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"JESUS CHRIST, THE SAME YESTERDAY, AND TODAY, AND FOR EVER."
"ENDEAVOURING TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND
OF PEACE."

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

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EDITORIAL

We have had a notably dry autumn. Water supplies have reached a low level in many places and in some towns water rationing has had to be introduced. Yet water storage in this country is always a comparative term, for we know nothing of the terrible droughts which in the Middle East can produce famine and subsequent starvation.

It was this kind of drought that Isaiah must have had in mind when he brought the promise of the Lord, 'I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed and my blessing upon thine offspring' (44 : 3). Here is a man, spiritually parched and in a land that is arid and dry, and God comes to him in refreshing and revitalizing power.

Spiritual dryness is the constant condition of the unregenerate man. Devoid as he is of the Spirit of God, his life is a barren desert. There may be a few scrub bushes of self-righteousness, but no trees bearing the fruit of the Spirit.

But the Christian, too, has times of dryness of soul when prayer becomes a burden, Bible reading a routine and worship a joyless formality.

There are various reasons for this dryness of soul. There may, of course, be physical factors. A man who has had a serious illness may suffer during a prolonged convalescence the depression which so often comes at such a time. Such a depression can cast a cloud over his spiritual life. It is one more reminder that we are still subject to bodily weakness and one more evidence that glory will only be fully ours when we enjoy the resurrection of the body.

Sometimes, however, the reason for the dryness is persist-

ence in known sin. Like the hot dry wind which blows in from the Sahara, so the dry winds of lust or covetousness, of hate or envy, blow over the soul, bringing arid conditions in their train.

But there are times when in spite of humbling ourselves before God and asking Him to reveal to us anything that may be displeasing to Him, we still find ourselves dry in spirit. It is not that we are in fact guilty of some serious disobedience. It is that God in His providence has withdrawn a conscious sense of His presence from us. He does this to humble us, to draw us out in more earnest longing for Himself, to beget in us a desire for heaven, to teach us lessons which will enable us to minister in due course to others in need.

To recognise this dryness is to begin to thirst for God. The Psalmist had this intense thirst. Memories of past blessing and the taunts of his critics made him feel all the more depressed. No wonder he cries out—‘As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul is athirst for God, for the living God’ (Psalm 42 : 1).

When God has stirred us to this kind of thirst He delights to meet us in our need. Like rain on dry ground, the Spirit comes. The Spirit penetrates gently and deeply. Into the mind He comes, opening our understanding afresh to the Word of God. Into the conscience the fresh moisture percolates, bringing a new sensitivity to sin. The feelings are refreshed and the joy of the Lord wells up in the soul. The will, so torpid and sluggish, is refreshed and strengthened.

When God comes in rich blessing it is a visitation which abounds. ‘I will pour water upon him that is thirsty’—the man enjoys the living water which meets his need. But the floods overflow on the dry ground. The man is blessed and so, too, is the Church. The vitalizing work embraces the fellowship, and as the floods spread out, so the blessing of a revived Church reaches the dry land around.

The answering response of a man who has begun to feel his need is to pray that God will deepen his thirst. It is a fruitful prayer, for the truly thirsty man will press on to enjoy the promise of living water.

H.M.C.

John Owen at Oxford

PART II

(January 1654 to July 1655)

PETER TOON

The year 1653 ended in a kind of triumph not only for *Doctor John Owen* but also for Oliver Cromwell, who became 'my Lord Protector' on 12th December. The rule of the Parliament of Saints had failed and from December 1653 until September 1654 the Commonwealth was ruled by the Protector and his Council of State. The basis of their rule was the Instrument of Government, which contained forty-two articles. Despite the demands of the stormy life of national and international politics, Cromwell remained Chancellor of Oxford and recommended John Owen as his Vice-Chancellor. He donated various rare manuscripts to the Library, endowed a divinity lectureship and continued to send requests for worthy persons to be given higher degrees. In gratitude for his care and that of his Council, convocation thanked him on several occasions and also paid its respects in Latin letters to the two commissioners for the custody of the great seal, Bulstrode Whitelock and Sir Thomas Widdrington.

Owen, who was chairman of convocation when these letters were sent, was kept busy in both Oxford and London. Apart from his official correspondence, he wrote (or helped to write) two important letters in the first three months of the year. The first was addressed to the Congregational churches of the nation and was also signed on 9th January, 1654, by Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye and Sidrach Simpson. It warned them of the dangers inherent in the theology of the Fifth Monarchy Men, who, it seemed, had no respect for established earthly government since they eagerly awaited the imminent millennial rule of Christ, the 'Fifth Monarchy'. The second, written in March, which was also signed by heads of Colleges in both Oxford and Cambridge, commended John Dury, the apostle of Protestant Church unity, to the Evangelical Churches of Europe. With the blessing of the Lord Protector, Dury left England on 5th April, 1654, to find a basis for the union of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches.

Church unity was also necessary at home, and to this end two important Ordinances were enacted in March and August aimed at achieving a religious settlement to fill the gap caused by the abolition of diocesan episcopacy and the failure of the

Long Parliament to impose Presbyterian uniformity throughout the nation. A general Board, whose members became known as 'Triers', was set up on 20th March for the approbation of public ministers. Thirty-eight men were named as commissioners, amongst whom was John Owen, and they were invested with the power and responsibility of judging the qualifications of persons who wished to be presented to benefices. The commissioners were both clerical and lay, representing Independent, Presbyterian and Baptist opinion. The Board was empowered to judge the fitness of the candidate for service in the parish rather than his qualifications for ordination. Five commissioners constituted a quorum capable of conducting the examination, which was usually held in London.. On 28th August a second Ordinance completed the administrative structure of the Cromwellian settlement by providing for the supervision of ministers at the County level through the expulsion of those deemed unfit. With his brother, William Owen, incumbent of Remenham, John Owen was named as a ministerial assistant to the Oxfordshire 'Ejectors', as they were called.

There are many similarities between this scheme and that proposed by Owen in *The Humble Proposals*. It has been said that the religious settlement conceived in the mind of John Owen and his friends was reduced to practical shape by the Protector. Significantly, Cromwell left out of his settlement any reference to doctrine, even though the second edition of *The Humble Proposals* contained sixteen articles of faith. As C. H. Firth put it: 'It was not so much a Church as a confederation of Christian sects working together for righteousness under the control of the State'.

Yet the question of doctrine could not be completely forgotten by the government. In the last week of October Cromwell's first Parliament, which assembled on 3rd September, discussed articles 35 to 38 of the Instrument of Government. These stated that 'the Christian religion, as contained in the Scriptures, be held forth and recommended as the public profession of these nations'. It was decided to invite certain divines to help the Parliamentary Committee for religion to draw up a statement of what were the fundamentals of religion. Amongst these were Owen, Goodwin, Nye, Simpson, Thomas Manton, and Richard Baxter. The latter wanted a broad definition (the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments), but the majority of the others decided on a formula which was virtually identical with the doctrinal articles of the second edition of *The Humble Proposals*. It was printed as

The Principles of Faith presented by Mr. Tho. Goodwin, Mr. Nye . . . and other ministers, but since the Parliament was dissolved all came to nothing and the labour was in vain. Though these principles excluded Papists, Socinians and Unitarians, they were sufficiently broad for an Arminian to sign them and they contained no references to predestination or limited atonement.

This same Parliament which asked Owen to help with the definition of the fundamentals of the Christian religion had earlier decided that he could not take his seat as the burgess for Oxford university. Though convocation sent a petition, he was excluded on the grounds that the Clerical Disabilities Act of 1642 did not permit ordained ministers to become Members of Parliament. Owen nowhere tells us why he allowed convocation to elect him in June, 1654, but, in view of the threat to the universities posed by the radicals in the Barebones Parliament, it is probable that he wished to make sure it never occurred again.

A few days after convocation elected Owen as its burgess, the city was visited by a group of northern Quakers, whose missionary zeal was now causing them to move into southern England. Two brave young Quaker girls, Elizabeth Fletcher and Elizabeth Homes, sought to preach to the students and reveal to them the unchristian nature of university learning. The rough reception that they received from the noisy students so moved Miss Fletcher that she felt God was calling her to be a living testimony. Accordingly, in the style of an Old Testament prophet, she took off her clothing and walked seminaked through the streets, proclaiming the terrible day of the Lord. For the young men this was a great joke and they drove her into the grounds of St. John's College, where they pumped water over her and Miss Homes. On the following Sunday the girls visited an Oxford church, where once again they felt moved to utter a warning from heaven, but they were arrested and put in the Bocardo. Next day, since the city authorities were hesitant to punish them, the Vice-Chancellor was called. Owen accused them of speaking blasphemies and abusing the Spirit of God, and he ordered that they be whipped and driven from the city. Unfortunately, such treatment of Quakers was common at that time. To protest against the treatment meted out to the girls and against the attitude of academics, a group of Quakers published a pamphlet entitled *Here followeth a true relation of some of the sufferings inflicted upon the servants of the Lord who are called Quakers* and one of their number, Richard Hubberthorne, printed *A True Testimony*

of the zeal of Oxford-Professors and University-Men who for zeal persecute the servants of the living God.

After the excitement caused by the Quakers came the festivities at the close of the academic year, the annual Act. One of the visitors to Oxford for the weekend was John Evelyn, the diarist. He describes the preliminaries on Saturday, the 8th July (disputations by the Doctors, etc.), and then speaks of the Sunday sermons at St. Mary's. 'The 9th Dr French preechd at St Maries on 12 Matt: 42 advising the students the Search after true Wisdome, not to be had in the books of Philosophers, but in Scriptures; in the afternoone the famous Independent Dr Owen, perstringing (i.e., criticising) Episcopacy.' On the Monday the candidates for Doctor's degrees were awarded them according to ancient custom, and after other ceremonies, Evelyn tells us that 'the Act was closed with the Speech of the Vice-Chancellor', which was, of course, in Latin. An English translation of part of it goes somewhat as follows:

All is well. Our establishment survives, and not merely that it may make its will and divide its bequests amongst its youthful members! We have only just escaped extinction and we have continued to exist when this was thought hardly possible. Let other institutions shew their trophies, the spoil of their enemies, their heads covered with garlands or the fruitful peace of a tranquil retirement, but we have nothing to shew but our scars, with our standard torn and our hands lifted up to heaven in thankfulness. We have fought for whatever was handed down to us from antiquity, the depository of the piety of past ages, the hope and seed-plot of all that was dear to us. We have put to flight the wine shops, the alesellers, the mimes, the farces, the buffoons, the public riots and the various disgraceful scenes which lately infested our streets.

Much of the credit for the continuation and growing prosperity must go to the Chancellor, to whom, stated Owen, 'under God we stand indebted for the returning peace and prosperity of this seat of learning'.

After the July Act the temporary Board of Visitors met on only a few more occasions before their final meeting on 1st September, 1654. The day after this, which was the day before the opening of Cromwell's first Parliament, a new Board of Visitors was constituted. According to Anthony à Wood, the Protector was influenced in his selection of the new Board by Thomas Goodwin, who did not, at this particular point in time, see eye to eye with Owen concerning the role of the Visitors.

Owen, being Vice-Chancellor, was responsible to the convocation, the Visitors and the Protector, and he obviously had somewhat different ideas about the relationship of individual Colleges to the Visitors than had Goodwin. Howbeit, the new Board was composed of two groups, non-academics and academics. The former were not to sit regularly, but the latter were to meet regularly within the university, and their names were Robert Harris, Christopher Rogers, Henry Wilkinson, John Owen, Thomas Goodwin, Peter French, Jonathan Goddard, John Conant, Thankful Owen, Philip Stephens, James Baron and Francis Howell. (Harris, Rogers and Wilkinson were also members of the first Board appointed in 1647.)

The Ordinance appointing them was published in convocation in January, 1655, at about the same time that Parliament was dissolved. Certain prominent members of convocation wished to petition the Protector in order that he would amend the Ordinance and give greater liberty both to individual Colleges and to convocation. Delegates were appointed to have discussions with the Visitors and to approach Cromwell, but in February the latter made it clear that he was unwilling to make changes before another Parliament had been elected. And there the matter had to rest. Owen himself was in sympathy with the delegates of convocation and he probably did much to help them.

Within three weeks of the reply of the Protector, Oxford was preparing for war. In early March a few hundred men—mostly minor gentry and their tenants—appeared under the command of John Penruddock in Wiltshire to fight for the young Charles Stuart. Though they were soon defeated, news of their insurrection made Cromwell's supporters fear the worst. Owen and his fellow Independents at Oxford 'took great care to secure the university and county'. A troop of scholars was raised and armed and placed under the command of Captain Stephens, the Principal of Hart Hall. At the head of these troops (according to A. à Wood) 'Owen did often appear well mounted, with a sword by his side and a case of pistols before him'. On the 20th of the month Owen himself wrote to John Thurloe, the Secretary of State, and told him that he had raised a troop of sixty horses and men and that the city of Oxford had mustered some footmen. Furthermore, several possible royalist sympathisers had been put into custody and there was the possibility that a troop of horses and men could be raised for the defence of Berkshire.

The troop was soon disbanded when the emergency was

past, but this was not the end of John Owen's worries. Apart from the continuing problems connected with university organisation and the need to safeguard the financial assets of both Christ Church and the university, he was constantly embarrassed by the misguided zeal of some of his fellow 'ejectors'. In the letter to Thurloe, mentioned above, he made reference to 'a few men of mean quality and condition, rash, heady, enemies of tithes' who wanted to eject out of livings ministers who had only committed trivial offences. In particular, certain ejectors in Berkshire wished to turn the learned orientalist and Oxford professor of Arabic, Edward Pocock, out of his rectory at Childrey, and this annoyed Owen intensely.

Owen's respect for and admiration of Pocock, who was no Puritan, reflects an aspect of his character which also was exhibited in his attitude towards certain Oxford men who, whilst remaining obedient to the Cromwellian government, preferred to worship God according to the liturgy of the Book of Common Prayer (which was then technically illegal). In his biography of Dr. Mansell, Principal of Jesus College, Sir Leoline Jenkins tells us that Owen 'suffered to meet quietly about three hundred Episcopalians every Lord's Day over against his own door (in the house of Dr. Willis), where they celebrated divine service according to the worship of the Church of England. And though he was often urged to it, yet he would never give them the least disturbance'. But whilst he gained friends because of his unwillingness to punish Anglicans, he lost others because of his general contempt for traditional academic dress. Anthony à Wood tells how, instead of being a grave example to the young students, Owen 'scorned all formality, undervalued his office by going in quirpo like a young scholar with powdered hair, snakebone bandstrings (or bandstrings with very large tassels), lawnband, a large set of ribbons pointed at his knees and Spanish leather boots with large lawn tops, and his hat mostly cocked'.

One reason perhaps why he did not interfere with Dr. Wallis and his Anglican associates was because of his friendship with Wallis and other members of the Oxford scientific group which later became the Royal Society. In his *History of the Royal Society* (1667), Thomas Sprat describes how this famous Society originated with a group of men interested in the natural sciences who began to meet in the lodgings of John Wilkins in Wadham College after the civil war. At their meetings could be found such well-known scientists as Seth Ward, Robert Boyle, William Petty, Christopher Wren and Laurence Rooke.

Their aim was to abandon the traditional Aristotelian scientific approach and put into practice the scientific philosophy of Francis Bacon and to pursue practical experiments. By February, 1652, the Oxford scientific club had about thirty members and there is every reason to believe that John Owen was one of these since his name occurs with those of prominent scientists on a manuscript (located at Oxford) which shows which parts of the Bodleian Library each member was to catalogue so that a list of books on natural science could be formulated for the club. At heart Owen was a traditionalist who had doubts about the changing scene of the sciences, but it is to his credit that he was a friend of these men at Wadham College and that he gave them support and protection.

The academic year for 1654-5 closed in the traditional way with the usual social festivities of the Act and Owen's Latin oration as Vice-Chancellor in which he surveyed the progress made and the difficulties encountered during the year. Some of these difficulties we have mentioned, but we have not as yet noticed the writings that came from his pen in this period. First, there was a poem, 'To the Protector', in a volume of poems in several languages offered by the university to Cromwell after his conclusion of peace with the Dutch in late 1654. Secondly, there was a large volume, *The Doctrine of the Saints' Perseverance*, which defended the Calvinist doctrine of the permanent and lasting salvation of all those who are born of the Spirit of God. This book has an interesting dedicatory letter to Oliver Cromwell and a further epistle to the Heads of Colleges in which he compliments them on their learning and orthodoxy. Thirdly, he published *Vindiciae Evangelicae or the Mystery of the Gospel vindicated and Socinianism examined*, which he dedicated to the Council of State. He had begun this book in 1652 at the request of the Rump Parliament. It sought to expose the errors of John Biddle's *The Twofold Catechism* (1651) and the famous *Racovian Catechism* and at the same time clear the good name of Oxford university of which, unfortunately, Biddle was a graduate. Owen argued for the proper and full deity of God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, and warned that a modified orthodoxy would soon lead into heresy (which actually happened in the eighteenth century). In these theological treatises we find the John Owen who was remembered and revered by orthodox Calvinists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (as he is still revered today); that is, Owen the dogmatic and systematic theologian. [See footnote on page 571.]

Down from his Glory

MARTIN J. ELLISTON

'Let this mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus'—

Philippians 2 v. 5.

In this age of practicalities Christians have fallen into the trap of dividing doctrine from practice. Christian doctrine is dismissed as being unrelated to the business of living the Christian life.

This was not the attitude of the Apostles. All Paul's letters to the Churches, for example, are doctrinal treatises but they are also handbooks on practical Christian living—the practice being closely allied to the doctrines.

The passage containing this verse has the doctrinal piece arising in the middle of a chapter on the practising of Christian virtues—unity, humility and self effacement. Paul cites the only perfect example, the Lord Jesus Christ, and proceeds to make a doctrinal statement on His person and work that is breath-taking in its scope and detail.

Philippians 2 v. 5-11 shows us the Lord Jesus Christ—the high position from which He descended, the lowly position to which He came and the position to which He has been exalted.

THE POSITION FROM WHICH HE DESCENDED

'Who being in the Form of God.' To understand what Paul meant by this we need to know something of the people to whom Paul wrote, and the culture from which they sprang. The Philippians were Gentile believers with a background of Greek language and culture and Paul is here using a term familiar to Plato or Aristotle the Greek philosophers. The 'form' is the essential character of a thing—its essential being rather than its passing appearance.

So when Paul wrote of Christ as being in the form of God he meant that Christ is THE GOD, the Creator, the Supreme ruler of the Universe. In this one word Paul was underlining the divinity of Christ.

This was Christ's position and identity. To the Jews He made the claim, 'Before Abraham was, I AM.' This was claiming to be the God of the Old Testament. He said to His disciples, 'I and My Father are One.' When He prayed to His Father in the garden, He said, 'We are One.' John's gospel was written to convince the readers 'That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.'

THE POSITION TO WHICH HE CAME

Jesus, being God, 'thought it not robbery to be equal with God,' or, as J. B. Phillips translates it, 'Did not cling to His prerogative as God's equal' 'but made Himself of no reputation'—of no standing at all—and took upon Him the form of a servant.'

What a descent! from the highest to the lowest, from the position as *The God*, the Ruler of All, He made Himself *The Servant of All*. He said, 'The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister.'

He was born in a cattle-cave, as a young child He was made a refugee in Egypt, He toiled in a carpenter's shop and during His ministry He was homeless—'The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.' He was unpossessed of wealth—when He needed a coin to answer a question, He had to ask others to show Him a penny. At the end of His life He was sold to His enemies for thirty pieces of silver—the price of a slave.

He was *the Servant*. He came to mankind whom He had made and who should have served Him, and served *them*. He healed them, provided them with food, raised them from the dead and even washed the disciples' feet.

When we read the Gospels Christ's goodness and service to humanity is the first thing that strikes us. But, Christ's service was, first and foremost, service to God, His Father.

At twelve years old we see Him in the temple, saying, 'I must be about My Father's business.' We find Him telling His disciples at Samaria, 'My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me.' He told the Jews, 'The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He seeth the Father do.'

Throughout His ministry He was constantly emphasising that he had been sent by His Father. Christ loved humanity because He loved and obeyed His Father. This is an important order.

The rest of the verse in Philippians tells us how He came down, 'and was made in the likeness of men.' When we reach this point comprehension has to give place to faith. Christ on earth was God *and* Man. Two natures in the same person. Christ never abandoned His Divine Identity but, to become man, he forewent the exercise of some of His Divine rights. He restricted Himself to the natural laws of this planet—He Who was the ruler of eternity. He was the God of Israel Who never slumbers or sleeps yet, as man He experienced great weariness. He was the immortal, ever living God yet, as man He died. He experienced these things as we do because He was wholly,

physically a man. At the same time He was also God. He was God in man, man in God. 'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.'

'And being found in fashion as a man He humbled Himself'. Even when He had lowered Himself from the position as God of Heaven to that of man in this sinful world, He humbled Himself even further as a Man.

When He rode into Jerusalem He rode upon the animal of the poor, an ass and the colt of an ass. He paused to bless children and He went out of His way to raise a little girl. The only sinless man Who ever lived and He was known as the friend of publicans and sinners. The greatest moral teacher Who ever trod the earth and He died a felon's death.

This was the full extent of His humbling of Himself 'and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' Here an important doctrinal point is raised. The part played by God the Father in our redemption.

Christ became obedient unto death—obedient unto His Heavenly Father. 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.' Our salvation comes to us through the plan of God the Father and the obedience of God the Son.

In the garden we find Christ praying to be relieved of the terrible ordeal of the cross, yet at the same time, making His ultimate submission to His Father. 'Nevertheless, not My will but Thine be done.'

Was there ever such suffering as His? Was there ever such humility?

As man He felt the pain of the nails, of the scourge and the thorns. As God He endured the rejection of God the Father. He was accursed of God on our behalf. In Galatians we read that He was cursed for us because it is written 'Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree.'

THE POSITION TO WHICH HE HAS BEEN EXALTED

From the throne of Heaven to a cross on earth and then to exaltation. Paul's doctrinal statement moves on to its wonderful climax.

'Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him.' Note the 'wherefore'. The Lord Jesus Christ has been highly exalted to the greatest place in Heaven, not only because it is His by Divine right but because He has also earned and merited it by humbling Himself and obeying God the Father fully and completely.

Let us trace this progress of exaltation from self-abasement. He descended into death and God raised Him to life. He came down to this planet and God took Him up to Heaven. He laid

aside His glory and God has given Him a greater glory.

'And given Him a name which is above every name.' To the name of Lord which He always had God has given Him the name Saviour, 'There is none other name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.'

The reason for God's exaltation of Christ is 'That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth and things under the earth', Every creature, the whole of God's creation should worship Christ and, if we are to be in God's will and purpose, this is what we must do. One day the whole creation will worship Him but we are His redeemed people and our worship should be made now, both in His house and in our lives.

Further He is exalted so that 'every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord'. One day He is coming to reign and rule over the world. Then all will confess that He is Lord but we should confess it now. He is our Lord not only because He is the Word by which we were made but because He has redeemed us and called us to be His people. We should be yielded completely to Him.

The object of total obedience to Christ is 'to the glory of God the Father'. This is the prime object of Christian life and service—not to make us happy or satisfied but to glorify God, and Christ is our means. By glorifying Him we glorify God the Father. We worship, we submit to the Lord Jesus Christ and our doing so is to the glory of God the Father.

Paul says 'Let this mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus'. Christians are to have the same humility of spirit as Jesus Christ, the same obedience to Christ as He had for His Father. We are to become servants to God through Christ and, as His servants, become servants of all men. Our exaltation will be to be with Him in His glory.

BOOK NOTE

Rev. Murdo Campbell's book, 'Gleanings of a Highland Harvest', has in the past been favourably reviewed in the *Gospel Magazine*. A new and enlarged edition of this account of some Scottish stalwarts is being issued. Copies may be obtained from: The Religious Book Room, Dingwall, Ross-shire. Price 8/6; by post 10/-.

The Blood of Christ

H. M. CARSON

*A sermon preached in Hamilton
Road Baptist Church, Bangor.*

'But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin' (1 John 1 : 7).

I want to return to this text again this evening because when I was dealing with it a fortnight ago* it was in the context of John's emphasis that if we pretend that we have no real need of cleansing and that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. John's whole appeal in these verses is that we should confess our sins, that we should be honest before God. But I want to return this evening to this verse to look at the other side, because confession, after all, is not sufficient. Martin Luther discovered that four centuries ago. He was constantly in the confessional, confessing his sins. He was desperately anxious to know that there was forgiveness and his great longing was for assurance of salvation, to know that he was right with God. But with all his confessing—and how persistent he was in his confessing—with all of it, there was no peace in his heart. So quite clearly confession is not enough; there must be the other side. There must be God's answer to the confession, and this is the answer, 'The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin'.

To speak about the blood of Christ is to speak about a theme which jars upon the sophisticated mind of twentieth-century man—in fact it jars upon the thinking of a great many modern theologians. Just the other day I was in the post office and happened to meet a couple of ministers and we talked for a few moments. I recalled someone I knew, and I recalled a conversation I had had with him in which I had said, 'You know, liberalism never converted anyone' (and I was not talking, of course, about political liberalism, I was talking about doctrinal liberalism). They immediately took me to task and one of them said, 'But surely the liberals *did* introduce people to Jesus', and he quoted Schweizer, the one who is known to many for his medical work in West Africa, but who is known to some of us more for his attacks on the miraculous

* This earlier sermon appeared in the October issue of *The Gospel Magazine*.

element in the gospels—did he not lead people to Jesus? I said, 'Well, some of these men may have led people to the Jesus of their imagination, but they did not lead them to the Christ of the New Testament'. And there is a fundamental difference between the two. Some people talk about Jesus and about coming to Jesus, but they do not deal with the Jesus who is revealed here.

The great essential truth that is constantly linked with the Lord Jesus Christ is the shedding of His blood. In actual fact, in the great debate which has taken place within the churches between those who seek to stand for the apostolic faith as it is embodied in the New Testament, and those who have moved from that position and really are appealing to human wisdom, the great point where the debate centres is on this issue of the death of Christ. What is it that distinguishes a liberal from an evangelical? Is it his view of Scripture? I would say only partly so. The issue in a sense is even more fundamental. It is on this matter of the centrality of the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some of you may know that in the universities over the years there has been this divergence; there have been different groups, both claiming to be Christian, and yet pursuing separate paths. One of these groups, which is completely committed to a liberal position, met with the Christian Union in Cambridge, which was the forerunner of the Christian Unions in the other universities. It was in 1919 when they met to discuss the possibility of coming together, to have a united witness in the university. Here would be a real impact, and in some ways it seemed to be a very attractive possibility. But one of the Cambridge Christian Union men asked: 'Do you put the blood of Christ central in your message?' The reply from the other side was quite frank: 'No, we give it a place, but we do not put it central'. The Christian Union men were equally frank—'Well, as far as we are concerned, it is central, and we feel that if we are going to maintain a witness in this university this must be our central theme'.

But is this still a theme that we can maintain in this day and age? When this matter is brought up you will find many smiling in a rather superior fashion. 'This,' they say, 'is the theology of the slaughter-house, this is something that belongs to Victorian days. It was all right for them then to preach this kind of message, but you cannot expect modern man to accept this.' But the question is not what modern man accepts or rejects, but what message has the stamp of God's approval or authority. After all, a great deal of nonsense is talked about

modern man. When you examine modern man morally you find that he is not a whit different from man ten or twenty centuries ago. He can move a great deal faster from one point to another, but the mere fact of speeding his locomotion does not alter him in his moral constitution one little bit. He may be much more highly educated, he may have a far wider range of knowledge, but as far as his constitution is concerned, as far as his moral nature is concerned, he is not a bit different. I confess that I have no time for this approach which suggests that modern man needs a particular twentieth century message. Of course we must meet him where he is, we must meet his problems and difficulties, but the essential basic message of the Scripture is the same message for twentieth century man as it was for first century man, because the thing that surely impresses you if you read the Bible and if you know men as they are today, is that they are remarkably similar—they have the same weaknesses, they have the same sins, they are just the same men. And it will impress you doubtless, if you move from university circles to very ordinary circles, how under the surface the same basic needs are there. I remember when I was in Cambridge, I used to move from working in the university to working in some of the very small streets in Cambridge, and the thing that used to impress me was that fundamentally, at the deep level of moral and spiritual need, there was not a whit of difference. Men basically need the same message.

But, after all, the big issue is not simply 'what do men need?' but the first question is 'what has God revealed?' And when we turn to the Bible, whatever some of our theological friends may say in a superior fashion about the religion of the shambles, this is in fact the central theme of Scriptures. This is not something that is dreamt up out of a few isolated texts, pulled out of their context and made to produce some particular doctrine. Right the way through the Bible, from beginning to end, this is a recurring theme. Go right back to the very beginnings of human history, go back to Genesis and listen to the story of Abel. Abel offers a sacrifice. Why did he offer it? I would say that clearly God had spoken, God was already beginning to reveal Himself to men, and the answering response of faith on Abel's part was to offer a sacrifice which involved the shedding of the blood of the sacrifice. When Noah is delivered, when he stands again on dry ground, what is his first action? It is, again, to offer a sacrifice. When Abraham goes into the promised land, one of his actions—indeed his primary action—is to build an altar, and the altar

was essentially the place of sacrifice, the place of slaughter. Go with the children of Israel into Egypt and the theme continues. God is going to deliver them. They have been slaves, they have been exploited, they are in a hopeless condition. Is there no future for them? Yes, God has His deliverer, and through Moses they are delivered, but again there is that accompaniment of sacrifice. On the night of their deliverance there was enacted the sacrifice that was to be perpetuated in Jewish history every year right down the centuries: the sacrifice of the Passover lamb, when the blood of the lamb was shed and sprinkled on the lintels and doorposts of the houses. When they come out of Egypt they meet at Mount Sinai, and God comes to them and establishes them as a people. They had been just a medley of tribes, but now God welds them together. They are going to be the people of God, the people of the covenant, knit by covenant bonds to the God who has redeemed them. Again there is sacrifice. The blood is shed and the blood is sprinkled upon the people as they are knit to Him. So you get the book of Leviticus, the whole ritual of the Levitical law with all the varying kinds of sacrifice, and the essential thing in it was that blood was shed.

Now someone says, 'But when you move to the New Testament, you surely move to a new realm. It is one thing to quote the Old Testament Scriptures, but is that not an earlier stage of revelation? Don't you move to a more refined atmosphere when you come to the New Testament?' On the contrary, you move in precisely the same atmosphere. Indeed, the New Testament does not make sense apart from this Old Testament background. If you do not appreciate the teaching of the Old Testament about the sacrificial system, you will not begin to understand what the New Testament means when it speaks about Christ. Christ spoke about Himself in precisely these terms. When His ministry began, the witness that was borne to Him by John the Baptist has this Old Testament background. You remember how John called attention to this One who had appeared on the scene : he says, 'Look, behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world'. This would have meant a great deal to them—they were Jews, accustomed to the yearly sacrifice of the Passover lamb, and to the sacrifice of the lambs in the temple. John is saying, 'Look! Here is the reality. All this has simply been picture language to point you forward, and now the reality has come. Here is God's Lamb'.

Jesus Himself continues with this theme. You may remember in Matthew 16 how He drew His disciples to the point

where He elicited from Peter the great confession that Jesus was the Messiah. He immediately goes on to tell them what kind of Messiah He is. Peter quite clearly, although he had reached the point of seeing that Jesus was the Messiah, had not really grasped what was involved in His Messianic ministry. Jesus at once goes on to say, 'The Son of Man must suffer'. That is the kind of Messiah He was. He was going to suffer, He was going to die. He was the Lamb whose blood was going to be shed. So when He spoke to them about the purpose of His coming He said, 'The Son of Man is come not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many'. He was going to give His life, and He was going to give it in death. He was going to be crucified. His blood was to be spilt at Calvary. So when you turn to the rest of the New Testament and they are looking back at what happened—the coming of Jesus, His life, His teaching, His ministry, His death—it is upon His death and His resurrection that they focus all their attention. Certainly the men who wrote the gospels focused their attention there, because if you look at the space taken in the gospels by the narrative of the death of Christ, that last week occupies a space out of all proportion to the time involved. There is much more space devoted to the final week of Christ's life and to His death than there is to great passages of His ministry. That is where they saw the emphasis to be—upon His death.

It is the same in the epistles. When Paul writes his letter to the Romans he stresses this point: 'It is through faith in His blood' that we are brought nigh to God. He writes to the Ephesians, 'We have redemption through His blood'. Redemption? They knew what that meant. They knew what it meant for a slave in the Roman world to be redeemed. He was redeemed, he was emancipated, by the payment of a price. 'We have redemption,' says Paul, 'through Christ's blood.' Peter says the same: 'Knowing that you were redeemed, not with corruptible things as silver and gold—you were not bought, as many a Greek slave was bought, and then set free by someone paying his ransom price—'No,' says Peter, 'you were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ.' The epistle to the Hebrews has the same theme, looking back to the Old Testament, looking back to the Levitical ceremonial and to the cleansing and the purifying of the various washings; it says, 'How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God'. The Book of Revelation, that grand climax of the whole of

Scripture, continues the theme. Who are these in heaven? 'These are they who have come through great tribulation, and have washed their robes white in the blood of the Lamb.' What is the great song of Revelation? In what theme do the redeemed join? 'Unto Him that loved us and loosed us from our sins *in His own blood*, unto Him be glory for ever.'

So John here is speaking the typical language of the New Testament. He is continuing the theme of the whole of Scripture, when he says, 'The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin'. But it still falls strangely upon the ear—the blood of Jesus cleanses us. What does it mean? What does it mean that a man *now* is cleansed by the blood of Christ that was shed over nineteen centuries ago? What does it mean? What is the significance of this statement? Well, we go back and ask, In what sense is this term 'blood' being used in the Bible? And here, of course, is where some of our liberal friends go astray. There has been a suggestion that blood—blood shed by Christ—means Christ's life being liberated, set free. They would go back to Leviticus and say, 'Well, the statement is there, "the life is in the blood"'. So clearly, when the blood is shed that means life is liberated'. So they would say that at Calvary Jesus perfectly obeyed His Father, He offered a sacrifice of perfect obedience; His blood cleanses us—in what sense? Well, His life is so wonderful and is such a moving and stirring example that it purifies your motives and it lifts you to a new level of ambition and desire to please God. But this is not the New Testament. This is not the Christian message at all. This is a poor weak caricature of the reality. After all, bloodshed does not mean life liberated; bloodshed means bluntly one thing only—it means death. When we lament the appalling bloodshed in Vietnam these days, we are not thinking about life liberated, but about the ghastly tragedy of life laid down, of death. When we speak about someone shedding someone else's blood, we are speaking about that person murdering someone else. Bloodshed means death, and it means a death accomplished by violent means. It is not the death of someone who dies quietly, it is the death of someone who by violent means is brutally killed. And the blood of Jesus means precisely this, because His death was no quiet ending to His life. He died in the full prime of His manhood, and He died by the violent hands of wicked men. He was brutally done to death and the New Testament emphasises this aspect of His dying—there was violence there, He was brutally killed, He was murdered at Calvary.

But with the Old Testament background, of course, it is not

enough simply to say that the blood of Christ speaks of His violent death, it speaks of His death as a sacrifice. He was the Lamb, and the Lamb was slain as a sacrifice. What kind of sacrifice? It comes out in the story of the Passover. Judgment was coming upon Egypt. God says, 'I will pass through the land, and the firstborn of every house shall die'. And God's word of redemption or deliverance was that they were to take a lamb and slay the lamb, and then in the most vivid way possible they were seeing this truth before their eyes: the death which fell upon the lamb was to take the place of that judicial death which would come to every house where the sacrifice had not been offered. The lamb was the substitute, the lamb was the sacrificial victim which took the place of the firstborn. So Jesus shed His blood. Jesus is the Lamb of God. The New Testament says this is the gospel. He stood in the sinner's place. He was the divinely appointed Substitute. No, He was not the innocent scapegoat upon whom an angry Father vented His anger. On the contrary, 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son'; and Christ says, 'I delight to do Thy will, O my God'. There is a glad giving by God and a glad coming by Christ. But He is the divinely ordained, the divinely appointed Substitute, standing in the sinner's place, and accepting the penalty that is due to sinful men and women.

So the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, speaks of His death—His death as a sacrifice and His death as a substitute. But if you go back again to the Bible you will find two aspects of this sacrificial work. There is the objective fact—what is done. This is seen in the sacrifice being offered and the blood being spilt upon the altar. There was also the application of the sacrifice to the people. The first is described by the word 'atonement'. But the word translated 'atonement' has as its background the Hebrew idea of covering. When God says in Leviticus, 'I have given you the blood to make an atonement, to be an atonement for your souls', He is saying, 'I have given it to be a covering'. Now what did He mean by that? We know how a man tries to cover up. When a criminal has done something wrong he tries in various ways to cover his tracks. We ourselves try so often to deal with our conscience which pursues us far more relentlessly than any policeman; we try to cover up, we try to forget the past. But we know that any covering which we produce is completely inadequate, it does not deal with the situation. The covering is a fake even as far as we are concerned, and it is completely transparent as far as God is concerned. God can see through all our feeble attempts

to cover up. But God says 'I have provided a perfect covering in the blood of the sacrifice'. Now behind this thought of covering in the Old Testament is this truth—sin is an offence to God, and sin stares, as it were, in ugly fashion at heaven. God cannot tolerate sin: 'He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity'. He cannot look upon evil. God must cover it up, but He does not cover it up as we cover it up. We cover our sins by trying to forget or by making excuses, and we overlay our sin with evasions of this kind or that, but God covers up in the sense of obliterating, and He covers up by means of the death of Christ. How does He accomplish that? The judgment of God has already fallen upon Christ, and Christ by His blood shedding has satisfied God's righteous justice. There is a covering, there is an atonement. Sin is obliterated, it is put away. This is what Leviticus was talking about: 'I have given you the blood for an atonement, for a covering, to cover over and to obliterate this foul ugly thing which is such an offence in the sight of a holy God'.

But I said that there is the other side. There must obviously be the application of what God has accomplished. There is the objective side—that which happens outside of us; but there is also the subjective side—that which happens in us. This was brought out vividly in the Old Testament ritual. You saw it at the Passover—the Passover lamb was slain, but then in ceremonial fashion the blood of the slain lamb was sprinkled on the lintel and the doorposts. You can see the symbolism of it all. The consequence of the death of the sacrifice was now a reality for the people in that home. The fruit of the death of the substitute was being applied to each resident within that door. You see it again on Mount Sinai: again the sacrifice is made, the blood is shed, the covering is provided, and then in symbolic fashion the blood was sprinkled upon the people. It was an application to them of all that God had done for them. So that redemption was not something outside, it was not simply a salvation that God had worked out; now it was theirs, now it was applied to them. And John is surely saying just this here when he says, 'The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, *cleanseth us from all sin*'. It is true that it has the objective side—it is something that happened at a certain point in time, so that one of the early creeds of the church says, 'He was crucified under Pontius Pilate' in the same way as we might refer to something today as happening when Mr. Callaghan was Home Secretary. Well, this happened when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, at a particular point in history. It was an actual historical event. He died. His blood

was shed. Atonement was made. God's great purpose was carried out. But, says John, this cleansing must become ours. As the blood was sprinkled on the lintel and doorposts, as the blood at Sinai was sprinkled upon the people, so the blood of Christ must be applied to our souls, so the dying of Christ must become a reality to us, so all that Christ accomplished by His death may become personally real to us each one.

This is what it means to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. This is what Paul surely means in Romans when he speaks of faith in His blood. I come to God and I see myself in my sin. I may have tried to cover up in the past, I may have tried to evade God's searching gaze, I may have tried to produce this and that excuse, but I know only too well as I stand before such a holy God that the whole thing is just a pretence. I am naked and open before Him. But I find this answer to my sin and my need: Jesus died, Jesus Christ the Son of God took my nature, He became a man, He lived my life but He lived it completely without sin. He died, He shed His blood, He took my place and He bore the penalty that is due because of my sin. And because of His death, and because by faith I put my trust in Him, and because I rely on what He has done for me, all that happened at Calvary becomes a reality. There is cleansing for me *now* through that which Christ did once and for all.

'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from *all* sin.' This is no partial remedy. I may try in this direction and that, I may reform, I may improve, I may amend my ways, I may deal with some of the consequences of past wrong-doing; but always there is this basic residual element of uncleanness and impurity. But Christ does not deal in some partial fashion. Here is no temporary remedy. 'The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin.' And of this word I can say, as I said of one of the other words in this chapter, it stands at the beginning of the Christian life and it stands at every point in the Christian life. You only begin when you come as a sinner to Jesus Christ. You only begin as a Christian when you know the cleansing of His blood. And every step of the way, when so often there is impurity and defilement and uncleanness, the word still stands sure. The blood of Jesus keeps on cleansing from all sin. John the Baptist said to the disciples, 'Look, the Lamb of God!' And that really is the task of any man who stands in the pulpit—to say, 'Look! Look at Christ. Look at Him as the Son of God. See Him as the Son of Mary who became man for us'. But look at Him, not simply as He stood on the mountain teaching, not simply as He performed those

miracles, but look at Him dying, see Him as He hangs on that Cross. It is through that blood shed, through that death, that we have redemption, redemption through His blood. May the Lord set our eyes upon Christ, and set our faith upon the Incarnate Son of God; for it is still true as it was when John wrote those words, 'The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth, keeps on cleansing, from all sin'.

THE BEST ANSWER

You may go the world over, and you will not find a single believer who is disappointed in the once crucified, now glorified, soon coming King. This is the best answer to the scepticism of the day. Take any class of society, the highest or lowest, and there is not an instance of one who trusted in the Lord and was confounded.

WILLIAM PENNEFATHER.

THE INFINITE CHRIST

If I might comprehend Jesus Christ, I could not believe on Him. He would be no greater than myself. Such is my consciousness of sin and inability that I must have a super-human Saviour.

DANIEL WEBSTER.

THE PERSON OF CHRIST

Had my Saviour been God only, I might perhaps have trusted Him but I never could have come near to Him without fear. Had my Saviour been man only, I might have loved Him, but I never could have felt sure that He was able to take away my sins. But, blessed be the Lord, my Saviour is God as well as man, and man as well as God. God, and so able to deliver me; Man, and so able to feel with me. Almighty power and deepest sympathy are met together in one glorious person, Jesus Christ, my Lord.

J. C. RYLE.

Doctrinal Definitions

THE SECOND COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

PAUL TUCKER

We conclude our study of the Person and accomplishments of the Lord Jesus Christ by considering, appropriately, His Second Coming. In thinking of His ascension, we were concerned with His return to Heaven from earth. The second Advent has to do with the return to earth from Heaven. Acts 1:11. Phil. 3:20. The early church was characterised by *remembrance* and *expectation*. Believers remembered gratefully the first coming of Christ, and looked forward expectantly to His second Coming. These characteristics are seen in the Lord's Supper. They looked back (I Cor. 11:24, 25). They looked *on*—"till He come"—(v. 26). Between the great fact contemplated (Calvary), and the great event anticipated (Advent), they lived as people who watched for their Lord. Their life, service and witness were within an eschatological context. We too need ever to recognise that for us, this present time is part of the interval between the first and second Advent. Do we live, serve, and work as men who watch for their Lord? The second coming is the hope of the Church (Titus 2:13). It is a tragedy that this doctrine which should unify all believers, has become a ground of division among Christians who hold different views in respect of the details connected with our Lord's coming. We all believe the great fact. More emphasis should be placed upon this, and less dogmatism upon secondary matters of detail. The early believers had a watchword, "Maranatha", with which they greeted each other, "The Lord cometh", (I Cor. 16:22). We need to recapture the glow and rapture of the forward view—"The Lord cometh". There is no doubt about His coming:

(a) *It is predicted in the Old Testament.* It is claimed that that there are no less than four hundred references to it in the Old Testament. Often in the prophets we find a *double strain of prediction*. References that speak of a suffering Messiah, and others that speak of a reigning Christ. Isa. 52:13, 15; 53:12. Yet v. 3 is also true. Some Rabbis looked for two Messiahs, whereas the explanation is that the One Who came in humiliation is to return in glorification. Peter speaks of the sufferings of Christ and the glory to follow. Part of that glory is His return.

(b) *The Second Advent is proclaimed in the New Testament.* By Christ Himself (Matt. 24: 27, 30; 25: 31), by the Apostles Peter (2 Pet. 3), Paul (I Thess. 4: 15-17), John (I John 3: 2), James (James 5: 7-9), Jude (Jude 14) and by angels (Acts 1: 10, 11).

I. THE MEANING OF THE COMING.

There are attempts by many liberal scholars to explain this doctrine away.

1. *Some teach that our Lord comes again at conversion.*

Christ does come to us at conversion. Then it is that life comes to us when we are *spiritually* dead. But the second coming is for the *physically* dead, and for the physically alive, who belong to the Lord. Besides, Christ has already come in conversion to the Thessalonians, yet they waited for His Son from Heaven, (I Thess. 1: 10).

2. *Some teach that our Lord comes at death.*

But death is regarded as the last enemy, whereas Christ's coming is a glorious comfort to the believers. Our Lord made a great distinction between death and the second advent (John 21: 18, 19).

3. *Some teach that Christ came at Pentecost, and quote John 14:21-23, & v. 18.*

In a mystical and spiritual sense He did come at Pentecost. But the coming of the Spirit was dependent on His departure, not His Advent, (John 16: 7). Much New Testament teaching concerning the second coming is to people who had already received the Holy Spirit, (Gal. 5: 5).

4. *Some teach that Christ returned at the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.*

But the teaching of the Book of the Revelation was given after the destruction of Jerusalem. The great theme of the Revelation is the Second Coming. Also, was I Thessalonians 4: 16, 17 fulfilled in A.D. 70?

These were *providential* comings of our Lord, but they do not, separately or combined, constitute His Second Advent.

The return of the Lord will be *personal*—"The Lord Himself"; *visible* to the believer (I John 3: 2), to the Jew and Gentile, (Rev. 1: 7); *glorious*—the Glory of the Father (Matt. 16: 27); *sudden*—"In a moment" (I Cor. 15: 51, 52), like a lightning flash (Matt. 24: 27); *unexpected*—"As a thief" (Rev. 16: 15).

II. THE MOMENT OF THE SECOND COMING

It is obvious from Scripture that no age of glory or 'golden age' will come before our Lord's return. There can be no establishing of the Kingdom of God without the

presence of the King. There can be no peace without the Prince of Peace. We who pray "Thy Kingdom come" must also pray "even so come Lord Jesus"—Rev. 22: 20—the last prayer of the Bible.

We do not know *when* He will come (Matt. 24: 36; Acts 1: 7). Date-fixing is forever condemned in Scripture. "The Bible always tells us sufficient to satisfy our faith, although not always sufficient to gratify our curiosity."

(a) *There are cautious words in the New Testament which hint at the delay of the Second Advent.*

We find this in the Parable of the Ten Virgins—"While the bridegroom tarried . . ." (Matt. 25: 5), and in the Parable of the Talents—"After a long time, the Lord . . . cometh". (Matt. 25: 19). According to Peter, this delay is in the purpose of God and is an extension of the day of grace. It is true that we read in Rev. 22: 12, "Behold, I come quickly", but "Quickly" refers to the manner, "in a single instant".

(b) *There are helpful words in the New Testament to indicate the nearness of the Second Advent.*

"When ye see things begin to come to pass, lift up your heads for your redemption draweth nigh". Luke 21: 28.

There are signs of the times:

- i) Widespread apostasy. (I Tim. 4: 1; 2 Tim. 3: 1-5).
- ii) Distress of nations. (Luke 21: 5).
- iii) Increasing iniquity. (Matt. 24: 12).
- iv) Love growing cold. (Matt. 24: 12, 13).
- v) World evangelisation. (Matt. 24: 14).
- vi) Revival of Israel. (Ezek. 37).

(c) *There are challenging words in the New Testament to stress the influence of the Second Advent.*

- i) It should produce holiness. (Titus 2: 11-12; I John 3: 2, 3).
- ii) It should promote service. "Occupy till I come", (Luke 19: 13).
- iii) It should kindle witness. (Luke 12: 35).

With this practical emphasis we conclude. May none of us be "ashamed before Him at His Coming."

(to be continued).

**Sanctification and Christian Unity*

H. P. WOTTON

The British Medical Association meets on the understanding that every member is a qualified doctor or surgeon. This qualification separates the doctor from the quack. It also gives him unity in the society to which he belongs. The qualification that separates a believer from an unbeliever and unites him to Christ and to his living members is an individual faith that sanctifies and separates from sin. And just as a man's qualification to be a doctor does not fall upon him when he meets with others of the same profession, so sanctification does not fall upon a person when he opens a meeting door. He brings it with him from the world outside, and takes it to live with him when he goes out into the world again, for the world is the fire in which his sanctification must be proved. It is the furnace that divides the precious from the vile, for sanctifying faith is more precious than the gold that perishes. It consists basically not in the physical gathering together of persons, but in attitudes of individual faith and trust in God; in a renunciation of our own glory, strength and righteousness, to be spiritually strengthened by that one Holy Spirit who works effectually in every member of the body of Christ, binding it together in the true unity and fellowship of the Spirit. And this unity is not only with those we meet. It is with multitudes in heaven and on earth who, activated by the same Spirit, yield their lives to Him who loved them and gave Himself for them, and washed them from their sins in His own blood.

Let us take a look at a sanctified man who was involved in worldly pursuits up to the hilt. We see him following a simple enough occupation, minding the family sheep—a happy, healthy, fresh-complexioned lad who had a courageous spirit, as had many others, but with this important difference, that while others trusted their own strength and courage, his came from God, who enabled him to protect his sheep from the lion and the bear.

* The word *sanctification* is not a synonym of the word *separation*. Separation, however, is included in it, and is essential to it.

Later we see him in an amazing scene. The armies of the Philistines and those of Israel face each other in battle array, when out from the hosts of the Philistines comes the giant of Gath clad with armour from head to foot and carrying a sword of immense proportions. He challenges the hosts of Israel to send a man out to fight. But none could be found to do so until David the shepherd arrived with God in his heart and his brothers' lunch in his hand. With a sling and five smooth stones he went out to meet the man who had the impudence to challenge the honour of his God and the welfare of His people. With God in his heart and one smooth stone in his hand he did what no man in all the armies of Israel could do alone, for David was a man united to God by a faith that set him apart and raised him above his unbelieving fellow-countrymen. And no doubt by the power of God's Spirit one of the five smooth stones of Calvinism will be sufficient to deal with many a giant of error coming out to meet us from the hosts of unbelief.

'Come out from among them,' says the Lord, '... and I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters' (2 Corinthians 6 : 17, 18). Not in the sense that you separate yourselves from their company when your daily calling requires you to be among those who do not honour God, but in the sense that your spirit is not theirs. If you are a child of God, 'the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience' (Ephesians 2 : 2) is no longer yours, for, by the mighty power of God you are translated out of the kingdom of darkness into His marvellous light. And with Him in your heart you will be able to fight, not against flesh and blood, but against the evil principalities and powers that rule the darkness of this world. But you cannot do this unless you renounce the spirit of this world, for 'no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier' (2 Timothy 2 : 4).

Sanctification is the life of God in the soul. It is the progress of the new creature towards spiritual maturity. Just as in the physical life of man there is a continuous process of separation as he makes his way towards maturity, the babe departing to make room for the toddler, the toddler to make way for the small boy, the small boy to make way for the senior boy, and so on, until the mature man emerges. So in the spiritual life the babe in Christ and the young man in Christ must depart to make way for a stronger faith and a closer conscious union with Christ and with His members.

To bring this about there has to be a great deal of division made with the pruning knife of the divine husbandman, for says the Lord Jesus, 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it might bring forth more fruit' (John 15 : 12).

'The Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit' (Hebrews 4 : 12). The soul, with its fleshly imaginations, natural affections, high thoughts, proud looks, love of ostentation, ambitions, its love of self, its looking down on others. From these things the Word of God, as the sword of the Spirit, must do its work, dividing asunder the soul and the spirit, so that there emerges in this great work the truly spiritual man, sanctified and fit for the Master's use, and capable of true unity in the church, which is the body of Christ.

'Head of thy church, whose Spirit fills
And flows through every faithful soul,
Unites in mystic love, and seals
Them one, and sanctifies the whole;

"Come, Lord," thy glorious Spirit cries,
And souls beneath the altar groan;
"Come, Lord," the bride on earth replies,
"And perfect all our souls in one".'

Calvin, the Geneva Bible and Eschatology

LEWIS LUPTON

One of the many achievements of John Calvin, the Genevan Reformer, was the completion of a series of Commentaries on all the books of the Bible except the Apocalypse of John. Some have even suggested that he did write a Commentary on Revelation. In his preface to his own exposition of the last book of the Bible, entitled *The Image of Both Churches*, John Bale, the Protestant bishop of Ossory, expressly ascribed a Commentary to Calvin. Also in the University Library of Geneva an anonymous Commentary is ascribed to him on the ground, so it seems, that it is bound up with his exposition of Jude. But the truth appears to be that Calvin's cool, logical mind found the apocalyptic imagery not to its taste and he never dared to do any more than make general observations upon the meaning of the visions of John on Patmos.

Calvin's general eschatological views were, of course, clearly stated in his Commentaries at such places as Matthew 24, Acts 1 : 11, I and II Thessalonians and II Peter, as well as in the section of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* entitled 'The Final Resurrection' (Book III). His position is essentially that of the Creeds, the Apostles' Creed and Nicene Creed.¹ That is, he looked forward to the Second Coming of Christ in glory to raise the dead and to judge the whole world. This doctrine is found throughout his writings and is also enshrined in the Protestant Confessions of Faith produced in the sixteenth century, the Augsburg and Helvetic for example. To the general eschatology of the Creeds he followed Luther in adding the doctrine that the Papacy is the embodiment of the Antichristian principle which through the years has been working against the elect Church of Christ. His view of the Papacy is clearly set forth in Book IV of the *Institutes*.

If there is one place more than any other where the views of the Swiss reformer on the meaning of the Apocalypse of John are likely to be found it is in the marginal comments of the English New Testament produced at Geneva in 1557. The events which led up to this publication were the revival of Roman Catholic power in England in the person of Queen Mary and the exodus of about eight hundred clergy, students, gentry, merchants, artisans and their families to the Continent.

Most of the refugees settled in the cities of the Rhine Valley and in Switzerland, which were centres not only of the Reformed Faith but also of the printing trade. One small group led by John Knox and William Whittingham settled in Geneva after a dispute over churchmanship amongst the refugees at Frankfort. In Geneva a small band of exiles under the direction of Whittingham worked to provide a new, inexpensive translation of the Bible for the people they had left behind across the English Channel. Up to this time English Bibles were bulky, expensive folios suitable only for churches and large houses. Whittingham and his friends had the help of Calvin, Beza and others, as well as access to ancient manuscripts. The new translation, a manageable quarto, was published in 1560, although the New Testament came out three years earlier. It soon became the Bible of the people of Elizabethan England, of the Scottish Reformation and of the English colonists in North America.² The text was divided into numbered chapters and verses, and in the margin there was a brief commentary on important verses or words. Each book had a preliminary 'argument' which set forth the relevance and importance of the book. In addition there were maps, woodcuts and illustrations.

THE NEW TESTAMENT 1557

The 'argument' to the Apocalypse of John for the 1557 New Testament may perhaps have been written by Calvin himself, for it is virtually the same introduction as that provided for the French New Testament of 1556. It called for a prayerful reading: 'Read diligently, judge soberly, and call earnestly to God for the true understanding hereof'. Further, it is the cautious attitude towards apocalyptic mysteries that is found in the marginal comments. Four notes identified the Papacy with the beast from the sea (13 : 1). By this particular verse the note reads: 'The lyvely pourtrait of the Romishe antichrist who is mayteyned by the second beast which is his clergy'. At 13 : 11 the reader is told that the beast who speaks like a dragon is in fact teaching the 'devilish doctrine whereby the Romish Antichrist is mayteyned'. The crimson beast on which the woman dressed in purple and scarlet sat (17 : 4) was likened to 'the Roman Empire, which being fallen into decay, the whore of Rome usurped authoritie'. Another note offered an explanation of the number of the beast (13 : 18) which, when compared with medieval explanations, is a model of caution. It was based on the common idea that seven is often associated in Scripture with God and perfection, and six with

humanity. So the Pope was 'not God and therefore neither almightie nor eternal'.

The events following the opening of 'ye sixt seale' (6 : 12-17) were said to refer to the 'seconde comming of the Sonne of God', whilst the 144,000 sealed ones of chapter seven indicated 'the greate number of the Jewes which go before us to salvation'. The angel with the golden censer (8 : 3) was identified with Jesus Christ who 'offereth up the prayers of the Saints', whilst the angel with the little book (10 : 1), the angel with the key (20 : 1) and the rider on the white horse (19 : 11) were also made to refer to the One who walked amidst the churches (2 and 3). The comments on the first five verses of chapter twenty were very careful.

- v1. 'an Angel.' This Angel is Christ that should treade the olde serpent upon the heade.
- v2. 'a thousand years.' That is for a tyme.
- v5. 'the deade men.' He meaneth them which are spiritually dead, for in whome Satan lyveth he is dead to God.
'that first resurrection.' Whereby God doth quicken and restore us to newness of life.

Here the millennium is equated with the time during which the Gospel is preached to the nations and the first resurrection is the equivalent of spiritual regeneration. This Augustinian doctrine is seen also in Calvin's comments in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Bk. III, ch. xxv). The idea that Christ will reign with the saints on earth for a thousand years he dismissed as 'too childish either to need or to be worth a refutation'. He went on to write that 'those who assign the children of God a thousand years in which to enjoy the inheritance of the life to come do not realise how much reproach they are casting upon Christ and His kingdom'. The general cautious approach of both Calvin and the Genevan New Testament is seen in the last comment of the latter. 'We must beware we esteeme not the length nor shortnes of the Lords coming by our owne imagination.'

The problem as to whether or not there would be a large-scale conversion of Jews to Christ before the end of the age was not a question to which Calvin himself paid much attention. His interpretation of 11 : 25-32 in his Commentary on Romans did not allow for this, but in his thinking generally he seemed to hold out hope for a future turning of Jews to Christ. This optimism may be found in his discussion of the problem of God's rejection of the Jews, but their continuance as His covenant people, in the *Institutes* (Bk. IV, ch. xvi, sec 13ff).

Yet the belief that there would be a future conversion of many Jews to Christ rapidly grew in the century following Calvin's death in 1564 and an indication of this is found in the 1557 New Testament. The comment on the words 'all Israel shall be saved' (11 : 26) is brief but clear. 'He sheweth that the tyme shal come that the whole nation of the Jewes, not every one particulerly, shall be joyned to the Church of Christ.'

THE GENEVA BIBLE 1560

In this famous Bible the introductory 'Argument' of the 1557 N.T. was retained but the number of marginal notes was greatly expanded. Instead of one hundred and forty there were over four hundred notes, and the length of them was increased. Whereas the margins of the octavo 1557 N.T. were only sparsely filled, the large margins in the quarto 1560 Bible were almost completely filled with them. The subject of the papacy was the dominant theme. In 1557 the star falling from heaven (9 : 1) was believed to be Satan (cf. Luke 10 : 18), but in 1560 the editors boldly affirmed 'this is the Pope'. The king of the locusts (9 : 11) was identified as 'Antichrist, the Pope, King of hypocrites and Satan's ambassador', and the locusts who came out of the pit as 'Monkes, Friers, Cardinals' and other papal agents. Opposite 16 : 2, which describes how sores fell on those who had the mark of the beast, the malady was described as venereal disease, 'or pox, and this reigneth commonly among Canons, Friers, Nonnes, Priestes and such filthie vermine'. Two interpretations of the number 666 were offered. First, it was about '666 yeares after this revelation (to John on Patmos) that the Pope began to be manifeste in the worlde'; secondly, after some juggling with the numerical values of the Greek and Latin letters for 'Lateinos', which 'noteth the pope who used the Latin tongue, and because Italie in olde time was called Latinum', the number 666 was reached. (L = 30; A = 1; T = 300; E = 5; I = 10; N = 50; O = 70; S = 200.) At 17 : 3 the simple comment appeared: 'the beast signifieth the auncient Rome; the woman that sitteth thereon the newe Rome which is the Papistrie'.

Interesting development from 1557 concerning Revelation 20 : 1-5 may be observed. The 1560 Bible has the following notes:

- vi. 'an Angel.' This Angel representeth the order of the Apostles whose vocation and office was from heaven: or may signify Christ which should tread downe the serpent's head.
'the keye.' Hereby he meaneth the Gospel whereby hell is shut up to the faithfull, & Satan is chained that

he cannot hurt them, yea & the ministers hereby open it to the infidels, but through their impietie and stubbornness.

- v2. 'a thousand years.' That is from Christ's nativitie unto the time of Pope Sylvester the second [Pope from 999]; so long the pure doctrine should after a sort remayne.
- v3. 'the thousand yeares were fulfilled.' After this terme Satan had greater power than he had before.
- v4. 'I saw seats . . . ' The glorie and authoritie of them that suffer for the Christ's sake.

Here clearly the millennium is seen as stretching from the year A.D. 1 to 1000. By 1560 this, or something similar (e.g. A.D. 70-1070), was becoming the generally accepted Reformed view of these thousand years. It is found in Bullinger's *A Hundred Sermons on the Apocalips of Jesus Christe* and Bale's *The Image of Both Churches*. With reference to the future conversion of the Jewish people, the comments on Revelation in the 1560 Geneva Bible had nothing to say on this topic, but the comment on Romans 11 : 25-32 extends and confirms the note in the 1557 New Testament.

FRANCIS JUNIUS AND THE GENEVA BIBLE

Francis Junius began his studies of prophecy and apocalyptic scriptures with the Book of Ezekiel in 1587, when he was in his early forties. He was a man who had remained faithful to the Reformation and its doctrines through many trials. Nearly killed in a riot at the age of fourteen, converted at fifteen, overtaken by war and stranded without any money he was appointed minister of the pest-house in Geneva at the age of twenty. Then he went to be pastor of the French church at Antwerp. Accused of sedition by the authorities and even suspected by his friends because of his French nationality, he was hunted from place to place. Later, he lost his wife, several children and a brother, and as a fugitive he served as a chaplain in William the Silent's army. In 1573 he joined Immanuel Tremellius at Heidelberg in the task of translating the Bible from the original languages into Latin, which eventually appeared in four volumes.

By nature he was a scholar; languages came to him almost without effort and his pen never seemed to leave his hand. Patient and thorough in all he did, he was to hand on to his son, Francis, those skills which are still represented by transcripts of precious manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. The chief part of Bible translation was over: only the polishing remained to be done. Truer readings, consistent

renderings, explanations of the sense of the original, alternative expressions in the margin, notes to draw out refinements of meaning, descriptions of the relationship between the different parts of Scripture, analysis of the parts, the elucidation of knotty points, the use of numbers in the Bible and other similar matters occupied the attention of Francis Junius the Elder.

But he was no pedant; how could he be after all that he had passed through? He was glad to be respected, but academic honours sat lightly upon him. It was pleasant to be popular (his popularity was to increase still more after his removal to Leyden in 1592), but it was balanced by the knowledge of what it is to be a hunted outlaw, unsure even of friends. College walls could not restrict the horizons of a life such as his had been. Books were not only for study; they concerned the emotions; images were let loose in the mind—fierce contrasts, visionary combats, spiritual warfare, the very life-blood of the soul . . . inevitably he turned to the Apocalypse.

In spite of all his labours in connection with the Latin Bible, it is possible that Junius did not regard it as his principal work, for in the list of his writings at the end of his autobiography two titles were distinguished from all the rest by being printed entirely in *large type*. The first was *La Confession du Foy de France* and does not concern us here. The other was the *Exposition de l'Apocalypse*. It had been preceded in 1589 by a Latin work, *Notae in Apocalypsim*, which was followed by the fuller French edition of 1592. Both were translated into English, but it was the shorter one which was first incorporated into the Geneva Bible in the 1599 edition. In both the Bodleian and the British Museum there are copies of the English translation of the Latin notes. The title page reads: *Apocalypsis. A Briefe and Learned Commentarie upon the Revelation of Saint John the Apostle and Evangelist applied unto the historie of the Catholike and Christian Church, 1592.*

From 1600 onwards, some editions of the Geneva Bible had copies of Junius' notes on Revelation inserted after the text, and from 1599 onwards it displaced Lawrence Tomson's Revelation in quarto Roman Bibles. It is in an edition of this date, printed by the deputies of Christopher Barker, that the Geneva Bible reached its most popular Puritan form. It has two title pages. The second had the usual engraving of the crossing of the Red Sea by Moses, but the first contained a new cut with an elaborate border with emblems of the twelve tribes, twelve Apostles, four evangelists, the dove, the lamb, and the open Scriptures around a heart-shaped panel for the title. This

was the edition which was printed in Holland so many times in later years and which was very popular and most influential in Puritan homes. The Apocalypse of John is entitled *The Revelation of Saint John the Apostle and Evangelist, with the Annotations of Francis Junius*.

Numbers are used in Revelation with a mysterious symbolism. There are seven spirits, seven lamps, seven churches, seven seals, seven trumpets and seven vials. Twelve and its multiples are also common: twelve gates, twelve apostles, twelve tribes and one hundred and forty-four thousand saints. Further, the Holy City is trodden underfoot for forty-two months; two witnesses prophesy for 1,260 days; the radiant woman is fed in the wilderness for 1,260 days and is nourished for 'a time, times, and half a time'. The Beast from the sea ravages the saints for forty-two months. Of course, 42 months, 1,260 days and 3½ years are the same. Junius, and some of his contemporaries, saw special significance in the numbers of Revelation and it is important to note that a section precedes his comments on the Book, entitled 'Order of Time whereunto the Contents of this book are to be referred'. In fact, Junius was a populariser of the year-day theory based on Ezekiel 4 : 6, 'Each day for a year'. This is seen in the introductory note on time as well as in many other comments. For example, at Rev. 2 : 10 he commented, 'For so commonly both in this booke and in Daniel yeeres are signified by the name of dayes'. The notion that a day represents a year in prophetic passages seems to have originated in Rabbinical comments on Daniel in the Middle Ages. The theory was of special use in explaining Rev. 11 : 2-3, where the 1,260 years were, said Junius, to be reckoned from the time of the passion of Christ. This brought him conveniently to the time of the less reputable Popes. He saw in 11 : 11 a prophecy of the destruction of Boniface VIII, Pope from 1294 to 1303.

The notes of Junius on Rev. 20 : 1-5 are much longer than those in earlier editions of the Geneva Bible. They are as follows:

- v1. 'an Angel'. Now followeth the 3rd place of the prophetically historie whereby Christ overcame the dragon as I noted chap. 7 : 1. This place must necessarily be joined with the end of the 12th chapter, and be applied unto the just understanding thereof. The chapter hath two parts, one of the dragon overcome, unto the 10th verse, the other of the resurrection and the last judgment unto the end of the chapter. The history of the dragon is double: First, of the first victory after

which he was bound by Christ unto the 6th verse. The second is of the last victory whereby he was throwne downe into the everlasting punishment, thence unto the 10th verse. This first history happened in the first time of the Christian Church when the dragon was thrown downe from heaven by Christ, went about to molest the new birth of the Church in the earth, chap. 12 : 17-18. For which cause I give warning that this story of the Dragon must be anexed unto that place.

'the keye.' That is of hell, whither God threw down the Angels which had sinned had bound them in chaines of darknesse to bee kept unto damnation. 2 Pet. 2 : 4, Jude 5.

v1. 'a thousand yeeres.' The first whereof (continuing this history with the end of the 12th chapter) is the 36 yeere from the passion of Christ, when the Church of the Jewes being overthrown Satan assayed to invade the Christian Church gathered of the Gentiles, and to detroy part of her seed, 12 : 7. The thousandth yeere falleth precisely upon the times of that wicked Hildebrand, who was called Gregory the seventh, a most damnable Necromancer & sorcerer whom Satan used as an instrument when he was loosed out of bonds thenceforth to annoy the Saints of God with most cruel persecutions, and the whole world with dissentions and most bloody waares: as Benno the Cardinall reporteth at large. And this is the first victory gotten over the Dragon in the earth.

v3. 'no more.' Namely with that publick and violent deceit which he attempted before, chap. 12, and which after a thousand yeeres (alack for woe) hee most mightily procured in the Christian world.

'a little season.' Which being once expired, this second battell shall bee, of which vers 7, 8.

v4. 'I saw.' A description of that common state of the Church of Christ on earth in that space of a thousand yeeres for which the devil was in bonds, in which first the authoritie, life and common honour of the godly is declared v4. Secondly newnes of life is preached unto other by the Gospel after that space, vers 5. Finally he concludeth with promises vers 6.

Hildebrand became Pope in 1073, and so for Junius the millennium stretched from the fall of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) to the latter part of the eleventh century. At this point of time 'the little season' began wherein Satan was loosed to cause troubles

to the true Church. Like Augustine, he expected the age to end with the battle involving 'Gog and Magog' and the true saints of God. After this would be the resurrection of the dead and the Last Judgment.

In the later editions of the Geneva Bible the notes on Romans 11 : 25-32 were also extended and reveal that their author, Tomson (or Theodore Beza) firmly believed in a future conversion of the Jews to Christ. Just how this doctrine was to fit into the expectation of the imminent end of the 'little season', the battle with Gog and Magog and the resurrection of the dead, is not explained. The notes on these verses are as follows:

v25. The blindnesse of the Jewes is neither so universall that the Lord hath no elect in that nation, neither shall it be continuall; for there shal be a time wherein they also (as the Prophets have forewarned) shall effectually imbrace that which they doe now so stubbornly for the most part reject and refuse.
'Come in.' Into the Church.

v28. 'As Concerning . . .' Againe, that he may joyne the Jewes and Gentiles together as it were in one body, and especially may teach what duety the Gentiles owe to the Jewes, he beateth this into their heads, that the nation of the Jewes is not utterly cast off without hope of recovery.

'the election,' in that God respecteth not what they deserve but what he promised to Abraham.

v29. 'gifts without repentance.' The reason or prooffe: because the covenant made with that nation of life everlasting cannot be frustrate and vaine.

v30. 'For even . . .' Another reason, because that although that they which are hardened are worthily punished, yet hath not this stubbornesse of the Jewes so come to passe for an hatred to that nation, but that an entrie might as it were be opened to bring in the Gentiles, and afterward the Jewes, being inflamed with emulation of that mercie which is shewed to the Gentiles, might themselves also be partakers of the same benefit and so it might appeare that both Jewes and Gentiles are saved onely by the free mercie and grace of God, which could not have been so manifest if at the beginning God had brought all together into the Church, or if he had saved the nation of the Jewes without this interruption.

It is significant that the comment on v. 25 states that the conversion of the Jews to Christ is predicted by the Old Testa-

ment prophets. This belief became prominent after the growth of the study of the Hebrew Bible and rabbinical literature (Targums) by Reformed divines, and it was a belief which was widely held in English Puritanism and by Dutch Protestants.³

NOTES:

¹ Cf. H. Quistorp, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Last Things* (1955).

² I am engaged in the writing and publishing of a five-volume edition of *A History of the Geneva Bible*. Two volumes have appeared and are available from The Olive Tree Press, 2 Milnthorpe Road, London, W.4.

³ See the informative chapters by Peter Toon on 'The Latter-Day Glory' and by Professor J. Van Den Berg on 'Dutch Protestant Attitudes towards the Jews' in the book, *Puritans, The Millennium and the Future of Israel*, which is available from P. Toon (published by J. Clarke & Co. Ltd. at 27/- in January, 1970), price 22/- post free to readers of *G.M.*

FOOTNOTE TO PAGE 541

(All the letters mentioned in this article are printed in my *Life and Work of Dr. John Owen* (Jas. Clarke & Co.), which I am able to supply post free for 25/- to readers of the *G.M.*)

The Epistle to the Romans

(CHAPTERS 2 AND 3 : 1-8)

R. N. CASWELL

After demonstrating the sinfulness of the Gentiles and demolishing their plea that they didn't know of a God, Paul now turns to their critics. These were people who agreed with what Paul had said. They themselves were not ignorant of God; they knew from His Word what was right and what was wrong, and hence disapproved of the Gentiles' conduct.

The apostle has in mind here two classes of people with whom the reader of Acts is familiar—the godfearers and the Jews. The former were Gentiles who attended the Synagogue for instruction—some of them, indeed, had become proselytes to Judaism.

Both they and the Jews, says Paul, are without excuse when they sit in judgment on others. The reason is simple—they commit the same shameful acts themselves (2 : 1-2). Mere knowledge is not enough. It simply shows that you know right from wrong, and hence leaves you inexcusable. What is the use of knowledge if it does not lead to self-criticism and repentance? Your criticism of others may well be a defence-mechanism to shield you from an accusing conscience.

It is tragically possible for men and women, calling themselves the people of God, to presume upon this standing and allow themselves to sin (3, 4). After all, they argue, God will not punish His own, will He? God is kind and forbearing. Agreed, says Paul, but you take His kindness wrongly if you take it as permission to sin. It is meant to give you breathing-space to repent, breathing-space before God judges all men. What you are doing (5) is making things worse for yourselves by resisting the obvious intention of His kindness to you.

The Bible makes no apology for the wrath of God. This is His holiness in action against sin. God would be no more God without His wrath than He would be without His love, for both are parts of His character. He will judge men and He will be just in doing it, for He will judge men by their character (6). Those who show their spiritual life by patiently continuing in good works will be given eternal glory; the disobedient and the unbelieving will be rewarded with the terrors of wrath. Here

Paul uses four solemn words: wrath, indignation, tribulation and anguish. Can there be a more terrible description of hell? (7-11).

Again, the question is raised about those who do not know the law of God. They have sinned in ignorance of the two tables of the law. What then? And an opposite problem—what of those who excuse themselves by pleading a superior knowledge of the law? In a short paragraph (12-16) Paul answers both questions. Take the second one first. To be justified by the law, it would obviously be necessary to *observe* its precepts. To know it and break it can never commend us to God. As for the Gentiles who knew nothing of the written law, they are left again without excuse, for they can and will be judged by the light of conscience. They have the laws of God written on their hearts, as is evident by their knowledge of ethical matters. All men everywhere show agreement on the broad outlines of good and bad behaviour—proof that in the very texture of their being God has woven His laws. This time they are not written on tables of stone, but on the tables of human hearts.

From verse 17 onwards Paul explicitly names the Jews. He mentions their superior attitude to the Gentiles. They felt able to instruct them about God and matters of morals—for had they not a revelation of God in the scriptures? (17-20). Suddenly Paul turns on them and accuses them of doing the very things they taught others not to do. Stealing, adultery and robbing temples are the three things he singles out. This hypocrisy only leads the outsider to blaspheme the name of God (21-24). What is the point of teaching the Bible (Old or New Testament) if you don't obey it yourself?

The Jews cannot then plead superior knowledge as a reason for escaping judgment. Neither should they plead circumcision (25-29), though some of them did. No circumcised person would ever be in hell, they said. But, Paul retorts, this shows a superficial view of the sacrament. The question we should be asking is: What does the sacrament *mean*? It signifies, as the Old Testament puts it, the circumcision of the heart, the cutting away of the old disobedient nature which is constantly in rebellion against God. Real circumcision is a matter of the heart, not of the flesh. Hence circumcision with disobedience is a flat contradiction. Paul states that it would be better to have the thing signified (obedience) without the sign (circumcision), than the other way round. The same is true of baptism (by whatever rite or mode). The important thing here also is the *meaning* of it. What is the use of being baptised if

you don't understand the significance, the washing away of the sin of the heart, the death to the old and the rising to the new life?

This chapter—may I say it?—is full of challenge to the Christian, especially to the Christian who has forgotten that faith must be shown by works, that superior knowledge about Christ is no excuse for sin and that the outward sacrament is no substitute for the inner meaning of it. God will show no partiality—not even to the Christian. Unpalatable in some quarters nowadays, but true nevertheless.

In the first eight verses of chapter 3, Paul meets some objections which were made against his doctrine. To begin with, someone might object that he had destroyed the whole tenor of the Old Testament by reducing the Jew to the level of the outside world, as if God had not revealed Himself to them and given them the special sign of circumcision. Paul denies the allegation. The revelation of God in the scriptures still stands even if the Jews have not believed it. The promises therein and the benefits of circumcision are available to faith (1-4).

The second objection is a strange one. If our sin commends the holiness of God by contrast—just as a white garment is seen to be white by contrast with a soiled one—why does God blame us? After all, this is bringing glory to Him! Would it be fair for Him to punish us? In fact, why should we not go on sinning in order that God's glory may be enhanced? (Some, apparently, had actually charged Paul with teaching this.) The apostle finally gives up in disgust. It is impossible to follow some people in their tortuous and twisted arguments, he feels. His moral sense comes to the fore and he concludes the section with the words: 'Whose condemnation is just'.

(To be continued)

Lives of British Reformers

PATRICK HAMILTON

by S. M. HOUGHTON

Thus far, in *Lives of British Reformers*, we have spoken only of Englishmen, whose work was more or less confined to that part of Great Britain South of the Cheviot Hills. But Scotland also was a centre of the glorious Reformation, and was conspicuous for its noble martyrs and its faithful witnesses for God's truth.

During the Middle Ages, Scotland, like its Southern neighbour, was almost entirely under the harmful and tyrannical sway of the Roman Catholic Church and clergy. Most of its people were in gross darkness. So long as the clergy were powerful and wealthy, they cared little for the real welfare of the souls of men. The true fear of God did not influence their conduct. It may be said of them what William Tyndale said of the English clergy, 'They care for the souls of the people as the fox doth for the geese.' Ignorance of the Scriptures was everywhere apparent. 'I have lived well these many years,' boasted the Bishop of Dunkeld in Perthshire, 'and never knew either the Old or New Testament;' a statement which gave rise to the proverb often heard in Scotland in later years, 'Ye are like the Bishop of Dunkeld that kent neither new law nor auld.' Happily this terrible darkness was relieved by a few faint beams of light, for the Lollard movement, begun in England by the Lord's servant John Wycliffe, was not altogether unknown in Scotland, and Scotland was not without its Lollard Martyrs, notably Paul Crawar, a native of Bohemia, who was burned at the stake with a ball of brass in his mouth to prevent him from exhorting onlookers gathered around the stake.

The Protestant Reformations in England and in Scotland both began about the same time. The writings of Luther and the New Testament translated by Tyndale found their way not merely into England through London and Colchester and other ports, but into Scotland through Leith, Dundee, Perth, and the great University town of St. Andrews in Fifeshire, the equivalent of Oxford in England. 'The Bible,' it has been said, 'was the only missionary that could enter with safety

and operate with effect. With silent foot it began to traverse the land; it came to the castle-gates of the primate (the archbishop) yet he heard not its steps; it preached in cities, but its voice fell not on the ears of the bishop; it passed along the highways and byways unobserved by the spy.' But, good though it is for a people to possess the Holy Scriptures in their own tongue, God usually accompanies it by the voice of the preacher, and to a young man named Patrick Hamilton, Scotland's first Reformation martyr, it was appointed to denounce the errors of Rome and declare the true gospel of the grace of God to his needy countrymen.

Concerning Hamilton's early life little is known. He was born very early in the sixteenth century, his father and mother both being in the direct line of descent from King James II of the house of Stuart. Together with his brother James and sister Katherine we may imagine that Patrick spent many happy hours in the home of his childhood, Kincavel in Linlithgowshire. But more serious matters soon claimed his attention, and as it was intended by his father that he should enter the church and take up 'holy orders', he was sent to the University of St. Andrews, where he took his Master's degree when he was about twenty years of age. By this time he had become intensely interested in the teachings of Martin Luther and others on the Continent, and he determined to cross over to Germany to seek personal acquaintance with the Reformers, and to make further progress in study. When he returned to Scotland he knew the grace of God in truth, and was filled with a burning desire to make known to others the knowledge which was so precious to his own soul. For a time his preaching seemed to be well received. The common people heard him gladly, and even the gentry did not seem unwilling to listen to one whose family was in high reputation among them, and whose learning and gracious manners were alike evident to all. Boldly did he declare that the blood and righteousness of Christ alone could save, and that the cowl and frocks of the friars, the shorn heads and ceremonies of the priests, the beads and paternosters, the pilgrimages and penances of the people, were entirely unavailing for salvation and highly displeasing and dishonouring to God.

Hamilton's bold preaching of the Gospel of grace soon produced no small stir among the clergy, for the narrow waters of the Firth of Forth alone separated the scene of his labours from the University town of St. Andrews, the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland, The archbishop of St. Andrews, James Beaton, 'a cruel, crafty man', was at

that time at the head of Scottish affairs, being 'primate' in the church and chancellor in the State, so that his position was somewhat similar to that of the great Cardinal Wolsey in England. He was the more powerful in view of the fact that the King, James V, was but sixteen years of age. This King had ascended the Scottish throne when he was but a year old, his father, James IV, who had married Margaret Tudor, Henry VIII's sister, having been killed at the battle of Flodden in 1513,

'Where shiver'd was fair Scotland's spear,
And broken was her shield!'

Archbishop Beaton was well aware that Hamilton's case called for wary procedure. The Reformer's high birth and reputation, and the support of some whom grace had reached through his word (John 17:20), caused the primate to determine upon craft rather than upon an immediate display of force; and the young and ardent preacher was invited to cross the stormy waters of the Firth of Forth and declare his faith and beliefs before the numerous churchmen of St. Andrews. Whether Hamilton suspected treachery is uncertain, but the warmth and apparent friendliness of his reception by the archbishop disarmed all his suspicions. Moreover, liberty was granted to him to converse freely with the teachers and students who resorted to that seat of learning. Beaton's hope was that Hamilton might be persuaded to renounce his Protestant beliefs, and he accordingly sent to speak with him several zealous and learned Catholics, whose skill in debate might be expected to overthrow a youth of twenty-four years of age, who necessarily lacked the experience which years alone can give. However, the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, proved superior to all human reasonings, and one at least of the archbishop's men was compelled to confess the truth of the statements of his youthful opponent. This man was Alexander Campbell, the head of a company of friars, who, although well versed in Catholic teaching, was 'not able to resist the wisdom and spirit' by which Hamilton spake. But it is sadly possible to be convinced of the truth of God's Word in the mind, and to have no real affection for it in the heart. Hence we read in the Epistles of some 'who received not the *love* of the truth that they might be saved' (2 Thess. 2:10). Such was the case with Alexander Campbell. He approved of that which was good, but continued to follow that which was evil. When the Archbishop asked him for an account of his interviews with Hamilton he replied that he was an obstinate heretic, who refused to hearken to and obey the

voice of the Church. The archbishop thereupon determined to bring the Reformer to a speedy trial and, in case he still persisted in his Protestant beliefs, to send him to the stake without further delay.

Under cover of darkness a small band of soldiers was sent to Hamilton's lodgings, where, in a small upper chamber, a few of his friends had gathered to pray and read the Scriptures, and speak one to another of the grace and love of God, and of the glories of the Redeemer. Sweet moments, indeed, when those who love the Lord, and are loved of Him, are able to meet together in one accord to seek a fuller knowledge of God! Such a company the soldiers rudely disturbed on a quiet evening in February, 1528. Hamilton, bidding his friends adieu, accompanied the soldiers. On his descending the stairs, 'they closed around him and led him through the silent streets of the slumbering city to the castle. Nothing was heard save the low moaning of the night-wind, and the sullen dash of the wave as it broke against the rocky foundations of the sea tower, to the dungeons of which Hamilton was consigned for the night.' On the following day the trial commenced, the traitor Campbell reading the accusations against the prisoner.

Campbell: 'Heretic, thou saidst it was lawful to all men to read the Word of God, and especially the New Testament.'

Hamilton: 'I wot not if I said so; but I say now, it is reason and it is lawful to all men to read the Word of God.'

Campbell: 'Heretic, thou sayest it is but lost labour to call on the saints as mediators to God for us.'

Hamilton: 'I say with Paul there is no mediator between God and us but Christ Jesus His Son, and whatever they be who call or pray to any saint departed, they spoil Christ Jesus of His office.'

Campbell: Heretic! thou sayest it is all in vain to sing soul-masses, psalms and dirges for the relaxation of souls departed who are continued in the pains of purgatory.'

Hamilton: 'I have never read in the Scripture of God of such a place as purgatory, nor yet believe I there is anything that can purge the souls of men but the blood of Jesus Christ.'

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'Marvel not, my brethren, if all the world hate you,' wrote John the Apostle. The world, and not least the religious world, has always hated the people of God in proportion to their faithfulness. Religious people crucified the Lord of glory; religious people stoned Stephen; religious people burned Tyndale and Latimer, Ridley and Cranmer. It is possible for a person to possess a very great deal of religion as the

Pharisees did, without possessing a saving knowledge of the Lord; and frequently it is the false-hearted who are in the majority. In 2 Chronicles 18, we have a very instructive account of how one prophet of the Lord, Micaiah, had to face four hundred prophets who claimed falsely to know God and speak for Him. Elijah was alone a prophet of God against four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and four hundred prophets of the groves who ate at Jezebel's table, and he was delivered out of their hand. But it is not always the will of God to grant His servants deliverance from their foes in this world, and sometimes He requires them to lay down their lives for their brethren and for the truth. Thus was it with Patrick Hamilton. He was prepared to endanger his life unto the death in the high places of the field (see Judges 5 : 18); and after his condemnation by his judges, he walked valiantly to the stake between his guards. To a faithful friend he gave his New Testament. To his servant he gave his cap and gown, saying, 'These will not profit in the fire; they will profit thee. After this, of me thou canst receive no commodity except the example of my death, which I pray thee bear in mind. For albeit it be bitter to the flesh, and fearful before man, yet is it the entrance to eternal life, which none shall possess that denies Jesus Christ before this wicked generation.'

Then in the midst of the faggots he said, 'In the name of Jesus I give up my body to the fire, and commit my soul into the hands of the Father.' As it happened the faggots were green, and it was a considerable time before they really took fire. In the meantime Hamilton's enemy, Alexander Campbell the friar, appeared at the stake and urged the dying martyr to recant ere it was too late. The scene is well described by one historian in the following words, 'Heretic,' he shouted, 'be converted; call upon Our Lady; only say, *Salve Regina*' (i.e. Save me, O Queen [of heaven]). 'If thou believest in the truth of what thou sayest,' replied the confessor, 'bear witness to it by putting the tip of thy finger only into the fire in which my whole body is burning.' The Dominican (Campbell was a Dominican friar) burst out afresh into accusations and insults. 'Depart from me, thou messenger of Satan,' said the martyr, 'and leave me in peace.' The wretched man was unable either to go away or to cease reviling. 'Submit to the Pope,' he cried, 'there is no salvation but in union with him.' 'Thou wicked man,' said Hamilton, 'thou knowest the contrary, for thou toldest me so thyself. I appeal thee (i.e. charge thee to meet me) before the tribunal-seat of Jesus Christ.'

From high noon to sunset Hamilton patiently endured his sufferings at the stake. The fire burned but slowly, yet no word of complaint escaped his lips. The grace of God in him was exceeding abundant and even near the end he still signified to the bystanders his steadfast belief in the doctrine he had taught. Shortly after sunset the ransomed spirit fled and Scotland's first martyr of the Reformation period had finished his course and testimony.

'Death is swallowed up in victory'. (1 Corinthians 15:54).

All that death can do to us, is to take us out of the scene in which it exercises its power, to bring us into that in which it has none.

J. N. DARBY.

'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith'. (1 John 5:4).

Faith prevails. It hushes Sinai; it answers the accuser; it pleads Christ to the demands of the law, and thus satisfies them; it meets the Father in the Beloved, and delights Him; it shouts a triumph over death, because of Christ's resurrection; it assures itself of all glory, because of Christ's oneness with His poor people. The believer thus prevails.

J. G. BELLETT.