest in the course of the ceremonies will take his sputum and put it in the mouth and the ears and the nose of the child and say, "Be thou opened." Well, it has no meaning today, and they are going to do away with it because many parents are simply shocked, after protecting their infant child as they do today, when they take it to the church and see a priest going through such a ceremony. There are other ceremonies that are going to be dropped. The ministration of Extreme Unction—the

name will possibly be changed to the Anointing of the Sick, because Extreme comes from the Latin word "extremus," meaning dying, and it would be more of an anointing such as would be used in a protestant church. But still it will be part of the Viaticum, part of the preparation for death, asking God to have mercy upon the souls; and it most likely will continue to be ministered after death, because the Roman Church believes that two hours have to pass before the soul leaves the body.

#### DIVISION IN THE COUNCIL

The Council is divided into three parts, or three segments. There are the Progressives, or so-called Progressives—and remember these men are not progressive in proclaimed doctrine; they are progressive in their means of expediting doctrine. Then there are the Moderates, whom we might term the "fence sitters"; in other words, they stay up on the fence until they find out which way the ballot is going to go. Then of course there are the Conservatives who believe that all power is rooted in the Curia, that is the Papal appointees in Rome themselves, the servants of the Pope, of whom 9 per cent are Italian, and since the Council of Trent they have controlled the Roman Catholic Church. Previous to that time, there was great independence on the part of each diocese, but with the Council of Trent, much of that independence was removed as a means or method of fighting the Reformation. Now the Conservatives are fighting the Progressives who want this independence restored, while the Conservatives want to maintain the present position.

The Pope's third aim as we saw was to demonstrate what a cohesive body the Roman Church was, but the world has seen for the first time that the bishops are not all of one mind. Now you may say, "Is this something new?" Not at all. You see the Curia in Rome is so powerful that it is a Gestapo, literally. The Curia is so strong that bishops by themselves never before dared to express an opinion; their opinion always had to be the opinion of the Church, because the Curia can remove them. The Consistorial Congregation, which appoints all bishops other than missionary bishops, can remove a bishop; they can resign him. They publish it through the Apostolic Delegate that the Rt. Rev. or Most Rev. So-and-So has submitted his resignation because of reasons of health and is leaving for Rome to take up his residence there; and they usually give him some job that sounds very grand. It is carrying on the Old Roman policy of *promovere remove*—promote and remove. We practise that somewhat in my Government also; it is not at all a strange policy. But now because the

bishops are together, the bishops have suddenly found out that they have real power, and they are trying to exercise this power in Rome. Now I will say this; I am certain, as the bishops have returned now to their own dioceses, again the Curia will apply the screw. The Curia is the working body of the Roman Catholic Church and it is just as impossible for anyone to destroy the Curia as it is for the Government of England to destroy all of the Civil Service in England.

There are twelve departments, twelve Congregations as they are called, and each one has a specific power that they exercise. The highest one is the most dangerous of all; it is the Holy Office of the Inquisition. Now you may be shocked. You may say, "Is not the Inquisition abolished?" No, and if you doubt this, merely get the Irish Catholic Directory which is very truthful in this respect, and you will see the Holy Office listed as the Holy Office of the Inquisition. In the English Catholic Directory, they drop the words "of the Inquisition" because they do not want to let people know that it still functions, but it does. The Holy Office can try a priest or a bishop or an archbishop or a cardinal; can judge him; can depose him; can sentence him; all before they inform him and all before he knows he is on trial; he has no defence whatsoever. So you see, as the bishops return to their dioceses they will again become singular persons; they will not have a body to speak for them.

Therefore out of the whole Vatican Council we can only look for these things to come. There will be these revisions I spoke of. They possibly will also allow a married Diaconate. This is much discussed. Pope Pius XII, Dr. Pacelli, wanted actually a married priesthood. This may come as a tremendous surprise to you, but he felt there was so much concubinage in Italy and France and Spain and South America, that it was much better for the spiritual growth of the church, as he put it, that they would allow the new men coming into the priesthood to marry before they were ordained priests. But John stopped the whole process and said; No, the priests were celibate and would have to remain celibate. Well, then John proposed a married diaconate in the place of a married priesthood, so as to save the vast number of young men that leave the priests' school or seminary before they are ordained priests. These laymen who studied in seminaries but who have since married, or who will be married later on, will assist the priests in the parish. A deacon can give communion, he can bury, he can marry, he can preach; he cannot celebrate Mass or hear confession. So you see this will take an enormous burden off the

parish priest and will multiply the curates in each parish so as to give greater power to the Roman Catholic Church. So this will be brought about, I am certain, at the end of the Vatican Council before it adjourns. But the thing that we must remember at all times is that the Roman Church is not changing doctrine.

The Roman church is an irreformable church. The moment the Roman church changes the decrees of the Council of Trent in regard to doctrine—that is, the sacrifice of the Mass, auricular confession, devotion, veneration, intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints, the doctrine of Purgatory, and all the other decrees of the Council of Trent in relationship to dogmatic belief (doctrine, that is)—the moment she alters those decrees according to the Scriptures, then she ceases to be the Roman Catholic Church, for her doctrine is then restored once more to a Christian position. So do not be confused; do not be misled by all of this publicity that is attended now upon these various changes that are taking place in the Roman Catholic Church, and when you meet a Roman Catholic, or a Roman Catholic challenges you, or possibly you talk to a Roman priest, always bring them back to the point; Are they changing the doctrine?

#### OUR OWN PRESENT SITUATION

Now that brings me to the present situation in England today. The great emphasis is upon fellowship, but have you asked yourself at what cost? Do you want to pay the price that Rome is demanding for fellowship? Today, you are a bigot if you do not want this fellowship. I know evangelical ministers right here in England who feel that any time you criticize Rome you are doing a disservice to Christian fellowship. And they say to me, these same evangelical ministers, and there are more of them than you think actually; they will say, "Well, now just a minute, brother; do you not think that if we are going to get any place in this world, we should come to terms in a sense with the Roman Catholic Church? O yes, they teach some things that we do not quite approve of, but on the other hand, if we were more understanding, possibly they would see our way." Well, that is ridiculous! You know what I thought of Protestants when I was a Roman Catholic? I thought Protestants were the weakest people in the world, and my reasoning was this. Roman Catholics, as a rule, will refuse to be married outside their church, and they will demand that Protestants sign the promises and sign over the innocent unborn children into the Roman Catholic faith. So I deduced in my own mind, not knowing Protestants, that these Protestants really cannot have much faith because they are willing to sacrifice so readily.

Now Roman Catholics will not be impressed by us repudiating the faith of our forefathers. Will it bring us into fellowship? Can fellowship be bought with surrender? Have you ever known anyone who had respect for another person when they surrendered their ideals? It will only confirm in the mind of the Roman Catholics that we have been wrong from the beginning. Now either the Reformation was right or it was wrong. The whole question can be resolved upon this argument. If the Reformation was wrong, then every one of us right at this moment should go right over there to the Cathedral, ring the bell at the presbytery there, and ask to receive instruction in the Roman Catholic Church because if the Reformation was wrong, then the Roman Catholic Church is the true church. If the Reformation was right, if everything proclaimed concerning doctrine, concerning the authority of the Scriptures, was right, and divinely inspired, then the Roman Catholic Church is wrong, because the Roman Catholic Church has not changed since the day of the Reformation. So you have no alternative—either it is right or it is wrong.

We are gathered here in a Protestant witness, so therefore we believe that the Reformation was right in the eyes of God, that it was inspired by God, and therefore we must give our loyalty to the principles of the Reformation. We must be sound in Reformation doctrine. The reason in England that things are so bad at this present time is because too few of the clergymen actually know or preach Reformation doctrine. They are afraid of Reformation doctrine. Therefore it is this fuzzy thinking that exists today among the ministers of this land that is responsible for the evangelicals, even, inclining towards Rome.

Now what will you have here in England and throughout the world if you move into fellowship with the Roman Catholic Church in the spiritual realm? I am not talking about not being good neighbours; God forbid, if you should think of anything else than that. I love Roman Catholics; I hate Romanism. There is a vast difference. We must always love the sinner and hate the sin, and I go out of my way to win Roman Catholics. But what will you have if we achieve spiritual fellowship with the Roman Catholic Church? The Roman Catholic Church will not give up a single doctrine. That means that we have to surrender this priceless heritage that we now possess, for which the great martyrs lived and died, in order to achieve this fellowship.

Then you will come into union with the Roman Catholic Church which claims 550 million members? Now this is a lie, and I will tell

you why. They claim, for instance, Italy as a Roman Catholic country, and Italy is the largest Communist country in Europe, outside the Iron Curtain. The last figures I had on Italy were approximately 37 per cent Communist. I know; I have been repeatedly to Italy; I know the strength of Communism there. France, at one time, was called the eldest daughter of the church. Well, the eldest daughter left the church a long time ago, and the Roman Catholic Church admits today that only about 15 per cent Frenchmen ever practise their faith. This is the cry of the Roman Catholic hierarchy; these are the figures of Cardinal Leonarde of Lille and others of the high members in the hierarchy. You have also in Spain, a Roman Catholic nation so-called, but I know from my own friends there, and not necessarily evangelical friends but Roman Catholic friends, that the day the Roman Catholic Church ceases to be the dominant body in Spain through the government, you will find a great number of people who will no longer be practising Roman Catholics. South America has 185 million people, roughly, but the Roman Catholic Church claims all but five million, that means 180 million people. Yet you read in Roman Catholic missionary magazines that only about 22 million people ever go to the sacraments in South America. So you see that is a fictitious figure also.

There is also my own country, where the Roman Catholic Church loses one million a year to nothing. They are not converted, although a great number of Roman Catholics are being converted in U.S. I preach in independent churches where as much as 30 to 35 per cent of the congregation is made up of former Roman Catholics, converted; that is because about twenty years ago Roman Catholics started coming more to Protestant meetings, out of curiosity, of course. But in my own country, if they lose a million a year even their enormous birth-rate does not offset it. Now where are these millions going? They are going nowhere; they just drop the practice of their religion. Here in England, Archbishop Heenan, when he was Archbishop of Liverpool, on the first Sunday of June in 1959, issued a pastoral letter—I was preaching in Liverpool on that particular Sunday—and in that pastoral letter he said that in England itself 60 to 65 per cent of Roman Catholics from Ireland lost their faith. So you see their figures here are inflated also. You would not be joining a large world-wide body. You would be joining a body that dies constantly and it has to be renewed, you might say, by an enormous birthrate; and that is why the Roman Catholic Church is so strict about family planning.

We must reaffirm the principles of the Reformation. You may

say, "But we are few, we are weak here." We are never few, we are never weak, if God is for us. "If God is for us, who can be against us?" As a matter of fact, the blessed Lord and Saviour never used multitudes. In the beginning He had twelve men to bring the Gospel to the entire world. So you see you have a power, a mighty power, if you believe in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Now hatred will not achieve anything; we must take away all hatred for Roman Catholics. As I said, we must love them but hate the doctrine, because the doctrine is contrary to the teaching of God through His Holy Word. If you are real missionary evangelists you will bring the Gospel to Roman Catholics and Roman Catholics will rejoice and praise you for this marvellous, this unspeakable gift of God.

---

## The Angel of the Covenant

"Behold, I send an Angel before thee."—Exodus 23: 20.  
The Lord God speaks:

The Angel of the Covenant I send  
To keep thee ever in My holy way  
And give thee succour every irksome day;  
He shall on all thy changing wants attend  
And for thy blessing Heaven's rare wealth shall spend.  
His Voice thou shalt give forethought to obey,  
His Arm thy angry enemies shall slay  
And guard thy steps till pilgrimage shall end,  
For, when thy work on earth shall finished be,  
Another way prepared thou shalt find,  
Leading to mansions of the sons of God;  
The unveiled face of Jesus thou shalt see,  
Whilst angels welcome give thy gladsome mind,  
Rejoicing o'er the way thy feet have trod.

T. Pittaway.

# REFORMATION

## —Then and Now

by

W. M. SMYTH

“Your Reverence, I wonder could you come to christen the wean? My mother doesn’t think she’ll do until she’s done”; the sight of a Bible in a prominent position in a room where a corpse is lying, even though the people have never been in church for years; the large attendance at so many churches on Sacrament Sabbath compared with a marked sparseness on normal occasions; the growing emphasis on the Church in the search for authority; the solemn way in which a minister assures his audience, in his zeal for stewardship, that the parable of the rich young ruler teaches that salvation comes by giving your money in response to God; what do these and many other signs suggest today?

They are routine and, by and large, accepted, but may one be forgiven if he takes them as signs of the need for continual reformation in the Church. One of the old Puritans, Robert Traill, spoke of a man being a “natural catholic” because of his desire to merit salvation from God. The tendency is ever with us and would underline the need for continual reformation.

What do we mean by this? Pictures are immediately conjured up of killjoys who wouldn’t smile on the Sabbath. People who dressed in sombre clothes and were forever meddling in other people’s affairs. Is this what is meant? Still others are mindful of Milton’s “New presbyter is old priest writ large,” and think it is simply a ruse to have the Church dominating in society again. Is this what is meant? Or is it simply an attempt to put back the clock?

The Reformation was something greater than this. It was God’s Holy Spirit moving in the Church to bring men back to an allegiance to Christ Jesus as King and Head of the Church. Martin Luther was a young monk who in October, 1517, nailed his celebrated theses to the church door in Wittenburg. Soon all Europe was ablaze with the news. In Switzerland God raised up a young Frenchman, John Calvin, from Noyon, to be the leader in the work in Geneva. His influence has been tremendous. Even the influence of that city in international affairs can be traced to him.

In 1909 the first stone in an international monument to the Reformation was laid in Geneva. It attempted to portray the events and personalities of the struggle. Thus the base is emblazoned with I.H.S. flanked by tongues of flame, symbolizing the centrality of Christ as the rock on which the Church is built. Today we need to reaffirm the sole sufficiency of Christ to save, keep and rule His people. Solo Christo, by Christ alone, was basic to reformed thought.

The rallying cry of the Reformation was salvation by grace through faith. These may seem outdated shibboleths to some, but the reality of which they spoke is still present. Man judged before God is guilty and lost. He can do nothing of himself to be right with God. All his righteousness must come as a gift from God who grants it to him in Christ Jesus.

Farel, Calvin and Knox, three of the figures on the central dais, hold Bibles in their hands. Calvin's is opened. Significant! The Protestants were the people of a book, and that book the Bible. This did not mean they read nothing else, for they were foremost in the world of scholarship. It did mean, however, that they governed their lives by the Word of God. They constantly asserted that the Bible was the Word of God to men, which became real personally when applied by the inner working of the Holy Spirit. We need a return to the Bible today. This demands discipline of study as we seek to grasp its teaching and apply it to all life. It thus demands the grace of obedience. Pleas of new morality can never set aside God's unchanging standards in the Bible. "Light from any quarter" should be used in coming to understand God's Word in Scripture, but "*light from any quarter*" should never be substituted for God's Word. "The Christian is not to set his reason above the Word of God."

Theodore Beza, successor to Calvin and fourth of the central figures, holds in his hands the laws of the Academy founded by Calvin. Here we find stress on education, which was paramount in the Reformed Churches. In Scotland, home of the reputed finest educational system in the world, much is owed to John Knox in this matter. Perhaps today we need to reassert our position in education. Certainly we must see to it that the Reformed Church does not lose its influence in the training of the children of our nation.

Flanking Calvin, Farel, Knox and Beza are representatives of reformed life in political and educational circles throughout the world. Coligny, Admiral of France; William the Silent, Prince of Orange; Etienne Bockkay, of Hungary; Oliver Cromwell, Protector of England; Roger Williams, from the United States, and Frederick

William, Great Elector of Brandenburg. These speak of the necessity of applying the teaching of the Bible to the whole of life.

They remind us that the Church is not composed of clerics and laity, but the true laity—the people of God—taking their place in their own vocation and living as witnesses there. What a difference it would make if Christian politicians, trade unionists, employers and employees, housewives and others, lived in the light of this. We would see a better society and get away from the prevailing concept of what does the Church say? whilst we wait for a minister to say it. Perhaps we would also get away from specialised ministries and restore the teaching office of the parish ministers from whose parishes these witnesses would go forth. The Reformation spoke of a participating people—not only in the worship, but also the witness of the Church—and thus it will do today.

Solo Christo, sola fide, sola gratia, sola scriptura, these are the rallying marks of Reformation. The Council of Trent firmly closed them out. We need be careful lest we do the same. We must remain a reformed church, always reforming.

---

*Our forefathers were particular about maintaining land marks; they had strong notions about fixed points of revealed doctrine, and were very tenacious of what they believed to be Scriptural; their fields were protected by hedges and ditches, but their sons have grubbed up the hedges, filled up the ditches, laid all level, and played at leap frog with the boundary stones. The school of modern thought laughs at the ridiculous positiveness of Reformers and Puritans; it is advancing in glorious liberality, and before long will publish a grand alliance between Heaven and Hell, or, rather, an amalgamation of the two establishments upon terms of mutual concession, allowing falsehood and truth to lie side by side, like the lion with the lamb. Still, for all that, my firm old fashioned belief is that some doctrines are true and that statements which are diametrically opposite to them are not true.*

C. H. SPURGEON

## SERMON

---

# GOD IS OUR REFUGE AND STRENGTH

---

PREACHED IN ST. PAUL'S, CAMBRIDGE,

ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 5TH, 1964

by

H. M. CARSON

*"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."*

—Psalm 46 : 1.

When we speak about trouble, we are speaking about anything that disturbs the calm and normal pattern of our living, that which disturbs it in an unpleasant and grievous fashion. Trouble is something to which we are all prone and something which we have all got to experience. We experience it in different capacities. First of all, we experience trouble because we are men and women, because we belong to a humanity. We are men who are "born to trouble," as the Scriptures say, "as the sparks fly upwards," and right throughout we have these experiences of trouble. Some of them are much more grievous than others, but all of them are very real. We may look back to childhood and we may remember some of the childish disappointments, fears and worries, and we may rather smile at them now and see how trifling they were, and yet when we were that age they were by no means slight. The child's disappointment can be a very major one and a child's sorrow can be a very real one. We may look back to teenage and we had different kinds of problems then; tensions, difficulties, and often the frustration of feeling that grown-ups did not really understand and could not really come into our situation at all. We have problems still with us; problems some meet because of business difficulties, some with troubles and sorrows in their homes, and some facing problems of health, whether physical or mental difficulties. Some face, I suppose, the supreme trouble of all, which is the sorrow that comes from bereavement. Some, who are not with us this morning, are facing the troubles of old age, and some have a real burden of loneliness.

## TRIALS AND AFFLICTIONS

Well, because we are men and women, and because we belong to the human race, we all face these and many other trials and difficulties, and the Christian is not immune. The fact that we belong to Christ does not mean that we are delivered from the ordinary afflictions that beset humanity, but because we are Christians we face other troubles, additional ones if you like, that are particularly or peculiarly ours because we are Christians. We face the troubles which come because of the conflict, the spiritual battle in which we are involved. This side of glory we are in the body, and as a result we still battle with the old nature. There are the desires which are so contrary to the mind of God. Because we are new men in Christ, we have desires for holiness. If we are Christians, we long to please God; our chief concern is to know Christ and to follow Him, and yet how often we are bitterly aware of sinful failure. We know what a drag this old nature exerts upon us, how strong the flesh is, and how often when we long to do what is good, we do what is evil. How often when we try to avoid the evil and do the good, we know how deeply we fail, and at times we can be sorely troubled by the sheer spiritual failure which we so often experience.

Also the Christian is in the world, and he finds, if he is being true to his Lord, that the world is an unfriendly place in which to find himself. Of course, if he is the kind of Christian who tries to come to terms with the world, who tries to be one of the community, even one amongst those who reject his Master, well, he will not find things so hard. But if a Christian is prepared to stand for Christ and to exhibit the life of holiness, and to witness for his Saviour, he will find the world a thoroughly unfriendly place. The Lord found it such. Christ was not accepted by the general run of men. There were few who stood with Him and very few who listened to His message. He was, after all, One who was "despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," and He reminded His disciples that they need not expect any other kind of treatment. In fact, He warned His disciples that if they received a different kind of treatment, if they received the acclaim and the plaudits of the world, there was something very seriously wrong with their discipleship; but if they were true to Him, if they were truly following Him, they must realise that they would follow in His footsteps, and this following in His footsteps means suffering and trouble. So the Christian in the world finds misunderstanding and sometimes he finds misrepresentation which is so hard to face. Often he faces an indifference as far as the Gospel which he proclaims is concerned. He finds a dead apathy which so troubles and distresses him.

Now behind the old nature and behind the opposition of the world there is the presence of the power of the evil one. The Christian is not deluded by so many modern shallow thinkers who try to reduce the devil to some vague influence. He knows only too well, both through Scripture and his own experience, that the devil is a powerful foe and a subtle foe. He is one who comes, now from this direction, now from that; one who exerts a continuing and a relentless pressure, and at times the Christian can feel overwhelmed by it all. There are times, I am sure, when many Christians go through experiences of feeling the burden is just too heavy to bear. They sometimes reach the point of feeling that the journey is too hard, the pathway is too uphill and it is too narrow. There come times of spiritual loneliness. This, I think, can come home pressingly to one who works in a place where there are no other Christians or one who is a Christian in an unsympathetic home. In such a situation, there can come times when the Christian feels so much alone that the sheer weight of spiritual loneliness bears in upon him. There are times, too, when the Christian can feel the weight of failure as a distressing burden. When we sin, when we know in our hearts that we have gone our own way, to please ourselves, and when we are brought to an awareness of our sin, how distressing it can be and how burdened we can feel. Yes, the Christian, because of his very standing, experiences particular and peculiar trials.

Of course the New Testament does not just look on us as individual Christians; we are not looked on as so many isolated members. We are always looked on as members of the body of Christ; we are looked on as members of the church of God, and the troubles which come, come not only to us individually, but they come to us as churches. It is because the Christian is aware not only of his personal position before God, but because he has got this awareness of his membership of the body of Christ, that which troubles the church, troubles him. Now when you turn to the New Testament, you find the church being troubled in various ways, and the church is being troubled in the same ways today. The church in the New Testament was troubled by false teachers. Paul writes to Galatia for this very reason, that the churches in that province had received false doctrine, and the false teachers who had come among them were disturbing the faith of God's people and sowing all kinds of evil. Of course, in our day and generation, we are facing this trouble in the church to a marked degree, probably to an even more marked degree than in years past, because now within the church we are not simply facing those who deny this or that aspect of the faith; we are facing men in high places today who are denying the

very foundations of the faith. New Testament Christianity is at a discount within the churches, until we are reaching the stage that we wonder what fresh heresy will be produced next. The church is being troubled, seriously troubled, by those who are propagating error and falsehood.

The church is troubled in the New Testament also by division and disunity. Go to Corinth—what does Paul find there? He finds party spirit; he finds cliques; he finds those who say, "I am of Paul; I am of Cephas; I am of Apollos; I am of Christ." The church was rent asunder by this party spirit. Or go to Philippi, the place where there was godliness but where there were members like Euodias and Syntyche, two women members of the congregation who were scarcely on speaking terms. Whether it is at Corinth or Philippi, Paul has to deal with this problem of disunity and division, and the church of God is troubled by such division. The church of God is troubled also by the pressures of the world. We are Christians individually in the world, but we are also a community of believers facing the world, and there are times when the pressure of the world becomes very strong and the church goes through times of trial. The church in some parts of the world today is going through such times of testing. The brethren in China, on this Lord's Day when you and I meet in liberty, are probably facing a very different situation altogether. And because we are Christians, and because we are members not just of one local congregation, but because we are members of the world-wide church of Christ, we share with them, we enter into their experiences and we sympathise with them. The church in China is troubled, and therefore if we are Christians worthy of the name at all, we should be troubled with them. So these troubles press in upon us, and one might enlarge and develop this whole idea, but each one of us is only too aware of our own particular needs to need a great deal of enlargement. Trouble, trial, affliction, difficulty—these things are constantly with us.

#### FALSE ANSWERS TO TROUBLE

Well now, what is the Christian's answer to all this? I believe here is the answer, in this text: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." This is a gloriously positive word, but I think it would be appropriate that before we look at this as a positive word of encouragement, we should think of some of the other answers that are often given to us, answers that I believe are completely inadequate. There are those who follow the old Greek Stoic philosophers. And what was their advice? Well, their advice was this: when trouble comes, you brace yourself to meet it; you maintain a stiff upper lip—that phrase, of course, is not from the

old Greek philosophers, it is of more recent origin in this country, but this was their attitude—you stand vigorous and secure. But what is wrong with that advice? It ignores the fact that we are men and women; we are not ice-cold mortals who are unmoved by deep experiences. The Lord Jesus Christ never intended that men should crush down their feelings. After all, He was One who could stand by the tomb of Lazarus and weep. He did not crush down His feelings; tears flowed, and Christ showed His sympathy and His grief at that point. It is rather like damming a river; if you dam it up at one point, the water will burst through at another. If we try and meet trouble simply by bracing ourselves and, as it were, steeling ourselves to stand against it, well, we simply cannot crush down our feelings like that. We may repress them at one point, but inevitably there will be a breaking out at another; we cannot reduce ourselves to this level.

There are others, of course, who give you a different kind of answer. They follow the other Greek philosophers, the Epicureans, and their attitude is: "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." One gets this advice constantly—do not worry about your trouble; occupy yourself in some pleasant way. Indeed, so many around us are engaged in this tragic occupation. They talk about drowning their sorrows in drink or drowning their sorrows in this, that or the other pleasure; but what a futile answer this is, because when you withdraw again from the flurry of activity or the whirl of pleasure, or whatever it may be, you have still got to meet the trouble. You do not deal with trouble by forgetting it for a moment. You do not banish trial and affliction by eliminating it for a brief moment of unconsciousness; it is still there and, in fact, the longer we postpone meeting it, the more difficult the task becomes. But you see the Bible does not deal with us in this way. It does not mock us; it enables us to face the situation as we find it. Here is God's reply to every kind of trouble that comes to us: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

#### THE TRUE ANSWER TO TROUBLE

But, you know, God is only our refuge and strength in the testing time if God is central in our life at all times. It is utterly futile to think of turning to God in times of crisis if we are not turning to Him constantly. The God whom we prove in days of affliction is the God whom we have already learnt to prove in days of prosperity. If we are not trusting Him now, when perhaps the sun is shining as far as our life is concerned, well, when the day of testing does come, we will find that He is not a God whom we have sought and whom therefore we know. Remember how He himself

speaks in very stern terms in the book of Proverbs. "Because," He says, "I have called and ye refused, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh." If we try to live our lives independently of God, or if we try to put God, as it were, out there on the outskirts of things, how dare we presume to imagine that God is ready to come simply when we choose to beckon Him, that God is there just for our convenience? Such an idea is utterly remote, or ought to be remote, from the thinking of a man of God. God is to be right in the very centre of everything, of our thinking, and of our living. Then when the time of testing does come, we prove that God is our refuge and strength.

#### GOD IS OUR REFUGE

God is a place of refuge and there are times when we need such. There are times when we need, as it were, to withdraw, to get alone, to get away from the pressures, to get away from the troubles, and to be alone with Him. Is not that how Jesus acted? He who was God in the flesh, yet needed seasons of withdrawal. Do you remember that day in the early part of His ministry? He had had an intensely busy day, and it was not simply that He was busy, it was a day that had been exhausting as far as His resources were concerned. He had been healing right the way through the day until the evening; and the next morning when He might have stayed in bed, as we would have been tempted to do, He was up all the earlier. Why? Because He needed renewal, and He needed to be alone with His Heavenly Father. Indeed, when He came to His greatest testing, when He was on the threshold of Calvary, and ahead was the darkness and the suffering, the ridicule, the scoffing, the dying; what was His need? It was to get away to Gethsemane; to get away from everything and to get alone with God. I believe this is one of our needs. It is a constant need, and one of the reasons that so often we are not ready to face the times of testing is that we have not learnt how to withdraw and to be alone. The art of meditation, of being quiet, of setting our minds upon God and upon the things of God—this is something that tends to be lost amongst us. We are in such a hurry. We are constantly rushing here and there. We are beset with so much activity, so many demands being made upon us, and what we supremely need, most of us (all of us need it, but there are some who are already enjoying it), is this withdrawal, this coming apart, this finding God to be a refuge.

The Psalmist writes very vividly; he says, "The Name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe." The picture you get coming again and again in the Psalms is of God being

the refuge into which the man of God retreats. Here is the battle-scarred soldier out facing the devil, out in the conflict of the world, and he withdraws; he draws near to God in order that his spiritual wounds might be dressed. Here is the Christian who is sorrowing; he goes to God, he withdraws, in order that he might find consolation. Here is the Christian who knows the bitterness of failure; he has sinned, he has disobeyed his God; he desperately needs to withdraw from the trial, to withdraw from the problem—not to try to forget it; no, to withdraw in order that he might be in a place where he can meet the problem. God is our refuge, and when we move into His presence, it is like moving out of the murk and the fog into the clean fresh air of heaven, where you take a deep breath and are renewed. Or it is like turning from a dry, barren, arid waste and finding fresh water to slake your thirst. God is our refuge. Well, let us withdraw and be close to Him, and know the renewal and the refreshing which He gives.

#### GOD IS OUR STRENGTH

But you know, that is not only merely half the verse; it is also only half the truth, because if we were simply to counsel "withdraw," we would be talking as if the Christian was called to be a monk or a nun, to remove himself to a cloister or a convent. But of course that is not Christianity; that is something man-made. The Christian does not withdraw in the sense of getting away from his troubles. A Christian withdraws in order that he may go back out to meet them. He goes into the refuge in order that he may return to the battle. He retires to his God in order that he may go out to meet all the onslaught of the evil one. The wounded soldier is healed in order that he may fight again. We regroup our forces in order that we may advance.

I have a friend who went through a great experience of affliction. He was Rector of a big city parish and he was told that he was going blind. Years afterwards he described his experience, not only then, but subsequently. At first he was rebellious—why should this happen to him? Here was a ministry which he was exercising, and as one who, as an undergraduate, attended his church, I know what a ministry he did exercise; and it was all apparently coming to an end. But he was a man who knew his God, and he proved in this hour of testing how God could be a refuge and a strength. It was in his withdrawal into the presence of God that he learnt to accept this terrible blow; but he described how, by the grace of God, he had been able to advance even beyond that; at first rebellious, then to accepting or acquiescing in what had happened, he reached the point where he could rejoice even in his affliction. I remember him telling

how God had enabled him to use his very affliction. He described how people would come to talk to him about spiritual matters; some young people would come with very personal problems, and he said, "They could talk to me because they knew I was not looking at them." Well, there was a man who had learnt to accept a great affliction and to triumph over it. God was his refuge and God was his strength. God is still his strength. I visited him recently and I found a man serene, a man full of the joy of his Lord. Why? Because he knows where his strength lies. We are called on to withdraw, not in order to get away from things; we withdraw to our Refuge in order that we might prove Him to be our strength, and that we might go out and meet the problems, meet the difficulty, meet the trial, and we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

#### A VERY PRESENT HELP

"God is our refuge and strength; He is a very present help in trouble." God is present just when we need Him; but remember God is present when we need Him and not in advance. God's grace is sufficient at the hour of need, but God does not meet our problems for us before we have encountered them. I think sometimes we torment ourselves unnecessarily because we look forward to some trouble that we can see coming, or some problem that is inevitably bound to arise, and we are troubled within and we wonder, "How will I meet this? This thing is going to overwhelm me." And what we are simply saying is this—God is not going to be present at that point. But this is a denial of this great truth that He is a very present help in trouble. If there is trouble next week, God does not give grace now in order to meet that trouble. God gives grace for present demands, and when that trouble comes God will give fresh grace. He strengthens us for the situation in which we find ourselves. He is a present help.

The Psalmist throws in another word; he says, "He is a *very* present help in trouble." As if to say, God is completely with you, He is right with you. When the moment of testing comes, well, God is there, and how complete He is there. People can be with you; they can be present; and yet as far as your need is concerned, they are unable to help. But God is very present, He is exceedingly present. He is a God who is at hand, and when the hour of testing comes, we find that He is our heavenly Father to strengthen us. We find that He is our Lord Jesus Christ who shed His blood for us, who lives to intercede for us and who sustains us right to the end. We find He is God the Holy Spirit who guides and directs us, not only on bright days but through thick darkness. We find that we have the whole

power of the Triune God, that when we come even to the valley of the shadow of death itself, we can say, "I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me." This is a God who is most readily to be found. The refuge is not far off, so that we may stumble on our way and never reach it. He is a very present help. He is alongside, and because He is alongside, therefore we will not fear.

Now we stand this morning on the threshold of a new year, and obviously it would be utter folly to prophesy concerning what may lie ahead. It may well be that some of us are going to go through deep waters in the coming year. Some of us may face terrible afflictions or real trouble. How are we going to face it? Here is the answer: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." In this Psalm, the Psalmist looks at a world completely in convulsions. He sees floods, he sees the mountains cast into the depths of the sea, and what is his answer? He says, "Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be moved and though the mountains be carried into the depths of the sea." Let the devil do what he will; let the world pit all its resources against us; let the flesh drag with all its might; we will face all that Satan, the world, and the flesh can do, and we will stand secure—not if we depend upon our own resources, but strong in the Lord of Hosts and in His mighty power. O brethren, let us face this new year, calm and sure. Let us look the Devil in the face and let us speak a word of defiance to him, realising that he is a beaten foe, and our Lord Jesus is the conquering Saviour. Let us face whatever may come with a quiet assurance. Let us know the peace of God which passeth all understanding, because through God we are more than conquerors. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

---

*Long afflictions will much set off the glory of Heaven. The harbour is most sweet and desirable to them that have been long tossed upon the seas; so will Heaven be to those who have been long in a sea of trouble. The new wine of Christ's Kingdom is most sweet to those that have been long a drinking of gall and vinegar.*

THOMAS BROOKS

# CHRISTIAN HOSPITALITY

By  
L. SAMUEL

Some people love entertaining visitors and organising get-togethers for adults and children. Others find it a strain. They spend ages getting food ready and spare no effort till everything looks just right. And when it is over they heave a sigh of relief. English ideas of entertaining and hospitality must seem strange to those who come from countries where it is the custom to visit in other homes without warning or invitation. Quite large informal gatherings take place in this way without any of the prior arrangements so common in this country.

But it is *Christian hospitality* in particular that is our theme. One dictionary describes hospitality as receiving guests generously and kindly. Christian hospitality means Christians doing this in the name of Christ, and for His sake, whether the hospitality is offered to Christians or non-Christians.

Christian hospitality is one of the most precious things to be found in this world, and therefore one of the most valuable things to be able to offer. The hospitality I have enjoyed in the homes of Christians has meant a tremendous lot to me in my Christian life. And as a young Christian I learned at my parents' table how much help it could bring to others.

It may come as a surprise to some readers to find how clearly God speaks in His Holy Word, the Bible, about Christian hospitality. "Use hospitality one to another without grudging" (1 Peter 4:9). Peter has been telling his readers that as members of a pagan society they have spent quite long enough in doing what the rest of the world was doing. They must devote the rest of their life to doing the will of God. And one of the activities involved in doing God's will is to be hospitable. Peter is concerned that Christians should welcome into their homes those who need hospitality, whether in the form of a bed for the night, a meal, an evening's chat, or, in our modern world, just a sympathetic ear over a cup of coffee. And the latter can be given by those who have no home, or even bed-sitter of their own!

Christian hospitality is a kind of two-way traffic, to be given and received at different times, and at different stages of life. Sometimes we are in a position to give it; at others we are in need of receiving it. To a new Christian, converted out of a non-Christian home, and

no longer so welcome among previous friends, Christian hospitality brings a sense of belonging to the Family of God. It always comes as a shock to hear a young Christian say, "I have never been in a Christian home before." But when Christian homes are opened to young Christians, they help to establish them in the things of God, and build up ideals of a truly Christian home to be put into practice when they get married and have their own home.

In every town there are Christian young people who have left home to take up their first job, or to nurse or study. They live, for the most part, in digs, hostels or bed-sitters, and it means a great deal to them to be welcomed into Christian homes, and be shown friendliness by Christians. If you have a home of your own, why not look out for someone like this and invite them sometimes for a meal, especially on a Sunday?

There are overseas students, too, who are probably more lonely than their English counterparts. Christian hospitality can mean a lot to them too. They may be a little shy of accepting your first invitation, so persevere and tell them how you really want them to come to your home (or out to a meal with you, if you yourself are in digs), and you will soon make a new friend.

Christian workers and missionaries travelling in the service of the Lord often need a bed for a night or two. It is a privilege to have such folk in one's home and to help them on their way. Many homes have felt the benediction of having such visitors.

Christian families moving to new areas can feel isolated and lonely to start with, but if they are invited into other Christian homes, perhaps for Sunday tea, they quickly make new friends and feel at home in their new church.

We cannot all give overnight hospitality, nor can we all give frequent hospitality. But I think there are very few reading these lines, apart from those in ill-health, who cannot offer hospitality in some way to someone. If you are a young person on the receiving end of Christian hospitality, the day will come when you are in a position to give it, and as our Lord Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Hospitality is to be "without grudging." Opportunities to give hospitality in the name of the Lord ought to be seized gladly as a privilege, and even as a form of service to the Lord Jesus Himself (Matthew 25, 40). People quickly sense when we are more concerned about the amount of food they eat or the amount of time they are consuming than we are about them. People matter more than things and it is the warmth of the heart not the cost of the food or the luxury of the home that makes hospitality.

In our desire to give hospitality we must be careful that the inevitable chores associated with meals do not devolve too heavily on one person. Leaving Mother to wash up alone while we sit and talk will mar our Christian witness both to her and to our visitor! Most guests are only too happy to give a hand with the drying-up. One can have interesting discussion on theological or practical problems over the kitchen sink. It may be bad for speed but it is remarkably good for fellowship!

No Christian household should know nothing of giving hospitality. Nor should a home with growing children do so much entertaining that it ceases to be a real home, where there is time for quiet discussion of personal and family matters. So let us each, as we are able, fit into the description of Christians given in Romans 12: 13 and be "given to hospitality."

---

## *Fellowship*

One of the words which Christians use frequently is the term "fellowship." Yet in spite of its constant use it often describes something which falls far short of what it should mean. We say we have had fellowship together, when perhaps all we have had has been a cup of tea and a general conversation. Now obviously there is the place for the ordinary social contact; but, for the Christian, fellowship should be a much deeper experience.

We need to realise in the first place that we are fellow members of the family circle of God. This means that we should have a mutual concern. We should desire to see our fellow Christians mature spiritually, and they in turn should be stimulating us to holy living. But such mutual help means a readiness to share together. Yet how slow we are. Two women will very quickly share a new recipe. Two men will discuss some gadget or some piece of sporting news. But how reluctant Christians are to talk to each other about Christ. We plead reserve and shyness, when we need to admit that our trouble is that our hearts are so often so cold that we have little to share.

May God teach us increasingly what it means to have fellowship one with the other, sharing our blessings—and our failures, too—praying for one another and in the words of Hebrews 10 provoking one another "unto love and to good works."

## Young People's Page

### THE NEW RECRUIT

Many years ago, one of our Fusilier regiments was ordered abroad on foreign service. The force was to take over the garrison of the principal town in a distant colony in the tropics. Just before the regiment embarked in the troop-ship, a few more recruits were being taken on to make up the full strength. When the last batch of men were being interviewed before signing on, the Chaplain (who told this story) happened to be present. The Colonel, a stern disciplinarian, was sitting at a table in his orderly-room, the Adjutant beside him. The Chaplain watched the last few men being brought one by one to the table; he noticed that there was a tall fellow among them, who came in with an independent bearing which the Padre thought would certainly not please the Colonel.

"What is your name?" said the Colonel to this man. "Henry Lewis," was the reply. "Can you sign your name?" "Well, I should think I can—I was educated at Eton!" The words were spoken almost insolently, and the Colonel did not like it. "If you have been at Eton, you are not the sort of man I want in my regiment; but you don't look like an Etonian." "I don't suppose I do," said Lewis; "all the same, I was at Eton, and at Oxford, too."

The Colonel and the Adjutant conferred together. "Gentlemen" recruits were never welcome in a regiment; they usually gave false names, and were trying to escape from the consequences of past misdeeds. They always had a bad influence over the rank and file, their education giving them a superior status. The Colonel would have refused to take on the Etonian if the Adjutant had not pointed out that there was no time now to find a substitute. The Colonel gave in, and Henry Lewis signed on.

The voyage lasted three months, and it went off happily. The only source of alcohol was the daily glass of rum, and as this was carefully doled out, drunkenness was impossible, and the men's conduct was good. Lewis did well at drill, and was so smart on parade that he was offered promotion. This he refused; the new recruit had no ambition and no wish for responsibility: The Chaplain tried to get to know the man, but he repelled his efforts, refusing to join the Bible Class, or to take part in social activities. To the officers he appeared sullen and reserved; but sometimes at night they could see

groups of men clustering around Lewis, listening to his stories with rapt attention.

When the troops had landed, and were settling in their new quarters, "Gentleman Harry" (as he was called) threw off all restraints and his conduct rapidly became thoroughly bad. He drank hard, and frequently came under punishment, passing most of his time either in prison or in hospital. The Chaplain was greatly concerned about the man, taking every opportunity of trying to lead him to repentance and to see his need of a Saviour; but he was unable to make any impression upon him.

One morning on entering the mess-room, the Chaplain found a buzz of excitement, all the officers talking at once. "What's the matter, Carter?" he asked the Adjutant. "Haven't you heard the news about your black sheep, Padre? Lewis has been left twenty thousand pounds! A rich uncle has died without a will, and Gentleman Harry turns out to be the only heir. The solicitors have tracked him down and are here to pay him the money."

The whole garrison was stirred at this extraordinary event, and everybody, officers and men alike, concluded that Lewis would at once leave the regiment. But this he refused to do, saying that he had nowhere to go, and no other friends outside. The Chaplain felt sure that it would be better for him to leave not only the regiment but the colony, and he and other officers tried to persuade the man to go. He was, however, quite determined. The solicitors handed over the twenty thousand pounds to which he was entitled, and Gentleman Harry immediately set out to spend it. He began to treat all his comrades with wild extravagance. He and his friends could be seen drinking the most expensive wines in the best hotels, or being driven about the streets in hired carriages. Riotous living was the order of the day, and if Gentleman Harry had been allowed to continue, the whole regiment would have been demoralised. But after three weeks the authorities discharged the man from the Army.

Lewis did indeed feel this to be a disgrace; but he was deaf to all the Chaplain's attempts to help him, and to lead him to a new life. He went off no one knew where, and the Chaplain hoped that perhaps he had indeed returned to England.

Some months later, the Chaplain was told that a patient in the Civil Hospital was asking for him. Wondering who it could be (for his work was among soldiers only), the Chaplain entered the ward, and instantly recognised Gentleman Harry. The man was wasted to a shadow and obviously dying. Shocked at the sight, the Chaplain took the man's hand, and began to speak to him of the change so near at hand. "I know," said Lewis, "I know it all; it's because I've

only a few hours left that I sent for you." "To tell me that you repent of the past, and are looking to the Saviour?" "Padre, listen to me. I don't repent of anything, and anyhow it's too late. If I got better by a miracle now, I'd be drunk again within an hour. No, what I want is for you to take charge of this twenty pounds—it's all I've got left. Give it to that little girl the regiment supports."

The Chaplain turned to the Word of God; he read and prayed with the dying man. "It's no use at all," said Lewis, "but tell the men how I died; it may not be too late for some of them to repent." They were his last words; a few hours later he had passed into eternity.

Gentleman Harry was buried in the soldiers' cemetery. The twenty pounds left out of his fortune was given to the orphan child supported by the regiment; and the following Sunday the Chaplain fulfilled Lewis's remaining wish by telling his comrades how he died.

It was a solemn sermon, and the men listened with keen attention. The Chaplain took for his text the words of Colossians 1 : 12—"Giving thanks unto the Father who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." After relating the story of Harry Lewis and his extraordinary bequest, so well known to them all, he spoke of his miserable end, calling upon the men to heed this solemn warning and to repent whilst yet there was time. Then he spoke of another inheritance, an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, reserved in heaven for the heirs of God. How did Lewis become heir to twenty thousand pounds? Not because he did anything to deserve it, or because he wished for it, but only because of his relationship to his uncle. So the heirs of God are those who are the children of God, taken into His family by adoption and the new birth. Moreover, the Father continues the work of grace in those who have become His heirs, by making them "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints." Poor Lewis was certainly the legal heir, but he was never "meet" for his inheritance. What a loving mercy it is that draws away the hearts of God's children from earthly things, and teaches them to set their affections on things above!

DAMARIS.

#### SCRIPTURE ENIGMA No. 121

The whole: Denied by the Sadducees.

1. John's was of camel hair.
2. The stone of help.
3. Cleopas asked the Lord if He was only a this in Jerusalem.
4. How Isaiah felt on seeing the glory of the Lord.

5. Beside this in Philippi, prayer was wont to be made.
6. Worshipped by the Syrian king.
7. A sorcerer in Cyprus.
8. Hearing this was on sale in Egypt, Jacob sent his sons to buy it.
9. With Tryphosa, she laboured in the Lord.
10. Born to Sarah and Abraham in their old age.
11. Made by Herod from his throne.
12. At the Creation, God called the darkness this.

SOLUTION OF No. 120

The whole: Revelation.

1. Rachel (I Samuel 10 : 2).
2. Excuse (Luke 14 : 18).
3. Vaunt (Judges 7 : 3).
4. Eye-witnesses (II Peter 1 : 16).
5. Luz (Genesis 28 : 19).
6. Athirst (Rev. 21 : 6).
7. Tekel (Dan. 5 : 25).
8. Italy (Acts 18 : 2).
9. Ox (Exod. 20 : 17).
10. Noon (Acts 22 : 6).

---

*ARTICLES THIS MONTH COME FROM . . .*

REV. J. R. BOWEN, M.A., Curate, St. Paul's, Cambridge.

REV. H. FARRELL, D.D., formerly "Fr. Hugh" of the Order of  
Discalced Carmelites.

REV. J. A. MOTYER, M.A., Vice-Principal, Clifton Theological  
College.

MR. L. SAMUEL, B.A., Minister of Above Bar Church, Southamp-  
ton.

REV. W. M. SMYTH, B.A., B.D., Minister of Alexandra Presby-  
terian Church, Belfast.

MR. C. WALKER, Cambridge.

## BOOK REVIEWS

---

SPURGEON'S "NEW PARK STREET PULPIT," Vol. I 1855 and Vol. II 1856. (Banner of Truth. Price 15/- per vol.).

How often books of sermons are passed by on the bookshelf, on the assumption that their only value is an academic one, for students of preaching or of Church history. Yet these sermons were originally published with the intention that ordinary men and women should read them and benefit from them. Spurgeon, in his preface to Volume II, says, "And now, reader, if thou art a renewed soul . . . may the words of thy brother in Christ be the means of some little comfort and edification to thee. . . But if thou art ungodly . . . may Jesus the Saviour give thee grace to turn to Him, and be saved." The same prayer is presumably behind their republication.

Spurgeon was concerned to proclaim the whole counsel of God. He accused the mass of ministers of not preaching "Free Grace in its discrimination and omnipotence." We find, therefore, a strong emphasis on the doctrine of election, which appears in some form in most of his sermons. If we believe, as he did, that this is a Scriptural doctrine, we shall not object to its presence, but only wonder whether sometimes its presence is a little forced. However, he was a man of his times, preaching in a particular situation where this truth was neglected, and we may well feel that there is an equal need for this emphasis today. Nevertheless, we only need to look at some of the titles of his sermons to see the way he covered the whole breadth of Christian Doctrine in his preaching.

As one reads, one is struck by the way in which these sermons are not only doctrinal, but extremely practical. There is careful and detailed application of the truths he expounds to the ordinary experiences of his hearers. This is one reason why these sermons preached over a hundred years ago are still as relevant today as they were then, for human nature and basic spiritual experience does not change. Sometimes the dramatic way in which he holds his hearers over the pit of hell before dropping them into the eternal depths, leaves one feeling that this approach would not have the same effect today as it would in his own time. This should never prevent us from acknowledging the reality of the things he preached, but rather lead us to seek ways of presenting the same truths in a way more suitable for our own day.

One of the most striking things about the sermons is the depth of understanding in a man so young, for he was only 21 years old at the time. Not only is there a great grasp of Scripture truth (which is

understandable), but there is an even more amazing warmth and sympathy towards his hearers. Although young men may often have a solid grasp of Bible teaching, it is rare for them to have a deep understanding and warmth for those to whom they minister. Spurgeon appears to have had a real concern for the experiences and problems of old and young alike, and for this reason his sermons warm the heart as well as instruct the mind.

Amongst the many typical sermons, there are in these volumes also a few tit-bits of different material. We find an interesting open-air sermon on Heaven and Hell in Volume I, and in Volume II the details of a Watch Night Service, plus two specimen tracts edited by Spurgeon. As with any preacher, the quality of sermons vary, but the overall standard set is high.

The books are attractively produced, but with rather small print. This is necessary in order to keep the price low so that the book can find its way into many more hands. No one with real concern to be warmly taught in God's Word will allow the small print to put them off.

When first preached, these sermons had this testimony from Spurgeon: "There is scarce a sermon here which has not been stamped by the hand of the Almighty, by the conversion of a soul." They have been similarly stamped ever since they were first published, and doubtless those who read them today will find the hand of God laid on their hearts and lives as they hear God's Word expounded by this great preacher.

P. W. L. RATCLIFFE.

"I WILL COME AGAIN." By ALAN TOMS. (Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony. Price 3/-. 72 pages).

The sub-title of this paper-back is "An introduction to the study of prophecy." This title is correct in so far as it is a simple and clear guide to a certain interpretation of prophecy, namely, "the simple futurist, post-tribulation, pre-millennial interpretation." There are six chapters, each dealing with some aspect of the Second Advent. In the first chapter Mr. Toms emphasises the fact and certainty of the Personal Return of our Lord. Present-day signs occupy the second chapter, which is based on an exposition of Matthew 24 and naturally leads on into the third chapter on "The Great Tribulation." The titles of the last three chapters convey the scope of the book, "Events at Christ's Coming," "The Millenium" and "The Final Consummation."

Mr. Toms' book, which is based on addresses to young Bristolians, presents this well-known scheme of the Last Days

lucidly and competently. Your reviewer thought it regrettable that there was no bibliography, no mention of the problems attached to this study, and no mention of books by conservative scholars who put forward a different approach to what is a controversial yet an important subject. Nevertheless this book is a good beginners' guide to this particular view of prophecy.

J. GWYN-THOMAS.

**WHAT IS THIS CALVINISM?** by G. E. LANE (Sovereign Grace Union. Price 9d., 18 pages).

This attractively produced booklet is a succinct statement of the essential points of reformed doctrine. It was originally produced by the author for his own parishioners—doubtless to explain what may have appeared to them to be the unusual preaching and methods of their vicar! But as a result of this it is the type of booklet which would be useful for giving to those who have little acquaintance with the subject, or those for whom Calvinism sounds like the death knell of gospel preaching.

Mr. Lane faces the question as to whether it is right to attach the name of a mere man to any theological system, and shows how circumstances force the adoption of some distinguishing word in view of the way in which so many terms, even the word biblical, have been denuded of their meaning. He demonstrates that the famous five points of Calvinistic theology are derived, not merely from a few proof texts, but from the general biblical teaching concerning God and man. He shows that the adoption of such a theological position will have profound consequences both for preaching and practice. Mr. Lane writes not as one brought up as a traditional Calvinist but rather with the verve of the enthusiastic convert. Doubtless his enthusiasm will whet the appetite of some of his readers to ask even more searchingly the question, "What is this Calvinism?" and to turn to Calvin himself for a fuller answer. I imagine Mr. Lane would want no better reward.

H.M.C.