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WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

The British Protestant

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THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE

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

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

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

No. 1336
New Series

JANUARY, 1964

No. 2336
Old Series

THE FAMILY PORTION

OR, WORDS OF SPIRITUAL CAUTION, COUNSEL, AND COMFORT

"Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."—2 CORINTHIANS 1:4.

THE SEED GROWING SECRETLY

"And the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how."
—Mark 4:27.

IN THE *Parable of The Seed Growing Secretly*, which is peculiar to the Gospel of Mark, the Lord Jesus gave wonderful encouragement to His apostles and indeed to all of His disciples who now in any way sow the seed of the Gospel of His Salvation. He spoke of a farmer who, after sowing his seed, slept at night and rose by day, confident that the seed would spring and grow up, *how*, he (emphatic) did not know. He could not *see* the hidden growth (the parable might hence be called the *Parable of the Imperceptible Growth*), but he continued his normal life, cheerfully confident in the result of his labour, although he might have long to wait for it.

Is there not a great encouragement here for all who "labour in the Word and doctrine," for Sunday School teachers, Hospital visitors, and all truly born-again Christians who desire to "redeem the time"—i.e., to pick up every opportunity? The work may seem difficult and often very discouraging; but there are many messages of encouragement in God's Word!

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Psalm 126:5, 6). "My word . . . shall not return unto Me void: but it shall accomplish

that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isaiah 55: 11). "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit" (John 3: 8). See also Proverbs 22: 6, Ecclesiastes 11: 6, James 1: 18, James 5: 7.

Sow in the morn thy seed,
At eve hold not thine hand;
To doubt and fear give thou no heed,
Broadcast it o'er the land.

Thou canst not toil in vain,
Cold, heat, and moist, and dry
Shall foster and mature the grain
For garnerers in the sky.

James Montgomery, 1832.

Thanks, everlasting thanks, be given
To God, to Christ for matchless grace,
And to that Dove, who seals for heaven
All who shall sing Jehovah's praise!

John Stevens, 1808.

W.D.S.

OUR YOUNG FOLKS' PAGE

POOR MISS PIKE

POOR Miss Pike had fallen on hard times. She was a dressmaker in a small way, and had been quite prosperous. But her best customers had died, and no new ones took their place, so that her business fell off, and she began to know poverty. Friends were not altogether wanting; at Mrs. Henley's house Miss Pike was always welcome to a good meal with the servants, and Mrs. Henley never let her go without a generous gift; for the rich lady and the poor dressmaker both belonged to the household of faith, and Mrs. Henley did not forget that they were sisters in the Lord. But Miss Pike was a quiet, retiring sort of body, and she made no parade of her difficulties, only pouring out her heart in secret to her Father in heaven.

The Henleys were busy people with a family of growing children, and many concerns to think about, so that Mrs. Henley did not

notice all at once that it was a longer time than usual since Miss Pike's last visit. When she realised this, she sent to her house to make inquiries; only to find that the dressmaker had left, to go nobody knew where. Mrs. Henley was concerned to hear it, but Miss Pike had left no trace, and the attempt to find her was given up.

About two years later, Mr. Henley was stopped in the street by a business man of his acquaintance, who asked him if he could nominate somebody to a vacancy in an almshouse. There was promise of great comfort for the happy woman who should succeed, for there was a small annuity and other provisions attached to the pretty little house. Mr. Henley could not at once think of anybody suitable, but asked if he might consult his wife before giving a reply. "Oh, yes," said his friend, "there is no immediate hurry; the committee will be meeting again in a fortnight."

Mr. Henley went home with his friend's proposal. "Oh, John!" said his wife; "if only we could find Miss Pike! I feel sure it is the very thing for her." Mr. Henley quite agreed, and could think of nobody more deserving; but the trouble was to discover her whereabouts. However, Mr. Henley was a man not easily balked; with this definite object in view, he renewed his inquiries, and at last picked up a trail which led him to a poor little house in Southwark.

Here indeed Miss Pike was living. She had been struggling to keep an invalid sister, and the two had just reached the very end of their resources. The rent of the tiny place was due; Miss Pike had nothing to pay it with, and the night before Mr. Henley came, she had been selling everything she could possibly spare out of their clothes and furniture to try to get the rent together. But though the little place was almost stripped, there were still two or three shillings wanting. The poor bedridden sister was too ill to share the trouble; but Miss Pike just opened her heart to the Lord. "Oh, Lord!" she sighed, "there is no eye to see, no ear to hear, but Thine! Thou knowest our need, Thou canst save us even now. Oh, hear the cry of Thy servant, and come and help us."

Miss Pike believed with all her heart that God had heard her prayer, and that He would never forsake her; but when there came a knock at the door, she trembled exceedingly, feeling sure it was the rent collector. You may say that if she had faith in God, she need not have been frightened! But even when the Lord has put true faith and trust in our hearts, He often keeps us trembling, to remind us what poor helpless things we are. Anyhow, trembling as she was, Miss Pike went and opened the door—to find her old friend, Mr. Henley, standing there beaming!

Well, Miss Pike was quite speechless for a moment; and then

of course it all came out. The poor dressmaker was overcome with thankfulness for such a timely deliverance; and Mr. Henley was moved to think that he had been made the messenger of God to His desolate child. Needless to say, the rent was paid; and before long the sisters were most comfortably settled in the pleasant almshouse. The invalid did not long survive; but Miss Pike lived many years to a peaceful old age, abundantly content and happy in the bountiful provision made for her by the God in whom she trusted.

This story happened many years ago—perhaps more than a hundred—and the old book that tells the tale is long since out of print; but what a comfort and joy to think that we who live today can still look for help and deliverance to the same almighty Father in heaven who had compassion on the poor dressmaker! She sought the Lord, and He heard her, and delivered her from all her fears. “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”

DAMARIS

THE LORD WILL PROVIDE

THOUGH troubles assail, and dangers affright,
Though friends should all fail, and foes all unite;
Yet one thing secures us, whatever betide.
The Scripture assures us, the Lord will provide.

The birds without barn or storehouse are fed;
From them let us learn to trust for our bread:
His saints what is fitting, shall ne’er be denied,
So long as ’tis written, the Lord will provide.

John Newton.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA No. 119

The whole: Officials at the Persian Court.

1. “Fair young virgins” of Shushan were put into the this of Hege.
2. The Jews’ enemy.
3. A great ruler.
4. Esther’s foster-father.
5. He conspired to assassinate Ahasnerus.
6. One limit of the Persian empire.
7. On a sleepless night the king had these read to him.
8. As well as gladness, joy, and honour, the Jews had this.
9. How Haman felt before the king and queen.
10. What Haman felt towards Mordecai.
11. The first month.
12. The king held it out to Esther.

SOLUTION OF No. 118

The whole: Methuselah (Gen. 5:27).

1. Mamre (Gen. 13: 8).
 2. Ephphatha (Mark 7: 34).
 3. Tabor (Judges 4: 6).
 4. Hospitality (1 Tim. 3: 2).
 5. Urijah (Jerem. 26: 20, 23).
 6. Salt (Matt. 5: 13).
 7. Embalm (Gen. 50: 2).
 8. Large (Luke 22: 12).
 9. Angels (Gen. 19: 1).
 10. Helm (James 3: 4).
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SERMONS & NOTES OF SERMONS

REFORMATION SUNDAY SERMON

By the Rev. H. M. CARSON, Vicar of St. Paul's, Cambridge

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."

—1 Timothy 1: 15.

It has become customary, in a great many parishes, during the past few years, to observe a Sunday in which we recall the blessings of the Reformation, that great movement of the Spirit of God about four hundred years ago, by which God did great things in this land, and indeed all over Europe. I am sure it is good that we should together recall and re-emphasise the blessings which God brought to us as a nation and church through the Reformation.

I think it is necessary to recall it first of all because of the ignorance which there is in so many people's minds. For so many, the Reformation is vaguely connected with Henry VIII and his matrimonial problems. It is not seen or thought of as essentially one of the greatest movements of the Spirit of God since the day of Pentecost. There is another reason, and a very important reason, why in these days we need to reconsider the truths which the Reformers brought home to the land, and it is that so many of the things which they resisted have been re-introduced into the Church of England. These men lived and died resisting the whole curse of sacerdotalism, that putting of a man, a priest, between a believer and God, but I am afraid in these days we are drifting back into that very condition from which the Reformers, by the grace of God, rescued us.

We have also got to think clearly in these days because of all the talk about unity. You cannot open a paper or listen to a wireless without being very much aware of the fact of the Vatican Council, and with all the sympathy in the world, listening to the reforming tendencies of Rome, and reading someone like Hans Kung, the young Roman theologian who speaks very strongly about reform, one is still compelled to say, Yes, but the doctrines remain the same. Indeed, the doctrines are further away from the Scripture than they were four hundred years ago, because some of the dogmas that have been introduced during the past century have moved Rome further away from the Bible than the Rome which the Reformers knew. When Hans Kung writes, and how well he writes, and when the

reforming bishops speak at the Vatican Council, you find, alas, that they are talking about the outskirts of the problem. They are talking about putting the Mass into the vernacular, of giving the cup to the laity, of this and that—fine, excellent, but they are not dealing with the heart of the problem, the *doctrine* of the Mass, the position of Mary in the church, and so on. One sees the confusion that reigns. Last evening, doubtless some of you read the *Cambridge News*, and there we were told that for the first time since the Reformation, a Jesuit is preaching during this term, in Great St. Mary's Church. Now what are we to make of that? Is it just one more stunt to catch the ear of the University, or is it just due to the theological confusion of the present moment? Are the Jesuits moving in a Reformed direction? Well, these are the questions we have got to ask and ask very insistently.

There is another reason why I think that it is good to consider the truths of the Reformation, and that is because they are very personal truths, they concern each one of us. It is completely false to imagine that the Reformation was due to men who sat considering, in a rather abstract and theoretical way, theological issues. The Reformers were not men who sat in their studies deciding how they could reform the church. They were essentially men who hammered out these great truths on the anvil of their own experience, and that is why this morning, I thought we should consider together a truth, a verse indeed, which was the means, under God, of opening the eyes of one of the early Cambridge Reformers.

LIGHT IN DARKNESS FOR BILNEY

Of course, I need hardly remind you that in the providence of God, this city and this university was the cradle of the English Reformation, and it was through this verse from 1 Timothy, chapter one, that THOMAS BILNEY, fellow of Trinity Hall, was brought to Christ. Bilney—the man whom God later used to reach and win Latimer—Latimer, who in turn became the great preacher of the gospel throughout the land. Well, Bilney was brought to Christ through reading this verse: "*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*"

Bilney, you see, was asking the question that so many people were asking in the sixteenth century: HOW MAY I KNOW THAT MY SINS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN? It was as simple and basic an issue as that. How can I know that my sins have been forgiven? How can I know that I am right with God? How can I be sure that I am going to heaven?

Well, of course, the church had its answers, and indeed the

answers were given in great detail. There was the Mass in which it was thought or alleged that the priest offered Christ on behalf of the living and the dead. There was the confessional to which Bilney might have recourse, where he might confess his sins and receive absolution from the priest, and be given penance to perform. There were all the aids which the church offered; the aids of the sacramental system; the aid of the saints whom he could invoke; the aid of the Virgin Mary. There were indulgences offered by the Pope through the church. There were ways of acquiring merit; you could go on pilgrimage, perhaps to some shrine where there were the relics of some martyr or some saint, and by going there you would acquire merit. All these were ways suggested whereby a man might get right with God; but Bilney, like many another in that day, had come to find that these things did not bring peace with God, and there was a great darkness of soul. He longed to know and yet he was groping in thick darkness and there was no light at all. Wherever he turned, men were in the same darkness. The whole university was plunged in spiritual gloom.

But the light was beginning to dawn. Erasmus had introduced the New Testament to the university, and as Bilney read, he said the words stood out in letters of light: "*This is a faithful saying, and worth of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*" For Bilney, this was light in the darkness. He saw the truth that Jesus Christ had come to save men, to save him—Bilney, and that day he came into peace with God. He went out, yes, to reach Latimer. He went out to stand for Christ. There was a time of failure, but there was restoration, and he stood firmly for the Saviour until that day when he was burnt at the stake in Norwich for his preaching of the gospel.

WATCHWORDS OF THE REFORMATION

Now as we look at this verse this morning, I want you to see it, not just as a wonderful text which God used to illumine the mind of Thomas Bilney and to bring him to the Saviour, but I want you also to see in it the essentials of the message of the Reformers. They emphasised great phrases. They spoke of *Scripture alone*. They spoke of *grace alone*. They spoke of *faith alone*. These, if you like, are the great watchwords, the great slogans of the Reformation movement. Scripture alone, grace alone, faith alone.

I.—SCRIPTURE ALONE

Scripture alone—it is a "faithful saying" we read. Paul writes to Timothy and says: Here is a reliable saying; here is a saying upon which you can base your faith; here is a saying upon which you can

base your life and your eternal destiny. Bilney had listened to the traditions of the church. The whole pattern was, "This is what the church teaches," but he found he was floundering. But here was a faithful saying; here was a clear reliable saying; this was not the word of a Council, or the word of a Pope, this was the word of the living God. It is a faithful saying; God has spoken.

But the word as he read it, was not just the word of print in the New Testament. It was a word that was brought home to him with great power by the Spirit of God. Bilney felt his heart, he said, exhilarated by it all. The Spirit of God opened his mind to see the truth. The Spirit of Truth brought the truth home powerfully to him. Well, of course, this was an experience which many of the others shared, and it is no wonder, therefore, that they laid such emphasis upon the Scriptures, upon the Bible. When men wanted to know the way of salvation, the Reformers said: God has spoken; here is the Book; here is His Word; turn to it and listen to God speaking to your own heart. Do not come to this Book depending upon your own abilities, or depending upon your own intellectual powers. Come to this Book and depend upon the Spirit of God Himself; pray for the Spirit to enlighten you; pray that He may give you understanding. Scripture alone—interpreted and applied by the Spirit of God. Here, said the Reformers, is the supreme authority in the church. This is the authority to which every Christian must submit.

This, of course, has practical consequences. They saw that, if people were to read the Scriptures, they must have the Scriptures in their own mother tongue. So you find Tyndale labouring in exile, facing misunderstanding, misrepresentation, loneliness, hardship and ultimately death itself, until he was able to put the New Testament into English, that "the ploughboy driving the plough might be able to read the Bible in his own mother tongue."

And, of course, this is not something that belongs to the sixteenth century. This is a message I believe that desperately needs to be emphasised today. Amidst all the confusion and all the welter of theological voices which have been raised, we have got to say—Scripture alone; this is where we begin. God has spoken. We do not listen to the stammerings of the theologians when they turn aside from the Word of God. When they submit their minds to the truth, we are ready to listen, but it must be Scripture alone, interpreted by the Holy Spirit. This is where we send men when they want to know the way of salvation. We say, Open your Bible and listen to the voice of God.

II.—GRACE ALONE

The other great watchword—*grace alone*. Here it comes so clearly in this word from Paul to Timothy—“*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*” Bilney had asked: How can I find the way to God? What is God’s word to me? The answer comes: God’s word is simply Christ Jesus. Here is the way to God. Here is the one Mediator. Here is your advocate with the Father. Here is the great high Priest through Whom you may come boldly to the Throne of Grace. Christ and Christ alone is God’s answer to you. Bilney had been brought up to think of many mediators; in fact, the whole system produced a series of mediators between the sinner and God. There was the Pope claiming to stand in succession to Peter; the Pope claiming to have the power of the keys to open or to close the kingdom. There was the priest in the confessional standing between the sinner and his Saviour. There were the saints through whom you might come. There was the Virgin who was more sympathetic really in popular thinking than the Lord Himself. Bilney discovered, in that glorious day when God spoke to him, that he needed not these mediators; he needed none other than Christ and Christ alone. The Reformers (to borrow a phrase which came later in the language of the Scottish Covenanters) restored the “crown rights of the Redeemer.” They put King Jesus on the throne of their lives, and in their thinking. Christ reigned supreme as the one Mediator between God and man.

“*Christ Jesus,*” says Paul, “*came into the world to save sinners.*” He came from heaven, from the very presence of the Father. Here is One who is no mere prophet. This is the Son of the living God. This is the One who from all eternity was in the immediate presence of the Father, and He came into the world, into a world where men were dying without God and without hope. He came into a world where sin reigned. He came into a world lying in the power of the evil one. He came in mighty power to deliver His people from their sins. He came; He took the first step; He took the initiative. What was it that compelled Him to come? Nothing but His grace; nothing but His own great love and compassion for the souls of men. This is the Christ who came. Why did He come? Well, it was to *save sinners*. This was the word that thrilled Bilney that day—sinners! How conscious he was of his own sin; how guilty he was; how utterly unfit for the presence of God. But it was for sinners that Christ came. There was a time doubtless when Bilney had been prepared to receive the current theology. How do you get right with God? Well, you build up merit by this, that and

the other good work. The church would come to your aid: it was a sort of theology of "God helps those who help themselves." There was the heavenly treasury, the heavenly bank in which were accumulated the merit of Christ, and the merit of the saints, and this was dispensed by the Pope, and you could receive straight from that heavenly treasury. But Bilney had come to an end of himself. Merit—he had none. He realised that a sinner in the sight of God has nothing that he can call merit. "All your righteousnesses are as filthy rags." That is how he came, and coming thus, this was a word that thrilled his very soul: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

No wonder the other great slogan of the Reformation was *grace alone*. "By grace," wrote Paul, "*you have been saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.*" These men realised that it was not a case of relying upon your own merits, on your own goodness, on your achievements. No, it was a matter of relying only upon Jesus Christ who is mighty to save. Not by the works of the flesh, not by the merits of man, but by the sweet mercy of Jesus Christ alone; by grace alone.

III.—FAITH ALONE

The final watchword—If it was Scripture alone where men might find an authority, and if it was grace alone, then it was by *faith alone*: "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance." This is a saying which is for men of every kind. It is worthy of all men to be received. This is not a saying which was just for the Jew, this is for the Greek as well. It was for rich and poor, high and low, educated and illiterate; whoever they are, if they are sinners, this is a word for them. It is worthy of complete acceptance. This is a word that you can accept freely and completely. But to receive the word is simply to receive Christ. You do not receive it simply with your mind. You do not merely become clear about these doctrines. This word dwells in your mind and it is in your heart; it moves your will; it stirs your conscience. It is a complete reception, an utter submission to the word of the gospel. It means to fling aside every other hope and to cling only to Christ. The faithful saying, the reliable saying of God, is that Christ Jesus came; and faith says, "I believe it." This faithful saying is, "He came to save sinners," and faith replies, "I acknowledge that I am thus; I am just a sinner. I am guilty, lost and helpless. I will trust in this Christ. I will make Him my Saviour and I will rely only upon Him. In His blood alone I trust. Upon His finished work I stake my hopes of everlasting life." By faith alone—faith, the hand

stretched out to receive the blessing of salvation which comes through Christ.

Well, here are the great truths of the Reformation; truths that should find a place in our hearts. Scripture alone—here is the ultimate authority for the church; here is where God speaks to men. Grace alone—not human merit, but the grace of God in Christ. Faith alone—trusting only in Christ for salvation. As I said, these are not simply themes which we consider as being rather interesting because they interpret to us what happened four hundred years ago. These are themes which we must have emphasised and declared afresh within the church in this twentieth century. When men begin to ask, as Bilney was asking, "What must I do to be saved? How may I know that my sins have been forgiven?" Where are we to turn? I believe there is only one place to turn them. It is not to the wisdom of men, it is to the word of the living God. That is why our instinctive reaction is to say, "Let us turn to the Word together. Let us open the Book. Let us hear what God has to say." And as we turn to the Book, what do we find God has to say? Why we find He has to say everything about Christ. Wherever we turn we find, as it were, the rays of light from the Book pouring upon Christ and upon Christ crucified. And what does this Word require from us? Well, we find that it requires from the seeker that he should admit his sin and that he should turn humbly to Christ.

Tell me, are these truths real for you? It is very easy to consider them as truths which affected men four hundred years ago, but are they truths that have gripped your heart? Have you turned to the Scriptures? Do you know this Christ as your Saviour? I do not ask you, have you been coming to church for years, but I do ask you if you know Jesus Christ? Has He washed away your sins? Are you sure that you are right with God? Are you sure that you are going to heaven? Were this to be your last day, would you know with deep conviction that come death itself, it will be but the threshold of glory? Do you thus know Christ? Is there a doubt in some mind here this morning? Are you not sure where you stand? What answer have I got? Well, I have the answer that Bilney had in his day of doubt and perplexity and searching. It is just this word. It is the word concerning a mighty Saviour: One who can deal with sinners; One who came to seek and to save that which was lost; One who died that men might live; One who rose again that men might have a sure hope of everlasting life.

A WORD TO TAKE TO OTHERS

But it may be that you say, "Yes, by the grace of God, I do know Him. I have come as a sinner. I have put my trust in Christ. He

is mine." Well, I say then, here is a word for you to take out to others. For Bilney, it was the word that brought liberty to his own soul, but what was his reaction? It was to look at Hugh Latimer of Clare College, the eloquent preacher of the University and the man who was bitterly opposed to Reformation doctrine. Bilney's longing was to reach that man for Christ. You recall how he went about it; how he asked Latimer to hear his confession. Latimer, as a good priest, was ready to hear the confession of the fellow of Trinity Hall. Bilney went along and began to speak to Latimer but it was such a confession as Latimer had never heard before. What had Bilney to say? He just told Latimer what had happened; how he had groped and searched and longed; how he had floundered in the darkness and how the light had dawned. And Latimer, by that same grace, relying upon that same Scripture, turned to that same Christ, and found Him mighty to save. That is how the Reformation spread, with men made anew by the Spirit of God, and going out with this gospel. Now you and I, if we truly know this Christ, are commanded to go and make disciples. We are called to go with the passionate concern of men like Bilney; a concern that led many of them to their deaths, but what did their life matter compared with this. They had the hope of glory; they knew Christ; they must share with men this knowledge which He had entrusted to them. So let us go out, by the grace of God, not simply mouthing watchwords or slogans, but rather realising that these are precious truths, these are the truths upon which the life of the church, the life of the individual, must be based.

Scripture alone—let us turn men back to the Word of God. In these days when there is so much confusion, let us speak to them of the faithful sayings of the living God. Let us turn them back to Christ. This is our theme. We are not out to talk to them about some religious position; we are not coming to develop some theological party line; we are going to talk about Jesus; Christ is to be our theme; we are pointing men to Him. We are going, by the grace of God, to humble men, not to pander to their self esteem, not to speak to them in terms of perfecting themselves, but to take away every human hope, to bid them "pour contempt on all their pride," that by grace alone they may be saved. May God write these truths on our hearts, and may God awaken us to realise that these are the truths which, in this twentieth century, can still shake this land and awaken this nation, and bring multitudes out of darkness and bondage into light and liberty.

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"; and when you and

I can add that glorious postscript "*of whom I am chief*," well then we know the meaning of it all, and it is no longer just a word from the past, it is a living word in the present, which God enables us to go out and to give to others.

H. M. CARSON

Cambridge, 1963.

SPIRITUAL BIOGRAPHY

THE PURITANS AND THEIR NEW ENGLAND SUCCESSORS

IN OUR last issue we gave some particulars regarding the life of Cotton Mather, who was born in 1663. We now proceed to give some details of the lives of three Puritan ministers who died in New England in that same year, 1663: JOHN MORTON, SAMUEL NEWMAN, and SAMUEL STONE. These three ministers all emigrated from this country to New England during the tyrannical regime of William Laud, notorious for his Arminianism and Ritualistic innovations, both of which features are the very life and soul of Popery.

I.—JOHN NORTON, 1606-1663

JOHN NORTON was born at Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire, on the 6th May, 1606. He was educated at Peterhouse, Cambridge, where he became a celebrated scholar. Having concluded his studies at the university and attaining the degree of M.A., he became curate at Bishops Stortford, the place of his nativity, when he formed an acquaintance with Mr. Jeremiah Dyke, of Epping, by whose ministry he was first awakened to a serious concern for his soul. He then resolved to devote himself wholly to ministerial work, and became an accomplished and gifted preacher. He frequently preached upon the necessity of faith, repentance, and holiness which, by gifted utterance, accompanied with a spirit of most serious devotion, he set forth in a most interesting and engaging light.

Though his prospect of promotion in the church was very promising, he refused all preferment, on account of the impositions under the Laudian regime. His aversion to Arminianism and Popish innovations precluded him from possessing a rich benefice which his uncle designed to have conferred upon him. It is also observed that the pious Richard Sibbes was so taken with his excellent endowments that he earnestly solicited him to accept a fellowship at Cambridge; but he was so thoroughly dissatisfied with the terms of admission, that he could not do it with a good conscience. He was

content with lesser things, and therefore became domestic chaplain to Sir William Marsham, preaching as he found opportunity.

He resolved to remove to New England, where he arrived in October, 1635. After Mr. Morton's arrival, he was chosen pastor of the church at Ipswich, where he laboured with great zeal, assiduity and success about seventeen years. Upon the death of John Cotton, pastor of the church at Boston, he accepted an invitation to become his successor.

Upon the restoration of Charles II, Mr. Norton and Simon Bradstreet were sent to England, as agents of the colony, with an address to his majesty, soliciting the continuance of their privileges. This address contained, among other things, the following passages:

"To enjoy our liberty and to walk according to the faith and order of the gospel was the cause of us transplanting ourselves, with our wives, our little ones, and our substance; choosing the pure scripture worship, with a good conscience, in this remote wilderness, rather than the pleasures of England, with submission to the impositions of the hierarchy, to which we could not yield without an evil conscience. We are not seditious to the interests of Caesar, nor schismatical in matters of religion. We distinguish between churches and their impurities. We could not live without the public worship of God, but were not allowed to observe it without such a yoke of superstition and conformity as we could not consent to without sin."

In the month of February, 1661, they entered upon their voyage; and, having obtained the king's letter, confirming the privileges of the colony, they returned in the following September. Mr. Norton, however, did not long survive his return, and his death was very sudden. He expected to have preached in the afternoon of the day on which he died, but, instead of preaching, his heavenly Father received him to himself. He departed, greatly lamented, April 5th, 1663, and Richard Mather preached his funeral sermon to his numerous and sorrowing flock.

Mr. Norton was the author of several excellent works. His book entitled "*Responsio ad Gal. Appollonium*," 1648, is supposed to have been the first Latin book that was written in America. Fuller observes "that of all the authors he had ever perused, concerning the opinions of the dissenting brethren, none gave him more information than Mr. John Norton, a man of no less learning than modesty, in his answer to Appollonius."

II.—SAMUEL NEWMAN, 1600-1663

SAMUEL NEWMAN, pious divine, was born at Banbury, Oxfordshire, in the year 1600, and educated in the university of Oxford.

He imbibed the spirit of genuine Christianity, and became an able minister of the New Testament. Through the episcopal molestations of the times he was silenced and driven from one place to another no less than seven times. But, agreeable to the advice of Christ, when he was persecuted and not suffered to labour for the good of souls in one place, he fled to another. This he did until he could find no place of rest, and at length he resolved to transport himself to New England, out of the reach of persecution.

He arrived in the new plantation, with many other excellent pilgrims, in the year 1638, and spent one and a half years at Dorchester, five at Weymouth, and nineteen at Rehoboth, in Plymouth colony. He gave the name to the town last mentioned, because, upon a removal to that place his flock, which before had been short of room, might then say, "The Lord hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land."

Mr. Newman was particularly attentive to the state of scriptural piety, both in his family and in the church of God. He was in like manner exceedingly mindful over his own heart, and most exactly attentive to the duty of self-examination. This will appear from an account transcribed from his own papers. For his own advantage it was his daily practice to examine himself and make such memorials as the following:

"I find that I love God and desire to love Him more.

"I find a desire to requite evil with good.

"I find that I am looking up to God, to see Him, and His hand, in all things.

"I find a greater fear of displeasing God than all the world.

"I find a love to such Christians as I never saw or received good from.

"I find a grief when I see the commands of God broken.

"I find a mourning when I do not enjoy the assurance of God's love.

"I find a willingness to give God the glory of my ability to do good.

"I find a joy in the company and conversation of the godly.

"I find a grief when I perceive it goes ill with Christians.

"I find a constant love to secret duties.

"I find a bewailing of such sins as the world cannot accuse me of.

"I find I constantly choose suffering to avoid sin."

This method did Mr. Newman daily observe betwixt God and his own heart. Towards the close of his life he became more and more watchful. He became more fruitful towards God as he approached

nearer his heavenly Father's kingdom. His last sermon was from Job 14: 4, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, until my change come." He fell sick immediately after this sermon, and in a few days closed his eyes in peace, saying "Now, ye angels of the Lord Jesus Christ, come, and do your office." He died on July 5th, 1663. He was author of "A Concordance to the Bible."

III.—SAMUEL STONE

SAMUEL STONE was born at Hertford, and educated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Having concluded his university studies, he sojourned for some time in the residence of Richard Blackerby. Here, while he received useful instructions from his venerable tutor, he imbibed his excellent spirit and principles. Afterwards, he became minister at Towcester, Northamptonshire, where his gifts and industry were manifest to all.

However, he could not be screened from the oppressions of the times, and resolved to withdraw from the scenes of persecution and emigrate to New England. He sailed in the same ship with John Cotton and Thomas Hooker, and arrived in the year 1633. He was chosen colleague to Mr. Hooker over the church which they gathered in a new plantation, which they called Hartford. This church afterwards became famous in the new commonwealth.

Dr. Mather gives the following account of Mr. Stone: "He was godly, sober, and righteous, and could with truth appeal to God and say, 'Lord, Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love Thee.' He was remarkable for the observance of days of fasting and prayer, by which his spirit was wonderfully ripened for the heavenly inheritance. His conversation was grave, serious, and holy, and he was a most exact observer of the Sabbath. The sermons which he intended to deliver on the Lord's Day, he usually delivered in his own family on a Saturday evening. In his sermons, which were rather doctrinal, he handled the great points of divinity with admirable skill. He delivered them with an uncommonly nervous address, and concluded with a close and direct application to the hearts of the people; by his fervent prayers, his sound doctrine was turned into devotion."

He continued feeding the flock of God fourteen years with Mr. Hooker, and sixteen years after him. In due submission to the will of God, he was desirous to leave the world and be with Christ. Expressing his longing desires for heaven, he used to say, "Heaven is the more desirable for such company as Hooker, and Shepard, and Hains, who are got there before me." He died on July 20th, 1663. His ministry was attended with the powerful demonstration and application of God's truth.

F.C.

Obituary

MRS. MARY ANN COSENS (Bristol)

Mrs. Cossens passed forward on November 5th, 1963, in her ninetieth year. She had long been a worshipper at St. Mary-le-Port and St. John the Baptist, Bristol.

She rejoiced in the truths of God's free and sovereign grace, and loved the worship in God's house and the Ministry of the Word.

A favourite quotation of hers was Miss Charlotte Elliott's verse:

O Jesus, make Thyself to me
A living, bright reality;
More present to faith's vision keen
Than any other outward object seen;
More dear, more intimately nigh
Than e'en the sweetest earthly tie.

Charlotte Elliott, 1860.

These lines were for many years the private expression of Miss Elliott's own daily prayers, and were so much a part of her own hidden life with her Saviour that they were rarely communicated by her to anyone, and only to her most intimate friends. We feel that the same might be said of Mrs. Cossens. (These lines were printed in Edinburgh in 1860 by a friend. Miss Elliott was rather disconcerted by this action, but came to feel that it was the Saviour's way of leading others to participate in her own private inner life. The lines were later included by Miss Elliott in "*A Christian Remembrancer*," 1870 (page 32), and appeared in Mr. Snapp's "*Songs of Grace and Glory*," when first issued in 1871).

Mrs. Cossens was born in Aberdare, Glamorgan. She lived at Mayfield, Derbyshire, and after the loss of her husband came to live in Bristol.

She was one of the brightest of Christian believers, and her God-given faith and example will long be remembered. Toward the end of her life she suffered much, but she loved the Saviour and rested wholly on Him.

The funeral service was at the Church of St. John the Baptist with St. Mary-le-Port, Bristol, on Friday, November 8th, and the interment at Canford Cemetery. We express our Christian sympathy with all who mourn her loss.

W.D.S.

THE LATE REV. H. D. SALMON (Woodridge, Woldinham)

"Thou art my Portion, O Lord"

The REV. HAROLD DYSTER SALMON, who was formerly Head of the Cambridge University Settlement, Bermondsey, and afterwards of the Ordination Candidates Training Fund, died on Monday, December 2, at the age of 94. We express our Christian sympathy with Mrs. Salmon and her family.

Mr. Salmon used to have in his study the words of Psalm 119: 57, *"Thou art my Portion, O Lord,"* and constantly delighted in the thought (compare Lamentations 3: 24, *"The Lord is my Portion"*).

We recall John Newton's beautiful hymn:

The Lord is my Portion

From pole to pole let others roam,
And search in vain for bliss;
My soul is satisfied at home,
The Lord my portion is.

Jesus, who, on His glorious throne,
Rules heaven, and earth, and sea,
Is pleased to claim me for His own,
And give Himself to me.

His person fixes all my love,
His blood removes my fear:
And while He pleads for me above,
His arm preserves me here.

His word of promise is my food,
His Spirit is my Guide;
Thus daily is my strength renew'd,
And all my wants supplied.

John Newton

W.D.S.

CURRENT TOPICS

WALL TEXTS

A series of eight large *Text Cards* (8 x 5 in.) is being produced by the Trinitarian Bible Society with the *Titles*:

Abundant Mercy.
The Lord is Nigh.
Trust in the Lord.
Come unto Me.
Wait on the Lord.
Faithful and Just.
The Love of God.
Follow Me.

These are beautifully designed, printed on white card in black and red with a blue border, punched and corded (price 3d., or 2s 6d. for 8 (including postage, 40 or more post free). The same texts are also available in a smaller (postcard) size (price 1s. 4d. for 8 including postage). (Trinitarian Bible Society, 7 Bury Place, London, W.C.1).

BIBLE NOTES FOR 1964

"CHEERING WORDS" is a monthly evangelical 8-page magazine, published continuously since 1851, the present Editor and Publisher being Pastor David Oldham, 1 Bentley Street, Stamford.

God willing, it is hoped to commence in January, 1964, four pages of "CHEERING WORDS BIBLE NOTES" each month, consistent with the doctrines of free and sovereign grace. The Notes will usually deal with a book of the Bible, though occasionally with a subject, and are to be contributed by twenty beloved ministers of the gospel, who are preparing them, in addition to normal use, so as to be suitable for use among young people.

These Notes will be embodied in the "*Cheering Words*" magazine (with the exception of its continuing 8-page Tract Edition), making 12 pages in all, at 3d. a copy plus postage. To increase their wider usefulness, however, they will also be published separately as a 4-page leaflet (handy as a Bible bookmark) at 2d. monthly, or at 12s. 6d. per 100, both prices plus postage.

Kindly order from Pastor D. Oldham, 1 Bentley Street, Stamford, Lincs., as early as possible.

ROMAN CATHOLICISM

DR. D. MARTYN LLOYD-JONES preached a sermon on Roman Catholicism on Sunday morning, 1961, which was printed in *The*

Westminster Record, May, 1963 (The Bookroom, Westminster Chapel, Buckingham Gate, London, S.W.1).

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones said that he had never actually done this before, but it was something which had to be done because we cannot otherwise understand the history of the Church in the past and because the present position demands it.

"There are movements afoot, and meetings taking place which are trying to bring a kind of rapprochement between Romanism and Protestantism."

Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones said that he was not thinking about individuals, but was looking at the *system*. "We are looking at a system; and I would not hesitate to assert that this system, known as Roman Catholicism, is the devil's greatest masterpiece! It is such a departure from the Christian faith and the New Testament teaching that I would not hesitate with the Reformers of the sixteenth century to describe it as 'apostasy'." This is through such additions to the truth as made it a departure from it.

He reviewed its (1) introduction of idolatry and superstition, (2) her system and teaching coming between us and the Lord Jesus Christ. "She claims to be responsible for our soul and its salvation"—hence we have "to submit utterly and absolutely to what the Church tells us and what the Church teaches us." It is a totalitarian system—the Church is supreme, the priests are the sole priests, there are other things, seven-sacraments, the cult of the Virgin Mary, the saints, etc.

Dr. M. Lloyd-Jones concluded: "Christian people, your responsibility is terrible, you must understand it, you must be able to counter false teaching."

The issue (*Westminster Record*, May, 1963) is price 4d., plus postage. The annual subscription 6s. per annum (back numbers available: The Bookroom, Westminster Chapel, Buckingham Gate, London, S.W.1).

RADIO EVANGELISM

157 letters were received in three months from listeners to the Tamil radio programmes (S.B.M.). Most of these came from the Tamil area in South India, but some came from other parts, including Assam. The broadcasts were heard by soldiers serving in the Congo. Letters from schoolboys suggest a serious interest. Some listeners want to share their problems, family difficulties. Others ask spiritual questions, "Can my sins be forgiven?"

Much information is given concerning the Radio and other work in "*Until and Unless . . .*", the 102nd Annual Report of the Strict

Baptist Mission (General Secretary, Pastor P. H. Crees, 61 Breakspears Road, London, S.E.4), price 1s., plus postage.

Throughout the Report there is the constant prayer that the Lord of the Harvest will "thrust forth" more labourers into the field. Hence the title "Until and Unless . . . more missionaries are available to us, all aspects of the work are curtailed."

SING TO HIM

Tune: *Nun Danket.*

Come all ye saints of God,
And sing to Him your praises;
Join with the angel host
Who high their anthem raises.
Sing now with one accord
And bless His holy Name
Whose love encircles us,
Unchangeably the same.

From childhood's early days
His loving Hand has led us;
Through all our pilgrimage
His Providence has fed us.
Today we know His love
Will be our Shield and Stay
And that His eye will guide
Throughout life's changeful day.

O may His holy Word
Be in our hearts to cheer us,
Then we shall trust His grace
And have His presence near us.
His promises are sure,
Our joy no foe can take,
And all His love we have
For Jesu's holy sake.

Rookwood, Styles Hill, Frome.

T. Pittaway.

BIBLE EXPOSITION

GOD'S PEOPLE STRENGTHENED TO DO EXPLOITS

(An address given by "E.R." at "Ebenezer" Chapel, Luton,
October 16th, 1963)

"And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall be corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits."—Daniel 11:32.

CLEARLY there is a distinction of character in this verse; the wicked who do wickedly against a certain covenant, and the people who know their God and are strong and do exploits. It is an acknowledged rule in expounding Holy Scripture that the context be seen. It would take too much of our time for one fully to go into the contextual setting now. A brief word must suffice. Here in prophecy Daniel is forecasting a vile person who should stand against God's people, the Jews, with the determination to uproot them as a body and all their ordinances of religion; in short, if possible, to annihilate the very name of God out of the earth. I refer, as some of you may well know, to Antiochus Epiphanes, who was a monster of iniquity, and who indeed did persecute bitterly the people of God. By deceit and craft he obtained power, but in the end was cut off, not by the hand of man, but by God. During that period of persecution, about 164 B.C., there were a people who did not bow the knee to the image of Baal, and that at the cost of their lives. These are the people named in the text as being "strong and doing exploits."

In case any of you are not familiar with this history, you may read it in the 2nd Book of Maccabees, the 6th and 7th chapters. Let it be clearly understood that one is not acknowledging any of the books of the Apocrypha as inspired, though one would now say that there was a most wise providence of God in the formation of the canon of the Old and New Testament Scriptures; a subject may be, that many of us know very little about. Well, that is our sin, because we could know more of that subject if we used the means.

I.—THIS PEOPLE KNEW THEIR GOD

Recently we have had statements from men in high position ecclesiastically respecting God that we will not pollute your ears by

naming. But what a beautiful thing it is really to believe in God! Do we truly believe in God?

Who is He? Evidently *He is knowable*, because the text asserts that "the people who *know* their God shall be strong and do exploits." He is knowable only by Holy Ghost teaching in and by His inspired word. Yet also the great works of Providence proclaim His eternal power and Godhead. His people are *witnesses* of this truth having proved it again and again in their daily lives. "Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, and My servant whom I have chosen: that ye may *know* and *believe* Me, and understand that I am He: before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me" (Isaiah 43: 10). This knowledge of God is the best, the safest, the happiest knowledge one can ever have communicated. So to know Him is to love, serve, and worship Him—what a favour! We cannot find out God unto perfection by all the searching possible and it is so easy for one to darken counsel by words without knowledge. May we never do that!

Consider the *unity* of God. "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is *one* Lord." *One* Lord! When one came to our Lord "in the days of His flesh" on earth and asked Him "Which is the first commandment of all?" he was told, "The first of all commandments is: Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is *one* Lord." And more—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment." The scribe said, "Well Master, Thou hast said the truth: for there is *one* God; and there is none other but He" (Mark 12: 28-34). "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee—the *only true God*—and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent" (John 17: 3). "But to us there is but *one* God, the Father, of Whom are all things, and we in Him; and *one* Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom are all things, and we by Him" (1 Cor. 7: 6).

Consider also the truth that in the Unity of the Divine Essence there are *three distinct persons*, revealed as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Explain this? That is impossible. We are not asked to do that, but we are enjoined by the Holy Spirit to *acknowledge* this sacred doctrine. "That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the *acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ*" (Col. 2: 3). And there is *experience* of this holy Trinity-in-Unity. Have you never had some softening power, you cannot explain nor define, Godward? But you have distinctly felt your heart bowed in loving reverence, filial obed-

ience unto Three Distinct Persons. Is this loving God with all the heart, mind and soul? At such a blessed time the heart is *feeling* the fact of the Trinity in Unity, however it is utterly impossible for your mind to explain to another. Oh, for more of this! Many years ago one used to hear that term used more than today, and the more is the pity. Paternity—the Father; Filiation—the Father and His only begotten Son. How? we do not know. It is unrevealable, and, if it were revealed, we could not understand it. It is utterly inconceivable how this relationship should ever come into being, but we read this: “The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” And what a blessed revelation that is! In all the words and deeds of Jesus on earth He has revealed the Father. Philip said “Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us,” but Jesus replied, “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.”

And the Holy Spirit is spoken of thus: “The Spirit of God hath made me and the *breath* of the Almighty hath given me life” (Job 33: 4) which appears a clear allusion to Gen. 2: 6: “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and *breathed* into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” Indeed, we are called upon to remember our *Creator*, Trinity in Unity, in Ecclesiastes 12: 1. This then is the God we know, by grace teaching us, and we feel this holy doctrine of the ever blessed Trinity in Unity is the foundation of our hope for eternal glory.

What of the experience in *prayer* to this God? How often we have to ask, do I ever *pray*, *truly pray*? If one does he is under the power of the *Trinity in Unity*. That is the great blessedness of *real* heart-felt prayer. Take an illustration. Here is a man crying: “God be merciful to me the sinner” (Luke 18: 13). Who would think that sinner is doing business with the Trinity in Unity? He is. “God,” alluding to God as the Righteous Judge against Whom he had sinned, “be merciful”; be propitious to me the sinner. He is looking to the *mercy seat*, for remember he was in the precincts of the Temple, and he knew what went on inside, the offering of the sacrifice. Now he was eyeing the sacrifice, while pleading with God for mercy.

Here is God the Holy Spirit creating in his soul the felt need for mercy: also pointing him to God the Son—the Lamb which taketh away sin by the sacrifice of Himself—and here he is begging the Father of Jesus to have mercy upon him for the sake of the blood of His dear Son. It is as if the poor sinner is saying, “God, do not look at me, look at Thy Son Who was the Lamb slain. He has

given His life for my life. I ought to have been slain for my many sins, but do be merciful to me on the alone ground of His being the propitiation for my sins" (Rom. 3: 25; 1 John 2: 2). Hence, the soul who has any experience of forgiveness of sins is one who knows God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

And again, when your soul is drawn into the holiest of all to enjoy access unto God is not this clear proof of your having to do with these Sacred Three in One? Surely it is so, friend. Note this—"For through *Him* (Christ Jesus) we both have access by one *Spirit* unto the Father" (Eph. 2: 18). Clearly we have the Trinity here.

Once more, as often as we close our services we pray that most comprehensive prayer found in 2 Cor. 13: 14: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." "The grace of Christ. The Love of God. The communion of the Holy Ghost." Blessed Holy Trinity!

Before I leave this first point of our subject, let me add one more most blessed part of a right experience of truth. Have you ever had a real sight of the harmony of the Divine perfections in the sin-atonement blood of Christ in pardoning your sins?

If you have not had that, in some degree you are held in fear, bondage, darkness; distance from God is your experience, and it must ever be so until favoured by God. When He does give you that (and He does give it to all who seek Him with all their heart) blessed sight, namely, that all His attributes are glorified and magnified in the forgiveness of your sins, *you* will love Him—cannot do otherwise then; you will not need any man to tell you that you should love Him, for love will be in your very heart.

Just the same when it pleases God to pass the sentence of *justification* in your conscience, which, of course, is the declaration that you are free from all condemnation, *then*, you are at *peace* with this blessed Trinity in Unity.

God never plays with His people. He lays hold of His children one by one, makes each one feel his guilt and that His judgment against him is real and just. He feels the sentence of *condemnation* in his very heart, and it would not matter to him if all the preachers on earth were to tell him he is a justified man before God; he just could not believe it. Why not? Well, he stands with "Mene. Mene, Tekel, Upharsin, thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting" ringing in his ears. And just so he wants a *clear* word by God's word with His authority in it, too, so as he can feel his condemnation is absolutely removed and that now, because of Christ's righteousness, he is under *no* condemnation.

Tonight you may be saying, "What me? It cannot be. My sins

are so outrageous." But God can clear all your "ifs" and "buts" out of the way, and when God passes justification in your heart, then Romans 8:1 will ring blessedly within: "*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.*" What a gracious statement, what a Gospel is this to you then!

And if there is *no* condemnation *now*, there will be none when you come to die, and none at the judgment day and, why is this? "The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." "*As Christ is*, so are we *now* in this world" (1 John 4:17). Oh, it is the sacred joy and delight for the true gospel preacher to declare, the Great Surety Himself bare our debt, paid it in His blood, and He is now discharged from all His Suretyship obligations, and all His chosen family are acquitted in Him. Yes, *now* henceforth and for ever. The people then know their God in the Unity of the Divine Essence and, of the Tri-Unity in the blessed work of redemption and godly experience. You have this profound truth, the Unity and the Tri-Unity in the very first chapter of the Bible.

II.—THESE PEOPLE SHALL BE STRONG

But the peculiarity of this is that their strength lies in felt *weakness*. Is this an apparent contradiction in terms? Never mind if it is: it is *not* so in actual fact. "When I am weak then am I strong." And Paul knew what he was saying, and all do that fear God. Wonderful revelations he had, heard unspeakable words, but a *thorn* went with all that, lest he be exalted above measure. And he prayed his deepest for God to remove that thorn, but no: "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Blessed chapter! (2 Cor., 12th chapter). When I am *weak*! Some here may have felt this more than 60 years ago, but you are *learners* of this lesson still. Our mutual friend here, the aged pastor of this church, would agree with us; we are more ignorant and weak now than then. So weak we cannot pray, even if you think we can. We just cannot. We may use words, but what of that? We cannot believe either at will, nor love. Fact is just this, "Weakness itself is found in you."

Of course you and I, by grace, *try* to pray and believe, but it is like one remembers many years ago a man in Suffolk saying (and he was then an old man and I am a stripling): "I have been *trying* to pray for over 50 years, and I am still *trying*."

Prayer is the *breath* of God in man, returning whence it came, and, it may be, that when we have no *sensibility* of prayer in us we really pray! One may have, at times, freedom of thought in

prayer, and freedom in use of words, and the very soul seems moved therein and thereby, and then—beware lest we get *pleased* with our prayers!

It may be that when you have had no language at all, just sheer, positive, downright groaning before God, the Holy Spirit has been with you! You shake your head and say “No, that cannot be!” But you allow the Divine word to settle that point. Here it is: “*Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered*” (Rom. 8: 26). And further notice: “*He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God*” (verse 27).

Not always is it that *your sweetest* prayers, as you judge them, are answered. More likely your times when you have gone to His throne in heavy bondage of heart, sheer inability to compose a thought, with the devil at your right hand to torment with his lies and slander against God; you have just breathed, heaved a sigh, and groaned out of pure weakness and risen up saying, “It is no use, I cannot pray, God can never hear such rubbish as this,” and yet, have you not found it true, that to Him there is beauty in a tear, and music in a groan? He *did* hear that groaning of His prisoner and give you help.

God gives strength, that is true. What could we do if it were not true? Sink! “*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*” (Phil. 4). Not always may you *feel* that strength given. Sometimes it may be so, has been so, but not always. The circulation of your blood in your body is going on now, but if you are healthy, you are not conscious of that essential fact. In God you are living and moving and having your being, as a creature, and totally unaware of any sensation. And similarly it can be so spiritually. “*He holdeth my soul in life*” when one does not *feel* it. Strength is poured into His family every day and every moment of every day without their being aware of it. It is *in union* with Christ our strength lies. “*Apart from—severed from—Me, ye can do nothing.*” But in union with Him the tiniest branch is strong. The branch is not aware of the sap rising from the root but it is so. So we may be unwise always to judge our state by our feelings, for often judging by our feelings means we are *living* by our feelings, and that cannot be right, for we live in *union* with the Vine only. Whether sensible of strength or not—and we like to *feel* the strength—the fact remains that it is not a matter of *sensibility* of it but that “*the strength of Israel will not lie.*”

III.—THEY ARE STRONG TO DO EXPLOITS

(1) Against corruption and flatteries and persecution is the contextual meaning. Daniel is telling, years before it came to pass, what Antiochus Epiphanes would do. To this also it is believed Paul in Hebrews 11:36-37 refers.

He has spoken of those worthies "who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions" and then says: "*And others* had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonments.' It is admitted by such able expositors as Dr. John Brown, of Scotland, Dr. Owen, and our own Dr. Gill, each very learned and very gracious, that "*the others*" of verses 35 and 36 refer to saints of God under this particular persecution. "Others were *tortured*." You may have noticed in the reading we repeated this word. Tortured, tortured! Put on racks and then beaten while so stretched out, and offered the rewards of wordly honour and riches if they would but deny their God; but they were "*strong*" for we read, "not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection" (verse 35).

A mother saw her children, seven of them, put to cruel death within the space of one day, but she bare it with a good courage because of the hope she had in the Lord. *That* is being *strong* and doing an exploit indeed! For you to understand better the meaning of that word "tortured" let me give you an example of its meaning. The first of the seven had his tongue cut out, then the utmost parts of his body, while his six brethren and mother looked on; and when the poor man was thus dismembered, Antiochus commanded he should be, while yet alive, put in the fire "and to be fried in the pan." Most brutally were the six "tortured" and "last of all after the sons, the mother died." At such a price was the honour of their God held faithfully, by His strength being made perfect in their weakness.

(2) Very rightly we must say none of us have done such "*exploits*," and we trust it may please God that neither we nor our children may be called upon to undergo such cruel *tests* of our faith in God. But in a very much smaller measure His graced-taught people do exploits. Here is one with some degree of grace at work and some measure of faith in Jesus Christ, and he has to *fight against the flesh* in himself. That is a great fight. If you do not believe me, you just try it! Try and resist *yourself*; the biggest piece of mischief you have in the whole world; go against self and see if it is easy! We have still a nature fallen—thank the Lord

we know it as such—and that wicked nature endorses all the flesh suggests. But regenerating grace makes you fight against that wicked flesh, and so the warfare has begun.

The wonder is we do not fall head over ears into its filth and guilt every moment of our lives. Why not? Why not go back to where and what you were before grace met with you? "Truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had *opportunity* to have returned." Then why not return? The strength of God, the Spirit is working in your heart and you cannot go back. "God forbid we return" you will say to the captivity of the devil and his works! Is not this an *exploit*? To go against what your sinful nature still loves and fight what seems an unequal warfare and to sigh often "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" and yet not to leave the field of battle though so sorely wounded by sin—if this is not an exploit, or a brilliant feat, we wonder what is.

(3) Then also take one who is called to offer something to God that is very precious. Abraham had a promise of a son and after about 20 years that promise was fulfilled. *That's* a long time to wait for His promise to be fulfilled, and then when fulfilled God commands him to take and offer Isaac for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains God would name. Abraham goes and Isaac spake unto his father and said, "Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" *That* must have cut poor Abraham's heart, but he answered, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering."

Abraham laid the wood in order, bound his son, and laid him on the altar and stretched out his hand, and took the knife to slay his son, but just then he is stopped: "Abraham, Abraham: lay not thine hand upon the lad, for now I know that thou fearest God." A great *exploit* of faith surely. Have you ever been called upon by providence to offer up that which is most dear to you, that which tears your very heart to pieces, and you fear it may tear your very religion to bits also. But has it? No, for it is founded in the Triune Jehovah. *You* are doing an *exploit* in this, yet it is not you so much as God in you. You are in good company along this road really. You may have had rebellion in the severe trial and wondered why it should happen to you. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

(4) Did you never find the worldling opposing you by his sneers, and by some power he may have over you? Can it ever be otherwise if we are real pilgrims here below? The Hebrews knew this path well as seen in Daniel 3rd. They stood firm for truth and

their God and so into the furnace they went, and, that heated seven times hotter than usual; but *God* was with them and it proved one of the very best walks they ever had, and they came out without one hair of their heads being singed nor even the smell of fire upon them. So you bearing persecution from the world remember this is an exploit of faith and a proof of love being real and you shall find that *your* God is able to deliver you and will.

(5) Have you ever had an order from God to go in a certain direction or do a certain thing but the details are not given you, they are not made plain. You are sure a change is coming but what may be the way it takes you cannot think. Your exercises continue, and even increase, so also do the difficulties, everything pointing to a grand climax when *something* has got to be done and you say, "I cannot do it without a word from God." But God does not give you the word, now what? At last a step has to be taken and taken without your knowing *where* you are going or what you are going to do. The whole of your path seems wrapped in complete mystery. Yet *go* you do and *must*. Is not this something of an *exploit*? Is it not something like "Abraham when he was called to go out into a place . . . he went out, *not* knowing whither he went"? And he did it "by faith." Faith does not walk by *sight* but we always seem to want the sight!

(6) What about those times when you have to call upon God with such guilt and shame that you just do not know how to plead with Him? Ezra was ashamed and blushed to lift up his face to God (chap. 9), but he did it. Your guilt shut your mouth? God can and does shut us up by His law sent to the heart. But now consider this, is not this an *exploit* that though such guilt fills your conscience and you are ashamed of yourself, deeply too, yet still you venture to Him on the ground of shed blood and ask for salvation to be granted you for Christ's sake?

(7) Have you ever been like that woman of Canaan who cried to Jesus for a favour and He appeared to take no notice of her request. Presently she said something to Him, "Lord, help me," and for answer she is told, "it is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs." Do not be offended if He calls you a dog! Not you, for you know He could call you much worse than that! She accepted the truth and said, "*Truth*, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." She had a deep need, a need that would not let her turn back though He seemed to rebuke and condemn her. Her case and her faith seems to have opened His heart and He said, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt" (Matthew chap. 15). You friend,

tonight without assurance, without great revelations some seem to have, may feel an outcast, but with your deep need keeping you at His feet even if He seems to take no notice of you is an *exploit*. Keep begging: you will win the blessing in His time.

(8) Observe the word *exploits* is in italics. If that means there is no word in the original corresponding, but was supplied by the godly translators of our much-blessed Authorised version, then let us use that to indicate that there is no *limit* to what strength in faith, or prayer, Godward can do. They shall be strong and do—what? Let the best Teacher answer: “Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, why could not we cast him out?” Christ answered: “Verily I say unto you, that if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and *nothing* shall be impossible unto you” (Matt. 17: 20).

That is worthy of much thought by any child of God in deep waters with nothing but “mountains” of human impossibilities around him: “*Nothing* shall be impossible” to him that cries unto and trusts in God, and he shall live to see wonders wrought in his life by prayer.

(9) There is one more great work to be wrought. The greatest battle for the godly lies ahead. It is that of *meeting death*! You have learned in the day of prosperity to be joyful, and in the day of adversity to consider how good He has been to you, yet, for you remains the *last* enemy, a bitter enemy, too. The person we speak of as the dying thief (might we not call him the *living* thief?) had no life of religion behind him, no, not even of profession of religion behind him, but looked like one openly belonging to the devil and just ready to drop into hell; but sovereign grace saved him, and listen to him as he meets his death: “Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.” Was not this a wonderful *exploit*? Think of the man as he had been, and now as he was, to have enough faith in Christ to *see he had* a kingdom when all around him were hounding Him to death, and strength given him to beg to be “remembered by Christ when He came into that kingdom.” If this is not a wonderful, gracious work, what can be? And what a blessed answer he got: “Jesus said unto him, verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with Me in paradise” (Luke 23: 43).

How did he overcome that monster death? How can *we* overcome? Are we going to bring up all the years of one’s profession? All our years of preaching, if a preacher? Emphatically no; all this will not hold water for a second before death.

Here that great grace of faith, wrought in one by the Holy Spirit does an *exploit* indeed. She in face of death and eternity says: "Into Thy hands I commit my spirit"; into Thy blood, Thy blood, Thou hast redeemed me thereby. *Nothing* else but true faith can do that. That blessed grace did that when *first* you were called by His grace: enabled by the Spirit to place your soul's salvation in *Him* alone, and in death faith ignores *all* else; all mere tradition, mere profession, the whole outside shell of all religions (so termed). The very highest, richest and deepest experience you ever were favoured with in all your long experience here, will *never do in death, as the foundation* of your entrance into glory. Nothing but Jesus will do then, and we seek nothing but He *now*.

It will be wonderful to you to whom, at times, faith seems so small, weak, indeed as if one had *none* at all; yet He who planted that grace in you at first will never leave it to die; and you will find in death that same grace will enable you to hang upon Christ; come heaven or hell, sink or swim, take me Lord Jesus. Can that ever be in vain think you? *Never*.

The great dragon may gather up all his power against you in this solemn moment but never forget *your* victory lies in the same Person and Work as they in Revelation 12: "They," and *stress* that word, "*they* overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives (spirit of the martyrs in them!) unto the death."

The service ended with the beautiful words of Dr. Watts:

Give me the wings of faith to rise
Within the vail and see
The saints above, how great their joys,
How bright their glories be.

Once they were mourning here below,
And wet their couch with tears;
They wrestled hard, as we do now,
With sins, and doubts, and fears.

I ask them whence their victory came,
They with united breath,
Ascribe their conquest to the Lamb,
Their triumph to His death.

They marked the footsteps that He trod,
(His zeal inspired their breast);
And following their incarnate God,
Possess the promised rest.

Our glorious Leader claims our praise
 For His own pattern given;
 While the long cloud of witnesses
 Shows the same path to heaven. *I. Watts.*

E.R.

REJOICING IN GOD'S WORD

By the late PASTOR J. K. POPHAM (Brighton)

"I rejoice at Thy Word, as one that findeth great spoil."

—Psalm 119: 162.

THERE is a good deal of rejoicing at times by certain people in the world; as when they succeed, when they attain to certain objects for which they have set out. But the Scripture saith, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16: 26). If you had everything that the human heart can wish, and had no life and fear of God in your soul, what benefit would you have? Things that are here are perishing.

The young man is warned not to rejoice in his strength, the rich man is not to glory in his riches. There is only one person who may really rejoice; namely, the man who knows and understands the Lord, that He exerciseth lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth, for therein He delights (Jer. 9: 23, 24).

Now may the Lord make you whose hearts are in the world consider this; consider what you are rejoicing in, what you are depending on, from what you are deriving your good and comfort; consider the temporary nature of all that you have, of your own life, which is even a vapour; consider the pride of your hearts, that you are practically independent of God, though you may not say so; practically independent, because you do not seek Him daily. Consider that He is not sanctified in your heart, that you do not honour Him. God give you a heart to consider your latter end, that what you have, what you hang on, is nothing but vanity, emptiness; yea, it may be worse than emptiness, it may be thick clay cleaving to you, and bearing you down into eternal ruin.

But there is a substance to which the election of grace attain, which may be and is rejoiced in: it is in the text, *"I rejoice at Thy Word, as one that findeth great spoil."* In speaking to you this evening on this scripture, I would, as enabled, first notice:

1. The term *"Thy Word."*
2. Secondly, *the rejoicing in it.*
3. And then look at the comparison: *As one that findeth great spoil*—*hunting, searching, finding that which is*

great spoil to him. Says the psalmist, "Just as he rejoices in what he has found, so do I rejoice in Thy Word."

I.—THE WORD OF GOD

First, then, we have before us *the Word of God*. What was written at that time of the Scriptures the psalmist found, and rejoiced in. What is now the whole of the Scriptures, the church of Christ rejoices in. I will make two or three observations as to, first, *what the Word is*; then, secondly, *the use of the Word*.

ITS INFALLIBILITY

The Word of God is verbally plenary inspired. It has in it, as originally given by the Holy Spirit, no flaw of human error, uncertainty, inaccuracy. It is not fallible; it is an infallible Book. "Every word of God is pure" from the beginning (Psalm 30: 5); and the psalmist says in a verse or two before the text, "Thy word is true from the beginning, and every one of Thy righteous judgments endureth for ever."

Go to the beginning, go to that blessed, pure garden, Eden, and see a pure couple, Adam and Eve, under the law. Said God, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." That word, the first recorded that the Almighty spoke into the ear and heart of Adam, that word is true. "Thy word is true from the beginning." His soul died in the day he ate, his body died later, and his whole person, with all his seed, became obnoxious to the second death.

A solemn thing! That sin of Adam ruined us all; he ruined his future race. The seed of evil once brought in has remained in us, and it is true we have died, died to God; we have died to holiness, to righteousness, to uprightness, died very largely to human kindness, died to principles of truth. Much of the Scripture is written with this before the inspired writers—that men are guilty of lying, of speaking contrary to God and truth, and of deceit and hypocrisy.

And when grace comes to them, not altering their old nature, but subduing it, the Scripture says, "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds . . . Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies." "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 13: 14)—put away all evil; evil speaking, hypocrisy, guile, and malice. How true is the Word of God as it respects men! Man fallen, man unfallen the Scripture describes.

Go to Adam fallen, and what a gracious word came from the mouth of God to him! Condemnation was not left alone to ring in the ears of that fallen man; but the gospel was preached, the heaven-

ly gospel sounded in his ear. Yes, the Lord said that he was a guilty man, but He promised the Seed of the woman. The serpent had bruised Adam; the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent. The devil had overcome man; Man, Incarnate Deity, should overcome the devil. The devil had led man into captivity; Christ should lead that captor captive. Christ should ascend into heaven, having died and received gifts for men, to administer those gifts, to give them to sinners.

This Word is true, it is the infallible Word. Search out all records, search all history, search the whole world, and you will not find one single scripture that has had anything to do with this or that thing, that has fallen to the ground. Said Joshua to Israel at the close of his eventful life, "Ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you: all are come to pass unto you; and not one thing hath failed thereof" (xxiii 14). Some of us can say, "We know." We know that the word of God is true, is infallible; we have hung upon it, have depended upon it, have been inspired to hope by it, have been led to pray by it, have been reproved, rebuked, comforted, strengthened, and guided by it. And as far as we have gone, has any single word failed? The Word of God is infallible, because it is inspired: "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

And I would affectionately say to you, my young friends, who may not at this moment feel as we who know, by the grace of God, something of self and a little of Christ,—mind how you treat this Book. God put it into your hearts to be careful about this Book. Flee from that which is written of the Jews, "They have rejected My Word, and what wisdom is in them?" He who rejects the Scriptures is a fool as well as an infidel; he lacks all wisdom.

One might for a moment ask, what exalted England? What made her the head? What made her the lender? The Word of God received and revered. What brought about the blessed Reformation? The reception of the Word of God, and its translation and dissemination among the people. Notwithstanding all the wicked opposition of the bishops and the priests, God sent His Word among us. He raised up a godly seed, He sent a powerful ministry, and the nation was blessed. Even as the Jews prospered through the prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah, so England was prospered through receiving the Word of God; and the liberty we have enjoyed, and the mercies we have daily had at the hands of God, have come to us by means of this Book. The Universities received it: it is very different to-day.

But now, dear young people, do, if you can, listen to me for a moment. Reverence this Book; treat it not as an ordinary book, but as the Word of God. Regard it as a standard to which you must be measured; as a balance into which you and all your works will one day be put and weighed. Remember God's holy Word. God forbid you should despise it or treat it wickedly. It is infallible, because it came from Him, and can you be guiltless if you despise it? Can you be innocent if you turn your back on the Bible? The Lord give you mercy in this particular.

ITS AUTHORITY

Secondly, the Word of God is *full of authority*. It does not ask any one's acceptance. It comes and says, "I am from God, I am the very expression of God's mind." And he who says to it, "I entertain you not, I have an intuition, I have learning; I know that some of the writers of this Book were ignorant, illiterate men, and they wrote under their national and personal prejudices; I do not receive you,"—I say such men will find one day that that Word which they despised will judge them. This Book says, "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgement."

But who shall judge what are idle words? Set up your own standard, and you do not utter many idle words, perhaps; but come to the Bible, and if God teaches you, you will understand what an idle word means. There is no fear of God, no reverence of His Majesty, no trembling at His Word, no calling on Him for mercy, no asking of Him to save you; and for all your idle words, all your misdeeds, all your ungodly speeches, which you have ungodly uttered,—for all these He will bring you into judgement. The Word of God has authority.

You may listen to me, and you do patiently and kindly, but some of you may say sometimes, "Well, after all it is only what *he* thinks, what *he* believes." And if there is no application of what I say to you, that is about what you will be thinking in your hearts. But here is a Book that will judge you; you will stand or fall by this. Remember, this Book tells us what a righteous man is, how a man becomes righteous, how a man becomes a Christian, how he is to live as such, and what is the end of him. It tells us what a sinner is, how he became a sinner, what sin is, what a foolish thought is, what a covetous wish is, what an unlawful look is; it tells us all these things. And it is not your judgement of yourself that will constitute you right or wrong, righteous or wicked; it is just what this Book says. Then it has authority. The Lord give it authority in our consciences, then it will stop us. Read it, read it, read it,

and God cause you to mark it, and inwardly digest it by faith.

ITS ENDURANCE

Thirdly, this Word is *an enduring Word*. Other books die, they pass away. The leaves of this will perish, but the truths uttered by it will live for ever. "For ever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven." There it is. Here is written the song of Moses, and here is the song of the Lamb; it is sung here, and in eternity they sing it. Here we have the record of the Fountain opened for sin and uncleanness; in heaven all, plunged into that Fountain, sing unto Him that washed them from their sins in His own blood, and made them kings and priests unto God and His Father, "to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever."

Now take these three points, or qualities, of the Word of God,—its infallibility, its authority, its endurance; and God give you hearts to reverence the Scriptures. Remember who wrote them.

THE USE OF THE WORD

Now I shall speak a little of some of *the uses* to which the Holy Ghost, the Author of this Book, puts it. It is for use, and He uses it.

First, He uses it in regeneration: "Of His own will begat He us with the Word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (Jas. 1: 18). A living word is dropped into a dead soul. How the Lord goes here and there and speaks some truth that the Scripture contains, tells sinners of heaven and hell, of sin and punishment, of grace and salvation, and teaches them to consider their latter end!

You may not be able to say this particular scripture or that, came to you in the beginning of your conviction and concern; but if eternity has been laid on you, if the things of eternity, if your immortality and your accountability to God, if the judgement day and the great Judge of all, quick and dead, have been in any way made known in your hearts and consciences; then what a sacred, wondrous use the Lord has made of the Scriptures in your case! He speaks by His Word. He spoke to holy men of old whom He made the penmen of the Word, and He speaks still to sinners by the same blessed Word. It is an instrument. He uses it. May He use it to you in your hearts. You will never escape God's Word. In some way it will speak to you, some day it will speak to you, some things it will say to you.

"Is not My Word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jer. 23: 29). And if you look at these two expressions, you may gather even rationally to what a very important and solemn use the Lord puts His Word. He

takes it as one takes a *hammer*, to break a rock. He takes the Word, and uses it *as a fire*, and puts it to sinner's life; to the sheaf that he has built up, the wood, the hay, and the stubble that he has gathered; He applies it to them, and they are burned. O, solemn, awful, blessed thing this!

One may say, "I do not want that religion." If you do not have it, if the Holy Ghost give you not, you will be in hell. One day you will know that that which you despise was the very blessing of God that maketh rich His people, and with which He addeth no sorrow. Happy is he who can say, "This and that scripture God used as a hammer and as a fire."

2. The Word is used *as a guide*. "I will guide thee with Mine eye." If you are by the hammer broken, by the fire burned, and look at, and grieve over, the ruin that has come to your soul and conscience and spirit, you feel in darkness, in confusion; how you can be saved you cannot tell. But one day some beautiful scripture may fall into your mind, and guide your eye to Jesus Christ. Just as the star guided the wise men to the place where the Infant Saviour lay, so some blessed scripture may fall upon your mind, exercised and confused, and as in prison, and direct you to the Lord Jesus. And what a sight for a sensible sinner! He needs righteousness, and there he sees it; he needs pardon, and there he sees the Fountain opened for sin; he needs grace to save him; there is the fulness of it, displayed in that divinely discovered Person. He needs the goodness of the Lord and there in the Lord Jesus is all that goodness. The Scripture is used as a guide.

"3. It is used by the Holy Spirit to stir up people, to stir up their *"pure minds by way of remembrance;"* to stir them up greatly in faith, faith in the bleeding Lamb, faith that wars in weakness and dares in doubt; faith that causes you to say, "I am all that which my conscience accuses me of being, I have done all that my conscience says I have done, I am more wicked than I can express; but there is a Saviour, there is a Redeemer, and my soul is after Him, my soul I cast on Him. I look to His Fountain, to His righteousness, to His grace, to His great offices, to His Name; I look to Him." Faith will not give in; and whenever faith has a strengthening, a buttressing word, that word will impart vigour and courage to it, and you will say, "Begone, unbelief." You will say, perhaps, with Esther, "I have not been called in to the King these thirty days, and I know that by law it is death to the person who enters the presence of His Majesty unbidden; but the case is a desperate one, and I will go in, and if I perish, I perish." The Lord will strengthen your faith sometimes to do that.

4. *The Word of God is used in sending out invitations.* Sweet, suitable, free invitations are issued by the Lord. I who have heaven at My command, and earth under My authority, I who am exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, speak to you, Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. I will not cast you out. Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out. He may bring his reasons and urge them, but I will not listen to them; he may set the briars and thorns of his sins and objections against My mercy, but I will go through them and burn them up, that I may save him." How great is God's Word in invitations! How free they are! Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." Blessed be God, He has spoken some such words to some of us. These invitations are used to express the very heart and love and purpose of God to certain sinners; the election of grace. You may see the characters who shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven; you may go with the apostle Paul and say, "Such were some of you, and such am I" (1 Cor. 6: 9-11). There you may stop, and you may remain there a long time, fearing you have no interest in what you see. But the word of the Lord is very great, it is the word of a King, and "where the word of a king is, there is power." If He speaks a word of forgiveness, if He makes you to know that He has pardoned your sins, then you will follow the apostle, "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God."

5. *The Word is full of promises, sweet, suitable, exceedingly great and precious promises;* not one of which is written in vain, not one of which shall ever be spoken on any heart in vain; no. O what promises the Bible contains! and in Christ they are all yea and Amen "unto the glory of God by us." Notice that scripture let us tarry for a moment upon it: All the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen"—certain, infallible, sure, never shall fail; all of them yea and Amen; and what for? "Unto the glory of God by us." How? In their fulfilment. And if you can say, "Now there was a time when I was destitute and afflicted and tormented and weak, and I knew not what to do, what course to take; I was empty and poor and miserable and wretched and blind and naked. And the Lord spoke to me, and He made a promise to me of life eternal; gracious truth was opened and applied to my soul;"—now, that was a use to which He put the Scripture. That word was His very word to you; and remember, it is a great thing to remember, "God is not a man that He should lie, neither the son of man that He should repent." No; you may make a bad use of it sometimes, or you may dishonour Him by forgetting it, or you

may say He did not give it to you, and dishonour the Spirit in that part of His work in you. You may set up your ingratitude, and think, because of that, you have provoked the Lord to take the promise back; but it is not so. All your poor thoughts, your unbelieving thoughts, your questions about it, will not turn Him aside. He "is not a man that He should lie." And when He comes and reproves you for your unbelief, then you will be very sorry that you treated Him so badly, and beg Him to forgive you; and He will surely do it, and fulfil His promises.

The Word of God is a wonderful Word in respect of promises,—promises of supplies, of strength, of wisdom, of guidance, of perseverance; promises of protection, the convoy of eternal love being granted; promises of covering you in the day of evil, of divine presence in water, in flood, in flame; promises of a passage safe and sure through Jordan, and an entrance into heaven; promises of supplies of your daily bread and water being made sure. All these things were written aforetime, and were "written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."

6. Now let us take briefly another view. *Take for instance this great truth in experience; namely, that we have a conflict;* that we wrestle not with flesh and blood, not against those enemies you can look upon every moment; but "against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places"—that subtle, that powerful, that ceaseless foe. Is there anything in the Scripture that will be of use in such a conflict? Yes, there are two things afforded us by the Word of God.

First, *armour*. "Put on the whole armour of God" (Eph. 6: 11); the armour of righteousness, the justification of your person; "the armour of light" (Rom. 13: 12), the illumination of God in your understanding. Having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness." Covered with this, a sinner may meet all the giants of sin, the devil, and trouble.

Then, secondly, the Word is also *a sword*. "Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." And with this armour and this sword, says the apostle, you will "be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Eph. 6: 13). How weak we are in ourselves! How incapable of fighting! How lacking in prowess and courage, in knowledge of warfare! But there is a blessed Word that will teach you how to fight. You see a marvellous example of the use of the Scriptures in the Lord Jesus. When He was tempted of the devil, He said, "It is written, it is written, it

is written." And may God help us in temptation to say, "It is written."—"Blessed be the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight" (Ps. 144: 1). Says the enemy, "But you do not know that you are the Lord's." May your faith say, "But there was a time when I did find such and such a word useful to me." And your faith will look at it, and put God in mind of it. That is the work of faith. Canst thou not perceive poor soul, that at such a time the work of faith is to hold fast? "Remember"—saith the Lord to the church in Sardis, to whom He had said, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead"—"Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast." May the Lord help us to do so. How did we receive? What did we receive? A promise? a good word from God? Says the devil, "You must not hold it." What has he to do with it? It is no business of his. It is God's work to give the word; it is the devil's work to make it doubtful to us, and to make our interest doubtful. But, as the Lord helps you, look into the Word, see how it provides armour and a sword. Says Paul, "Put it on, put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

7. And, my brethren, *the Word of God looks to the future*. It does not say only, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." It does promise that; but it looks to the present and to the future, and says, "*In Me ye shall have peace.*" It looks to the *end* of the conflict and of tribulation. "Because I live, ye shall live also." I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." These are some of the uses to which the Lord puts His blessed Word.

II.—REJOICING IN THE WORD

Now look for a moment at what the psalmist says: "*I rejoice at Thy Word.*" Throughout this Psalm you see his esteem of the Word of God; he esteemed it to be better than all else. He esteemed every precent of God to be pure; he said that it was to him the testimony of God, and he panted for it. "My soul panteth for Thy Word; I long for it." And when he found it, it was just with him as with Jeremiah later: "*Thy words were found, and I did eat them—they were my nourishment, my meat and my drink—and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.*"

You had better have a promise in your heart than a million pounds in the Bank of England. A million of gold would not sustain your heart in trouble, and would not bring you safely

through Jordan; but the word of God spoken in your heart will do all that. Yes, it will. I do not want to speak thoughtlessly, but a man of God can be content with his poverty; and is so, when he finds the word of God in his heart, assuring him that he shall lack no good thing. The Lord said to His disciples, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

And I dare not say that He did not say to me once, with a power not to be forgotten, "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." That to faith is sufficient; not to an unbelieving heart, not to a worldly mind; but to faith that is sufficient. If your heavenly Father knows what you need, and says so to you, that means He will look after you, He will take care of you. If He pities a person, His pity is effectual pity. If He works for a person, that work is effectual; there is nothing in the Lord of impotence. So look at that promise. If you have that in your heart, you are rich. When you find Christ with you in a word, the dear Saviour of sinners in a promise or a word of the gospel, when you find His righteousness there, and His mediation there, then you will say, "I rejoice at Thy word, as one that findeth great spoil"—here is more to my soul than ever the huntsman could get; here is more to my soul than all riches."

This answers to an earlier Psalm, where the psalmist is saying, "There be many that say, Who will show us and good?" He looked out on the whole world, and as it were heard them crying out for good: "Who will show it to us?" The Pharisee, the Sadducee, the worldly priest, the wicked priest, and the people who were turning away from God, all saying, "Who will show us any good?" Said this man of God in his secret prayer, "Lord lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us." And when he got that light shining, then said he, "Thou hast put gladness in my heart more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased."

Let the wicked have their corn and their wine; it is all they have. Poor sinner, if you never have more than corn and wine, which means earthly good, what a poor person you are! Yes, if you could say, "So much belongs to me; if you could count your possessions by the thousand and ten thousand, what then? It is but poverty. But if you get a smile from God, then you can say, "I rejoice now, I rejoice in the Lord, I rejoice in Christ Jesus; I rejoice in the word that brought Him to me, into my very heart; I rejoice at the condescension He showed in blessing me; I rejoice because He answered prayer, and I rejoice because He came near to me; I rejoice at Thy Word."

III.—FINDING GREAT SPOIL

"As one that findeth great spoil"—as one who as it were stumbled on wealth untold; as one who, not expecting it, finds himself possessed of it. You who fear God will follow this. May the Lord give us, then, to enter into this word, yea, this experience. A man of God standing in awe of the holy Scriptures, suddenly finds himself esteeming the Word of God, yet persecuted by princes, his heart possessed of the Scriptures in power, in life, in light, in glory; finds himself saying, "This is *my* Word, this is the Word of God to *me*, and I rejoice in it."

May the Lord bless you, my dear hearers. And do not think that having the Bible in your hands is enough; the Spirit put it in your hearts. God give you the grace to seek His blessed Word to be in your hearts with power.

Once again let me say, all we have here will die. If we live for years to enjoy it, as men speak, we shall die and leave it; or it may make to itself wings and fly away. But if we have the Word of God in us, the boundless wealth that God has given to us,—the kingdom of immense delight that awaits us, the precious Saviour who will not leave us nor forsake us, the good God who has said He will guide us with His eye, who has exhorted us to follow Him as dear children. Then I say, we may rejoice in boundless wealth in eternal goodness; we may look everything in the face, and say sometimes, "I bear all my treasures with me, and can therefore fear no fatal shipwreck."

May the Lord add His blessing. May the Holy Ghost bless you by giving you His Word.

Sermons, Vol. II, 1923.

J. K. POPHAM.

PILGRIM PAPERS

"WALKS AND TALKS WITH JESUS"

TALK WITH SIMON THE PHARISEE

By DR. D. A. DOUDNEY, St. Luke's, Bedminster

"AND behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at His feet behind Him, and began to wash His feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment."

Simon seeing this, and knowing the character of the woman, as a notorious sinner, began to doubt whether Jesus was what He was thought to be, after all. But Jesus had thoughts as well as Simon; and there was this vast difference between them: Jesus knew what Simon's thoughts were, but Simon knew not what Jesus was thinking about.

Then Jesus asked Simon, if a certain creditor were to forgive one man five hundred pence and another fifty, which was likely to love him most? Simon saw little or no difficulty in this matter, and, therefore, he said, "I suppose he to whom he forgave most!"

Now mark!

"And He turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment."

Now, how well may we learn from these facts, that Jesus may be giving heed to our sorrow or our service, when we have no idea that such is the case. Can we suppose, for a moment, that whilst this poor sorrowing sinner was thus engaged, she had the veriest thought that Jesus was giving heed? What she felt was, the mercy and the privilege that she was permitted thus to occupy herself. Her tears were those of mingled joy and sorrow: joy that she was not repulsed—that she was not driven from the Saviour's presence,

sorrow that she had so sinned against the laws and the love of such a Lord!

Jesus adds:

"Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."

"*Her sins, Simon, not thine!*"

Ah, reader, mark the distinction!

Then Simon did not secure a pardon, or merit forgiveness, or purchase favour, by the entertainment he gave to Jesus? No! Strictly speaking, and in spite of the Pharisee's intention, it was on that poor sinner's account, Jesus went to Simon's house, and sat down to meat.

Moreover, it was *love* that prompted that poor notorious street-sinner to do as she did; not so, in the case of Simon. What he did was out of *self-love*! what she did was on account of *self-hate*! She loved much; Simon did not love at all! She "stood at Jesu's feet behind Him, weeping"; the Pharisee sat in judgment upon Him, carping and condemning! She was a suer for mercy; he a scorner of that mercy! She was broken-hearted; he whole-hearted! She was humble; he haughty!

She had no *words*, but tears; and she trembled lest she had been too bold and presuming even with *them*, for with her very hair—that by which she had sought aforetime to attract and allure—she wiped away the tears that wet the feet which ere long were to stream with blood!

But, although no words were spoken, Jesus heard the plaintive cries, and read the touching pleas of those tears; aye, and He had words with which to meet and greet them:

"And He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven thee Thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace!"

What a difference, reader, in her going and coming!

She came to weep! she went away to bless, praise, and adore!

Reader, take courage! Let thy state and circumstances be what they may, be it thine to test and try the self-same Lord!

Be this thy language:

"I can but perish, if I go;

I am resolved to try:

For if I stay away, I know

I must for ever die!"

Bedminster, Bristol, 1876.

D. A. DOUDNEY.

THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE

ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE TRUSTEES

The Trustees announce that, owing to increasing years, the Rev. W. Dodgson Sykes has resigned his position as Editor of *The Gospel Magazine*. The present issue is therefore the last one for which he is responsible. The matter came before the Trustees at a recent meeting when they felt they could do no other than accept the resignation, though they did so with great regret.

Mr. Sykes was appointed Editor in 1951 and the first issue of the Magazine under his Editorship was in November of that year. The previous Editor, the late Rev. Thomas Houghton, died in January 1951, and the late Rev. H. R. H. Hill acted most acceptably in that capacity until the appointment of the Rev. W. Dodgson Sykes.

The Trustees have unanimously expressed their deep appreciation of all that Mr. Sykes has done for the Magazine as its Editor, appreciation which they are sure is shared by a wide circle of readers. They would like to ask all his friends to join them in prayer for Mr. Sykes and for his continued work for the Lord.

The Trustees are glad to state that the Rev. H. M. Carson, Vicar of St. Paul's, Cambridge, has agreed to act as Editor for the time being. Mr. Carson is well known for his evangelical position, and his faithful preaching of the great truths of Sovereign Grace, for which *The Gospel Magazine* stands. They trust he will feel led of the Lord to accept the permanent Editorship. Meanwhile they would solicit the prayers of all readers for Mr. Carson and for God's continued blessing upon the Magazine.