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Editorial

Perhaps we sometimes forget that Solomon *asked* for wisdom. He had been called in providence to succeed his father David on the throne of Israel, and he felt his insufficiency. But he did not simply sit at home and mope about it; he went to Gibeon where God's tabernacle was. And every one of the thousand sacrifices which Solomon offered there was an urgent plea to the God of heaven for help. 'In that night did God appear unto Solomon, and said unto him *Ask what I shall give thee.*'

He could have asked for wealth, or the lives of his enemies, hoping that the granting of these would guarantee his deliverance from all his needs and dangers. But he did not ask for these. In the marginal rendering of 1 Kings 3 : 9, he asked for a *hearing heart*. He asked for a hearing heart that, when he would feel his ignorance, he might be open to receive wisdom from above; that, when he would feel his danger, he might be guided by the God with whom his safety lay.

Solomon knew that he would have to guide his people on, say, military and economic affairs. But he realised that, in facing all manner of problems, the supreme matter was to have God's help and guidance. *The principal part of wisdom is the fear of the Lord*, as he was afterwards to write in Proverbs.

What blessings will we have, if we are taught to look to God from day to day, as Solomon was? 'Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble. When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet . . . For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.'

More and more he learned it. There was nothing from outside himself which could raise him above the level of his daily needs. Nor was wisdom itself a power which, in some magical way, provided the answer. It was a daily dying to self, and living to God. It was an ongoing discarding of what was carnal, a reaching out to what was heavenly, resting in the grace of God. It was a long road which stretched out before him when he asked, at the outset of his reign, 'Give me now wisdom'. But it was good for himself and for his people that he started on it.

And for those of us who, today, also bear responsibility for the affairs of the kingdom of Christ, it will be good for us and for our people if we remember:

If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.

Cunningham on Calvin and Beza

The following article is based on the chapter entitled *Calvin and Beza*, which appears in the book by William Cunningham *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*. This book, first published in 1862, was reprinted by the Banner of Truth Trust in 1967, and another reprint has just been issued (pp 616, price £5).

The opening paragraph of the chapter on Calvin and Beza gives a summary of the ground covered in earlier chapters, and in the second paragraph Cunningham goes on to give some details about Beza.

We have given some account of the doctrine promulgated, and of the influence exerted upon important theological questions, by the leading Reformers,—Luther, Zwingle, and Calvin,—keeping in view chiefly the object of furnishing materials for the formation of correct opinions in regard to those aspects of their doctrines, character, and influence, which have been made subjects of controversial discussion in more modern times. We have also given a view of the character and theological position of Melancthon, chiefly because of the influence he seems to have exerted in leading the Lutheran churches to abandon the Calvinism of their master, and even contributing eventually to the spread of Arminianism among the Reformed churches,—and because of the connection alleged to exist, historically and argumentatively, between his views and those of the Church of England. The only other man among the Reformers whom we propose to bring under the notice of our readers is Beza. Beza stood in a relation to Calvin very similar in some respects to that in which Melancthon stood to Luther; and there is this farther point of resemblance between him and the Preceptor of Germany, that they were the two great scholars of the Reformation, in the more limited sense in which that word is commonly employed,—that is, they possessed a thorough and critical knowledge of the classical writers of Greece and Rome, they had a great talent and predilection for philological expositions and discussions, and they exhibited, in an eminent degree, that cultivation and refinement both of thought and style, which a thorough acquaintance with classical literature is so well fitted to produce.

Beza was, during the latter years of Calvin's life, most intimately associated with him. He was one of the very ablest defenders of

Calvin's system of theology. He succeeded to the high position which Calvin had long held, not only in Geneva, but in the Protestant world; and was, for a period of above forty years after Calvin's death, the most prominent and influential theologian in the Reformed, as distinguished from the Lutheran, Church. He was thirty years of age before he openly and thoroughly abjured the Church of Rome,—a step which involved exile from his native country, and the sacrifice both of a handsome private patrimony and lucrative ecclesiastical benefices. But after joining the Reformed church, and settling in Switzerland, first at Lausanne, and then at Geneva, he was spared, in providence, for considerably more than half a century in the full vigour of his powers; and during this long period he was enabled, by the excellence of his character, the strength of his intellect, the extent of his erudition and literary acquirements, and by his strenuous and unwearied exertions, to confer the most important benefits upon the Church of Christ and the cause of Protestant truth.

The reason why we are drawing attention to Cunningham's views on some aspects of the relationship between Calvin and Beza is that, in recent years, some publicity has been given to the claim that, in certain areas, the views of Calvin and Beza diverged widely. In drawing attention to the views of Cunningham on this matter, we do not hold up this eminent theologian as the supreme authority on the question. But at least readers will know that the claims being made now have been discussed very thoroughly and fairly in the past, and that, in order to have a balanced introduction to present discussions, they could do a lot worse than read Cunningham's book.

Cunningham explains the situation in which Beza found himself during the latter half of the 16th century — the widening controversy between the Reformed and Lutheran churches — and goes on to say,

The fuller discussion which this important subject underwent after Calvin's death led, as controversy usually does when conducted by men of ability, to a more minute and precise exposition of some of the topics involved in it. And it has been often alleged that Beza, in his very able discussions of this subject, carried his views upon some points farther than Calvin himself did, so that he has been described as being *Calvino Calvinior*. We are not prepared to deny altogether the truth of this allegation; but we are persuaded there is less ground for it than is sometimes supposed, and that the points of alleged difference between them in matters of doctrine, respect chiefly topics on which Calvin was not led to give any very formal or explicit deliverance, because they were not at the

time subjects of discussion, or indeed ever present to his thoughts.

The principal subjects in regard to which the allegation referred to has been made, are the question controverted between the sublapsarians and the supralapsarians about the order of the divine decrees in their bearing upon the fall of the human race,—the imputation of Adam's first sin to his posterity,—the extent of the atonement,—and the nature and import of justification. It may not be uninteresting to explain how the matter stands as to the views of Calvin and Beza respectively upon these important subjects. We mean to devote to this matter the principal portion of our present discussion; and we think it will appear, from the survey, that there is really no very material difference between the theology of Calvin and of Beza, any apparent discrepancy arising chiefly from the usual tendency of enlarged controversial discussion to produce a greater amount of exactness and precision in details; while it may also appear that Beza, by his very able exposition and defence of the doctrines of Calvin, has rendered important services to the cause of scriptural theology and Protestant truth, and has to some extent anticipated that exactness and precision with respect to definitions and distinctions, which are characteristic of the great systematic divines, especially the Dutch and Swiss theological professors, of the seventeenth century.

Further on (p.358) Cunningham continues,

The chief points, as we have mentioned, on which it has been alleged, that Calvin and Beza differed in their theological sentiments, and that Beza was more Calvinistic than Calvin, are the order of the divine decrees in their bearing upon the fall as controverted between the Sublapsarians and the Supralapsarians,—the imputation of Adam's first sin to his posterity,—the extent of the atonement,—and the nature and import of justification.

The point of particular interest at the moment, on which it is alleged that Calvin's followers differed from Calvin, is the third one mentioned by Cunningham — the extent of the atonement. From Cunningham's introduction to this section (p.395) it is clear that allegations on this point were of long standing when he wrote. The impression, then, that the pressing of these assertions in recent years is a novel thing is more than a little misleading. Cunningham wrote in 1862,

It has been contended very frequently, and very confidently, that Calvin did not sanction the views which have been generally held by

Calvinistic divines, in regard to the extent of the atonement,—that he did not believe in the doctrine of particular redemption, that is, that Christ did not die for all men, but only for the elect, for those who are actually saved,—but that, on the contrary, he asserted a universal, unlimited, or indefinite atonement. Amyraut, in defending his doctrine of universal atonement in combination with Calvinistic views upon other points, appealed confidently to the authority of Calvin; and, indeed, he wrote a treatise entitled, “*Eschantillon de la Doctrine de Calvin touchant la Prædestination,*” chiefly for the purpose of showing that Calvin supported his views about the extent of the atonement, and was in all respects a very moderate Calvinist. Daillee, in his “*Apologia pro duabus Synodis,*” which is a very elaborate defence, in reply to Spanheim, of Amyraut’s views about universal grace and universal atonement, fills above forty pages with extracts from Calvin as testimonies in his favour. Indeed, the whole of the last portion of this work of Daillee, consisting of nearly five hundred pages, is occupied with extracts, produced as testimonies in favour of universal grace and universal atonement, from almost every eminent writer, from Clemens Romanus down to the middle of the seventeenth century; and we doubt if the whole history of theological controversy furnishes a stronger case of the adduction of irrelevant and inconclusive materials.

Cunningham goes on to debate the question at issue, and admits that he had only read one short passage in Calvin’s writings which could be taken as formally and explicitly denying an unlimited atonement. He does not place undue emphasis on this passage because of its brevity, but having gone on to discuss the matter from other points of view he states (p.398),

There is not, then, we are persuaded, satisfactory evidence that Calvin held the doctrine of a universal, unlimited, or indefinite atonement. And, moreover, we consider ourselves warranted in asserting, that there is sufficient evidence that he did *not* hold this doctrine; though on the grounds formerly explained, and with the one exception already adverted to, it is not evidence which bears directly and immediately upon this precise point. The evidence of this position is derived chiefly from the two following considerations.

1st. Calvin consistently, unhesitatingly, and explicitly denied the doctrine of God’s universal grace and love to all men,—that is, *omnibus et singulis*, to each and every man,—as implying in some

sense a desire or purpose or intention to save them all; and with this universal grace or love to all men the doctrine of a universal or unlimited atonement, in the nature of the case, and in the convictions and admissions of all its supporters, stands inseparably connected. That Calvin denied the doctrine of God's universal grace or love to all men, as implying some desire or intention of saving them all, and some provision directed to that object, is too evident to any one who has read his writings, to admit of doubt or to require proof . . .

2d. The other consideration to which we referred, as affording some positive evidence, though not direct and explicit, that Calvin did not hold the doctrine of a universal atonement, is this,—that he has interpreted some of the principal texts on which the advocates of that doctrine rest it, in such a way as to deprive them of all capacity of serving the purpose to which its supporters commonly apply them. If this position can be established, it will furnish something more than a presumption, and will almost amount to a proof, that he did not hold the doctrine in question.

That this point can in fact be established, we believe readers will see when they read Calvin's comments on 1st Tim. 2:4 and 1st John 2:2. Cunningham gives these quotations in Latin, but here we quote at slightly greater length, from the English translation used in the Saint Andrew Press edition.

1st Tim. 2:4 *Whō will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

‘. . . the apostle's meaning here is simply that no nation of the earth and no rank of society is excluded from salvation, since God wills to offer the Gospel to all without exception. Since the preaching of the Gospel brings life, he rightly concludes that God regards all men as being equally worthy to share in salvation. But he is speaking of classes and not of individuals and his only concern is to include princes and foreign nations in this number . . .’

1st John 2:2 *And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.*

‘. . . here the question may be asked as to how the sins of the whole world have been expiated. I pass over the dreams of fanatics, who make this a reason to extend salvation to all the reprobate and even to Satan himself. Such a monstrous idea is not worth refuting. Those who want to avoid this absurdity have said that Christ suffered sufficiently for the whole world but effectively only for the elect. This solution has commonly prevailed in the schools. Although I allow the

Concluded after part 1 of News & Notes.

The Reign of the Risen Son

H. P. WOTTON

A commentary on the hymn by Isaac Watts:

'Jesus shall reign where'er the sun'

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun

Doth his successive journeys run;

His Kingdom stretch from shore to shore,

Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

Jesus reigns now. We must not forget this lest we get things out of perspective. He reigns and 'He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet'. The Kingdoms of this world *shall* 'become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever'.

The sun runs its course from day to day, giving light and heat to the earth in differing degrees and at different times. It rises in the East. The Sun of Righteousness also rose in the East when He was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King. Since that day 'the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ' has shone into many a heart, warming and softening that naturally hard and desert place, causing it to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit—the pleasant fruit of faith and love and joy and meekness, of humility and of temperance.

'The people which sat in darkness saw great light.' Many responded to it and opened wide the windows of their souls to let the Light shine in. Lords other than the Lord Jesus had had dominion over them, for everyone is governed by someone or something—maybe by my lord Avarice, by my lord Pride, by my lord Self, or by some other tyrant. But when the Lord Jesus comes in He delivers His people from these, for whom the Lord makes free is free indeed.

*For Him shall endless prayers be made,
And praises throng to crown His head;
His Name, like sweet perfume, shall rise
With every morning sacrifice.*

We may be tempted to think that the hymn-writer should have written 'To Him' instead of 'For Him' in the first line of this verse. But this is no mistake. Every prayer offered in the Name of Jesus is in the interest of His Kingdom; and so it is *for Him*. Endless prayer is made that 'He shall see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied' in the final triumph and completion of His church.

'The head that once was crowned with thorns is crowned with glory, now', and though the praises of the redeemed can add nothing to His essential glory, they do sound forth the praise of Him who is worthy, and let all who come within hearing know who is the 'blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords'; even the Lamb that was slain, who is now in the midst of the throne.

In the Song of Solomon we read that 'Thy name is as ointment poured forth'. There is wonderful sweetness in the Name of Jesus for the redeemed, and as we utter in faith and love this wonderful Name, our prayers rise up to the Father acceptable and well-pleasing in His sight.

*People and realms of every tongue
Dwell on His love with sweetest song;
And infant voices shall proclaim
Their early blessings on His Name.*

Because of language difficulties, missionaries have sometimes found it hard to convey the gospel to the people to whom they have been sent. In one particular tongue no word could be found to express the word *love*. Even among people where the word *love* is used, its real meaning is not always understood.

But when 'the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost', we will be in no doubt about the fact, though we may have nothing to express it adequately in our language. The boy who eats the pudding knows what it is even though he may not be able to describe it. And as Billy Bray, the Cornish miner, said of joy: 'it is better felt than telt'.

When Issac Watts says that 'People and realms of every tongue dwell on His love with sweetest song', he is not thinking only of singers; for many have sung of Christ's love who have never known what it is. He is thinking of those who have the love of Christ in their hearts, for it is from the heart that the sweetest song emanates.

Jesus said, 'Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto Me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven'. Those who deny children the right to accept His invitation to come to Him, their greatest Friend, do them the greatest possible injury. But Jesus knows how to remove all barriers, and 'infant voices *shall* proclaim their early blessings on His Name'.

*Blessings abound where'er He reigns;
The prisoner leaps to lose his chains,
The weary find eternal rest,
And all the sons of want are blest.*

The Israelities were to possess a land flowing with milk and honey—a vivid image of a country abounding with temporal riches of all kinds. The reigns of the kings David and Solomon were times of great prosperity for the people of God, when blessings abounded on every hand. But the blessing of those days can hardly be compared with those received in our gospel day when Christ becomes Lord in the hearts of many. For these blessings are not of a temporal, but of an eternal, nature. The prisoner bound with the strong bonds of sin that none but Jesus can break, now leaps to lose his chains, and his liberty is real and eternal.

Many spend their lives working hard at what is fated to failure from the beginning. But when the heart's door is opened for the Lord Jesus it is opened to a life of purpose. And so the weary find rest; not in sleep, but in the rest of mind that comes to those who love and serve the divine Lover, who has loved them and given Himself for them.

'The sons of want' are the poor in spirit who see themselves to be bankrupt and destitute of all spiritual good. These are they of whom the Lord Jesus said, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven'.

*Where He displays His healing power,
Death and the curse are known no more;
In Him the tribes of Adam boast
More blessings than their father lost.*

The Bible seems to speak of the first Adam and of the second Adam as though there were no other men than these. There is a sense in which this is so, for they are representative men. The whole human race (except the second Adam) was in the first, and naturally proceeds from him.

When he fell from his original innocence, his nature became spiritually and morally corrupt; and just as the fruit is of the nature of the tree, so Adam's offspring come into the world with the nature of their fallen father. From him we inherit death and the curse.

But eternal life and the removal of the curse came through the Lord Jesus. By spiritual new birth we become living members of a new-born race of which Christ, the second Adam, is the Head. In Him is no death, but life; in Him no curse, but blessing. Death is but a door by which the believer enters his Father's house.

For the Christian the curse is now a blessing for 'all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose'. In Christ indeed 'the tribes of Adam boast more blessings than their father lost'.

Concluded after The Holy Spirit and Charismatic Gifts.

Revival Scenes

The following are extracts taken from the book by Joseph Tracy, 'The Great Awakening: A history of the revival of religion in the time of Edwards and Whitefield'. This edifying and informative book was republished by The Banner of Truth Trust in 1976.

Obviously the ministry of Edwards features prominently in Tracey's account of these revivals. Here is an extract from Edwards' personal narrative (p. 214).

Sometimes, only mentioning a single word, caused my heart to burn within me; or only seeing the name of Christ, or the name of some attribute of God. The sweetest joys and delights I have experienced have not been those that have arisen from the hope of my own good estate; but in the direct view of the glorious things of the gospel. When I enjoy this sweetness, it seems to carry me above the thoughts of my own estate. It seems, at such times, a loss that I cannot bear, to take off my eye from the glorious pleasant object I behold without me, to turn my eye in upon myself, and my own good estate.

Once, as I rode out in the woods for my health, in 1737, having alighted from my horse in a retired place, as my manner commonly has been, to walk for divine contemplation and prayer, I had a view, that for me was extraordinary, of the glory of the Son of God, as mediator between God and man, and his wonderful, great, full, pure and sweet grace and love, and meek and gentle condescension. This grace, that appeared so calm and sweet, appeared also great above the heavens. The person of Christ appeared ineffably excellent, with an excellency great enough to swallow up all thought and conception; which continued, as near as I can judge, about an hour; which kept me the greater part of the time in a flood of tears, weeping aloud. I felt an ardency of soul to be, what I know not how otherwise to express, emptied and annihilated; to lie in the dust, and to be full of Christ alone; to love him with a holy and pure love; to trust in him: to live upon him; to serve and follow him; and to be perfectly sanctified and made pure, with a divine and heavenly purity. I have several other times had views very much of the same nature, and which have had the same effects.

On p. 204 we find some references to Edwards in the private journal of the Rev. Ebenezer Parkman. The year is 1742.

January 28. There being at Leicester very considerable awakenings among some of the people, they set apart this day for fasting

and prayer, for obtaining a plentiful effusion of the Holy Spirit upon them; and they having sent for me to assist on that occasion, I went up. Mr. Edwards of Northampton, was there, and preached a very awakening sermon on Rom. 9 : 22—'Vessels of wrath'. I preached in the afternoon on Zech. 12 : 10. In the evening, Mr. Hall preached on Isa. 54 : 13. N.B. Some stirrings.

January 29. Mr. Edwards preached on John 12 : 23, a peculiarly moving and useful sermon. May God bless it to me, to draw my heart effectually to Jesus Christ, by his love, by his bitter and ignominious sufferings on the cross for me! I prevailed on Mr. Edwards, before we went out of the pulpit, to come by divine leave next week to Westborough.

January 31. I cannot help remarking what a wonderful time was now appearing; for there are great movings upon the hearts of the people of the country, in one part thereof and another O! that I and mine might be stirred up earnestly and seasonably to put in for a share! The Lord grant us this mercy, and let us not be left behind!

February 1. It was a rainy day, but I rode to Grafton and Sutton. Mr. Edwards was come from Leicester. Mr. Edwards preached to a large assembly on Ps. 18 : 25. At evening in a very rainy, stormy time, I preached to a considerable assembly on Ps. 68 : 8. Religion has of late been very much revived in Sutton, and there is a general concern about their souls.

Another diary, from which extracts appear on p. 201 ff, is that of the Rev. Eleazer Wheelock. Again we have a personal account, by a mature minister, of revival scences.

October 21 1741. Had but little sleep. Arose before day. Rode with Mr. Coit and my friends to Voluntown. Courteously received and entertained by Mr. Dorrance. Went to meeting at ten. Heard Mr. Gideon Mills preach well. Preached after him. There is a great work in this town; but more of the footsteps of Satan than in any place I have yet been in: the zeal of some too furious: they tell of many visions, revelations, and many strong impressions upon the imagination. They have had much of God in many of their meetings, and his great power has been much seen, and many hopefully converted. Satan is using many artful wiles to put a stop to the work of God in this place. Good Lord, let him be confounded. Let his mischiefs fall upon his own head. At their conference at night, I mentioned some of these devices of Satan, which I apprehend they are in danger of, and heard the accounts of a number of new converts.

October 22. Rose this morning refreshed. A pleasant day; found

my soul stretching after God. The Lord has this day in some measure fulfilled my early desires. Preached twice with enlargement, by Mr. Smitu's barn, to great assemblies. Many cried out; many stood trembling; the whole assembly very solemn, and much affection; four or five converted. One woman, who came from Kingston against a great deal of opposition on purpose to hear me, came out clear and went away rejoicing in God, longing to have her husband and others taste and see with her.

October 23. Rose at three; somewhat indisposed. Dear Lord, I commit my body, my soul, my life, health, and all to thee. Use me as thou wilt, only let me glorify thee, and seek that as my last end. Left Voluntown about seven, accompanied by a great number of wounded and comforted. Came to Mr. Cooper's of Scituate, in the county of Providence. Preached to a considerable assembly. I am always thronged with company, and want time to talk with the tenth part of those who desire to converse with me. Dined, and rode with a great number of Voluntown people to Captain Angel's. Preached there. The old man and woman violently opposed; called me antichrist, etc. Came about eight to Mr. Henry's, seven miles from Providence.

October 24. Rose early, prayed and sang. Discoursed with some wounded and afterwards exhorted a company, who came in. Sung a hymn, prayed, and rode with a great company of Voluntown people and others to Providence. About two miles from Providence, met Mr. Knight and another man, who came out to meet us. His first salutation was, God bless you, my dear brother. Went to his house. Rev. Mr. Cotton came, invited me to preach; felt freedom and sweetness in my soul.

October 25. Rode with Mr. Knight into town in his calash. Preached three sermons, 2 Cor. 13 : 5; Mark 1 : 2; Luke 10 : Clt. O, the dreadful ignorance and wickedness of these parts! O, what a burthen dear Mr. Cotton has daily to bear.

October 26. Rode with Mr. Cotton back seven miles to Mr. Bennet's: preached at one o'clock to a numerous and affected assembly. One converted. Returned with a great number to Providence. Preached to a full assembly: many scoffers present: one man hired for twenty shillings to come into the meeting house and fall down; which he did, and made great disturbance; ordered all who had a real concern for the salvation of their souls, to follow me to Mr. Cotton's, in order to have a conference with them. A considerable number came, who seemed considerably moved.

October 29. Came with Mr. Cotton and many others to Attleborough; very courteously received by Mr. Wells. Heard Mr. Turner, of Rehoboth; preached after him; a great deal of affection and sobbing through the whole assembly; had great enlargement. Exhorted in the evening at Mr. Wells'. (Quere, Weld's?)

October 30. Had a great sense of my own badness and unworthiness, of what a cursed heart I have. O, Lord, let me see and know more of it. Rode with Mr. Wells and many others to Norton; kindly received by Mr. Avery. Preached to a full assembly; much affection and sobbing through the whole assembly. Rode to Raynham with Mr. Wales and brother Byram.

November 1. Preached in the forenoon to a full assembly; one cried out, many affected. Advised those who belonged to the assembly, not to follow me to Taunton, but stay and hear their own preacher. Went with Brother Byram to Taunton; preached there. One or two cried out. Appointed another meeting in the evening. I believed thirty cried out. Almost all the negroes in town wounded; three or four converted. A great work in the town. Dear brother Crocker, a true servant of Jesus Christ, preaches here upon probation. I was forced to break off my sermon before it was done, the outcry was so great; continued the meeting till 10 or 11 o'clock.

A VIEW OF CHRIST'S GLORY

“Once as I rode out into the woods for my health, having alighted from my horse in a retired place, as my manner commonly has been, to walk for divine contemplation and prayer, I had a view, that for me was extraordinary, of the glory of the Son of God, as Mediator between God and man, and His wonderful, great, full, pure, and sweet grace and love, and meek gentle condescension. This grace that appeared so calm and sweet, appeared also great above the heavens. The person of Christ appeared also ineffably excellent with an excellency great enough to swallow up all thought and conception—which continued as near as I can judge about an hour, which kept me the greater part of the time in a flood of tears, and weeping aloud. I felt an ardency of soul to be, what I know not otherwise how to express, emptied and annihilated, to lie in the dust, and to be full of Christ alone; to love Him with a holy and pure love; to trust in Him; to live upon Him; to serve and follow Him; and to be perfectly sanctified and made pure, with a divine and heavenly purity. I have several other times had views very much of the same nature, and which have had the same effects.

—Jonathan Edwards.

The Narrow Life

DAVID L. WRIGHT

Enter ye in at the strait gate; . . . because strait is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it —Matthew 7 : 13 and 14.

A missionary on furlough was returning home by ship. As the days passed he joined in the deck games, saw the occasional television show and talked freely with passengers and crew alike. Then, at the captain's request, he conducted public worship on the Lord's Day. Afterwards another passenger said to him, "I would never have dreamed you were a missionary. You are so like us!" That remark was intended as a compliment. It surprises people to find that Christians, be they missionaries, ministers, office-bearers, or leaders of organisations, are not stiff and unbending but have a keener sense of fun and enjoyment than that with which they are usually credited.

At the same time the comment "You are so like us" has its dangers. Some Christians, who are afraid of being labelled narrow-minded, become so like non-Christians in their thinking and ways that there is little to distinguish them. Apart from their attendance at Public Worship one would never dream from their conduct and bearing during the week that they were Christians at all. Of course the Christian way of life liberates from petty restraints and Pharisaical gloominess. But to accommodate the broad way of the world for fear of being called narrow-minded is different altogether.

To do so is to miss out on the distinctive feature of Christianity. And that is not "You are so like us" but "You are so like Christ!" Why else did Christ designate His way of life as narrow, except to dispel our fears and to encourage us to follow on after Himself? And, despite our lamentable shortcomings, that is surely our aim in worship this morning.

Straight Gate

To become like Christ, however, involves inevitable separation. The Christian has to turn aside from the wide gate of the world, to go against the stream of popular opinion, to stand apart from the crowd. Naturally, we all want to dodge going through the strait gate. No one likes to be different, to be considered odd because he does not conform.

Maybe as a child you enjoyed wearing the kilt, our national costume. But when teased about it at school and Sunday School, you wanted to disown it Only gentle coaxing made you continue, despite

the smirks of class-mates. In a profounder sense it takes peculiar courage to wear the garb of a Christian in church, home, work and community. Yet if we are to follow the Lord, we must abide by what we believe and not hide ourselves among the majority. We must recognise our individual accountability, get out from the easy thinking of the world and deliberately line up with Christ.

But separation always includes the straitness of suffering. Any scholar intent on his highers, any student on his degree, any graduate on his research has to count the cost. So in a deeper sense has the Christian. It is a personal matter which varies with the individual but none the less is very real.

Some encounter suspicion and criticism. Others receive the cold shoulder and are black-listed. A few are persecuted and cast out by their families. Jesus Himself was "despised and rejected of men" and warned His followers to expect similar treatment. "A man's foes shall be they of his own household," He said. Unlike the wide gate which has room for families, congregations and communities, the strait gate admits individuals only one by one. This is hard for relatives, friends, work-mates to accept and hard for the individual Christian to bear. Hurt because he goes their broad way no longer and infuriated because he has turned to Christ, they tend to hit out at what they fail to understand. "Father forgive them", prayed Jesus, "for they know not what they do." As the apostle reminds us, "all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution," ministers of the gospel included.

And not the least part of a Christian's sufferings is the exclusion of the self life. While it is galling to be dealt with harshly by others, self abasement is even more humiliating. No one likes to be scaled down to size. We all have such a good opinion of ourselves. And the way of the world helps to ferment these vain thoughts. But Jesus said, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." To deny oneself is not merely to refrain from certain pleasures during Lent. It is to assent to the fact that the sin nature has been crucified, that in Christ we have died to the way of self.

Obviously the crossing out of self, the dying daily to our unregenerate nature, will be painful to our pride. It is even more humiliating than the confession of our sins and their removal beneath the cleansing blood of Christ. But if we are to be born from above with His sinless nature, then our sinful self must be crucified. That is to reverse the trend of social climbing by self-aggrandisement, to substitute Christ's new nature for self-expression. People want to see

Christ, not us you know. In any event the gate is too strait to admit two lives, that of Christ and self. Instead our fallen Adamic nature has to be left outside the city wall, slain on the cross and buried in the tomb, in order that the risen Christ in us may go forward.

Now some of you may feel unsympathetic towards this narrow presentation of the Gospel. That is quite understandable. The severity of the way is often overlooked. It was so in the days of the New Testament when many followers went back at the mention of the Cross. "Will you also go away?" asks Jesus. Dare we disappoint Him? Good were it for us to reply with Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" Besides, the severity of the way helps to keep us close to Him, so that his narrowness is reflected in our narrowness. And this is in order that His way of life may be ours. Liberated from the tyranny of self and self interest, we pursue the course which He has marked out. Created anew, we follow the leading of His holy nature.

Trace the divine stoop of that nature from the self-emptying in glory to the birth at Bethlehem and the sharing of our humanity during the thirty silent years in Nazareth — strait is the gate. Picture the commencement of Jesus' ministry, with subsequent scheming by enemies, demonic and human — narrow is the way. Keep watch as He prays in Gethsemane, stands in the judgment hall, hangs on the cross and is buried in the sepulchre — straight is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto what? The death of the Gospel? No, ten thousand times no! Remember Easter and the Enthronement. Strait is the gate and narrow is the way, that leadeth *unto life* — our life, eternal, abundant, dynamic. True our way in Christ narrows down to a cross. But it broadens out into the exultant life of God.

Compare that life with what the world has to offer. There are no spot checks along its cul-de-sacs, no restraints on self expression or illicit desires. How free and broad it seems! In America there is a street called Broadway. Glamourised by movie, camera and theatrical spectacular, it represents supposedly the good life. That life, if we believe everything we see and hear and read, is associated with all the best people. But all the best people, who are Christians, do not go in for it. They have found it void of purpose and wholly unsatisfying. It is just an empty show, a make-believe which cannot compete with the narrow way. The broad way narrows down until it fades out, while the narrow way broadens out into God.

During the war there were posters which asked, "Is your journey really necessary?" Would that people asked themselves that question in a spiritual sense. The Christian knows where he is going, why he is

going and with Whom he is going. But the non-Christian lacks such assurance. Indeed he keeps postponing consideration of his spiritual time-table. Uncertain of his journey through this present passing world, he is equally unsure of his destination in the next world. Come illness, old age, the angel of death and his confusion is pathetic to behold. Relatives may try to comfort. "It's all right," they say. But it is not all right. He knows that he is not right with God. How could he be, having travelled on the wrong road all his days? Christ alone is the narrow way into God's presence, whereas the broad way peters out in misery and destruction. "No man," He said "cometh unto the Father, but by Me." There is no back door into God's Presence.

Few and many

Thus the Christian is something of a specialist. In Christ he knows his way into God's holy presence. In this respect he is like other specialists whose interests narrow down to their particular study. He may not have attended university but, as a graduate of Calvary, his course is of the highest importance. So far from fearing the label — "narrow-minded" — in the Christian sense, he fears lest he is not narrow enough. There is no other approach that yields life in Christ except by specialisation, by bending one's ransomed powers to this supreme objective.

That is why there are few that find it. They are not desperate enough to search for the gate, not earnest enough to pray for admittance, not desirous enough to belong to Christ. "Strive to enter in", says Luke in the parallel passage. The word used there for "strive" means "agonize" which is translated in Colossians as "labouring together" and in first Timothy as "fight". Such expressions denote formidable obstacles to be surmounted. But the earnest seeker after Christ will not be deterred by worldly companions or natural impediments of procrastination and popularity. "The Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force," not in the sense of trampling over others to grasp at earth's prizes, but rather in the sense of zealous perseverance that refuses to be daunted and breaks through all hindrances to Christ. Rest assured, any who go all out will find the gate open and the way made clear. And though the individuals concerned are fewer than the many who enter the wide gate, they still add up to a multitude which no man can number. What an inducement to specialise, to foot it bravely, to follow on after the Lord.

You are familiar with the phrase 'room at the top'. Although there is room for all, few are found there. The vast majority prefer an easier

lot, self to Christ, the world to God. The narrow way up to godliness is not for them. But see what they are missing. Ascend the heights of fellowship is Christ's invitation. "Come and live with Me", He beckons in effect, "come up to My Level, walk with Me, become like Me". For the blessedness of the Christian is to share in the life that God lives, a life of love and caring for others, a life that can never die. As the apostle says, "Life for me is Christ, death is simply more Christ." What a thrilling prospect! What a breathtaking view! What a full and broad life at the top!

Well, what are we going to do about it? Having surveyed the Christian life, will we live it? Will we reply in the affirmative to Christ's invitation? Henceforth will it be *our utmost for His Highest*? Listen to the Deuteronomic appeal: "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing, therefore choose life — that you mayest love the Lord thy God, that thou mayest obey His voice, that thou mayest cleave unto Him; for He is thy life . . ." In short, choose to love, obey, cleave and live. As Ella Armitage puts it,

*"Tis ne'er too late, while life shall last
A new life to begin:
'Tis ne'er too late to leave the past
And break with self and sin;
And we this day both old and young,
Would earnestly aspire
For hearts to nobler purpose strung,
And purified desire."*

"Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be who go in thereat; Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

"Enter ye in at the strait gate . . . Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

"Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life . . ."

"Strait . . . and narrow . . . leadeth unto life . . ."

"Enter you in at the strait . . . and narrow . . ."

Enter—You—In.

If you seek, there is a hoard, a hidden treasure and a gold mine in Christ you never yet saw.

—Samuel Rutherford.

For Younger Readers

HENRY VENN

The cricket match between Surrey and All England in 1749 drew a lot of spectators. The crowd got very excited as the match went on, but then at the end something happened which caused a lot of surprise. One of the best players, whose side had just won the match, threw his bat down on the ground.

'Whoever wants a bat which has served me well can take that one,' he said. His friends looked at him.

'Why are you giving up cricket, Henry?' they asked.

'Because I am to be ordained on Sunday,' Henry replied, 'and I will never have it said of me "Well struck, *parson*"!'

Many pled with him to change his mind, but Henry Venn refused.

From that time he gave his whole attention to his work as minister at Horsley. He preached, he gave out tracts, he spoke to people, he read a great deal. But after a time he began to doubt whether he was living as he should. According to his own ideas, he seemed to be doing quite well; but was he living *to the glory of God*?

As the months, and then the years passed by, Henry Venn thought about that question more and more.

After four years at Horsley, Henry Venn went to Clapham in London. He was very busy, preaching in different churches in the city. Then, in 1756, he became so ill that he could not preach for eight months.

It gave him time to think. More deeply than ever before he felt one thing. It was not what he did that would count for his salvation; it was what God would do. It was not his good living that would save his soul, but only the mercy of God through Jesus Christ. After that there was a change in Venn's sermons. Now he preached more clearly than before that salvation is in Jesus Christ alone.

Three years after that illness Henry was on the move again. He and his wife left London, going north to Yorkshire. Here he settled as minister of the large town of Huddersfield.

Most of the people of Huddersfield were very poor. They worked at weaving looms or perhaps in the coal mines which lay outside the towns. They worked for very long hours, and they hardly got any pay. Few of the poor children went to school to learn to read and write. They were often hungry and they lived in dirty homes. Nobody seemed to care.

But when Henry Venn became their minister in 1759 the people of Huddersfield began to feel that somebody loved them. He preached on the Lord's Day in the church, and during the week he went all

around his parish. He visited the grimy villages on the outskirts of the town, and soon he was holding eight or ten services in houses during each week.

Venn was not long in Huddersfield when some men in a nearby town heard about him. These men laughed at the kind of beliefs which Venn held, and one day two of them came to Huddersfield Church to hear him preach. They were not coming to worship God. They just wanted to hear what Venn had to say, so that they could go back and have a good laugh about it with their friends.

When they came near the Church, however, they were greatly impressed by what they saw. Great crowds of people were pushing into the church, and when the service began the congregation worshipped God with a real sense of his presence among them. Then Mr. Venn preached, and even these visitors felt that what he said must be true. As the service ended and the two men left the church one of them said, 'Surely God is in this place. There is nothing to laugh about here.'

He found out where the minister was, and went to speak to him. He told him he had come to make fun of his message, and asked Venn to forgive him and to pray for him. To the end of his life this man was Venn's close friend.

The people in Venn's congregation began to feel very concerned about the things which their minister preached to them. Many, who had known nothing before about these things, began to feel that they were sinners and that they must come to know Christ as their Saviour.

One night a group of these people were praying in Huddersfield Church. A boy and his uncle were passing and stopped to listen at the door. The boy, whose name was William, was sixteen years old; his uncle was nineteen. When they heard the prayers from inside the church they felt that these people must believe very deeply in what they were praying for.

Because of what they had heard, these two came back on a Thursday night to attend another service. The church was full of people. But the crowd was very quiet, except that some people were in tears. Venn's text that night was from the book of Daniel, *Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting.*

William and his uncle listened very carefully, and when the service was over they went out of the church without saying a word. Silently they walked home through the fields, until the uncle stopped, leaned against a wall and began to cry. William looked at him.

'I can't stand this,' his uncle was saying as he wept. That was the night when he first realised that he was a sinner. After that Thursday night he was completely changed. William, too, was never the same

after that meeting. He saw his need of a Saviour and he could not rest until he found him.

Longwood, where William lived, was three miles from Huddersfield. Crowds of people used to walk from Longwood to Huddersfield Church to hear Mr. Venn. When they came out, they would walk along the road to Longwood together, until they came to Fir's End. There, a mile from Longwood, they would stop and talk about the sermon for a while before they separated to go to their homes. William, as an old man, never forgot standing in that crowd and listening to these discussions. Neither did he forget the minister whom he came to love, the stern look on his face as he spoke of sin, and the loving look and the tears he would shed as he would speak about Jesus Christ.

Venn was twelve years in Huddersfield. Then, in 1771, he had to leave. He was only forty-seven years old, but he had worked so hard that he had made himself ill. He went away to Yelling, where he could still preach, but did not have so much to do.

While Venn was at Yelling, one of his daughters married a man whose wife had died, leaving young children without a mother. Venn was very interested in these children to whom his daughter was now to be a mother. One of them, called John, was only three years old.

Venn asked John to come to stay at Yelling with him. When he arrived, Venn soon found out that John was very frightened of the dark. When night time came Venn took the little boy by the hand and led him into his study, where the shutters were already closed. The study was dark, but Venn sat John on his knee, and told him such an interesting Bible story that the darkness was soon forgotten. Each night he did the same, till John looked forward every day to the evening when he went into Grandpa's study to hear a story. After Venn had told many stories with John sitting on his knee he placed John beside him in the study, still holding his hand. The next night he put him on a seat beside him, but did not hold his hand. After that he put John's seat a little distance away, and gradually he got John to listen to his story sitting in the dark, at the opposite end of the room. After that winter had passed, John was never afraid of the dark again.

Years after that, in 1797, old Henry Venn lay weak and dying. But sometimes he grew so happy, thinking of going to heaven, that his strength would return for a while.

When he died, there was one who felt his death in a special way. That was 'little John'. As he thought about his 'grandfather', John remembered the last words he had heard from him: 'Remember, little

Concluded after Book Reviews

The Holy Spirit and Charismatic Gifts(2)

RICHARD B. GAFFIN

II. The Gift of the Holy Spirit and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The passages that figure most prominently in the discussion of what are commonly referred to as spiritual or charismatic gifts are Romans 12:3-8, I Corinthians 12-14, and Ephesians 4:4-16. Building upon the preceding sketch of New Testament teaching on the gift of the Spirit, our concern in this section will be to highlight several general considerations that ought to control in gaining a proper understanding of these and related passages and the particular gifts mentioned in them.

1. It is essential to recognize a distinction between the gift of the Spirit in the sense of distinguishing between the work of the Spirit experienced by all in the church and those workings variously distributed within the church. The *gift* of the Spirit, having to do with the salvation revealed in Christ (repentance unto life, Acts 11:18), involves those blessings that are a foretaste of the eschatological inheritance (Rom. 8:23; II Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:13, 14). The *gifts* of the Spirit, consisting of particular operations pertaining to various ministries (I Cor. 12:4-6), are provisional and subeschatological. The latter would appear to be one of Paul's points in the much disputed passage, I Corinthians 13:8-13: Prophecy and tongues, among other gifts, have a provisional and partial character and so are temporary, destined to give way before the enduring works of the Spirit such as faith, hope, and love. The demand, then, in considering the whole work of the one Spirit in the church, is to do justice, on the one hand, to those activities that are eschatological in character and experienced by all, the gift of the Spirit and experienced by all, the gift of the Spirit; on the other hand, to those subeschatological functions more of which is universally distributed (the gifts of the Spirit).

2. To refer to gifts and activities listed in Romans 12, I Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4 as charismatic in order to distinguish them from presumably noncharismatic gifts and functions in the church is at best misleading. This can be seen perhaps most easily by surveying the use of the key term *charisma*. This word is distinctively and almost

exclusively Pauline. Surely Paul is the first to make of it a theologically important term. What especially bears emphasizing here is the relatively wide range of meaning that *charisma* has for Paul. It does not refer only, as in Romans 12:6 and I Corinthians 12:4ff., to a variety of specific gifts present in the context of the congregation and intended to function for its edification. In II Corinthians 1:11 it has reference to the apostle's experience of God's deliverance from a specific peril (cf. verse 10). In I Corinthians 7:7 celibacy under certain conditions is regarded as a *charisma*. The capacity granted to Timothy for the faithful exercise of this ministerial office is termed a *charisma* (I Tim. 4:14; II Tim. 1:6). The plural usage in Romans 11:29 probably brings into view the various covenant privileges of Israel (cf. 9:4; 3:1,2). Particularly noteworthy is the more general force that *charisma* has in Romans 5:15,16. There it overlaps in meaning with *charis* and has a quite sweeping reference to the righteousness and life graciously revealed in Christ. In the deliberately developed parallelism of the immediate context to *charisma* is the close correlative of "the grace of God and the gift by grace" (verse 15) and "the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness" (verse 17; cf. verse 20). Similarly, in Romans 6:23 to *charisma* is, quite comprehensively, eternal life.

Charisma, then, is a flexible term, capable of being used in various senses. At the same time, however, it is important to recognize, especially in view of the semantic overlap between *charis* and *charisma*, the consideration that apparently underlies and unifies the various meanings of the latter and naturally gives rise to its flexibility: Every *charisma* is a manifestation of *charis* and any manifestation of *charis* can be termed a *charisma*. Further, since in its origin and continuation the church exists solely by divine *charis*, the whole church in all its aspects and activities is properly seen as charismatic. The life of faith as such is by grace (Eph. 2:8) and is thus, in its entirety, from beginning to end, charismatic. To identify certain gifts in the church as charismatic and in this way distinguish them from others runs the risk of distorting and narrowing Paul's perspective. Similarly, the way in which the distinction between the gifts of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit is often made betrays a schematization foreign to the apostle. Further, while it must certainly be maintained that some gifts involve distinctive endowment beyond the natural or concreated capacities of the recipient (e.g., revelatory gifts), it is fair to suggest that the direction of Paul's teaching is that any capacity of the believer brought under the controlling power of God's grace and functioning in his service is a *charisma*. Biblically speaking, "charismatic" and "Christian" are synonymous.

3. To refer to the gifts listed in Romans 12, I Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4 as spiritual gifts is only approximately correct. The work of the Spirit is inseparable from the work of Christ in view of the functional unity that exists between them dating from Christ's exaltation. Accordingly, in Ephesians 4:7ff. it is the ascended Christ who gives gifts. I Corinthians 12:4-6 (cf. Eph. 4:4-6) provide a distinctly trinitarian perspective on their bestowal. In Romans 12:3 and I Corinthians 12:28 it is either implicitly the Father or more generally God who is the giver. The breadth in outlook corrects a one-sided emphasis on the Spirit in relation to gifts in the church and should not be ignored.

Still, it would also be wrong to overlook the accent on the Spirit, particularly in I Corinthians 12-14. The giving of gifts is a matter of "the manifestation of the Spirit" (12:7; cf. verses 8,9). And it is the Spirit who distributes to each one as he wills (12:12). Even if it should be the case that the use of the adjective "spiritual" in this context picks up on the preference and specialized usage of some among his Corinthian readers, it is difficult to disprove that in 14:1 (cf. 12:1) Paul has made its usage as a substantive a virtual synonym of *charisma*. The expression "some spiritual gift" in Romans 1:11 (which is best taken indefinitely, without Paul having in mind any one particular gift) shows how closely he associated the Spirit with gifts given to the church and how naturally and appropriately he described them in terms of the Spirit's work. His point is hardly to distinguish some gifts from others not of the Spirit.

4. All gifts variously distributed in the church have a pronouncedly functional or ministerial character. They are given for service in the church. This can be seen, for instance, in what is perhaps the best understanding of I Corinthians 12: 4-6. In the triadic structure of these verses "gifts", "ministries", and "workings" do not have reference to different entities but the latter two serve to identify the character of the former and make plain that the gifts listed in the verses that follow (8-10) are to function for service within the context of the church. The (diverse) manifestation of the Spirit is "for the common good" (verse 7). The consideration that identifies the purpose of all gifts and regulates their exercise is the edification of the church (14:12,26). Beneficial or memorable experiences that the exercise of a particular gift may bring to its recipient are not aspects of it independent of this principle of the edification of the body but are strictly ancillary to that principle.

5. The view that certain gifts (e.g. tongues) are the (almost) invariable accompaniment that serves to evidence baptism with the

Holy Spirit as a distinct, (usually) post-conversion experience of the individual believer finds no real support in the New Testament and in fact runs counter to its teaching on the baptism (gift) of the Holy Spirit (cf. part I). In this respect no gift can claim a "privileged" position or have its place in the life of the church maintained as a component in a "second blessing" or Spirit-baptism theology. Each gift must be considered in its own right and examined, so far as possible, in terms of its distinguishing character and specific function for the edification of the church.

6. The long-debated question: gift-office cannot occupy us here except to say that any tension or dialectic between gift (Spirit) and office, properly exercised, is foreign to the New Testament. This is clear, among other considerations, from the use of *charisma* in the Pastorals (I Tim. 4:14; II Tim. 1:6) as well as the plain office character of the apostolate. The one and same Spirit is the Spirit of both ardour and order.

7. It is frequently and correctly pointed out that the lists of gifts in Romans 12:6-8, I Corinthians 12:8-10, I Corinthians 12:28, and Ephesians 4:11 are not complete but selective and representative. So far, however, Paul's rationale for selection in each instance has not been demonstrated conclusively. Still, it is possible to make at least two generalizations about the composition of these listings taken as a whole.

a. Despite the inclination of Western mentality with its penchant for the specialist, too sharp a line should not be drawn between many of the gifts. It is doubtful whether anyone has successfully demonstrated exegetically a clear difference between the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge (I Cor. 12:8). Similarly, it is difficult to distinguish clearly between gifts of healing and working of miracles (I Cor. 12:9,10), or between teaching and exhorting (Rom. 12:7,8). This suggests a degree of overlap between certain gifts as well as the exercise in some instances of more than one of them by a given individual.

b. The apparently random character of the lists should not cause us to miss the fact that each of the *charismata* may be seen to belong to one of two basic categories: word-*charismata* and deed-*charismata*. The two are of course inseparable and closely supplement each other, but at the same time the distinction between verbal and nonverbal activity ought not to be overlooked or minimized. Any particular *charisma* is either a service in word or a service in deed, with several, notably apostleship, involving both kinds of ministry.

Confirmation for viewing the various lists in terms of this basic profile may be found in I Peter 4:10,11, the only occurrence of *charisma* outside of the Pauline corpus, which not inappropriately may be taken as providing a brief, compressed overview not only of Paul's but of the entire New Testament teaching on spiritual gifts: "Each one should use whatever *charisma* he has received to *serve* others, faithfully administering God's *charis* in its various forms. If anyone *speaks*, he should do it as speaking the very words of God. If anyone *serves*, he should do it with the strength God supplies . . ."

Continued from The Region of the Risen Sun

*Let every creature rise and bring
Peculiar honours to our King;
Angels descend with songs again,
And earth repeat the loud 'Amen'.*

What does Isaac Watts mean by *peculiar* honours? I think he means that every created being should honour its Creator in the way that is peculiar to its own nature. The physical heavens cannot utter words of praise, but they declare the glory of God in sun, moon and stars.

The rose has no voice, but it honours its Maker by exhibiting its beauty and filling the air with fragrant perfume. The violet is a sweet and lovely flower and its peculiar work is to remind us in its humble way of the humility of our Redeemer. The sunflower lifts its lovely head in grateful praise to Him from whom it receives its life and light.

But what of man? He was made a spiritual being with capacity for worship and communion with his maker. But now he is by nature dead in trespasses and sins, cut off from the life of God. And so he needs the new birth to enable him to bring to his Maker the honours which are His due.

It is only when by faith he becomes a child of God that he is able to do this. And when we offer to God praises peculiar to those who offer them from a new and full heart, 'angles descend with songs again, and earth repeats the loud *Amen*.

O Day of Rest and Gladness

JOSEPH PARKER

The author of this hymn, Christopher Wordsworth, was the nephew of the great poet William Wordsworth. After a brilliant academic career he became the Bishop of Lincoln in 1869. Among his writings were a Latin Grammar, a Commentary on the whole Bible, a Church History, an edition of The Greek Testament with Notes, and a volume of hymns. The peculiar merit of many of these hymns is their full scriptural presentation of the theme. Each forms a bible Study in itself. So it is with this hymn on the Lord's Day.

Travellers in India or the East will remember with gratitude the 'travellers' bungalows' along the more lengthy routes. There they may find food, fire and water, besides shelter, freely provided by the kind thoughtfulness of the local inhabitants. So is God's provision of the Lord's Day for pilgrims to the heavenly country, an institution full of benefit and comfort.

*Thou art a port protected
From storms that round us rise,
A garden intersected
With streams of Paradise;
Thou art a cooling fountain
In life's dry dreary sand;
From thee like Pisgah's mountain
We view our promised land.*

Verse two of the hymn shows us the threefold seal of the Lord's Day as an institution established by God's authority. This was on the first day of Creation, when God said, 'Let there be light'; on the day of our Lord's Resurrection, 'the first day of the week'; and on the day of Pentecost when God sent the Holy Spirit in power upon the Church.

*On thee at the creation,
The light first had its birth;
On thee for our salvation
Christ rose from depths of earth;
On thee our Lord victorious
The Spirit sent from heaven;
And thus on thee most glorious
A triple light was given.*

And so the Lord's Day is a triple commemoration—of creation, of resurrection, and of the Holy Spirit's new life and power. But this is not all. The seventh-day Sabbath was itself a type of Christ's resting in

the grave after finishing the work of redemption. After the 'It is finished' of the cross, Christ rested through the hours of the Sabbath in the grave, until on the morning of the first day of the week, He arose to shed forth the beams of spiritual light over a new creation.

Moving to verse 4 of our hymn, we are taught that Sunday is to be a day to bring us in heart and mind nearer to the heavenly rest.

*Thou art a holy ladder
Where angels go and come;
Each Sunday finds us gladder,
Nearer to heaven our home.
A day of sweet refection,
Thou art a day of love;
A day of resurrection
From earth to things above.*

So to those who use the Lord's day aright is given a glimpse of their eternal and heavenly home, with its blessings of peace and rest. But there is also a vision for the nations, and a call to Gospel preaching in all lands.

*Today on weary nations
The heavenly manna falls;
To holy convocations
The silver trumpet calls,
Where gospel light is glowing
With pure and radiant beams,
And living water flowing
With soul-refreshing streams.*

Lord Macaulay once said: 'We are not poorer but richer because we have rested one day in seven'. The Psalmist said: 'This is the day the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it' (Psalm 118 : 24). We live in a mixed society, and in a time of change, as did David. We, too, must make our own resolutions about the Lord's Day. We have opportunities. We shall evoke questions from friends and visitors; and the opportunity for witness will arise. But chiefly let us join our voices with the saints of all ages, in the house of prayer, in the praise of God.

*New graces ever gaining
From this our day of rest,
We reach the rest remaining
To spirits of the blest.
To Holy Ghost be praises,
To Father, and to Son;
The church her voice upraises
To Thee, blest Three in One.*

Challenging the Churches

CORNELIS PRONK

III. PERGAMOS

The third letter which the exalted Christ dictated to His servant John had to be sent to the angel, or pastor, of the church in Pergamos.

Pergamos, the capital of the Roman province of Asia, was a great cultural center which could vie with Alexandria for eminence in the literary world. It was also a city of temples. Paganism flourished there more than anywhere else in that district. That is why Christ says, *where Satan's seat (throne) is*. There were temples dedicated to Apollo, Aphrodite, Zeus, and especially Asclepius, the god of healing. Emperor worship also flourished here, and a huge temple had been built for that purpose.

In this city, infested with heathen temples and shrines, Christ also had a small band of believers. Needless to say, these Christians had a difficult time in such an environment. And therefore how welcome and how refreshing it must have been for these weary saints to receive a letter from their King! Introducing Himself as the One *which hath the sharp sword with two edges*, Christ says,

I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and has not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. (Rev. 2:12,13)

Christ knows what is going on, what His people are going through. He knows also where they live and work. He knows that His people in Pergamos are surrounded by the powers of darkness. Pergamos, the Lord says here, is the place where Satan has his seat or throne. What does that mean?

It is true, of course, that Satan manifests his power everywhere on earth. He is the prince of this world. *The whole world*, John tells us *lieth in the evil one* (I John 5:19 A.S.V.). But it is also true that this dominion of Satan becomes more clearly manifest in one place than in another. We all know, for instance, that in our large cities are greater concentrations of evil than in small rural communities.

So it was with Pergamos. It was in a special sense the seat of Satan. You will ask why this was so. Our text does not tell us, but we know enough from history to get a fairly accurate idea. I mentioned already that Pergamos was famous for its worship of Asclepius, the god of healing. Great powers were attributed to him. Reports of his miracles went out to all the world and from everywhere pilgrims flocked to his temple to find healing there. Pergamos, one might say, was the Lourdes of the first century. Asclepius was honoured as the saviour of mankind. Right away you will see the problem this posed for the Christians. They knew only one Saviour: Jesus. Asclepius therefore was a false Christ, an Anti-Christ.

In the second place, Pergamos was one of the chief centres of Emperor worship. So what we have here is a twofold idolatry. The idol Asclepius is worshipped as the saviour of mankind, and the man Caesar is worshipped as lord of all the earth. The question facing the Christians accordingly was also a twofold one: who is Saviour, Jesus or Asclepius; and Who is Lord, Christ or Caesar? More and more they were forced to make that choice.

The problem facing Pergamos is still with us today. The forms and names may have changed, but the issues remain exactly the same. Asclepius is no longer worshipped today. Nor do people bow the knee before Caesar. But that does not mean that idolatry is no longer practised today. Just replace these ancient names by modern ones and you will see that Satan is still alive and well on planet earth. Today man worships science and technology or humanity and democracy or sports and entertainment. But even in the literal sense the idols are still with us today. Is there not a revival of demon worship and witchcraft in our sophisticated age? Even Asclepius is still here in the form of spiritism.

Basically the issue is still the same: healing of the body with its physical ills, or healing of the soul with its spiritual diseases. The masses are still much more interested in the former than in the latter. This evil generation still wants to see signs and wonders, but cares little for the old-fashioned Gospel of sin and grace.

How did the Christians in Pergamos stand up to these pressures? Apparently very well. On the whole the congregation was faithful. Christ can say of this people: *thou holdest fast my name*. They were not ashamed to confess Him as Saviour and Lord! Christ praises them for this. And He still does that. Can He say this of us, however? *Thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith*, i.e., my doctrines or the Truth.

But the letter to Pergamos contains not only encouragement and praise. There is also criticism. Jesus says,

But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. (vv. 14,15)

All was not well in Pergamos. Although the majority stood firm against the temptations around them, there were some in the congregation for whom the pressures became too strong. They began to ask themselves if it was really necessary to be so strict and so exclusive. Was it really their duty to avoid all participation in the social life of the community? Must they always forbid the young people to take part in the religious festivals? These idols did not really exist anyway. Why then couldn't they have some fun with their non-Christian friends?

Also, what was wrong with putting a pinch of incense on the altar of Caesar? As long as you did not intend such a gesture as an act of worship, but merely as a token of respect to the government? In other words, they wanted to strike a bargain with the world, a compromise. Of course there is nothing new in this approach. Our text mentions the example of Balaam, the prophet. This false prophet had been hired by Balac, king of the Moabites, to curse Israel. But instead of cursing, he could only bless God's people. Then, at long last, he gave Balac this clever advice. Don't try to fight Israel with the sword. That won't work. God is on their side. But invite them to one of your feasts. Give them plenty of food and drink, and women too. I guarantee the outcome.

We know Balaam was right in his prediction. Baal-peor became the scene of a terrible orgy. Balaam knew that if Israel would break through the fence that separated her from other nations, the victory would go to Moab. For them God Himself would turn against His people, and Moab need do nothing any more. Israel would be consumed by the anger of her jealous God.

Balaam's method has often been tried and usually with the same success. Also in Pergamos there were reasonable gentlemen, broadminded men who could see both sides of any question. They could respect the religious views of their pagan neighbours too. To be

sure, the majority of the congregation was not like that. But they did make one big mistake, namely that they did nothing to stop these Balaams or Nicolaitans. They accepted them as members in good standing. They allowed them to partake of the sacraments, and no one did anything to discipline them.

The spirit of Balaam is not dead yet. I'm afraid that also in our day this same spirit of compromise is found in almost all churches. O, how great is the influence of the world upon the church! Especially our young people are drinking in the godless philosophy of the new morality via TV and books and magazines. And the Church leadership for the most part is silent and thus gives its tacit approval.

But Christ warns Pergamos, and therefore us too, in no uncertain terms: *Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth* (v. 16). If the Church won't take action against those Balaamites, Christ will do it Himself! What a warning not only to those who walk in the ways of Balaam, but also to those who are still pure! By tolerating them, they allow themselves and their children to be influenced. They must examine themselves to see if perhaps they have already been contaminated. This self-examination is always necessary for Christians. Maybe it never came to actual deeds of wickedness, but what about your thoughts? Be honest: Doesn't the spirit of Balaam live in all of us by nature? And is it not true that even after our conversion to Christ the doctrine of the Nicolaitans still appeals to our flesh? Can you say you have never longed, secretly longed for sinful pleasures? And if ever there were opportunities to sin, it is today. From every side we are bombarded by things which have been designed to stimulate us to sin. Why not, Satan says? But Christ warns us, don't give in to the spirit of compromise! Don't listen to the voice of the tempter!

Then Christ adds this promise: *To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.* (v. 17) What is that, the hidden manna? Well, remember how Israel in the desert was sustained by manna from heaven? In the New Testament Christ calls Himself the true manna or bread from heaven. The hidden manna is therefore a reference to Christ. But notice who will eat of this manna. Only those who overcome. You say, but I can't overcome in my own strength! True, and here is the paradox. On the one hand only those who persevere eat of the manna. But on the other hand, only those who eat the manna now will persevere.

Only by the true faith in Christ and by clinging to His promises will you overcome your many temptations.

In that same way you will also receive that other blessing, namely, the white stone with that new name on it. The reference here, I believe, is to the ancient custom of pronouncing the guilt or innocence of a defendant in court. Each of the jury members would be given a white and a black stone. When they had to give the verdict, they would do so by putting one of these stones on a table, the black one symbolizing guilt and the white one innocence. So the white stone was a symbol of acquittal or justification. By promising the faithful a white stone here, Jesus assures them of their final acquittal in the Day of Judgment. And on that stone will be their new name. Possibly this refers to their status as citizens of heaven. They were in danger of losing their Roman citizenship because they had refused to burn incense at the Roman shrine. Christ therefore assures them that this loss will be more than compensated for when they will enter into their reward. Then they will receive a new name, which will reflect their inner nature and individuality as citizens of God's kingdom. There is much here which we can only guess at. We see through a glass darkly. But one thing we may know for sure. Christ's promises are true and will definitely be fulfilled.

*How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said;
To you who to Jesus for refuge have fled?
The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not, desert to its foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavour to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake.*

Five young college students, before ordination, spent a Sunday in London, and were anxious to hear some well-known preachers in churches other than their own. They found their way on a hot Sunday to Spurgeon's Tabernacle. Whilst waiting for the doors to open a stranger came up to them and said: 'Gentleman, would you like to see the heating apparatus of the church?' They were not particularly anxious to do so on a broiling day in July, but at once consented. They were taken down some steps, and a door was thrown open, and their guide whispered, "There, Sirs, is our heating apparatus". They saw before them 700 souls bowed in prayer seeking a blessing on the service about to be held in the tabernacle above. Their unknown guide was Spurgeon himself. Are we surprised that Spurgeon's sermons are still circulated? —*Living Links.*

News and Notes

LEICESTER 1979

Nearly 300 ministers, missionaries and divinity students gathered in April for the 16th Leicester Ministers' Conference, the writer's second. I was sorry to miss meetings on the first evening and on the last morning, but the addresses and discussions which I did attend I found enlightening and stimulating.

Two of the morning papers were given by the Rev. Sinclair Ferguson on *Reformed Piety: the teaching of John Owen*. If we came with the idea that orthodox reformed teaching was something long on intellect and short on heart and practice, these talks must have gone a long way towards disabusing our minds. Sinclair Ferguson presented Owen as one who, though vastly gifted, was not supremely concerned with the intellectual side of theology; but as one who could say, 'My heart's desire is that the mortification of sin and the promotion of holiness be the aim in myself and others'.

In the first paper we were introduced to Christian piety as 'the fruit of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the believer's heart . . . the pattern of life produced by the pattern of the way of salvation.' Mr. Ferguson then dealt with four areas of Christian piety — 1. Its foundation, 2. Its opposition, 3. Its constituent elements and 4. Its goal. Under 3. we heard about the difference between the legalist and the one in whom true Christian piety is seen; the latter performs the duties laid on him by faith in Christ. Under 4. we heard of Owen's references to Enoch, not celebrated so much in Scripture as a preacher as one who walked with God in humility, faith and love.

The second paper dealt, among other things, with communion with God and growth in grace. Here we were reminded that it was not a theological axiom which died for us; that we should aspire to live in a sense of the love of God to us in Jesus Christ. We were also exhorted to fix our minds on the fact that God the Father is love. Giving Owen's teaching, or the substance of it, Mr. Ferguson's words were somewhat as follows: 'There is nothing more inimical to assurance than to think of the Father as hating, whose hatred is only avoided by Christ's sacrifice. Such insecurity leads to censoriousness and pharisaism.'

Mr. A. N. Martin was the other main speaker, although I only heard 2 of his three addresses.

In his first lecture, *The Message of the Evangelist*, Mr. Martin stressed that the work of an evangelist is an integral part of the gospel ministry. In the context of pastoral duties which Paul laid on Timothy, there was included this, 'Do the work of an evangelist'. If we did not

do this, Mr. Martin said, we were not filling our ministries to the full. Among other points made during this paper, Mr. Martin emphasised the centrality of the cross in the proclamation of the gospel. If Christ was absent from our preaching, it was because He was absent from our hearts. 'Could it be,' Mr. Martin asked, 'that in our preaching there is too little tender, earnest proclamation of the cross?' He showed how the shadow of the cross fell over every ethical demand in the New Testament; how Paul approached differing problems with the same method — planting the cross in the very centre of them.

In his second lecture, *The Disposition of the Evangelist*, Mr. Martin dealt with the evangelist's disposition towards 1, The Message 2, The Magnitude of the task and 3, The people to whom he spoke. Under 3 he told his hearers that what was said of one famous preacher ought to be true of all, 'He preached as if he were dying to have you converted'. 'If our hearts are set upon the conversion of our people,' Mr. Martin said, 'we cannot relinquish that end without pain.'

There were other able speakers at the conference, who also gave addresses which were full of practical and spiritual teaching. Apart from the lectures and discussions, it was greatly refreshing just to meet and see so many ministers who have been led to take such a real interest in reformed doctrine. Surely 'This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.'

J. T.

Continued from Cunningham on Calvin and Beza

truth of this, I deny that it fits this passage. For John's purpose was only to make this blessing common to the whole church. Therefore, under the word *all* he does not include the reprobate, but refers to all who would believe and those who were scattered through various regions of the earth . . .'

Last year, at the Leicester Conference, we met and heard Simo Ralevic. It was a great privilege to hear from him something of what God is enabling him to do for the furtherance of the Reformed Faith in his native Yugoslavia. Here is part of a personal letter recently received from Simo:

'God is good to us. He is Lord of heaven and earth, doing all according to His sovereign will. We praise Him for life eternal, for choosing us, and for using us to His glory. Satan is active all over the world, but God is on the throne. This is our hope and strength. We feel often some drops of His grace poured on people and saving them for His glory.

'We are most of all wondering how He uses us sinners saved by grace who deserved Hell to bring His chosen people back to His flock. His grace we see every day, and what shall we do except worship Him and be thankful? There is nothing so wonderful as when our Lord reveals His grace and sovereignty to us sinners. When our eyes are opened to see His mighty hand everywhere and when we depend on Him, life becomes meaningful and full of joy. Oh! Lord, show Thy grace to many more. This is strength for living in our shaking world.

Why not look to God, Unsearchable Ruler?

Higher ways!

Higher thoughts!

Predestined paths!

Eternal roots!

He is Lord, and He fills all.

'Pray for us. We greet you in the name that is above all names, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.'

Copies of the January and February issues of *Grace* were sent to us by the Rev. David Bugden, one of the associate editors of this monthly magazine. In his letter, Mr. Bugden indicated that the magazine had 'taken to itself a new look', and he wondered if we might feel able to make mention of it sometime.

Grace provides a forum for the expression of Particular Baptist principles, whereas *The Gospel Magazine* is non-denominational. However, it is encouraging to come across indications here and there of a reviving interest in reformed doctrine. From the two issues perused, we would feel that the producers of *Grace* are making a serious attempt to deal with problems within the church, and to apply the timeless gospel to the contemporary world scene.

The Evangelical Library

We have recently received the Spring issue of *The Evangelical Library Bulletin*. This issue includes the *Annual Report* by the librarian, in which he looks back over the 50 years since the Evangelical was established, though at its inception it was called the *Beddington Free Grace Library*.

There are 130 local branches of The Evangelical Library in different countries of the world, but the library's headquarters are at 78 Chiltern Street, London, W1M 2HB. The number of books filed here is now around 80,000. The premises at 78 Chiltern Street have served their purpose well, but it is felt that extensive development is now required, the cost of which has been estimated at £100,000. We publish below a *Special Appeal* which the Library Committee are sending out this year.

Dear Friend,

Since the Annual General Meeting in December, details of which are given in the current *Bulletin*, The Westminster City Council, who are landlords of the premises at 78 Chiltern Street, have agreed to the Library purchasing its portion of the building on a 99 Year Lease. Negotiations are at present being carried on.

Many of you who have visited the Library recently have commented favourably on the interior improvements already made. It is, however, the desire of the Committee to further improve the premises by:

- * More adequate heating and insulation of the two floors;
- * Installation of a lift and improving the appearance at the entrance;
- * Replanning of Toilet and Staff areas.

The continuing aim of the Library is to:

- * Pay Staff more adequately;
- * Purchase new books for Headquarters and Branches;
- * Rebind rare books.

We have a certain amount of money in the Building Fund towards the purchase of the lease, but this and the items listed above will involve us in considerable expenditure.

We are very grateful to those of you who have supported the Library so generously in the past, but **at this time** we appeal **urgently** to you and others interested to help so that the Library may go forward, and be increasingly used of the Lord in the preservation and circulation of worthwhile Evangelical books.

Yours sincerely in His Service

D. M. LLOYD-JONES, *Chairman*.

GORDON R. SAYER, *Librarian and Secretary*.

H. C. TODD, *Treasurer*.

Protest from the Bible Christian Unity Fellowship

Many readers will know of Bishop D. A. Thompson, Chairman of the Bible Christian Unity Fellowship. Recently he sent us a copy of the following resolution, passed at the Fellowship's annual meeting.

To Her Gracious Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second

May it please Your Majesty

This annual meeting of the Bible Christian Unity Fellowship — whose members hold the Bible to be the Inspired and Inerrant Word of God and the sole rule of Faith and Practice — have learned with the greatest grief that — according to the Roman Catholic Press — Your Majesty is intending to visit the Roman Catholic flower show in Westminster Cathedral on July 13th, 1979.

We humbly submit that this action is to ignore the spirit and letter of the Bill of Rights and the Act of Settlement prohibiting communion with the Church of Rome.

We are persuaded that our distress is shared by countless numbers of Bible-believing and loyal Protestant subjects throughout the United Kingdom and British Commonwealth. We and they cannot forget that many of the Popes and their Church tortured (especially in the halls of the Inquisition), burned alive, or by their crusades and warfare brought to an early and cruel death millions of the most law-abiding and blameless men and women simply because they had read their Bibles and felt that its holy teachings were diametrically opposed to the leading doctrines of the Church of Rome.

The two afore-mentioned statutes were born of the experience of our forefathers at that time and also of what they heard from their parents and grandparents of how Pope Sixtus V tried to get Queen Elizabeth I assassinated, of how the Pope, using Spanish troops, sought to overthrow the Protestants of the Northern Netherlands but was successfully resisted by the brave Dutchmen under the leadership of their Prince of Orange, of how the French monarchy under the influence of the priests maltreated their Protestant subjects, massacring on St. Bartholomew's Day, 1572 and during the following fortnight about 70,000 Huguenots, how the Pope Gregory XIII celebrated this awful slaughter by a special singing of the *Te Deum* and the striking of a medal to commemorate this blow against those he termed 'heretics', and of how King Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes so that one million of Huguenots had little choice but to flee at terrible risk to their lives their native land and be penniless exiles in another.

Even we who can look back over most of the years of this century

can see — unless we are wilfully blind — how the priestly—moulded minds of those in Southern Ireland have acted and are providing an asylum for the priests' pupils, the I.R.A., the kindred groups, who are committing murder and arson in Ulster, as well as giving complete immunity to those who have most deceitfully enticed unsuspecting British soldiers into quarters where the latter could be murdered, after which the former could make good their escape over the border. The Popes have not only never expressed their regret at their predecessors' inhumanity to man, but the Papacy is still as deceitful and drunk with the blood of those she stigmatises as heretics as ever she was in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

We therefore humbly pray Your Majesty to be true to your Coronation Declaration 'I am a faithful Protestant' and have no fellowship with Rome (2 Cor. 6 : 16-18) but to arrest and to reverse the Romeward drift both in Church and State, which has been so pronounced in the last hundred years and especially during Your Majesty's reign.

And we shall continue to ask Almighty God to bless you and your family as well as to revive the Protestant Reformed Religion that it may be a power for regeneration and righteousness throughout your dominions.

D. A. THOMPSON, *Chairman*

(A Bishop outside the Establishment, and retired.)

The Gospel Magazine

A growing number of churches purchase the magazine in bulk, and distribute copies to their members. We thought we should draw the attention of readers to this fact, in case other church groups might feel that this was an arrangement they would also like to come to with our office. As stated in a previous issue, if individuals undertake to distribute the magazine, we will give the distributor's subscription at half-price for five copies distributed (i.e. six subscriptions for the price of 5½) and we will give the distributor's subscription free for 11 copies distributed (i.e. 12 subscriptions for the price of 11).

Sometimes our attention is drawn to missionaries who greatly need the kind of reading material which the magazine provides, but who may not be able easily to afford the cost of a subscription. The trustees would welcome any gifts sent to our office for the purpose of extending the number of magazines freely distributed to missionaries in such circumstances.

Book Reviews

Jonah by Hugh Martin. Banner of Truth Trust, pp 368, price £3.

We very much welcome the re-issue of this exposition of the book of Jonah by the late Dr. Hugh Martin. Although it was first issued in 1870, it remains of intense interest today.

Although the work is a commentary on the whole book of Jonah, each passage commented on produces distinct lessons which may be studied separately from the whole. For example, how relevant for today is the treatment of the text, 'So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not', which Dr. Martin does under the title, *The World Rebuking the Church*. In a very practical way, he brings home to the conscience of each member of the church the duty of not providing the world with an opportunity justifiably to rebuke. 'Why should the church allow the world to bear away the palm in reference to any one element of excellence whatsoever — candour, courtesy, charity, kindness, large-mindedness, liberality, self-denial, any virtue whatsoever — the pilot rebuking the prophet! The world rebuking the church! These things ought not to be'. From that Dr. Martin goes on, in relation to the pilot's call to the prophet — 'Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not' — to draw attention to the substance of natural religion as illustrated by that call and to point out both its strengths and its weaknesses.

Again, in dealing with the narrative of the casting of lots, Dr. Martin explains the principles that should regulate the Christian's life in this area in a way that is most instructive and practical for today when misuse of the lot in the form of gambling has become such a widespread, time-consuming and soul-destroying evil.

In this book, then, there is much practical teaching of great importance today, but there is more. There is with every page the feeling that here is an author, who lived in holy fellowship with his God and who had a fervent desire that his readers should do likewise, and who would use every means in his power to help and encourage them to say in the language with which he concluded the book: 'Though my flesh and my heart fail; though my house be not so with God; though the fig-tree shall not blossom; yet will I rejoice in the Lord; for He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: this is all my salvation, and all my desire.'

J. P. H. MACKAY

The Gospel as it really is, —Paul's Epistle to the Romans simply explained: Stuart Olyott. pp 165, Price £2.30, Evangelical Press.

This pastor of a Liverpool Church writes in a plain, direct style to ground newcomers to Bible Study in the fundamentals of the Gospel. There is a welcome clarity of teaching on Justification by Faith, the New Birth, and the New Life, freedom from bondage to sin, and loyalty to the new Master.

God's continuing purpose for the Jewish people is carefully considered. Consecration to God is seen in right relationships within the church, to the state, and to society — live justly, lovingly, expectantly.

He is as good on the practical teaching of the later chapters as in the earlier doctrinal ones. Matters of conscience are dealt with, and Luther's sayings are made the sum of christian liberty and charity: "A christian man is a most free lord of all, subject to none" and "A christian man is a most dutiful servant of all, subject to all".

An excellent portrait of a faithful pastor is drawn from the biographical matter on Paul and others named in the closing chapters.

W. J. PARKER

Sermons by Stanley Delves; 6 cassettes; £2. each including postage; obtainable from Mr. J. Burd, 66, Manor Drive, Surbiton, Surrey.

Mr. Delves was the minister of Forest Fold Particular Baptist Chapel, Crowborough, Sussex, for over half a century. His ministry there began in 1923. Since his death a little over a year ago the Stanley Delves Trust has issued a series of sermons delivered by Mr. Delves to his regular congregation.

Six cassettes have been issued, and it is planned to make others available in due course. Each cassette comprises two sermons. The writer has been privileged to listen to several of these unfoldings of some of the great truths of the Word of God. They seek to honour the Lord Jesus Christ, to enlighten souls, and to lead the Lord's people into deeper experience of saving and sanctifying grace.

The titles of these profitable discourses are: "When I see the blood, I will pass over you"; "O that thou wouldest bless me indeed"; "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net"; On quenching the Spirit, and Repentance; "Why are ye so fearful?"; and How to find rest in the soul; Delighting in the Lord, and The time of the Lord's Return. The sermons were originally preached over a period of twelve years, between 1965 and 1977.

It's a Hard Life; George M. Philip; 106 pp; 60p. paperback; Didasko Press, Aberdeen.

This is a series of studies in the Book of Ecclesiastes, and was originally given as twelve sermons — one chapter for each sermon — to a Glasgow Church of Scotland congregation. Mr. Philip relates biblical truths to modern needs and situations. He presents his matter in terse, plain language; and has the gift, so eminently seen in Bishop Ryle's writings, of making much use of short, clear sentences.

In his introduction Mr. Philip speaks of "the centrality of the Cross in Christian theology". He takes his stand here. He links Ecclesiastes with the Epistle to the Romans chapter 8, verse 20 and following. "Life from the dead is the need and the answer" proclaimed in these studies. "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" sums up the preacher's declared position before his congregation, (p.79).

H. G. H. HILL

Thoughts on Religious Experience, Archibald Alexander Banner of Truth, 338 pp + xix, £3.

The Banner of Truth are to be commended for bringing out this well-produced second reprint of Dr. Alexander's invaluable work. The first Professor of Princeton sets forth here a gracious, well-balanced and thoroughly Scriptural survey of the experiences of Christian life from that of the new birth, of sanctification, conflict, growth in grace, back-sliding, restoration, to death. He wisely emphasises the importance of early religious instruction; "there is a common practical error in the minds of many Christians in regard to this matter. They seem to think that nothing has any relation to the conversion of a sinner but that which immediately preceded this event."; "if piety may commence at any age, how solicitous should parents be for their children, that God would bestow His grace upon them, even before they know their right hand from their left".

There is most helpful advice on ministering to friends under the trial of melancholy; and wise counsel regarding fanaticism. The author commends the telling by Christians of God's dealings with their souls, but warns of the dangers of what we now term "testimony meetings".

The chapter on the spiritual warfare is of great value: "as the 'old man', though crucified, never becomes extinct is this life, this warfare between the flesh and the spirit never ceases until death"... "experience teaches that the most effectual way to subdue the power of sin is to cherish and exercise the principle of holiness". His

interpretation of Romans 7 as referring to the apostle himself may not be acceptable to some commentators, but it appears to us both Scriptural and logical.

The chapter on "Growth in grace" affords much encouragement, especially to young Christians and to those "with a weak and wavering faith", and warning that "many an accurate and profound theologian has lived and died without a ray of saving light". "Backsliding" is dealt with graciously and tenderly, as also the problem of suffering. Seven chapters deal with the solemn subject of death; these will bring forth earnest exercise of soul. The many death-bed experiences given "furnish much reason for encouragement and hope to the real Christian . . . a strong evidence of the truth of the doctrines of grace . . ." The concluding pastoral letters to the Aged, the Young, Christian Mothers, a Widow, and a Widower reflect the sweet understanding and sympathy of one who was not merely a distinguished theologian, but supremely a pastor. The Rev. W. J. Grier's *Biographical Introduction* gives a useful background to the book.

Your reviewer only wishes the publishers had made a slight change in the title, substituting the word "Christian" for "Religious". Here is a book which should be in the hands of every believer, young and old alike.

H. J. W. L.

Daniel Edward J. Young Banner of Truth Trust pp. 330 price £3.50.

When E. J. Young, professor of Old Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary, died in 1968, the church lost a conservative Old Testament scholar of extremely rare standing.

As the publishers say, the difficulties in approaching the book of Daniel have frightened some Christians off, while others have opted for superficial interpretations. But, as they also say, 'without the revelation which its pages contain we lack some of the most magnificent demonstrations of God's rule in history, as well as several far-reaching disclosures of the Kingdom which is to conquer all'.

Prof. Young's aim in writing the commentary, which was first published 30 years ago, was 'to present a clear and positive exposition of the prophecy'. In pursuing this aim, he felt it necessary to refute two approaches to the prophecy with which he did not agree. The first of these was the 'critical' view, 'a position which is in basic error', 'one which denies that it (Daniel) is a work of true predictive prophecy as it purports to be'. The other approach which Young criticises is 'one which interprets the prophecies in an extremely unwarranted manner

by referring the fulfilment of many of them to an alleged period of seven years which is supposed to follow the second advent of the Lord'.

As he works through the prophecy, Young gives a translation of the text in which he 'endeavours to bring out the exact meaning of the Hebrew and Aramaic'. He then comments on the passage and seeks to show the reader the untenability of such false interpretations as those mentioned above. Young does not expect his readers to accept his views without proof, and this sometimes means that the commentary includes passages which do not make easy reading. The aim is not so much to dwell on the devotional aspect, as to establish the precise meaning of the scripture, and to vindicate that.

The introduction of 13 pages is helpful, as are also the 8 appendices, covering 60 pages. These include an *Historical Background of the Book of Daniel*. For anyone wishing a painstakingly careful exposition of this important part of God's word, we heartily recommend this commentary.

Continued from For Younger Readers

John, if anything could make heaven not heaven to me, it would be not having you with me there'.

And when, years later, 'little John' himself was near the end of his life, he would often say, 'When I get to heaven, how I shall bless God for the early lessons of dear old Henry Venn!'

Note: The above is based on the chapters on Henry Venn and His Ministry which appears in Ryle's Christian Leaders of the 18th Century.