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Editor:

JOHN TALLACH

Free Presbyterian Manse, Kinlochbervie, Lairg, Sutherland,
IV27 4RP.

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Editorial

As we face another year, we can expect to meet situations in which our allegiance will be tried. The minister will be tested as to whether or not his motives are pure, in what he does in the church. The Christian teacher will be tried as to whether she will stand firm on Christian principles. The believing businessman will be put to the test as to whether he can maintain an unsullied profession in an alien atmosphere. It will be a time when we will all be tested as to whether we will say, *I am thine*.

What gives strength to the believer's profession is the fact that it is God who has made him His. *I am thine, because thou hast redeemed me*. This is 'the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood'. And again, *I am thine, because thou hast possessed me for thyself*. This is the church in which He dwells and walks.

Does the believer then feel complacent, as he faces times of testing which lie ahead? David did not. As soon as he had owned God as his Lord, he cast himself upon Him as his Saviour: *I am thine, save me*. Save me from being unfaithful, save me from denying that allegiance which I have just owned.

Save me from being deceived. Peter thought himself ready to go with his Lord to prison and to death. But Peter was deceived by his deceitful heart; *save me*.

Save me from being drawn aside. Demas was drawn aside by the world; *save me*.

Whatever testing we may meet in the church, in the school, in business, may this paradox always obtain in our hearts. May we indeed be strong to make the profession, *I am thine*. But may we also be honest to confess our weakness in the prayer, *save me*.

Revive Us Again

P. E. HUGHES

IX

HUMAN FALLIBILITY

In times of revival allowances should always be made for the weaknesses of human nature. There is in all people a danger of going to extremes, and this should never be forgotten in judging of a work of the Holy Spirit. We have been endowed with a faculty of discernment, and we should be careful to exercise this faculty in a reasonable and charitable manner. It is needful to distinguish what is good and what is bad, and to avoid judging the whole by the part; otherwise we may be found guilty of serious errors of judgment with regard to the whole, and of doing harm through our own misconceptions to a work which we ought rather to promote and encourage.

We should not condemn a movement because its leaders in some respects run to an excess of zeal. All mankind without exception is subject to the frailties of the human frame. Moses, who spoke with God face to face, was guilty of this failing when he impetuously smote the rock in the wilderness the second time; our Lord's disciples, too, were impelled by excessive zeal when they wished to call down fire from heaven upon the unresponsive Samaritans; and the Christians of the circumcision when they were so ill-advised as to condemn Peter for taking the Gospel to Cornelius. Yet all these men who, on certain occasions, might be charged with over-zealousness, were specially chosen and used of God for the setting forward of His purposes, and we should be gravely at fault were we to think lightly of them or their work simply because their conduct displayed occasional imperfections.

The Lord looks on the heart

There is need for caution also lest we condemn a work altogether because we observe in it flagrant cases of hypocrisy or dissimulation, or because there may be instances of individuals falling away into a state of apparent reprobation, who once were prominent in their connection with it. On the other hand, we should remember, too, that our judgment may possibly be equally incorrect with respect to some whom we consider to be eminent examples of saintliness. Their manner of speech and conduct may be such as to impress us; yet we should ever remind ourselves that the true spiritual life is an inner life, and that it is God alone who is able infallibly to discern the real contents of

the heart of each man. We, like Samuel, must remember that 'man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart'.

We have an unforgettable instance in the case of Judas Iscariot. He had been one of the Twelve throughout our Lord's ministry; he had shared with them in all the privileges of that sacred fellowship; his companions never seem to have suspected that he was anything but a true-hearted follower of the Master; and yet he turned out to be a traitor and an instrument of the devil. Our Lord discerned the evil intents of his heart, but from the other disciples they were completely hidden.

It is not for us, then, to pass final judgment concerning the state of heart of other professing Christians. We all know that we should not neglect to use the powers of discernment which we have been given, and that Christians should reprove and correct one another with regard to faults which may be noticeable; but it is always to be done in a charitable and brotherly spirit. A harsh censuring attitude, which all too easily manifests itself during a season of revival, is something to be studiously shunned. We are not to be puffed up; we are not to consider ourselves something when we are nothing; in lowliness of mind each should esteem others better than himself; all should be subject one to another and clothed with humility, 'for God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble'.

Judge nothing before the time

This spirit of humility should always characterise our attitude towards others. While we endeavour to exercise discernment as far as possible, having respect to the external fruits of a life, we should remember that our own human imperfection lays us open to being deceived at least in some cases, and that, after all, the judgment of the heart is the prerogative of God. We ought, with Solomon, humbly to acknowledge before Almighty God, 'Thou, even Thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men'. We should give heed to the rebuke of St. Paul to the Romans, 'Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth'; and to the admonishment of St. James, 'There is one Lawgiver that is able to save or destroy; who art thou that judgest another?' 'Therefore,' says St. Paul in another place, 'judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come; who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart.'

It is not for us to be busy about separating the goats from the sheep, the bad fish from the good, or the tares from the wheat. This is the particular business of the day of judgment, as the Scriptures plainly

show, and will be performed by Christ and His angels. In the parable, the zealous servants were eager and impatient to go out and separate from the wheat the tares which had been sown by the hand of an enemy. Their motives were no doubt excellent, for they desired a pure harvest; but their ability and judgment were imperfect. The tares were so similar in appearance to the wheat that, were they to set about such a work of discrimination, they could not but commit many errors of judgment. Thus their master wisely commanded them to forbear lest, in gathering the tares, they should root up the wheat also. Both were to grow together until the harvest, when the separation would be effectively and infallibly made.

His prerogative

'I once did not imagine that the heart of man had been so unsearchable as it is,' wrote Jonathan Edwards. 'I am less charitable, and less uncharitable than once I was. I find more things in wicked men that may counterfeit and make a fair show of piety; and more ways that the remaining corruption of the godly may make them appear like carnal men, formalists, and dead hypocrites, than once I knew of. The longer I live, the less I wonder that God challenges it as His prerogative to try the hearts of the children of men, and directs that this business should be let alone till harvest. I desire to adore the wisdom of God, and His goodness to me and my fellow-creatures, that He has not committed this great business into the hands of such a poor, weak, and dim-sighted creature—one of so much blindness, pride, partiality, prejudice, and deceitfulness of heart—but has committed it into the hands of One infinitely fitter for it, and has made it His prerogative.'

Living near to Christ with much humility and prayerfulness will not only sober our critical faculty and increase our charitableness, but will also act as a protection against the extremes to which an excess of zeal would otherwise carry us. While the Master tarries, there will never be lacking plenty for us to criticize and correct in our own hearts, and our own growth in holiness and grace should concern us as much as, if not more than, that of others.

Revival Scenes

The following are two extracts from *The Apostle of the North*, which is featured in *Book Reviews*. The background to the first extract is as follows:

Soon after Dr. Macdonald began his ministry in Urquhart, his wife died. Her death occurred at the time when the scheduled 'Communion Season' in the congregation was due to take place. The elders suggested that, in the circumstances, the Communion Season should be postponed, but Dr. Macdonald replied, 'No, no; let not the death of my wife interfere with commemoration of the death of my Saviour'.

On that Communion Sabbath a congregation of about ten thousand gathered, and Dr. Macdonald preached from the particularly appropriate words, *I will betroth thee unto me for ever*. The power of God was seen that morning, and in the evening, 'the hearts of many sinners were pierced. The excitement at last was very great, the groans and outcries of the stricken ones sometimes drowning the voice of the preacher . . .'

Tidings of the awakening at Urquhart reached Breadalbane. Mr. Findlater then occupied a missionary station there. He was a godly man, a faithful fervent preacher, and the lack of learning and talent in his discourse was well supplied by the unction of a broken heart. He was stirred up by the good news of the Lord's work in Ross-shire to seek an outpouring of the Spirit on Breadalbane. Prayer-meetings were set up; and not long after the 'dry bones' began to move. One after another came to Mr. Findlater asking, 'What must I do to be saved?' He wrote to Mr. Macdonald, imploring his assistance at his next communion, and he agreed to go. Of that communion season at Ardeonaig the following account is given by the Rev. D. Campbell, Kiltarn, who, along with his brother, the Free Church minister of Lawers, looks back on that time as the dawning of a better day.

'On Thursday Mr. Russel of Muthill preached in English from 1 Kings 8 : 38, and Mr. Macdonald in Gaelic from John 16 : 9. During the Gaelic sermon an extraordinary degree of attention was excited, and towards the close of it a young woman from Glenlyon cried out, being unable to repress her feelings. Mr. Macdonald preached an evening sermon at Lawers from Psalm 32 : 6. Owing to the darkness of the night, the poor people of Glenlyon could not return home; and some of them were quite unfit for the journey, a sense of sin pressing so heavily upon their hearts. Those who were able to go home, next morning, brought with them the tidings of Mr. Macdonald's arrival and the effects of his preaching; news which excited an ardent desire to

hear the extraordinary preacher, and to witness scenes before unheard of in Breadalbane; while some desired to experience such influences themselves as were felt by others. The result was that the most of the Glenlyon people were in Ardeonaig on the Sabbath. Mr. Macdonald preached the action sermon† in the tent that day to an assembly of people more numerous than had ever met before in Breadalbane. His text was Isaiah 54 : 5, *Thy maker is thy husband*. The sermon was accompanied with an extraordinary outpouring of the Spirit. Some cried out; others were melted into tears; while many laboured in vain to suppress their feelings. The place was then "no other than the house of God and the gate of heaven".* Mr. Macdonald preached on Monday from Luke 16 : 2, a sermon by which many more were awakened; so that this occasion proved to many in Glenlyon, and to some in Breadalbane, to be like the month Abib to Israel, the first of all months.'

The next extract refers to Dr. Macdonald's involvement in the revival which took place in Uig, Lewis, around 1827. He had been en route for St. Kilda when bad weather forced his boat back to Harris. Hearing of the Communion Season at Uig, in Lewis. Dr. Macdonald set off in that direction and arrived there on Saturday morning; he preached that day. The rest of the story is told on pages 281-282 of the book:

'On the following day the Doctor preached again; and he preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. The great congregation was smitten as by a mighty wind and the people were laid prostrate on the earth. There were loud outcries. To secure order the Doctor interrupted his sermon and gave out a few verses to sing. The precen-tors, for there were two of them . . . were Malcolm Macritchie and Angus Maciver. They sang; but the congregation were overcome with silence. Dr. Macdonald stood behind them singing, and it is said that in the congregation of many thousands these were the only voices to be heard. The awakening of Uig which had been in progress for some time under the ministry of the worthy Alexander Macleod, the minister of the parish, now came to a head. This great day of the gospel was one of the tokens that John Macdonald's Master gave to show His approval of His faithful servant, and it was the preaching that was attended by such power and blessing that won for the minister of Ferintosh the name of *The Apostle of the North*.'

†The sermon preached before dispensing the Lord's Supper.

*Dr. Kennedy speaks of fifty people being awakened through this sermon.

Temporary Faith

DONALD A. DUNKERLEY

*A sermon preached from 1 Samuel 10 at McIlwain
Memorial Presbyterian Church, Pensacola, Florida.*

A problem case

King Saul poses a problem for many people. He seems to have made a good beginning in his spiritual life and yet he ends up an apostate, disobedient to God, warring against David (the man after God's own heart), and apparently going to hell. How can this be? Those who are of the opinion that a true believer can fall away and be lost like to point to Saul as if his life were evidence to support their position. We need to think about Saul's good beginning.

Several things indicate that Saul's beginning was a good one and if we only had this chapter, many might well conclude that he had become born again. Does not verse 6 say, 'Thou shalt be turned into another man'? And does it not say in verse 9, 'God gave him another heart'? Indeed, it might appear that Saul is not only a born again Christian, but a Spirit-filled man who is given miraculous gifts including the gift of prophecy. But since Saul became an apostate we might well question whether he was really born again and Spirit-filled, because that would fly directly in the face of much of the clear teaching of the Word of God. We read in the book of Philippians, chapter 1, verse 6, 'Being confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ'. Paul says in Romans 8 : 38-39, 'For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord'. And Jesus said in John 10 : 27-28, 'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand'. The new birth is birth into a life that lasts for ever and cannot be destroyed. We read in 1 Peter 1 : 23, 'Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible'.

How then are we to understand such phrases in 1 Samuel 10 as, 'Thou shalt be turned into another man' and 'God gave him another heart'? We need to understand the context in which they were written. This chapter is talking about Saul's fitness to be king. Saul was not fit to be king by any natural fitness of his own, but he received from the

Lord a new heart to fit and qualify him to be king. It was not such a new heart as would fit and qualify him for heaven, but such a new heart as would fit and qualify him to be king.

We get a glimpse of Saul's natural temperament a little later on in this chapter. When it was time for Saul to be anointed king publicly, we read in verse 21, 'And when they sought him he could not be found'. In verse 22, 'And the Lord answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff'. Saul was apparently a man who was, by nature, of shy temperament, hardly the appropriate temperament for a king, and this temperament even revealed itself on the day of his coronation. But God had given him a new heart and God had made him a new man. In time, this new heart and new man came to the surface and Saul was able to conduct himself with all the dignity that a king ought to have. This was of God and it was significant, and it made Saul's failure all the more of a disaster, but it was not a saving change.

Gifts may not imply salvation

Some would reply, 'Yes, but Saul had the Spirit of God to come upon him and give him the gift of prophecy, and certainly one who has the Holy Spirit and the gift of prophecy is not only saved but has attained to a level of super-spirituality'. We have, in our own day, a movement which claims that those within the movement have received a special baptism of the Holy Spirit and have received special gifts of prophecy and miracles, and they allege that they have attained to a level of super-spirituality beyond that which has been attained by the rest of us.

We need to recognise that the Word of God teaches very plainly that gifts of prophecy and miracles do not necessarily attest to super-spirituality and do not necessarily attest to salvation. You can be used of God for the utterance of prophecy, you can be used of God for the working of miracles, and still be lost. There was a time back in the book of Numbers when God needed a spokesman and a mouthpiece, and He chose to use the mouth of Balaam's ass, and Balaam's ass spoke in human language and uttered prophecy, but Balaam's ass wasn't saved. When you read about Balaam, himself, he also had a marvellous gift of prophecy, but the Bible indicates very clearly that Balaam went to hell. God can use you to utter His Words and still you may be outside of salvation.

Note the warning that Jesus gives in Matthew 7 : 21-23, 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" And then will I profess unto them, "I

never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity”. Jesus does not deny that these people have prophesied in His name and cast out demons and done wonderful works. They have gifts of prophecy and miracles and casting out demons. Still he says in verse 23, ‘Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you. Depart from me, ye that work iniquity’. He does not say ‘I no longer know you’, but ‘I never knew you’. Gifts of prophecy and gifts of miracles are not always accompanied with the gift of salvation. You can do these things and yet at the same time not be known by Jesus as one of His own people.

Notice, also, Luke, chapter 9, verses 1 and 2, ‘Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick’. To whom were these powers given? They were given to the twelve, and among the twelve was Judas, and Judas went to hell; Judas was never saved. The Word of God tells us that all the time he was travelling with the disciples of Jesus he was stealing from the moneybags (John 12 : 6). Judas was given, as we read here, the power to cast out demons and the power to cure diseases. Gifts of prophecy and gifts of miracles are not always accompanied with the gift of salvation. Saul and Judas had the one but not the other.

Temporary faith—what does the Scripture say

Saul is a serious example and a warning to us on the subject of temporary faith. The Bible teaches us that there is such a thing as a temporary faith which is not a saving faith.

It is possible for a man to hear the Gospel, to know that the Gospel is true, and at the same time to be subject to supernatural influences of the Holy Spirit and even receive miracle-working power. It is possible for him to go through some significant reformation of his life and yet never come to true repentance, never be saved, and be finally lost. Such a man believes in a certain sense, but not in a saving sense. He experiences the operations of the Holy Spirit in his life, but not to a saving extent. There is in his life a temporary reformation, but not a true repentance. The Scripture warns us of this many times. This is what happened to Saul and this is what, alas, happens to many other people and may even, indeed, be the condition of some with us this morning.

Jesus speaks of this temporary faith in Matthew 12 : 43-45, ‘When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and

dwelt there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation'. Here is a man who went through a reformation. He was cleansed of an evil spirit. He cleaned out his life, but instead of filling his heart and his life with the Lord Jesus Christ he left it empty, and so evil came back and filled that vacuum so that it was worse than before.

Jesus also discusses temporary faith in Mark 4, verses 3-6, 'Hearken, Behold, there went out a sower to sow: And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away'. For the interpretation of the stony ground hearers, we look at verses 16 and 17, 'And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended'.

Such people hear the Word and respond to it with feeling. They respond with gladness. Immediately they say, 'Isn't it wonderful? Just believe in Jesus and you go to heaven'. They come out of the meeting dancing for joy. They have heard the Gospel. They have accepted it, at least in an intellectual sense. They have heard that they are going to heaven, and they go out with great gladness because they think they are saved. But they have no root in themselves. It would have been better if, instead of receiving it immediately, they had taken time to think it over. It would have been better if, instead of receiving the Word with gladness, they had received it with tears of repentance. Their conversion is superficial and short-lived. They have a kind of faith, but it is a temporary faith and not a saving faith, and they are lost. They think they are saved, but they are not.

There are other such warnings in the Scripture of those who have temporary faith. One is 2 Peter 2:20-22, 'For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire'.

One of the most significant of such warnings is Hebrews 6, verses 4-8, 'For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned'.

This warning from Hebrews 6 is not the teaching that you can be saved today, lost tomorrow, saved the next day and lost the day after, the way some take it. It is to say that those who receive these operations of the Holy Spirit and believe for a while and then fall away will never ever be able to be truly saved. They have received a knowledge from the Holy Spirit, they have gone through a temporary reformation of life, and then they have rejected and hardened themselves against that which they have known to be true.

It is to be noted that while these people experience something genuine from the Holy Spirit, even as Saul experienced something genuine from the Holy Spirit, the words which the author of Hebrews uses are minimal threshold words. He does not say that they 'feasted' upon the Word of God, but twice uses the word 'tasted'. You can have a taste of the truth without feeding upon it. You can taste everlasting life without ever having it. You can be subject to certain operations of the Holy Spirit and yet not be subject to the saving new birth operations of the Holy Spirit. Saul can testify to that. Judas can testify to that. And many who are in hell right now can testify to that. It is a solemn truth.

We must also note that in the very next verse the author says, 'But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak' (verse 9). The Greek contains the definite article so that it should be translated, '*the* things that accompany salvation'. The author is thus making it very clear that the operations of the Holy Spirit described in verses 4-8 are not necessarily saving operations. He is making it clear that he believes that his readers are saved, and if so they are not in danger of the falling away of which he has just been speaking.

What should our response be?

What should our response be to the truth that there is such a temporary faith? Here we should turn back to the book of Hebrews,

chapter 4, verses 1-3, 'Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, "As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world".'

He is speaking of the Israelites in the Old Testament, who were delivered from bondage in Egypt, met the covenant-making God at Mount Sinai and experienced many miracles. Because of unbelief they were not permitted to enter the promised land and, instead of entering into rest, were forced to spend the rest of their days wandering in the wilderness until a new generation arose that could go into the land. They received a certain deliverance but did not enter into true rest, because they did not have saving faith, and we are exhorted that we must enter by faith into the rest that God promises His people.

Several times in the third and fourth chapters of the book of Hebrews we are reminded of the warning in Psalm 95 that we should not harden our hearts, and thereby fail to enter into God's rest.

We need, each of us, to search our hearts to make sure that we have entered into God's rest. It is possible to experience something of the power of the Holy Spirit and the miracle-working power of God, and not enter into the rest of eternal life and salvation because of hardness of heart. There are those, like Saul, who make a good beginning. They hear the Word of God, they know it is true, they experience something of the operations of the Holy Spirit, they make a reformation in their lives; but there is no true repentance, there is no true saving faith. They do not enter into the rest and they end one day hearing the words of Jesus, 'Depart from me, you cursed, I never knew you'.

How can I know if I'm really saved? 1 John, chapter 2, verse 3: *And hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.*

For Younger Readers

STAR

India is a land of heat. For months in the year the sky is hard and blue and no rain falls. Dust lies thick over everything, and the trees droop in the heat. The air is like the air of a furnace.

The main religion of India is called the Hindu religion. The Bible says that there is only one living God, who made us and the world; but in the Hindu religion there are many gods. The people worship these gods by idols—things that they make to represent their gods.

The girl in this story learned to worship idols like the other Indian children with whom she grew up at the beginning of this century. She knelt, she lay on her face before her Hindu idols, she thought of them as her gods.

She liked to ask questions about all kinds of things, but as time passed one question became more important to her than any other. As she looked at her hands and her feet she knew that someone had created them. She ran to her father and asked him.

'Father, who made me?' There were so many gods to be worshipped, but what she wanted to know was, *which of the gods had made her?* She asked her father time and again, but he did not seem to know.

Then she had another idea. She would find out for herself which of the gods had made her. She would do this by putting them all to the test in prayer. She was going to ask all the gods which she knew, in turn, if they would change her nature. She had a quick temper, and when she played with other children she sometimes lost her temper, and if she could have her nature changed, perhaps the other children would learn to love her instead of running away. And she thought this: *the god who can change my nature must be the greatest god of all, and the greatest god must be the god who made me.*

She prayed first to Siva, the god which her family worshipped in a special way. But Siva never answered her prayer. She prayed to other gods whose names she knew, but neither did they answer. She began to feel very lonely. She had been made by Someone; was she to die and never know that Someone who had made her live?

There were missionaries in the part of South India where that little girl lived. At the very time when she was spending hours in hopeless prayer they were coming near. They were discouraged; they found it very hard walking through deep burning sand to speak of Jesus in dusty villages where no one seemed to want to listen at all.

It was evening. Time for the little girl to go to the outskirts of the town where she lived. The well was there, and it was her turn to fetch water. She came skipping along a well-worn path with her waterpot under her arm.

She stopped. There was a crowd round the well. There were three white people, and some Indians with them. For the moment she forgot why she had come. She stood on the wet stones by the well, and looked and listened as these visitors talked and sang. Then she had seen and heard enough; she began to move away. Suddenly there was a disturbance among the crowd, and she stopped again to watch. But the disturbance soon died down, and she turned again to go. It was then that she heard one sentence, spoken by the Indian preacher, which rooted her to the spot. He repeated the sentence several times, although he could not know how much these words meant to her:

'There is a living God. There is a living God. He turned me, a lion, into a lamb.'

Her answer: this was her answer. The question she had asked her father and countless others had been answered by a stranger at the well. This was the God who could change her nature. She had heard for the first time in her life about her Creator. 'He is the living God,' she thought. 'All other gods are dead; Siva is a dead god; I will not worship a dead god any more.' She walked slowly home, but when she went to bed she did not want to sleep. As she said afterwards, 'I wanted to lie awake all night and talk to the Living God'.

Next morning she woke with the joy of her discovery fresh in her mind. Her people had never told her of the Living God, and now that she had heard of Him she did not tell them. But she went to hear more about Him from the people whom she had met at the well the evening before. It was against the Hindu religion for her to mix with Christians, but she found the tent where the missionaries were, and squatted quietly on the floor. There were other children there, and although she was shy it was easy for her to sit at the back of the group. She learned a hymn that day. She also heard a little more about the Living God who can answer prayer. She did not speak to any of the missionaries, and after a while she slipped out and went home.

As she made her way home she thought she should put the Living God to the test. She would ask three things from Him, and if He answered two prayers out of three she would be sure He heard and cared for her.

Her mother stood at the door of their house when she got back. She had a stick in her hand. The girl knew that this meant a beating, and in a flash she prayed 'Living God, O Living God! Do not let my

mother whip me!' But her mother did whip her. She was angry with her daughter for listening to these Christian missionaries. She thought she could stop her by whipping her and she whipped her till she cried. She cried herself to sleep that night.

Next day she went back with other children to the missionaries' tent; again she squatted at the back of the group. This day she heard about Jesus, and she gathered that Jesus was the Living God.

As she walked home that night she passed by a tamarind tree whose branches were bending low over the path, laden with ripe fruit. She had been brought up to believe that picking fruit off a tree was stealing; but if the fruit fell to the ground itself she was free to eat it. She prayed to Jesus that some fruit might fall and it fell right at her feet.

It was dark as she reached home; she was almost certain to be whipped again. But as she ran along the path she prayed, 'Jesus, Living God, don't let my mother whip me!' Her mother met her at the door. She did not whip her. 'I thought you were lost in the dark, my child,' she said, and drew her in.

The little girl had a relative who lived near where the missionaries stayed. Her parents allowed her to go and live at this relative's home for the next few weeks. Now she had plenty of opportunities to call at the homes of the missionaries, and to attend their church. She learned more hymns, more about the Bible, more about Jesus, the Living God.

But her parents began to hear about all this and they wanted her back. 'Only four days,' they said. 'She must come home for a family festival and after four days she can return.'

The little girl suspected nothing, and went gladly. The missionaries, however, watched sadly as she skipped away. They knew that it would be more than four days before they would see that little girl again.

The days became weeks. The anxious missionaries heard nothing at all. Then they heard that she who had said that she was Jesus' child had now denied Him. She had been mocked by all her relatives, she had been punished so severely that she had given in. She had gone back to the idols she had left. She had bowed down to Siva again.

The missionaries heard this story. What could they do for her, surrounded as she was by those who did not know her Living Lord? They could do nothing, they were told. And yet the missionaries could not but wait in hope. It was impossible, they were told, that the girl should ever return. And yet they could not but think that the God whom that girl had come to trust can do impossible things.

On the morning of one Lord's Day a missionary sat in her room.

She was reading the Bible, and many verses seemed to speak to her of that girl whom she had taught for those weeks. *Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord; there is not one who can do as thou doest.* The little girl had known the truth of these words for herself. Oh that she who had become Jesus' child would come back to them again!

The bell for morning service began to ring; the missionary would have to get ready for church. Then suddenly the sun-blind was pushed back and the little girl stood just inside the door.

She was very ill. She had been treated in a terrible way. All the family had gathered together against her. They had done everything they could to force her to submit, but she had refused. During the first days of her suffering she had been comforted even by the feel of the Gospel of Mark which she had hidden in her dress. But then they had taken it away. After that she thought:

They cannot take away Jesus . . . He walked in the fiery furnace with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego . . . Because He walked with them the fire could not burn their bodies . . . it could not burn anything on them except their cords . . . It was a good thing that the fire burnt their cords, for if not they could not have walked in the fire with Jesus . . . Lord Jesus, let the fire burn my cords . . .

'What happened after that?' asked the missionary.

'I don't remember anything,' the girl replied. 'Only, I think the fire got cool.'

Her father came many times during the next five years, to take her away. The missionaries could do nothing to force him to let her stay. But every time he appeared one of them slipped away alone and continued to pray until he left. He always left without her. One time he was heard to say, 'What is the matter with me? My hands are strong to take her. It is as if I were bound and held from touching her!'

She had come at a time when the missionaries were very discouraged. They had felt themselves walking in the dark. But God had brought them together with one whose heart He had prepared to seek Him. And He had kept her from denying Him, He had strengthened her to bear a bright witness to Him in her home, and had brought her back. No wonder the missionaries gave her a special name, and called her *Star*.

Evangelist Extraordinary: William C. Burns

JOHN MACPHERSON

This is the first part of an address given at a meeting of the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship Associates at Inverness on 8th September, 1978. John Macpherson is minister of the Free Church of Scotland congregation at Dornoch.

INTRODUCTION

I should like to begin this study with a few introductory comments on the reasons that have led me to choose this topic for your meeting today, particularly as the name of William Chalmers Burns may be little known or perhaps totally unknown to many of you. In my early Christian life one of the books that made the greatest impact and proved formative in my spiritual and theological development was the *Memoir and Remains of Robert Murray McCheyne* by Andrew Bonar. The earnest, God-filled life of this young minister of the Church of Scotland, who died at the age of 29, cannot fail to stir the heart and conscience of every Christian who reads Bonar's moving volume. It was this book that provided my first introduction to the name of W. C. Burns, who replaced McCheyne in the pulpit of St. Peter's Church in Dundee, while the latter was absent for eight months in 1939 on a Church of Scotland sponsored Mission of Enquiry to Palestine. A mighty movement of the Spirit of God took place in Dundee under Burns' ministry, similar to what had been seen in other places such as Kilsyth. Later study of church history and missions provided me with fuller details about Burns' role in the revival in Kilsyth; an occasional mention of his later years as evangelist in Scotland and elsewhere; and the statement, tantalising in its brevity, that he spent the last 20 years of his life as a missionary in China. I looked around for further information, but failed to find any until I read that great missionary classic, *The Life of Hudson Taylor*, and discovered there—which didn't surprise me—that Hudson Taylor held William Burns in the highest regard, and considered his contact with him one of God's greatest blessings in his own life. This, of course, whetted my appetite for more knowledge of Burns' missionary career, and I tried to obtain a copy of the biography written over 100 years ago by his brother, Professor Islay Burns, only to learn that it was long since out of print.

Several years passed, in the course of which I left Scotland for missionary service in Peru. Belonging to the Reformed tradition, I was soon to discover that a prevalent attitude in other Evangelical churches and many missionary societies is that while the Reformation and Reformed churches were strong on theology, they were lamentably weak on missionary vision and effort: indeed, their theology, with its stress on divine sovereignty, was claimed to cut the nerve of all evangelistic and missionary zeal. I knew this didn't square with my own reading on such outstanding missionaries as John Eliot, William Carey, Alexander Duff and many others, but the charge made me all the more eager to learn the full story of William Burns, unreservedly Calvinistic in his theology while unashamedly zealous in his evangelistic and missionary endeavour. It wasn't until my second furlough from Peru that I eventually came across a copy of the biography, while browsing through some old books in a missionary holiday home; and the reading of it proved, as expected, a fascinating and challenging exercise. Having read it, I would say with Rev. Eric Alexander of Glasgow Tron Church: 'By any standards, Burns was a remarkable man, and his life a remarkable life. But his true significance lies in what Hudson Taylor saw: the quality of his consecration, his zeal for God, and the steadfastness of his devotion, both in times of amazing blessing and in days of deep discouragement. We have much to learn from him today. Our need is to see his like multiplied among us.'

For your information there are available two brief summaries of Burns' life (there may also be other material of which I am ignorant). One is *China's Man of the Book*, by Agnes Clarke, published by OMF in 1968, the centenary of Burns' death. The preceding quotation from Eric Alexander comes from the foreword to this book. The other is by Rev. R. Strang Miller of New Zealand and forms part of the Banner of Truth publication, *Five Pioneer Missionaries*. Both these summaries depend almost exclusively on the official biography by Burns' brother Islay.

OUTLINE OF BURNS' LIFE

Early days

Born in 1815 in the parish manse of Dun in Angus, Burns moved at the age of six to Kilsyth, just east of Glasgow, on his father's accepting a call to be parish minister there. The home was representative of the ever-increasing Evangelical sector within the national church, and William was aware from his earliest days of the need of personal conversion to Christ and commitment to his cause. This was not,

however, the sentiment that most moved him in his early teen-age days, and he decided to become a lawyer, because he 'saw lawyers rich and with fine houses'. However, before the necessary articles were signed which would make William an apprentice lawyer with his uncle, he surprised everyone by walking one day the 36 miles from Edinburgh to Kilsyth and dramatically announcing to his mother, 'What would you think, Mamma, if I should be a minister after all?' He tells us himself of various factors which led to his conversion: the preaching in the church he attended, the fear of death because of a cholera epidemic, a letter from his sisters 'in which they spoke in a single sentence of going as pilgrims to Zion and leaving me behind', but especially the reading of a book called *Early Piety*, 'when in one moment, while gazing on a solemn passage in it, my inmost soul was in one instant pierced as with a dart. God had apprehended me'. Characteristic of the man's whole future life was his reaction at the moment of conversion: 'In the same instant almost I felt that I *must* leave my present occupation and devote myself to Jesus in the ministry of that glorious Gospel by which I had been saved'.

His student days were spent, first in Aberdeen and then in Glasgow. While in Glasgow he attended Milton Church, pastored at the time by Rev. John Duncan, a deeply spiritual if rather eccentric genius, later to be the Church of Scotland's first missionary to the Jews in Hungary, and after the Disruption, first Professor of Oriental Languages in the New College, Edinburgh. Burns' brother Islay tells that 'every Sabbath spent by him in Milton Church was as a day in Patmos, and every sermon almost as an opening of the gate of heaven'. Also while at Glasgow, Burns' missionary interest was deeply aroused through the Students' Missionary Society. By the year 1838 the Church of Scotland had done much to make amends for her tragic rejection in 1796 of the overtures from the Synods of Fife and Moray, urging her to consider the most effective means by which the Church might 'contribute to the diffusion of the Gospel over the world', and 'to aid the several societies for propagating the Gospel among the heathen nations'. (This was the debate that drew forth the dramatic intervention of Dr. John Erskine of Greyfriars, 'Moderator, rax* me that Bible!'). In spite of the Bible, it was not until 1824 that Alexander Duff was able to sail for India and a distinguished missionary career there. Burns volunteered for service on the Indian field, was accepted in principle, and immediately felt himself committed to the work of God overseas. No turning back was possible, for God had called him.

*rax = reach.

A remarkable intervention

But at this juncture the same God who had called him to the mission field intervened in such a remarkable way that his going was delayed by no less than nine years. While waiting for details to be clarified, and the issue being further clouded by invitations to work in Canada and Aden, Burns was asked by his friend, Robert Murray McCheyne, to take his place in Dundee during his absence in Palestine. To replace a man so gifted, so godly and so loved by his large congregation as Robert Murray McCheyne was a daunting task, but Burns must have felt greatly upheld by the words written him by the man he was replacing: 'You are given in answer to prayer, and these gifts are, I believe, always without exception, blessed. I hope you may be a thousand times more blessed among them than ever I was. Perhaps there are many souls that would never have been saved by my ministry, who may be touched under yours; and God has taken this method of bringing you into my place. His name is Wonderful'. He started his ministry in Dundee preaching, significantly, on Romans 12 : 1-2, and it was not long before his tremendous earnestness and ability as a preacher began to draw immense crowds. Well aware of the dangers of popularity, Burns sought more and more to humble himself before God, writing, for example in his diary, 'I had an affecting disclosure to myself of the pride and vanity of my heart, which praise of late has awfully stirred up; none but an omnipotent and infinitely gracious Saviour will suit my case'. But at the same time he felt the deep inner compulsion constantly to proclaim the Gospel: 'The time is short! Behold! the Judge *standeth* before the door. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly'.

Revival at Kilsyth

Despite great blessing in Dundee, the highlight of his ministry was undoubtedly the August 1839 Communion season in his father's congregation of Kilsyth. Deeply moved in his preaching on the Sunday evening, Burns intimated that he would preach once more on the following Tuesday morning. What happened then may best be described in his own words: 'I can hardly recall the feelings with which I went to preach on Tuesday morning—a morning fixed from all eternity in Jehovah's counsels as an era in the history of redemption. . . . Though I cannot speak with precision of the frame of soul in which I went to the Lord's work on that memorable day, yet I remember in general that I had an intense longing for the conversion of souls and the glory of Emmanuel, that I mourned under a sense of the awful state of sinners without Christ, their guilt in rejecting him . . . my own

total inability to help them by anything that I could do, and my complete unfitness and unworthiness to be an instrument in the hands of the Holy Spirit in saving their souls; while at the same time my eyes were fixed on the Lord as the God of salvation with a sweet hope of his glorious appearing. . . . When I entered the pulpit I saw before me an immense multitude from the town and neighbourhood filling the seats, stairs, passages and porches, all in their ordinary clothes, and including many of the most abandoned of our population. I began, I think, by singing the 102nd Psalm, and was deeply affected when in reading it I came to these lines:

*Her time for favour which was set,
Behold is now come to an end.*

That word *now* touched my heart as with divine power, and encouraged the sweet hope that the set time was really *now* at hand. . . . I preached from the words, *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power* (the fourth point being) It is the day of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. I was led under this last particular to allude to some of the most remarkable outpourings of the Spirit that have been granted to the Church, beginning from the day of Pentecost, and in surveying this galaxy of divine wonders, I had come to notice the glorious revelation of Jehovah's right hand which was given at the Kirk of Shotts in 1630, while John Livingstone was preaching from Ezekiel 36 : 26-27, when it pleased the sovereign God of grace to make bare his holy arm in the midst of us, and perform a work in many souls resembling that of which I had been speaking, in majesty and glory. In referring to this wonderful work of the Spirit, I mentioned the fact that when Mr. Livingstone was on the point of closing his address a few drops of rain began to fall, and that when the people began to put on their coverings, he asked them if they had any shelter from the drops of divine wrath, and was thus led to enlarge for nearly another hour in exhorting them to flee to Christ, with so much of the power of God, that about 500 persons were converted. And just when I was speaking of the occasion and the nature of this wonderful address, I felt my own soul moved in a manner so remarkable that I was led, like Mr. Livingstone, to plead with the unconverted . . . and continued to do so until the power of the Lord's Spirit became so mighty upon their souls as to carry all before it, like the rushing mighty wind of Pentecost.'

Preaching in other parts

Burns returned to Dundee, where similar scenes were witnessed. As an evidence that the hundreds of professed conversions were not mere emotionalism, we have comments in McCheyne's handwriting a year

later on a document prepared by Burns on individual cases of spiritual awakening. For example, of one he says: 'Holds on her way rejoicing'; of another, 'I trust goes on well and steadily'; of yet another, 'Admitted her joyfully to the Lord's Table'. The beautiful relationship existing between the two men, one aged 24 and the other 26, is seen in Burns' words: 'Had a letter from dear Mr. McCheyne, written in a spirit of joy for the work of the Lord, which shows a great triumph, I think, of divine grace over the natural jealousy of the human heart. O Lord, I would praise thee with all my heart for this, and would entreat that when thy dear servant, the pastor of this people, is restored to them, he may be honoured a hundredfold more in winning souls to Christ than I have been in thine infinite and sovereign mercy.'

McCheyne's return to his own congregation left Burns free for further evangelistic effort, and he is found in many places, especially Perth, St. Andrews, Aberdeen and Newcastle. The diary contains such comments as: 'Church full, the gay people of Perth, the magistrates present', 'Church densely crowded; thousands went away, I am told, without getting in. Glory to the Lamb'. 'I met with anxious inquirers in the Aberdeen North Church session-house, but so many came (they could not be fewer than 250) that we had to go to the church'; 'In the Lord's wonderful providence the minister of this dead parish (Breadalbane) consented to my preaching there this day at 12 noon . . . At the conclusion when I had pronounced the blessing, I sat down in the pulpit in secret prayer as usual, but to my amazement I heard nobody moving; and waiting a full moment, I rose and saw them all standing or sitting with their eyes in many cases filled with tears, and all fixed on the pulpit'; 'A dense and hungry audience (Sunderland) who seemed to open the mouth wide for blessing'.

As a brief interlude in his itinerant evangelism, Burns spent the winter of 1841-42 as minister of St. Luke's Church, Edinburgh, during the absence for health reasons of Mr. Moody Stuart. It is instructive to see him combine the task of evangelist with that of pastor and teacher. On Sunday mornings he preached through Romans, on Thursday evenings through James, on Monday evenings he taught a series on the miracles to young women and on the parables to young men. On Saturday afternoons he conducted a class for children, while he also found time to give a regular course in Greek to divinity students. But as always there was the desire to reach out to the lost, and Leith in particular was the scene of much open-air preaching, especially to the sailors. When the first Sunday trains began to run between Edinburgh and Glasgow, he spoke out strongly for the entire sanctification of the

Lord's Day, and in addition to his normal two services at St. Luke's, preached twice each Sunday for three months on end to congregations at Haymarket Station numbering several thousands.

Further afield

Many more evangelistic trips were undertaken throughout Scotland, but mention can only be made of two that took him further afield. The first was to Dublin, where his open-air preaching to Roman Catholics earned him many an insult and many a blow. Outward results were fewer there than in any place he had ever been, but he preached daily for a month in churches and in the open air, and left the results with God. The other visit was to Canada, where for two years he preached incessantly in the cities of Montreal and Toronto and throughout the provinces of Ontario and Quebec. In Montreal he preached regularly to the troops with results such as those described by an NCO of the 93rd Regiment: 'I have known the Rev. W. C. Burns to send this famous regiment, these heroes of Balaclava, home to their barracks, after hearing him preach, every man of them more or less affected; not a high word or breath or whisper heard among them; each man looking more serious than his comrade; awe-struck *like men that dreamed they were*'. But Burns' especial concern in Canada was for the spiritually poverty-stricken French-Canadian Roman Catholics, and he journeyed in the most difficult conditions, usually on foot, so as to make more contact with the people, to the most remote places that he might make known the Gospel and plead with men and women to be reconciled to God. (On one occasion he and a fellow-minister were caught in a blizzard on their way to address a meeting. His companion exclaimed, 'This is awful!' to which Burns solemnly replied, 'Oh, my dear sir, there is nothing awful but the wrath of God'.)

In 1846 Burns returned to Scotland, ready to go anywhere and do anything for God, but still deeply convinced that his original call to missionary service to the heathen had never been revoked. A remarkable chain of circumstances led to his being asked to go to China as the first missionary there of the Presbyterian Church of England. He delayed answering only long enough to be sure of the Lord's guidance in the matter, and then went to Sunderland to offer himself for the work. On being interviewed by the Synod, he was asked when he would be ready to leave for China, to which he unhesitatingly gave the answer, *Tomorrow*. And indeed he did not return to Scotland. Ordained the next evening at a deeply moving meeting which ended with the singing of Psalm 98 : 1-4, Burns was away the next morning on the London train to catch the first available boat to China.

China at last

After a five-month sea voyage he reached Hong Kong, and immediately began to preach the Gospel to his fellow-countrymen in the newly formed Presbyterian congregation, but particularly to attend services in Chinese and to mingle with the local population. His great linguistic ability as well as his passion for men's spiritual welfare is well evidenced by his visiting the local jail *one month* after his arrival to read the Scriptures and pray in Chinese with three men under sentence of death for murder. No missionary who has struggled for months or years to master a new language and then communicate the Gospel in it can do other than stand amazed at such a feat. He soon removed from the missionary home where he was staying into the Chinese quarter, where he opened a small school to make more contact with the people.

A year later, when he felt himself at home both in the language and the culture, he discontinued his English services, closed the school, and launched out alone into the vast hinterland of mainland China, 'a land of idols and a land without a Sabbath'. For 16 months he laboured in the great city of Canton, meeting generally with suspicion and a refusal to heed his message. What a contrast between the revival preacher who saw thousands converted through his ministry in Scotland, and the solitary missionary struggling to get a handful of people to listen to him! There is nothing that shows more clearly the spiritual stature of the man, nor demonstrates more emphatically that it is required in stewards that they be found, not successful, but faithful.

Burns next made for Amoy, a busy port and island about 400 miles north-east of Hong Kong. A new dialect had to be mastered, and then once again hundreds of villages were visited with the Gospel, mainly through open-air preaching and tract distribution. At last there was encouragement, particularly at a place called Pechuia where, to quote Burns, 'about 20 people have declared themselves on the side of the Gospel'. Indeed, so enthusiastic was Burns at the prospect of advance in this area, that he wrote the home committee donating a year's salary (£250) for the furtherance of the work. One can appreciate the comment of the Convenor of the Committee: 'Surely that field is ripe unto harvest, when the reaper sends home his own wages to fetch out another labourer!'

At this juncture Burns paid a brief visit to Scotland, not indeed in the normal sense of a furlough, but to accompany an invalid colleague. Once again the calibre of this man's missionary service is seen when one realises that during 20 years his only contact with the homeland was a six-month spell, not for his own sake, but out of concern for

a sick man and his family. His furloughs, his salary, his comfort, his security—these were all swallowed up in his consuming desire to glorify God and preach the everlasting Gospel.

Of his remaining years in China, only the highlights can be mentioned. One was undoubtedly his friendship with Hudson Taylor, who accompanied Burns on an evangelistic tour in the Shanghai area, and later for six months in the notoriously sinful city of Swatow, which boasted that it was 'without Emperor, without rulers, and without the law'. Burns describes Taylor as 'an excellent young English missionary', while Taylor says of him: 'Such a friendship is beyond price. William Burns is better to me than a college course with all its advantages, because right here in China is lived out before me all that I long to be as a missionary'.

On another occasion Burns was arrested for preaching the Gospel—just prior to that he had been robbed of his possessions—and sent under custody to the British Consul at Canton. In the magistrate's report he is described as 'an Englishman, aged 42 years', and as 'a teacher of the religion of Jesus . . . for some time past engaged in exhorting his fellow-men to do good deeds'. The magistrate's puzzlement is evident when he asks: 'Can it be that a person, dressed in Chinese garb and speaking the language of China, is really an Englishman, or may he not be falsely assuming that character to further some mischievous ends?'

For his final period of missionary service Burns made his base in the capital city of Peking, over 1,000 miles north of Hong Kong. In addition to constant preaching, he undertook a great deal of translation, rendering into Chinese a volume of hymns, a translation of the Psalms, complete with commentary and direct from the Hebrew, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and a volume on Christian doctrine. Burns, however, was too imbued with the spirit of the Apostle Paul to be able to stay long in an area where other Christians were labouring, while the regions beyond were unevangelised. After four years in Peking he pressed north to the city of Nieu-Chwang, on the way to the Manchurian border, of which place he wrote to a friend, 'Romish priests are found here and there, but the only representative of the Protestant churches is my solitary self'. His spirit is seen in the testimony of a Christian sailor who visited him there: 'He had many friends, he said, where he had been staying for four years before, and was very comfortable; but he wanted to come to Nieu-Chwang because there was no one labouring there. He said we must not study comfort: they that go to the front of the battle get the blessing: the skulkers get no blessing'. However,

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Speak Lord

PAUL TUCKER

THE LAST THINGS

Consciousness after Death

Read 1 Corinthians 15 : 1-28

There are many people who allow for the continuance of the soul after death but who at the same time deny that a person exists consciously after death. They teach that the person goes to sleep and hibernates in a state of unconsciousness until the Second Coming of Christ. The Jehovah's Witnesses, Christadelphians and Seventh Day Adventists all teach this error. At the beginning of Christianity there was a small sect in Arabia who taught this unconsciousness of one's existence after death until the coming of the Lord Jesus. At the time of the Reformation, a group of Anabaptists taught this same error of soul sleep, and John Calvin wrote an entire discourse against this heresy stating the Biblical doctrine concerning the soul after death. What are the objections that some people raise against conscious existence after death?

I. THE FLOW OF CONSCIOUSNESS IS DEPENDENT ON BODILY SENSES

The argument is that at death there is a complete cutting off of all sensory perceptions so it is impossible for the soul to be conscious and active because it is always dependent for its flow of awareness upon impressions made by the bodily senses. The answer to that argument is: Whereas the body cannot exist without the soul, the soul can and does exist without the body. It is true that while the soul is tabernacled in the body there is this inter-play between the bodily senses and the soul and spirit. But when the soul is separated from the body, it is capable of adapting itself and expressing itself to its new environment utterly independently of a physical body. While a man is in the body, the soul expresses itself through the senses; but when the soul is separated from the body, it has other means of expressing its personality. The best Bible illustration is God Himself; God the Father has no body, God is Spirit. He does not possess the five bodily senses and yet He possesses absolute consciousness. He is the One Supreme Reality, He is the Living God. So if God the Father

exists without a body, is it not feasible that creatures made in His Own image will continue to exist consciously in eternity without a physical body?

II. THE BIBLE REPRESENTS DEATH AS SLEEP

When we are asleep, we are unaware of what is happening around us; we are in a state of unconsciousness while we are asleep. When we die, we go to sleep, so the logic of that is, we are not awake. We must examine this term sleep.

(a) *'Sleep' in Bible language is a euphemism.* Death as a stark fact is both unpleasant and offensive. It is unpleasant because it was not God's original intention for man; it has come on account of sin, as we have seen. It is offensive because God has set eternity in the heart of man and there is something in man that objects to death. Paul does not conceal it in 1 Corinthians 15 : 26. When Paul speaks of the passing away of the believer he describes it as sleep. He is using the milder term in order to take the sting and offence out of death and to show the believer that for him, death is no longer the offence or enemy that it was before he became a believer, because the Lord Jesus has rendered death harmless.

1 Thessalonians 4 : 13. Paul is comforting the believers whose loved ones have died and who are wondering what will happen to their loved ones when the Lord comes again. Notice very carefully v. 14. 'For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again.' When he comes to speak of the passing away of the believer, he does not use the word 'died' or death, he does not say 'Even so, them also which died in Jesus', he uses the milder term 'if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which *sleep* through Jesus will God bring with Him'. The Lord Jesus has *died* for our sins; He has taken the penalty, the condemnation and separation from God that was our due on account of our transgressions, and by the grace of God, He has tasted death with all its hideous flavour, for every man. Now that the sting has been taken out of death for the believer, he does not die, he sleeps.

(b) *'Sleep' is always applied to the body in the N.T.* It is never applied to the spirit or soul. The N.T. never speaks of the sleep of the soul, so that this very idea of 'soul sleep' is completely foreign to the teaching of the word of God. In Scripture it is the sleep of the body.

Luke 8 : 52, 'she is not dead, but sleepeth'. 'They laughed Him to

scorn, knowing that she was dead'. When He talks about sleep He is talking about the body. 'He took her by the hand and called saying, Maid, arise.' Luke, who was a doctor, tells us what the other evangelists do not include. V. 55 'And her spirit (that is distinct from the body, which was asleep) came again.' The word 'came' means returned. Now the spirit returns and takes up residence again, in the tabernacle of the flesh, so that the sleep has to do with the body and not the spirit.

Matthew 27 : 50-53. Matthew is the only evangelist who tells us this particular news. After the resurrection of Jesus there were saints who were raised from their graves and reappeared. We are told quite plainly in v. 52 it was the body that was sleeping and the graves were opened and many bodies of the saints which slept, arose. The bodies were asleep.

Acts 7 : 55-60. 'And when he had said this, he fell asleep.' He fell asleep as to his body but his spirit had returned to his Saviour and was in the presence of the Lord, so that in chapter 8 : 2, we read 'And devout men carried Stephen to his burial and made great lamentation over him'.

1 Corinthians 15 : 16. Paul means, not that they have ceased to be conscious, but that they have fallen out of the rank of living witnesses; they can no longer give a vocal word of testimony that they saw Jesus risen, because they are no longer in the body; they have fallen asleep. When a man goes to sleep he ceases to participate in the activities related to the sphere in which he operates when he is awake. When a believer dies and, so to speak, goes to sleep, he ceases to operate in the realm of this world, where he operated when he was awake with physical life.

Sleep means rest. When a man is tired and weary, he goes to bed and is replenished and rejuvenated through sleep. See Revelation 14 : 13. They have been delivered and emancipated from all the labours and toil of this earthly activity. They have entered into a heavenly bliss and rest that we can never know upon earth. They are not inactive in heaven. See Revelation 7 : 15. They serve Him day and night in His temple. The two things go side by side. They rest from all the wear, tear, fretting and worrying of this earthly life but with higher powers and more glorious ability they serve Him day and night. There is no night in heaven of course, it is another way of saying they serve Him perpetually.

**b. III. THOSE WHO WERE RAISED FROM THE DEAD BY
JESUS NEVER SAID ANYTHING ABOUT HEAVEN WHEN
THEY CAME BACK TO EARTH**

Why did they not say anything about heaven? For the simple reason that they never went there, that they had gone to sleep. If they had gone there of course, they would have come back and been so full of it, that they would have talked about it, so their silence after they were raised is supposed to be proof that they had not been conscious while they were dead, but had been unconscious. That is the argument.

There are three cases in the N.T. where our Lord raised people from the dead. The first in Luke is that of the widow's son of Nain. It is just a very brief account; we are not told what happened when the young man got home, so we are arguing from silence when we say that he never said anything about what happened while he was dead. We just do not know, so we cannot build up an argument on that. Then there is the little maid, Jairus' daughter. Again we do not know what kind of conversation she engaged in after the Lord Jesus had raised her so we cannot argue from silence in this passage. What about Lazarus? We read of Jesus going into the home of Lazarus, taking food at the table with him. There does appear to be silence. We do not read anything that Lazarus said.

I would prefer to argue along these lines: first, in all probability, what they did experience in glory was graciously removed from them when they came back into the physical body. Would they have wanted to leave the glory of God's Presence and come back into all the limitations of the flesh? So I prefer to believe that what they did know was graciously veiled from them when they came back into the physical body. But more than that; even if they did retain something in some kind of vague manner, of the glories of eternity, maybe the Lord had pledged them to silence. See 2 Corinthians 12 : 2, 3, where Paul speaks anonymously about himself. Some scholars relate this to the time when Paul was stoned at Lystra, and dragged outside the city and left as dead, and there are some scholars also who say that he probably was dead and that God miraculously brought his spirit back and raised him up. But Paul himself tells us that he does not know whether he was dead or alive. 'This I do know, how that he was caught up into paradise and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.' See v. 7. So amazing was this revelation of God that he had to have a thorn in the flesh, a physical weakness, to keep him humble, lest he should be exalted above measure, because of this amazing revelation. He did not even talk about the experience until

14 years afterwards and then it was only to tell people that he had had the experience. He did not go into any details about heaven; he was forbidden to do it. Perhaps Lazarus also had been sworn to silence.

IV. *THE O.T. CONTAINS PASSAGES THAT COME VERY NEAR TO SAYING THAT THE DEAD HAVE NO CONSCIOUSNESS*

Many so-called proofs for soul sleep are taken from passages in the O.T. In Job, Psalms and Ecclesiastes. We have to recognise that the Bible is a progressive revelation. Hebrews 1 tells us that in various times and different manners God spake unto the fathers by the prophets, but the final revelation is in the Person and work of Jesus Christ. So that you do not expect in the O.T. the same light upon death as you get in the N.T. Jesus has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. We do not really go to these obscure passages in the O.T. to try to prove our case.

At the same time we must remember that when we say the Bible is God's Word, we do not mean that everything said by certain people in the Bible is true, e.g. The devil said 'Ye shall not surely die', to Adam, but that was a lie. What is true is the inspired record that the devil did say it. Some people take up these passages and do not look at them in their context and say 'there it is in the Bible'. Yes, it is in the Bible, but who said it? It is the record that is true, not necessarily the actual statement. See Ecclesiastes 12 : 13, 14, 7. We have to distinguish between the musings of a philosopher and words of Divine revelation.

Alongside that, there are amazing revelations in the O.T. of life after death. When Job really came under the light of the spirit of God and was speaking, not his own ideas, but Divine revelations, he knew it. He knew he had something amazing to say. See Job 19 : 23-26. So there are outbursts of revelation on this subject even in the O.T. See Psalm 16 : 11 and Psalm 73 : 23-25.

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God's work for him on earth was almost done, and after spending his last months in ever-increasing weakness, he died, aged 53, his last distinguishable words being, 'Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory'.

As a missionary friend wrote to his mother, 'William literally buried himself in that vast land—a noble, living burial! Now he has attained the fulfilment of Christ's prayer, *Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory*'.

What Are These, and Whence Came They?

H. D. M. GILLIES

This sermon, taken from a tape, was preached by Dr. Gillies on 17 May, 1970, in Aberdeen.

Revelation 7 : 13-17

And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

For the lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

INTRODUCTION

As you know, the first part of this book is devoted to messages to the seven churches in Asia. But these messages are also intended for the correction of the church of God in every generation; for the sins of these churches permeate the church throughout the ages. And the encouragements which are extended to these churches are also required to the encouragement of the church in every age.

On this occasion we find John being granted a view by vision into Heaven. We might say, 'Such knowledge is too strange for us, too high to understand'. But the more one finds one's contemporaries in the cause of Christ going home to glory, I think the more one is inclined to seek to look into Heaven. If the Lord takes a near and dear one away from you in time to be with Himself, there is a spiritual inclination to follow that one within the veil. Paul could say 'our conversation is in Heaven', and he was on another occasion caught up into the third Heaven. And so the Lord's people, though they might not even be conscious of it, yet time and time again they find themselves going into glory taking a look at their future home.

Some of us were reading last night, 'In my father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.' It's home to the Lord's people: and if you are one of the Lord's people here today this is your home, this is your permanency. I am coming to think more of it in that way every day of my life. I think just how fleeting time is. There is no permanency here at all. In a state of nature we feel that everything is going to go on as it was, that it will be the same tomorrow and the next day, but I think the older some of us are growing the more we are realising just what a fleeting thing time is, that permanency is across on the other side of the veil. That's where stability is. That's where the Rock is, although we must emphasise the use we make of time. For if we are to be in Christ to all eternity we must come into Christ when we are in time.

There are two questions before us here. John is being asked, *What are these which are arrayed in white robes?* and *Whence came they?* John is viewing them in Heaven, and he is not able to give the answer to these questions. His vision is as it were clouded in this matter. He had to have it explained to him. We will take the second question first. We will take a look at the redeemed in time first: and then we will notice what they are now, as the redeemed in glory.

WHENCE CAME THEY?

From every part of the earth

They are described here as a great multitude which no man can number, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues. They are not confined to any one race, they are not confined to any one colour. The heathen from China and from Africa, the Eskimos and the Red Indians, they are all to contribute to this great assembly, this great gathering that is before the throne of God and of the Lamb. In that way we are encouraged not to exclude any. Race is no barrier to being of the number, colour is no barrier. Every nation will be represented among the redeemed at the last. They are going to come from every part of the earth because when Christ first gave this gospel to His disciples He commanded them to go into all the earth to preach it. So that every nation has a right to hear the gospel of redeeming grace, and every nation will hear it, in order that, as the Psalm we were singing says, 'Every one of them in Zion appeareth before God' (Ps. 84 : 7). 'Not a hoof shall be left behind.' What a great and glorious wonder that is. There they are at last, when the church is complete, when Christ takes His bride on His arm and presents her without spot or wrinkle or blemish to His Father. He is to say, 'Behold I and the

children which thou hast given me'. Every one of them is to be there. Not one of them is to be missed out; not one of them is to be lost.

A blood-washed people

'They have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.' This identifies them also. This is a blood-washed people. This is a people who have learned the merit of the finished work of Christ. This means that they are sinners. This is a teaching of the word of God, that even the people of God, until they draw their last breath, are tainted with sin. It's only in the final act of sanctification—and how much must be involved in that—that they are made perfect in holiness. What a great and blessed work the Holy Spirit does, as He takes a sinner along the King's Highway to glory, in the process of sanctification. But how much must be involved in the final act of sanctification? I sometimes think of it in this way. If you take Elijah going across, leaving Elisha behind him, the chariot of fire coming down to receive Elijah body and soul: How much must have taken place in that chariot of fire, before Elijah was received through the portals of glory! This is what keeps them low—the consciousness that they are sinners and that they require to be washed day by day. But they are blessed in that their sins have found them out, not on the other side of death, but in time. They have been brought to know their need of washing, but also that the Eternal God had provided a ransom for them, He had provided the Lamb. As it was said to Isaac, 'God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering'. This is surely pointing us to this, that God from all eternity provided Himself a Lamb that they might be redeemed, that they might be there, that this vision would be available to John in Patmos, that the windows of Heaven would be thrown back so that John could look in and see a number that no man can number of the fallen race of man before the Throne of God and of the Lamb. And God was saying from all eternity 'Save him from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom'.

It began early in the history of the world, this washing of their robes and making them white in the blood of the Lamb. We see it in the case of Abel, when he took the choice lamb from the flock, and when he offered that lamb for a burnt offering to God, conscious of his sin. By faith Abel was offering a more acceptable sacrifice to God than Cain. His trust was not in the lamb which he was offering, but Abel was saying of the God whom he was seeking to serve that this God had made a provision, and he was looking through this lamb from his own flock to something which was in the divine purpose, where he could take refuge. Like Abraham who was to follow him, he was

seeing the day of Christ and he was glad. Therefore we say that Abel was washing his robes and making them white in the blood of the Lamb; the Lamb which was slain from the foundation of the world.

Blood had to be shed, for without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. And a great provision was therefore made for the redeemed—a fountain was opened for sin and for uncleanness. Now this is the experience of each of the redeemed in time—they are enabled to lay their sin upon the great sin-bearer. The Lamb and the Blood become more precious to them than any other thing in time. And that's an evidence that you are of the redeemed and that you are going to spend eternity with Christ, that you are to join this great and wonderful throng around the throne. This is where you are going, when death comes to take you away; because, however precious other things are to you, there is nothing more precious to you than the shed blood of Christ and Christ Himself. It is the shed blood first; *there* is the great attraction to the divine Redeemer. And as, day by day, you are enabled by grace to bring yourself anew to the shed blood, you are getting little views here and there of the glory of the Person of Christ. But this is where He shines to you first of all, as the one who can sprinkle you with His own precious blood and in that way wash your sins away. Now is that your confession—that there is none like the Lamb?

Through great tribulation

But when you are brought into the kingdom of Christ, that does not mean to say that life becomes plain-sailing. Each believer, in his own generation, in his own environment, is to know tribulation. We might even say this about the thief on the cross, though he didn't have very long in time. If John's eye was fixed on the penitent thief, as his soul was before the throne of God, he might have said to the elder, 'That one attracts my attention. There is something about that one that is drawing me to him. He stood by my Saviour and he encouraged my Saviour when I forsook Him and fled.' And the elder would have to say, as he had to say about every one of them, 'he is one who came through great tribulation, and he washed his robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb'.

You know in your own experience, that you have had a fiery trial, and in the midst of it you were resting on the Lord, you were walking as if your feet were off the ground. You were strengthened to this extent, that the Lord was Himself carrying you through it, although the tribulation was great. What was that but great grace in exercise?

If you get to the Throne of God and of the Lamb, it will be by way of great tribulation. I am not for a moment suggesting that all the

Lord's people must be imprisoned, or beaten with rods, but I am saying that they are all to know great tribulation. What does it mean for a believer to know great tribulation? You might say, 'I can see that other person being brought a very hard way, and things are coming into their providence which must make their lives almost unbearable; and if it were not for grace they would have gone down long ago. But the Lord is not giving me the bitterness in my cup that He is giving to them.' Well, we mustn't invite bitterness. Let the Lord bring us the way it is His purpose to bring us. But what I am saying is this—they are *all* coming through great tribulation. And how is that? Well, if we take a step towards Heaven, we'll take it by grace. The tribulation takes on the character of the grace that enables the individual to take his steps towards glory. Grace is never anything else but grace. Faith is a heavenly commodity, grace is a heavenly commodity. It is not something that Gabriel manufactured; grace is from the very midst of the Godhead. Grace is out of the very fulness of the Godhead that dwells in Christ Jesus. And if you are not being brought as hard a way as others, do not estimate that your tribulation is not great; but rather estimate it in this way, that to take one step toward Heaven you need grace. To me, it is as if the elder were saying to John, 'Surely the tribulation is taking on the character of the precious commodity that takes the individual through that tribulation'. Let you and I, then, be hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Let us be groaning and weeping our way to Heaven. Grace will take us there, and nothing else will.

Now there is one tribulation that is common to each of the Lord's people, and that is the trial of their faith. It is of the very essence of faith that it must be tried. And it will be tried in a variety of ways. It will be tried in our persons, it will be tried in our environments, it will be tried even in the cause of Christ. And you might even have to know that here as a small congregation, that your faith in respect of a matter will have to be tried. But, be that as it may, you lean heavily on the Lord and you seek to draw out of the fulness that is in Christ to take you through that trial.

WHO ARE THESE?

Arrayed in white robes

What are they now? What do we learn here of the blessed estate of the redeemed in glory? The first thing is that they are arrayed in white robes. This is not a robe which they did not know in time. Because at the moment of their justification the divine Redeemer put that robe on them, which He worked out for them when He came the wilderness

journey Himself. This was required of Him, this was a great part of the scheme of redemption, that as the two natures met in the one glorious Person, and as He came through the valley of His humiliation, He was busy working out a robe of righteousness to clothe His redeemed in every age. And they got this blessed garment at their justification. How many of them tremble lest they are not wearing it. How many of them find it so difficult to see this garment adorning them and covering them, and in that way turning away the anger of God in respect of their sins. But Jacob, for example, sinned, and there is the record of his sin in the Scriptures; yet when God viewed Jacob clothed in the righteousness of Christ He was saying 'I see no iniquity in my Jacob, nor perverseness in mine Israel'. You may say, 'Well, if I could think like that this would be a wonderful Sabbath Day for me—if I could be aware of this in the depths of my heart, that I was clothed in the righteousness of Christ'. Well, whether you are aware of it in that way or not, friend, the Lord's people here today are clothed in this righteousness of Christ, and it's as white on them today as it will be to all eternity. In other words you are justified now, sitting in these seats; you are as white, as to this garment, as you will be to all eternity.

And it is a beautiful garment, in the sight of the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And while you are in time, though you are in a sinful atmosphere, there's not an angel in glory that is better clad than you. You wouldn't exchange your garment, no, not for the garment that clothes angel or archangel, cherubim or seraphim. Because whatever Gabriel is clothed in, whatever angels are clothed in, there's one thing sure—they're not clothed in a garment that was wrought out by the divine Redeemer for poor sinful creatures.

Christ's friends

'Therefore are they before the throne.' Now I think the idea that the elder is making clear to John—and it must have been soul-satisfying to John—is the idea of nearness. How near they are to Christ; they are closer than the angels and the archangels; they are near the Throne. Round about them stand the angels, but next to Christ, next to the throne of God and of the Lamb, here are this number which no man can number. And that's where they should be, because they are Christ's friends. They are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. Gabriel is not an heir of God in the respect that the redeemed are. Here they are, then, and O how near they are to Christ, their Elder Brother! The family of God is close to God. Here God is the Father, Christ is the Elder Brother, and here are the brothers and sisters in

the family, gathered around the Throne. We might put it in this way—they are gathered around the family altar. What a personal, what a pleasant view of Heaven; the closeness, the nearness of the Redeemed to the Three in One God!

The very presence of a redeemed soul in glory must be an act of worship. These very souls, these very individuals, who sought in weakness to worship God in time—now, in perfect strength, they worship without ceasing in glory. And, coming to the nearness again, if we ever worship in time, if we ever really worship in a God-honouring way, it's in association with this—nearness to Christ, closeness to Christ, affinity with Christ. We need Christ close to us in time, if we are going to worship God acceptably, with godly fear. Even here today; if our worship this morning is going to be acceptable to God it is because Christ is here, because Christ is near to us, because He is in His people in the living exercise of their souls.

And it's the same in Heaven. The worship of the redeemed is essentially dependent on nearness and closeness to Christ. And He will not deny them this, because He was saying to His Father, 'I have glorified Thee on the earth' in His own blessed, infinitely gracious and glorious act of worship. And now in Heaven, with His redeemed about Him, He is continuing to glorify His Father. The fact that He is in His highest exaltation does not for a moment prevent the divine Redeemer drawing near to His Father those whom He loved to the end, for whom He gave Himself lovingly in time. He brings them near to His Father, and as it were encourages them to worship His Father in holy sinless perfection. What a joy this must be to a three in one God in Heaven, that this is the exercise of the redeemed now: still close to the Saviour, still proximate to the wounds in His hands and in His side, worshipping God in this way.

'And he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.' It is as if God were saying, 'I now come down to dwell in my family. I now take my place in the midst of this people, whom my Son brought out of the kingdom of darkness for me, because they were my elect from all eternity. I now propose for all eternity to dwell among them, and to have this personal relationship with them.' Perhaps we do not express this as often as we should, that in time the relationship between God in Christ and a sinner saved by grace is a very real and a very personal one. Think of it this way: here is something, and you cannot tell your nearest friend about it, but you can go to Christ with it in secret, and nobody else need know about it. That's how personal the relationship is. Well, it's no less personal in eternity. How near our loved ones are to God, who have already made Heaven of it.

Their time of affliction over

'They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.' In other words, their time of affliction is over for ever. There is no more sorrow, no more sighing, no more mourning over their imperfections. The hot sun will not burn them any more. The church who was speaking in the Song of Solomon is there now, she is home in glory, and she cannot now say what she was saying in time, *I am black but comely*. She will have to say now, *I am white and comely*. There is just a state of perfect felicity. There is perfect holiness and perfect happiness. The Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters. This is glory indeed, and this is happiness indeed—to be near Him and to serve Him and to be fed by Him.

'And God Himself shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.' That's an unusual phrase, isn't it? What does it mean? I may just offer you this as an interpretation of it. The Lord brings His people as individuals, into perplexing situations. And you know, although they are given grace in it, and although they are taken through it, and they are encouraged to go on in strength of God the Lord; they just don't understand. The Saviour was saying to Peter, 'What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter'. In other words, *You shed your tears in the world, Peter*. And you shed your tears, child of God, here, at the mystery of my providential dealings with you, that I took you into this matter and into that matter, and it is making you say, 'If it be so, why am I thus?' We are not to quarrel with the Lord's dealings with us. Let us shed our tears and plead that the Lord would take our tears and put them into His bottle. And is it not as if the Lord is taking out His bottle now, when the soul is home to glory, and He is saying, There's that tear and that tear, and that other tear—do you remember them?

I remember them well.

Well, I now explain to you why I brought you that way, why I made that difficulty lie before you, and put that other bitterness into your cup. That's the reason for it. Now, are you satisfied that I brought you the right way. And the redeemed will answer, 'We are indeed satisfied; it was the right way. Looking back on time from eternity, we would not have it any other way; this was surely the best way for us'.

The Lord knows us, and the Lord knows the way that He is bringing us. But He's not going to leave us ignorant. As Mr Tallach* used

*i.e., the author of *Sermons and Meditations*, reviewed elsewhere in this issue. It was Dr. Gillies who wrote the preface to it.

to say many a time to us, 'Do you think the Lord's people are going to be more ignorant when they get to Heaven than when they are in time? Far from it! The Lord is going to explain these matters to His own. They're near enough to Him. They're close to Him, and He's a personal God to them there. He'll wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Like Christ

Then they're to be like Christ. Perhaps that's why John wasn't just recognising them; the change was so great, even as to their souls. We know not what we shall be. But we know this, and this we say to your comfort here today. Whatever you shall be, you'll be like Christ. You will see Him as He is, and you'll be like Him. Once again we think of that final act of sanctification, the soul getting the final impression of the image of Christ. And that will be true also of the resurrection body on the resurrection morning. There will be this glorious impress. *Made like unto His glorious body* will be true of every one of them, as they rise triumphant from their graves. 'And so shall they ever be with the Lord.'

They shall be like Christ. And this is to the glory of God the Father, that He will look on the redeemed to all eternity, and in each and every one of them He will see the image of His beloved Son. And how satisfied, speaking with all reverence, God the Father will be that day with the scheme of redemption; when He will see all His people conformed in this way to the image of the divine Redeemer. Looking at the redeemed in Heaven, it's not so much the redeemed whom God is seeing; He is seeing Christ there—the perfect reflection of His beloved Son in every one of them.

Now, do you think of Heaven yourself here today? What's your own estimate of Heaven? Is it to be with a departed friend? I was reading that little book by Scougal last night and this morning, *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*. He was saying there that the first part of the felicity of the redeemed was, to be within the embrace of the three in one God. But there was also this in the felicity—their embracing of one another. And my mind was going to what the apostle Paul enjoins on us as a duty here in time, *Greet ye one another with an holy kiss*. You think of the souls of the redeemed, welcoming a soul into glory whom they met with in time, with whom they sought in weakness to worship God in time, and to be for Him. You think of the holiness of the kiss that will be between these souls in Heaven.

Now is it to be with a departed friend—is that Heaven for you? You might say, 'Yes, that's Heaven to me'. Is it to be free of trials and tribulations, to be at rest? And you might say, 'Yes, I hope that's in Heaven for me too'.

But, you know, when you measure it in that way, it's a poor estimate of Heaven. To the gracious soul, this is Heaven—to be with God. To the gracious soul, this is glory—to be with Christ. Certainly grace will take in Heaven all the other things as well; grace will take those who love the Lord with it, grace will take being away for ever from trials and tribulations. But if this isn't in it—being with God and being with Christ—it's not going to be Heaven to the gracious soul. As the apostle was saying, 'to depart, *and to be with Christ*, which is far better'.

The redeemed in glory are singing that song, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain*. But this is not a song they learned when they went in at the gates of Heaven. It's a song that they learned in time. It's a song which you yourself sing. You might not have much of a tune to it, if we might put it in that way. The melody that you make is perhaps not to your satisfaction at all. But you are already singing this song in time, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain'. Angels are with them there, and angels are seeking to sing with them, and no doubt the angels will sing with them to the praise and glory of the Uncreated Angel. But the angels will not be singing this, *Who washed us in his own precious blood*.

Are you looking forward to Heaven? I'm not asking you, 'Are you longing to be in Heaven?' That's another matter. There are those who get that—a gracious desire to depart and to be with Christ. But is this in your Christian experience, while you are in this world, 'It will be good to get to Heaven, it will be good to be with Christ'? It is of the very nature of grace to anticipate glory.

This is where death becomes the friend of the believer. We're not longing to be taken away. But grace is saying, 'There's more to follow, and death is my great friend now'. Christ has so altered death in respect of the believer that it's just as if it were an invitation, *Come this way to glory*.

But we will never make glory of it, friend, unless we get to know Christ in time. We must make our calling and election sure. Then we'll come to where David was when he said,

*But as for me, I thine own face
in righteousness will see;
And with thy likeness, when I wake,
I satisfied shall be.*

Book Reviews

THE THOUGHT OF THE EVANGELICAL LEADERS: Newton, Cecil, Scott, Simeon, etc. Published by Banner of Truth, pp. 535. Price £4.50.

The sub-title of this book reads, *Notes of the Discussions of The Eclectic Society, London, during the years 1798-1814*. The sub-title may give the impression of a book far removed from practical issues in modern times, but to assess the book in this way would be to misjudge a really valuable volume.

The number of issues raised at these meetings between evangelical leaders is vast. The subjects range from pure theology to practical Christianity, from the theoretical to the very down to earth. It is a great privilege to be able, by means of this book, to get the views of these giants on such matters as, *What constitutes Effect in preaching?; What lessons may we learn from the dispensations of providence?; What methods can we use most effectually to promote the knowledge of the gospel among the heathen?; How shall we distinguish between unbelieving fears, and those doubts concerning our state which are salutary and Scriptural?*

The method adopted in these discussions was for one member to propose a question, giving his views on it, and then for the other members to give their views. The experience and talents of these men were vast, and it is no wonder that their debates still make very profitable reading.

THE APOSTLE OF THE NORTH: John Kennedy, pp. 292. Price £3.

MUCKLE KATE AND THE HIGHLAND KITCHEN MAID, pp. 13. Price 20p.

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH, pp. 24. Price 20p.

These are all published by Free Presbyterian Publications, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow G3 6LE.

The Westminster Confession needs no introduction. It is the Confession agreed on by the divines who met at Westminster between 1643 and 1647, and many regard it as the classic statement of reformed doctrine. It is attractively produced in this cheap form with a white, green and gold cover, without proof texts. The publishers draw attention to the fact that they also publish a large print copy of the *Confession* in hardback, with Scripture proofs, along with the *Larger and Shorter Catechisms* and the *Sum of Saving Knowledge*. The large print edition retails at £3.50.

Muckle Kate and *The Highland Kitchen Maid* are tracts, based on

two remarkable conversions, which are issued as one large print leaflet. The substance of these two stories is arresting and edifying, though the language is now distinctly dated.

The Apostle of the North tells the story of the life and labours of the Rev. John Macdonald, D.D., of Ferintosh, whose ministry began in 1805 and ended in 1849. Dr. Macdonald was certainly an extraordinary man, and one whom God greatly used as a preacher. His zeal for the advancement of his Master's kingdom took him up and down the country, and as we follow his steps we see the darkness surrounding a 'moderate' ministry, as well as the light which was here and there among faithful ministers and bright Christians. For those who love the spiritual heritage of the Highlands, or for those who would like to learn about it, this book is reading which we strongly recommend.

THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT: John Douglas, pp. 63. Price 60p (incl. post.). From Mourne Missionary Trust, 'Hor-Kesel', Church Road, Carginagh, Kilkeel, Co. Down, N. Ireland.

This is a brief introduction to a complex subject. The style is direct, and the author makes his criticisms of the charismatic movement in a clear and forthright way.

The subject is a serious one, and has perplexed many. We cannot deal with it here, though for those who would wish to pursue it we mention the following: *What About Tongue-Speaking?*, A. A. Hoekema (Paternoster Press); *Signs of the Apostles*, Walter Chantry (Banner of Truth); *The Modern Tongues Movement*, R. G. Gromacki (Presby. and Ref.); *Counterfeit Miracles*, B. B. Warfield (Banner of Truth); *Banner of Truth Magazine*, October, 1970 (Art. by Donald Macleod).

We agree with the basic position adopted in this book, though we wonder if the author's zeal carries him at times too far. On p. 26, for example, he states categorically that 'the tongues referred to in the word of God are foreign languages'. He maintains this in reference to the tongue-speaking at Corinth on the basis of 1 Cor. 14 : 23. A more cautious view is expressed by Hoekema: 'It seems difficult, if not impossible, to make a final judgment on this matter' (*What About Tongue-Speaking?* p. 83).

In generally recommending this booklet, we would make two points about the subject with which it deals. Firstly, we should not necessarily judge individuals by the isolated fact of their involvement in a movement which, as a movement, we judge to be unscriptural. The second point is one of self-criticism. Does misunderstanding of the truth not get the chance to take root when the church fails to present that part

of the truth with due weight? And does God allow such errors to grow for the purpose of drawing the attention of the church as a whole to a part of the truth which she has neglected till then? Perhaps it is because the church is not sufficiently living in the power of the Spirit that God is forcing her to pay more attention to this whole area of doctrine by means of the charismatic movement. J.T.

SERMONS AND MEDITATIONS: by the Rev. James A. Tallach, pp. 110. Price 85p, by post £1, obtainable from The Clinton Bookshop, 13 Mill Street, Dingwall, Ross-shire.

Having welcomed this small book in review on its first appearance, I am very glad to welcome a new edition. It will be valued by Mr. Tallach's former acquaintances who knew the strength of his ministry in Kames and Stornoway, and the many places he served earlier—Glasgow, Canada, London.

Mr. Tallach's theology was learned from the Bible under the tutelage of the worthy Rev. Donald Beaton, minister of the F.P. Church at Oban, at the time he was preparing his excellent little book, *Foundation Truths of the Reformed Faith*.

Our present book consists of ten sermons and eight meditations, ranging over the whole years of his service. What Beaton taught as pure theology is here worked out as warm-hearted truths of Christian experience. Most of the illustrations are taken from Holy Scripture, but references peep out from Bunyan, Scottish Church history, and the missionary witness in Africa, of which he was a warm supporter.

A wide circulation of this book would ensure a good understanding of the foundation truths of the Gospel which are these days so often surrounded by a haze of doubt. It is of course an added recommendation that the author was the father of our present Editor.

FACING SUFFERING: A Christian Response, by Herbert M. Carson. Evangelical Press, pp. 134. £1.90.

It is a privilege to review a new book by our previous Editor. This is a study of the problem of suffering. Its course is to examine the problem in general, then to give practical answers from various Christian standpoints, and finally to look at various particular applications.

First, then, *Why does God allow it?* Second, *God's love, sympathy and purpose*. Third, to consider some of the present-day situations, as *Bereavement, Unhappy Marriage, Mental and Physical Handicaps, Depression*, etc.

Each section concludes with a specially valuable Biblical Case History, in order, *Job, Paul, and Jeremiah*, which are remarkably help-

ful studies of Christian experience in their own right. It would help every Christian minister to learn the lessons that God taught Paul through his suffering! The study of Jeremiah is particularly for those who have been in a state of spiritual desolation.

*Is my gloom, after all,
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?*

The closing chapter outlines the Christian experience of *Hope, Prayer, Patience and Praise* in time of trouble.

This is a book for the serious reader. It will be a blessing to those who can think through the message of its pages, and will stimulate understanding of the Christian witness. W. J. PARKER.

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