

24 MAR 1977

THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE

MARCH • APRIL 1977

THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE

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IV27 4RP.

Incorporating the Protestant Beacon and The British Protestant

No. 1473
New Series

MARCH-APRIL, 1977

Old Series
No. 2473

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Editorial

When reading for review Machen's Introduction to the New Testament, I was struck by words to which the author draws attention: 'Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it' (Colossians 4 : 17).

We do not know who Archippus was, though Paul refers to him in Philemon verse 2 as 'our fellow soldier', and Machen suggests that he may have been Philemon's son.

We do not know the spirit in which Archippus approached the service in the Colossian church that day when Paul's Epistle was first read. Perhaps he had been truly praying, as Paul before him, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' Perhaps, on the other hand, he had been harassed by unbelief, doubting his calling to serve or thinking his service of no value.

Whatever obscurity covers the background to these words, the words of the charge itself are clear enough. They are even startling, coming as they do at the very close of the Epistle. It might have seemed that nothing more was to be said; only the apostle's final greeting remained. Then, like a thunderbolt, these solemn words: 'And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it'. There was no dubiety or darkness there. It was in the Lord that he had received his calling, and it was a calling which God had laid on Him and no one else. All that remained was for the recipient to fulfil it.

If there was no escape; if Archippus simply had to face his calling and fulfil it, might any of the rest of the Epistle have occupied his thoughts as he walked away, strengthening him for the task? *Ye are complete in him* (2 : 10).

And as regards the spirit in which he should work, was there any word about that? *Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance for ye serve the Lord Christ* (3 : 23-24).

Archippus now is gone to his account. But the words of his charge remain, perhaps to come with personal application to some reader now. *'Take heed to the charge which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.'*

Studies in Mark

Chapter 2 : 1-12

Having embarked on a preaching tour of Galilee, from which tour Mark gives us one incident in 1 : 40-45, Christ now returned to the city of his adoption. He had been rejected by Nazareth, and now for a time Capernaum became His headquarters, where He appears to have had the use of a house.

As soon as Christ returned, streams of people came along to see Him. There were such crowds of people that there was no room to receive them even around the door. We take it that Mark is referring to the outside door, and to understand what he means we must picture to ourselves the shape of the typical house in Palestine at this time.

First think of an outside door, facing immediately on to the street. When you passed through this first door, you were not within the house proper. Rather you had to cross a fore-court, which was usually part open and part covered, and then you reached the house proper. The wall now facing you had a window on either side and a door in the centre which led into the living room. When you entered the living room you saw a door at either side of the long wall facing you. These doors led into two small inner rooms, usually bedrooms.

Some houses had two storeys, and as the upper storey consisted of one long room covering the entire bottom storey, it was usually used for any meeting or gathering of people. Such an upper room was used by the disciples and the women while praying in anticipation of Pentecost (Acts 1 : 13), and some feel it likely that it was in an upper room that the following incident took place. However there is no evidence that the house was two-storeyed, and as a house of one storey was by far the commoner, we will assume that it was one of these that Christ had for His use while at Capernaum. We will take it, then, that He was presently in the large living room. The living room was full, people were even in the fore-court outside the living room doors, they were standing cheek by jowl even to the outside door, and were spilling out on to the street. On the faces of these people we can imagine great excitement, for Christ's popular following in Galilee was now at its height.

But there was another element in the company in the house which showed a very different spirit. Luke tells us that 'there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem (5 : 17). The expression 'sitting

by' seems to express the spirit in which these Pharisees took their seats. They were not there with any trouble from which they wished relief. They were not there with any consciousness of need, but rather the opposite. They had heard about this prophet from Galilee and had converged on Capernaum from every quarter that they might see and judge Him for themselves. So they would have watched for Christ's return, and been ready to take their place beside Him at the earliest opportunity. Now that He had returned they had succeeded in beating the crowd to a place in the house, and here they were 'sitting by'. There was cold detachment in their eyes, and there was that pride never far from the Pharisee's heart. So there was an element of conflict in the atmosphere in the house that day. There was the wild enthusiasm of the people and the calculating fault-finding detachment of the Pharisees. Against this mixed background, Christ 'preached the word unto them'.

We must next picture four men coming round a corner of the street. They are sweating and short of breath, for they are carrying a heavy load. It is a paralytic, and they have each a corner of his bed and they mean to bring him in to Jesus. But when they reach the house where they thought their troubles would end, they find them only beginning. Others who had nothing but themselves to carry have run along before them, and the house is crowded to the outside door. There is only one thing for it: they must get up on the roof. This would have been impossible on a western house, but not quite on an eastern one. Access to the roof was by means of an outside stair (which gives us the point of the Saviour's warning in Matthew 24 : 17). The absence of remains of these outside stairways today probably means that they were constructed of wood, and not of stone. Sometimes they would be no more than portable ladders. If it was a ladder in this case, we can only imagine how the four men manhandled the patient up to the roof! When they did get there, of course, their troubles were far from over. Perhaps they had hoped to find Christ in the open courtyard between the house proper and the outside door, in which case it would have been easier to get to Him. But He was not there, and now a solid roof stood between them and Him. To see what an obstacle this was, let us imagine ourselves in the living room below. Along the length of the ceiling centre lies a strong beam which rests on the two end walls, and is supported from the floor by another beam or beams. Crossing this centre beam, and resting also on the other two walls, are the joists or rafters. On top of these is a layer of brushwood and on top of that is the tiling, made of mud and chopped straw which is pressed into the brushwood and baked hard under the hot eastern sun. This is

what faced the four men now, but it did not daunt them. First they 'broke up' the tiling and dug through the brushwood. Next the invaders laid strong hands on the rafters and ripped them up. Perhaps they needed a tool of some description, but if so we will never know how or where they obtained it! At last the hole was big enough, and they lowered the paralytic 'into the midst before Jesus' (Luke 5 : 19). His bed must have had some kind of wooden framework, with the mat or mattress spread on top, or his helpers could not have used ropes as the usage of the Greek verb seems to imply.

Jesus did not reject this interruption as a presumptuous intrusion. He looked at the men on the roof and he saw their faith. Christ was soon to detect another spirit in the scribes present, but in looking at these men what He saw in their hearts was faith. Others might well say it was presumption that dictated their approach. Others might say they should have been guided by the providence which prevented their gaining access to the house in the regular way, that they should have gone home for that day, perhaps to return another day. But they overcame all obstacles, guided by an irresistible drive to get access to Christ. 'Now is the acceptable time,' they said, 'Now is the day of salvation'. And so they forced their way in until they achieved their objective, and Christ looking into their hearts saw only faith. We ought to remember the spirit they showed, and how it was commended by Christ. We ought to remember, too, the texts of Scripture which commend such an aggressive faith to us. 'The people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits' (Daniel 11 : 32). Some perhaps feel that the people who truly know their God shall be so consumed by a sense of unworthiness that they shall remain totally enervated for the whole of their lives. But this is surely false knowledge, begetting false humility. The true spiritual knowledge of God must lead to faith, faith by which the people of God grow strong. And where such strong faith is, works will never be far behind. 'Faith without works is dead' (James 2 : 20).

Of course, there are many other scriptures also which point the lesson which is presented to us in the example of these men. Hebrews 11 : 33 lists for us some of the mighty exploits achieved by those who had faith, and holds them up as our example. When we remember these examples, and the one in the incident here in Mark, let us seek to follow them. Faith will lend strength to climb up rickety stairways, faith will give strength to rip up stout rafters, faith will drive you on until you and your burdens are brought 'into the midst before Jesus'.

Seeing the spirit of faith in the hearts of the paralytic's bearers, Christ turned to deal with the sick man himself. In Matthew's words

Christ said to him, 'Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee'. From this remark to him we can deduce what the man's feelings were. He had a feeling of unworthiness, and no doubt as he was manhandled through the roof and lowered into the room before Jesus he felt as Isaiah did before God in the Temple: 'Woe is me, for I am undone, for I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell among a people of unclean lips (Isaiah 6 : 5). No doubt the man was crying for mercy and the pardon of his sins. To assure the man of the reality of this heavenly privilege Christ bestows on him the title of 'Son'. If he were a son, the man might then argue, he was an heir of God and a joint heir with Jesus Christ (Romans 8 : 17).

As Christ swung open the gates of heaven to this man, and poured into his soul the consolations of the gospel of peace, it was as if the paralytic were alone with him. But he was not alone, and some who watched had thunder on their brow. The atmosphere between Christ and the paralytic was one of heavenly peace, but where the Pharisees were behind them was the sound of a gathering storm. How near they were to a scene of heavenly beauty, and how tragic that their only response should be to reason in their hearts. The heart of the paralytic was flooded with the warm light of the gospel, but the hearts of the scribes knew only the cold dark reasonings of their evil hearts.

Then, as Christ had searched the spirits of those who had borne the paralytic, so now He looked right into the scribes' hearts too. There is no word recorded, that passed between one scribe and the next, but Christ reached into their hearts, and drew out the thoughts that lurked there. 'Why reason ye these things in your hearts—"whether is easier to the sick of the palsy, Thy sin be forgiven thee; or to say Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?"'

Christ read off their thoughts as follows: 'Now we know what the secret is by which this upstart gains his following. He dispenses indulgences which can never be disproved. It is easy for him to say "Thy sins be forgiven thee" because there is no outward sign by which men can discover that he is a spiritual fraud. If he had said something like "Arise and take up thy bed and walk" then that would have been honest, for he had then made his claim to power in a realm where men could judge his claim for themselves.' All these thoughts had in essence occupied the minds of the scribes, and Christ made an open parade of them before the crowd. The very fact that Christ read off their secret thoughts with such accuracy should surely have convinced them that he was no imposter, as they had thought. 'The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints

and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart' (Hebrews 4 : 12). Here was the Word incarnate.

Christ now went on to give His reaction to the thoughts of the scribes: 'But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins . . .' Again we can paraphrase Christ's words as follows: 'You have said that it is the prerogative of the court of Heaven to grant remission of sin. But I will show you that I am divine, that it is no robbery on my part to exercise the prerogatives of God. For though my glory as the Son of God is now veiled in my humiliation as the Son of Man, yet I have authority to carry out on earth that which you say can only be done in Heaven.' What condescension is in these words. The scribes had not been able to follow Him as He had moved in realms unseen and eternal, forgiving the paralytic's sin. Because they had not seen His work with the naked eye they had said He was a cheap fraud and an imposter. Now Christ says He will demonstrate His power in the realm of things seen and temporal, He will come down to the level at which their dim eyes can discern His working. And as He proves His power in healing the paralytic, so He will vindicate His claim to power in the matter of forgiving sins.

Then He turned to the paralytic, and commanded him to get up. The flushed faces of the people, excitedly hoping that their hero will once more show up the Scribes, contrast with the drawn faces of the Scribes, abashed at Christ's public parading of their thoughts before the crowd, but unbelieving to the last. Then the miracle happened. The sick man got up, picked up his mattress and the wooden frame, and walked out easily 'before them all'. They could not part to give him entrance earlier, but now that he was made an example of the healing power of Christ they squeezed themselves back against the wall to let him pass. And as he passed through the wondering crowd they said, 'We never saw the like of this before'. In Matthew's words 'they glorified God, which had given such power unto men'. They were afraid, finding themselves in the presence of One who was the channel of divine healing power to men. The miracle had a salutary effect on many, but we read nothing about the scribes and Pharisees. In a little while they were cavilling at His eating with publicans and sinners. So we assume that, though Christ demonstrated His claims to have authority greater than Moses, and utterly dwarfed the little men who made so much of Moses, yet they rejected Him. Christ would not step inside the framework of the scribes' concepts and regulations. Therefore they refused to step outside to get the truth direct from Christ. They clung to their old safe traditions and refused to touch anything so explosive as the Truth.

The Best Match

EDWARD PEARSE

'The Best Match', subtitled 'The Soul's Espousal to Christ', is a book of sermons which the author published while unable to preach because of illness. His desire in publishing these sermons was that he might say of his readers, as Paul wrote of the Corinthian Church, 'I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin unto Christ'. The edition of 'The Best Match' from which the following chapter is taken is the 12th, published in Glasgow in 1772. In one or two places the spelling has been modernised.

In the first three chapters of his book, Pearse introduces his subject, opens up some aspects of the marriage relationship between Christ and believers, and deals in a general way with the means employed to bring about this spiritual relationship. In chapter 4 he examines particularly 'the more remote acts of divine grace, put forth more immediately by the Father and Jesus Christ, for us, and towards us, in order to the accomplishment of the spousal between Christ and us'. We join this series of sermons at that point where the writer takes up what he calls the 'more near acts of grace which the Father and Jesus Christ by His Spirit, do put forth in us and upon us, for the effecting of the espousal between Christ and us'.

Divine grace has not yet done its work; no, there are other acts which it does, and must put forth, if ever the marriage be made up between Christ and us; and these I call more near, because they are wrought in us and upon us, and do more immediately conduce to the tying of the marriage-knot between Christ and the soul. And as in the former, the Father and Jesus Christ wrought more immediately of and by themselves; so in this the blessed Spirit's influence comes in, and his grace shows itself, they in these acting by him; and the truth is, the match is all this while but half-made; but now God comes, and by His Spirit working in and upon the soul, carries on and completes it; which he does by these five acts of grace.

1. The soul is, by the Spirit of God, divorced from its old husband,

the law, and thereby is fitted and prepared for an espousal to Christ. Naturally we are all married to another husband, even to the law; and we must be divorced from that, or we can never be married and espoused to Christ; so much the apostle clearly holds forth, Romans 7 : 4. 'Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. Pray mark, 'married to another'; the law was their husband, to which they were married; and that they must be dead to, and divorced from, if ever they would be married to Jesus Christ; look, says he (for it is his own argument and allusion in verses 2, 3), as a woman can't be the wife of two husbands at once, but her present husband must be dead before she can be married to another; so neither can a soul be espoused to these two husbands at once, the law and Christ, but he must be dead to, or divorced from the one, e'er he can be married to the other; observe, 'ye are dead to the law'; what is it to be dead to the law, or divorced from the law? To be dead to the law, is to have no hope, no expectation of life and righteousness by the law; it is to be sensible that the law cannot save us; yet there is more in it than so. To be dead to the law, is to see ourselves dead by the law; it is to see ourselves lost and condemned by the law, for sin, as the transgression thereof; and thus we must all be dead to the law, or divorced from the law, or we cannot be married to Christ. Now this the Spirit of God effects by a work of the law upon the conscience; he divorces the soul from the law, by the law, i.e., by bringing home the law to the conscience: Thus the Apostle felt in his own soul, 'I thro' the law' (says he), that is, the Spirit of God bringing home the law to my conscience, 'am dead to the law', Galatians 2 : 19. So again, Romans 7 : 9. 'I was alive without the law once; but when the Commandment came, sin revived, and I died.' I was alive without the law once, that is, I thought myself to be alive, I apprehended my state to be good and happy; but this was without the law, i.e., before the Spirit of God, by the ministry of the law, convinced me of my sin and misery; therefore it follows, when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died; i.e., when the law came in its convincing power through the Spirit upon my soul, then I saw my sinful, dead and miserable state; Thus was he himself divorced from the law, that he might be married to Christ. The sum is this, the Spirit of God comes and shows the soul the strictness and holiness, the purity and spirituality of the law, and makes him sensible how large the duty is that it requires, how impossible it is for him to keep it, and how many ways he has broken it; he withal lets him see the dreadfulness of that curse and condemnation it has justly laid him under for

the breach thereof; and thus he is divorced from it; And this is all one with the Spirit's convincing us of sin, and our lost and miserable condition by reason thereof, which is his first work in order to faith, and so to our espousing to Christ, John 16 : 8. Thus by the Spirit of God the soul is divorced from the law, he is taken off from all expectations of life and happiness, by that, and is made to see his own sinfulness, and so his infinite need of Christ, whereby he is fitted for this other and better husband.

II. The soul being thus divorced from the law, and so fitted and prepared for Christ, then the Spirit of God reveals and offers the Lord Jesus Christ in the promise of the gospel, as a better husband to him: Now the blessed Spirit comes, and does as Abraham's servant did, who was sent to take a wife for Isaac; he told Rebecca of his master's greatness, of his flocks, and his herds, his silver, and his gold, his men-servants, and his maid-servants, and withal, that he had given all to Isaac, Genesis 24 : 35, 36. So the Spirit of God now sets before the soul the riches and the greatness, the beauty and the excellency of the Lord Jesus Christ: He tells them what a full, what a sweet, what a rich, what an amiable one he is, and withal tenders him to his embraces; he reveals and offers him to him, as one full of grace and truth, as one that has all fulness dwelling in him, all fulness of life and peace of righteousness and salvation, as one every way able to save him to the very utmost, which is, that which Christ calls his 'convincing the world of righteousness', John 16 : 9. He reveals and offers him to him in the transcendent beauty, excellency and amiableness of his person on the one hand; as also in the glorious fulness, largeness, and sufficiency of his grace and righteousness on the other hand: Thus he reveals and offers Christ unto the soul, and withal, opens his glory, and causes it to shine forth before him; so that now the soul sees that in Christ, that fulness, that beauty, that love, that amiableness, that sweetness, which he never saw before: Christ is now another thing in the soul's eye than ever he was before. Now the soul, as those, John 1 : 14, 'Beholds his glory, as the glory of the only begotten Son, full of grace and truth': Yea, not only does he thus reveal Christ unto the soul, but withal fixes the soul's eye upon him; he makes him to pore and gaze upon Christ, as the most excellent and amiable object, and as one infinitely needful for him; and this is called a 'seeing of the Son', and that in order to believing; 'whosoever seeth the Son, and believeth on him, shall have everlasting life,' John 6 : 40. The blessed Spirit deals by the soul herein, as God, by the angel, did with Hagar, Genesis 21 : 19, where it is said, 'He opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water for her relief': She was in a very distressed condition, being in the wilderness, she and her

child both in a perishing condition, being in the wilderness; and her water in the bottle being spent. Now God shows her a well of water, whence she fetches a full supply. So here, the poor soul having been under the convincing power of the law, sees himself in a woeful, miserable, distressed condition; whereupon he is full of bitterness, crying out with Hagar, 'How shall I see the child die?' How can I bear it to perish eternally? But now the Spirit of God comes, and open his eyes, and shews him Christ, and Christ as infinitely suitable to him. Look, says the Spirit to the soul, being now desolate and undone; look, here is a Saviour for thee, a husband for thee, another and a better husband than the law could ever have been, even the Lord Jesus Christ, who is infinitely able to pay all thy debts, to supply all thy wants, to heal all thy wounds, to relieve all thy distresses, to pardon all thy sins, to satisfy all thy desires, to answer all thy love, and to give thee perfect happiness and satisfaction in and with himself for ever: Look here he is, here he is in the promise, here he is in the covenant, here he is in the tender and invitation of the gospel; here he is at the very door of the heart, knocking and calling for admission thereunto. Revelation 3 : 20. Here he is with his arms wide open to receive and embrace thee; and that notwithstanding all thy vileness, sinfulness, and unworthiness: Look therefore to him, and be saved.

III. With this tender and revelation of Christ unto the soul, the Spirit of God comes and works a secret love and longing in the soul after Christ. He does not make a naked tender and revelation of Christ only to the soul; for that were not enough, but he withal gives him a secret touch, whereby he is made to breathe and long after Christ, to move a little Christward; 'He drops a little myrrh upon the handle of the lock, as it were, whereby he is drawn out in holy longings and breathings after sweet Jesus; as you know the case sometimes was with the spouse, Song of Sol. 5 : 5 . . ' Yea, such is that secret touch, which in and with those tenders and revelations of Christ the Spirit of God gives the soul, as that (like that of the loadstone to the Needle) which sets it a trembling, and will not suffer it to rest, till it stands fully pointed Christward; yea, till it finds itself in the very bosom and embraces of that beloved; it is indeed such as by degrees makes the soul 'sick of love, and longing after Christ', Cant. 5 : 8, and he cries out for Christ, as Rachel sometimes did for children; 'Give me children' (said she) 'or else I die'; So, give me Christ, says the soul, or else I die, I perish, and that for ever; In a word, nothing but Christ will satisfy him; send him to the creatures, send him to his own duties and services, send him to his highest accomplishments and attainments, and without Christ they

will not do; yea, all these he accounts 'but as dung', as dog's meat; 'that he may win Christ', Phil. 3 : 8. Indeed, heaven and earth, with all the fulness of both, are nothing to him without Christ; and an union with Christ; his language now is, O Christ! Christ above ten thousand worlds: O that Christ were mine! O that I had union with him! O that I were in his embraces! O how happy are they that are married to him! and how happy should I be, could I call him mine! This I say is his language, and when once it comes to this, then things work well indeed, then the match is in a good forwardness, there being but an hair's breadth, as it were, between Christ and the soul. Therefore,

IV. The soul being thus inclined Christ-ward, and drawn forth in holy longings after union with him; the Spirit of God comes and enables him to believe, he carries the soul to Christ in a way of believing, whereby he actually closes with him, and is espoused unto him: For, my beloved, it is faith which ties the marriage-knot, and makes up the marriage-union between Christ and us. Hence Christ is said 'to dwell in our hearts by faith', Eph. 3 : 17. Christ dwelling in our hearts notes the nearest union and communion between him and us. And how comes he thus to dwell in our hearts? why, by faith, by our believing on him: Hence also, Christ tells us, That 'he that eateth his flesh, and drinketh his blood, dwelleth in him, and he in him'. John 6 : 56. By eating Christ's flesh and drinking his blood, is meant, our believing on him; and so he himself expounds it; for he makes eating and drinking of him, and believing on him, all one throughout that Chapter: Now (says he) 'He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him'; that is, he has the nearest union and communion with me. It is faith then that unites, and so espouses us to Christ: Faith gives Christ an inlet into the soul, and it gives the soul an inlet into Christ, and so they are made one, and married together. By believing, we consent to take Christ, and actually do take him for our head and husband for ever: and so the match is made up between him and us: 'We by faith' (says a learned man) 'wrought in us by the Holy Spirit, consent unto this marriage with Christ': . . . As Christ gives his consent, so we must also give ours, which we do by believing in him; by which therefore the match is made up between him and us. Now, there is a threefold act of faith, which the Spirit of God works in the soul, whereby he more especially closes with Christ, and is espoused unto him, made one with him in a marriage-covenant.

- (a) An act of choice or election.
- (b) An act of trust or dependence.
- (c) An act of resignation or subjection.

(a) An act of choice or election: In the act or work of believing, the

soul is by the Spirit of God made solemnly and deliberately to choose Christ as his only head and husband, his Lord and Saviour, being thus offered to him in the gospel. Choice or election, as the school-men tell us, is an act of the will, whereby it pitches upon some one thing, and prefers that before all others in order to such or such an end: Accordingly we may conceive of this act of faith we are speaking of: It lies thus; the will is by the Spirit of God sweetly and powerfully determined upon Christ, preferring him for an head and husband, a Lord and Saviour, before all others; It singles him out, as it were, from all others, whether persons or things, in heaven and earth, and embraces him as the best husband, the best Saviour, the best Lord; There are others which make love to him, and tender themselves to his embraces, as sin, self, the law, the world, with its inticements; but he passes by all, yea, rejects all with loathing and indignation, and pitches upon Christ as infinitely best, saying to him, 'I will have none in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee'. This the scripture calls sometimes 'a laying hold upon Christ', Prov. 3 : 18. Sometimes a 'receiving' or embracing of Christ, John 1 : 12. It is true, in the work of faith, Christ is and must be received into the understanding, but he is most properly said to be received into our will and affections; Christ in the gospel is revealed and offered to the soul with all his riches, fulness, and perfections; he is tendered to him as a full, a mighty, and uttermost Saviour, as one who has not only an infinite fulness and sufficiency in him to redeem and save, but also an infinite suitableness in him to endear and delight the soul; and accordingly the soul accepts and embraces him, he cleaves to him and fastens upon him, resolving to have none but him alone; his language of him now is, there is none like Christ, no head like this head, no husband like this husband, no saviour like this saviour for my soul: This is the head, the husband, the saviour that I need, and that indeed my soul desires. No love like this love, no beauty like this beauty, no blood like this blood, no righteousness like his righteousness, no fulness like his fulness; He therefore, and he alone shall be my head, my husband, my saviour, and my all for ever. Sweet Jesus (says he) dost thou tender thyself for an head and husband to me, and art thou willing to be embraced by me? Lo, then I do with my whole soul accept of thee, and that for all times, and in all conditions, with all inconveniences as well as thy privileges; to suffer for thee, as well as to reign with thee; and this the soul does upon the deepest counsel, and most mature deliberation; and accordingly he abides by his choice for ever.

(b) An act of trust or dependence: As in the work of faith the soul is, by the Spirit of God, made to choose Christ; so also to trust and

depend upon him for all grace, righteousness and salvation. Now it bottoms upon Christ, and anchors upon Christ, rests and relies upon Christ for all life and peace, for all grace on earth, and glory in heaven: He lays the whole weight and stress of his salvation upon him: He commits all to him, ventures all upon him, expects all from him; this the Scripture calls sometimes 'a trusting in Christ'. Eph. 1 : 13, sometimes 'a leaning upon Christ', Song of Sol. 8 : 5, sometimes 'a hoping in Christ', 1 Cor. 15 : 19. And in this respect Christ is called 'our hope', 1 Tim. 1 : 1, our hope, that is, the object of our hope and trust, as to life and salvation; the soul has no hope in himself, no hope in the creature, no hope in the law, or first covenant, no hope in any thing in heaven or earth on this side Christ: He looks here and there, to this and that, but he can find no solid ground of hope, no bottom to build or rest upon for life and salvation; but then he turns his eye upon Christ, and there he sees abundant ground of hope; he beholds him upon the cross, and there is hope; he beholds him upon the throne, and there is hope; he looks upon him dying, and there is hope; he looks upon him rising, ascending, sitting at the Father's right hand making intercession for us, and there is hope: He looks upon the infinite virtue of his blood, the infinite efficacy of his Spirit, the infinite fulness of his grace, the infinite dimensions of his love, the infinite freeness and faithfulness of his promise; and in these he sees infinite ground of hope and trust, and accordingly he rolls and ventures all upon him: Here I will build (says he), here I will bottom, here I will rest, here I will hang and depend, here I will live; yea, and if die I must, here I will die, His language to Christ now is like that of the Psalmist to God in another case, Psalm 29 : 17. 'Now Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in thee.' This is to 'cast anchor within the veil', Heb. 6 : 19. And indeed it is with poor souls many times, as with persons at sea; the storm arises, the waves lift up themselves, which beating upon them, they are ready to sink every moment, and their very soul is melted because of heaviness but anon, they find bottom, cast anchor, and are at rest; So poor souls are under storms of sin, guilt, and wrath, perishing in their own apprehension every moment; but anon they drop an anchor of hope upon Christ, and do rest upon him; or it is with them in this case, as it was with the dove when she was first sent out of the ark, she found no resting place abroad for the sole of her foot; but at length returned to the ark, and there found rest, Gen. 8 : 8, 9. So the poor guilty soul finds no rest any where but in Christ. His language in this act of faith is such as this, I am a poor, lost, sinful, distressed creature, and there is but one door I can expect relief from, and that is Christ, and at this door I will lie in wait; I know he is able to help me, for he can save to

the uttermost; and surely he hath bowels, great bowels towards poor sinners; he is a merciful high-priest. He says concerning him, as they sometimes did concerning the king of Israel, 'Behold we have heard that the king of Israel is a merciful king, peradventure he will save us': Yea he has bid me look to him and be saved; and he invites all them that are weary, and heavy laden, to come to him, and promises them rest; Why then should I not rest and rely upon him? It is true, I am a mighty sinner, but he is a more mighty Saviour: Have I sinned to the utmost? He has satisfied to the utmost; What shall I say? True, I am death, but Christ is life; I am darkness, but Christ is light; I am sin, but Christ is holiness; I am guilty, but Christ is righteousness; I am emptiness and nothingness, but Christ is fulness and sufficiency; I have broken the law, but Christ has fulfilled the law; and his life is infinitely able to swallow up my death; his light, my darkness; his holiness, my sin; his righteousness, my guilt; his fulness, my emptiness; on him therefore I will lean, and live, and hope. It is true, I am utterly unworthy of any life, any grace, any favour; but Christ does all for sinners freely, he loves freely, he pardons freely, he saves freely; how vile therefore and unworthy so ever I am, yet I will rest and depend upon him, who knows but he may cast an eye of love upon me? This is that act of faith which is held forth, Isa. 45 : 24. 'Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.' I have neither strength nor righteousness of my own, but I have all righteousness and strength in Christ; all righteousness for pardon and justification; this is that the Apostle calls a 'rejoicing in Christ Jesus, having no confidence in the flesh', Phil. 3 : 3.

To draw towards a conclusion of this head: Which way soever the soul looks on this side Christ, he meets with nothing but discouragement: If he looks to himself, there he sees nothing but sin and guilt, blackness and deformity: in his heart he sees a fountain of sin, an abyss of sin, a very hell of sin and wickedness; in his life he finds innumerable evils, sins of a crimson die and scarlet tincture staring him in the face; yea, his very duties are not without sin, even in these, there is abundance of pride, formality, unbelief, and the like: His very 'righteousnesses are as filthy rags', Isa. 64 : 6. If he looks unto the law, there he reads his doom and condemnation in every line thereof; there he finds himself under the curse: there he sees nothing but 'fear, and blackness, and darkness, and tempest', Heb. 12 : 18. If he looks to justice, that he finds as a flaming sword keeping him from the tree of life, from all happiness: That appears with an angry frowning countenance, demanding satisfaction as being infinitely wrong'd: But now in the midst of all these discouragements, the poor soul at length gets a sight of Christ, in whom he sees encouragement after all; He discovers

land in a storm, as it were, and finds in him a bottom to rest his weary spirit upon; in him he sees that which can atone God, satisfy justice, answer all the demands of the law, fully deliver him from sin and guilt and make him both holy and happy for ever; and accordingly he rests and rolls himself upon him, resolving that if he dies, he will die thus leaning upon this beloved.

(c) An act of resignation or subjection. As in the work of faith the soul thus chooses Christ, and depends upon him, so also he is by the Spirit of God made cordially and unreservedly to resign up himself unto him to be ruled, governed, and disposed of by him in his own way: The soul now puts himself out of his own power and possession, he passes himself away from himself, and he gives up himself into the power and possession of Jesus Christ, to be ruled, governed, and saved by him as he sees good: which is properly that act of faith which we call resignation, and this the Scripture often mentions, 'one shall say, I am the Lord's', Isa. 45 : 5, that is, he shall give or resign up himself to the Lord to be for ever his, and at his disposal; so 2 Cor. 8 : 5, 'They gave themselves unto the Lord': and Ephes. 5 : 24, the church is said to 'be subject to Christ': The case seems to be this, there having been many treaties past in order to a match between Christ and the soul; the soul at length, through the help of the divine Spirit, is made freely to consent to take Christ for his only head and husband, and to be subject to him in all things, to be perfectly and eternally at his disposal. His language now to Christ, is like that of Ahab to Benhadad, 1 Kings 20 : 4, 'Behold I am thine and all that I have is thine': Sweet Lord Jesus, says the soul, I have been my own, and have lived too much in mine own will, and to my own ends and interests, but now I desire to be thine, and to live in thy will and to thine ends; take possession of me, save me, rule me, lead me, dispose of me as thou pleasest, do all thy pleasure in me, pull down and set up what thou wilt; I will be, and do, and suffer what thou wilt have me to be, and do, and suffer. And this is properly that act of faith, whereby we close with Christ as a Lord and a King, and is indeed the evidence of the truth of the two former; for you must know, that though faith's first aspect be to Christ as a Saviour, yet it comes to eye him as a Lord and King also. As faith fully bottoms upon the satisfaction of Christ, so it freely bows to the scepter of Christ; yea, when faith cannot challenge (lay claim to) Christ as a Saviour, yet it will own Christ as a Lord. You know how Laban spake to Abraham's servant upon the sight of the ear-rings and bracelets, which he had given his sister Rebekah, and upon his hearing a relation from her of his discourse with her, 'Come in thou blessed of the Lord, why standest thou without? I have room

for thee', Gen. 24 : 31. In like manner does the soul speak to Christ, upon the sight of that worth that is in him, and that need which she has of him; come in thou blessed of the Lord, come in thou blessed of the Lord, why standest thou without? I have room for thee in my understanding, and in my will and affections; and I would have thee possess all, and command all: In a word, the soul freely gives up himself to Christ's holy and spiritual government. Thou art an holy Christ (says he), who is to reign, and I resign up myself to thee, I will have no Lord but thee; take the whole throne to thyself within me; I know thy yoke is an easy yoke, and I desire to bear it; thy scepter is a righteous scepter, and I desire to bow to it; thy kingdom is a kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and I heartily desire to come under the power of it. I would be sanctified as well as justified; I desire thy Spirit to subdue my corruptions for me, and to make me holy, as well as thy blood to wash away my guilt for me. . . . Thus by these three, which indeed are the great united acts of faith, the Spirit of God enables the soul to close with Christ in a marriage-covenant, and relation.

V. The Soul being thus enabled to believe, and so close with Christ in a marriage-covenant; then as the crown and perfection of all, the blessed Spirit of God, takes up his abode, and dwells for ever in that soul, as the pledge and everlasting bond of this marriage-union and relation between them. The sweet Spirit does not only come as a friend, to treat about the match, and also to tie the marriage-knot between Christ and us; but moreover, this being done, he remains himself in the soul, as a love-token from Christ to him, as the pawn and pledge of this espousal, and as the everlasting bond and confirmation of this marriage-union and relation: Hence that of the Apostle, 'He that is joined to the Lord, is one Spirit', 1 Cor. 6 : 17, one Spirit with the Lord he is joined to; that Spirit which did join him to Christ, does remain in him and in Christ both: Christ leaves his own Spirit in his spouses as the pledge and bond of that marriage-union that is between him and them; so that he and they have the same Spirit dwelling in them; yet with this difference, he dwells in Christ without measure, in us by measure; in Christ immediately, by virtue of the personal union, in us by his gifts and graces: in Christ as an head, in us as members, and he with these are the love-tokens, the pawns and pledges of his marriage-troth plighted between Christ and us; and this indeed is that which makes this union so strong and inviolable, as that it can never be broken: Yea, not only does he remain in the soul as the pledge and bond of this union, but also to deck and adorn the soul with grace, and

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Speak Lord

PAUL TUCKER

THE CHURCH

PRINCIPLES OF THE CALL TO SERVICE

Read Acts 11 : 19-26; 13 : 1-13.

I want to concentrate on the church at Antioch because it shows some of the guiding lessons that have to do with a call to Christian service.

I. THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH.

(a) *It was founded by everyday believers*, verses 20, 21. These men had not been formally set apart or ordained, but they did have the hand of the Lord upon them and they took the gospel with them as they journeyed, and as a result of their ministry this church was brought into being. Paul often refers to the church that is in the house of certain individuals, see Colossians 4 : 15; Romans 16 : 3-5. Many of these churches in the New Testament did not have an ecclesiastical origin, but were begun by ordinary believers. So it was with the church in Antioch.

(b) *It was composed mainly of Gentiles*. In the beginning the gospel was preached to a few Jews in Antioch, but with the advent of other believers (people of Cyprus and Cyrene) the preaching was extended to the Grecians, the Gentiles, and to all who would listen, so the great majority of members in this church were Gentile believers. It was from this church that Paul, the great Apostle to the Gentiles, was thrust forth.

(c) *It knew a great deal concerning the Lordship of Jesus Christ*. It was founded and established on the sovereignty of Jesus Christ. Notice the reference to the Lord Jesus that comes constantly in connection with this church, verses 20, 21. 'A great number believed and turned unto the Lord.' Not simply to Jesus, but to the *Lord*. 'When Barnabas saw the grace of God (verse 23), he exhorted them all to cleave unto the Lord.' 'And much people was added unto the Lord' (verse 24). Barnabas does not appear to have been a great expositor, but he could encourage and exhort others. Then he realised that a deeper ministry was needed to establish this church and so he went to Tarsus and

brought back Saul. In verse 26 we are told that they 'taught much people', with the result 'The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch'. There was such a noticeable mark about the lives of these believers that they were recognised as Christ-men and Christ-women.

II. THE CHARACTER OF THE MEN WHOM GOD CALLS OUT OF SUCH A CHURCH.

Turn to chapter 13 and notice the following characteristics of the people whom God calls to His service.

(a) *They recognise the place and position of the local church.* Barnabas and Saul were within the local church; they belonged to it and worshipped in it. They did not pride themselves in being freelancers who were independent of any church membership; they were found within the local fellowship so that when the Holy Spirit needed men for His service He found there men whom He could call. This is a very important feature. Some men today go to college for training without first having proved themselves in their local church or without having been recommended by the oversight of a local church. Whenever the Lord called men in the New Testament He called them out from a local church fellowship where they belonged.

(b) *They were men of gifts*, obviously so (verse 1). There are four principal passages in the New Testament where the gifts of the Holy Spirit are mentioned. Romans 12 : 3-8; 1 Corinthians 12 and 14; Ephesians 4 : 7-11. In all of them these two gifts are mentioned—Prophecy and Teaching. Every believer has certain gifts, but if a person is called to the ministry, to evangelism or missionary work, there must be some manifest evidence that the Lord has graciously endowed that person with the necessary qualifications. Gifts are not simply natural ability. When Paul speaks of 'gifts' he is thinking of something graciously and supernaturally bestowed by the Lord. Saul and Barnabas were numbered among those to whom God had bestowed certain gifts and we are to regard Christian service not as an opportunity for exploiting our own talents, but rather as an exercising of these gifts for the furtherance of His work and for the glory of His Name. Christian service is not undertaken because of personal desire, but because a person can do no other.

(c) *They are men whose gifts were patiently developed and locally exercised.* Verse 1. Paul was in that church at least one year before he received his call, chapter 11 : 26. Paul and Barnabas were numbered among the prophets and teachers, and whilst there in the local church, they were patiently exercising and developing their gifts before they were sent forth to a larger ministry. Any who are called into the Lord's service should first prove themselves within the local fellowship, so

that the minister, the oversight and members, when these people receive a call to service elsewhere, can say of them, yes, they have certain gifts, we have seen them at work, they go with our blessing.

(d) *They are men who can work together in the harmony of team spirit.* The members mentioned in verse 1 are really symbolic of the universal appeal of the gospel. There are different nationalities and geographical and cultural backgrounds. Barnabas was a Jew from Cyprus, a man of some financial standing who was able to give a large portion of his goods to the Lord's work. Simeon, who was also called Niger (an African name), so he could have been a coloured brother, and in all probability was. Some suggest he is Simon who carried the cross of Jesus. We do not know much about him, but he came from the area of North Africa. Manaen was a man of social status because he had been brought up with King Herod Tetrarch. The margin says he was Herod's foster-brother, so he moved in court circles. Yet here he is with Simeon, Lucius and Barnabas. Saul, who although a Jew, was also a free-born Roman and one steeped in Jewish theology. They were all brought together, ministering and serving in the one church fellowship. Different social backgrounds, nationalities and colours, and yet there is harmony. One of the greatest problems in Christian service is not of 'worldliness', but that of human relationships. No one called to the Lord's service should not be able to get on with his fellow brothers and sisters within the local church. If we cannot be in harmony with our brothers and sisters in Christ at home, how can we be at unity serving where the situation is even perhaps more trying and difficult?

(e) *They are people of self-discipline;* prepared to separate themselves from lesser things, verse 2. That word 'fasted'; it is easy to avoid it and explain it away, but they were shutting themselves away from everything visible and temporal. They probably took the smallest amount of food necessary for their existence in order that they might devote themselves entirely, at this point, to the work and will of God. They really were prepared to go out of their way to put the Lord first. Now those are the kind of people whom the Lord calls into His service. Not only separated from doubtful things, but at times separated even from legitimate things for the glory of God.

(f) *They are people who put worship before work.* See verse 2. 'As they ministered to the Lord.' When we come together for worship, so often we are concerned about what we get out of the service; the first purpose of our coming together is not to receive, but to give. 'O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.' 'Give unto the Lord the glory due to His Name.' As sinners we come with empty hands, but we do not

come with empty hands as worshippers. We offer ourselves as living sacrifices, holy, acceptable unto God. At Antioch they were met together in the church, and the outstanding feature was this—that before they engaged in any service, before they received their call to go out to the regions beyond, they ministered unto the Lord. There was that in their hearts which delighted the heart of God. It is worship that gives quality to our service. That is why some preachers speak truth which grates, and other preachers speak the same truth but it comes with power and with conviction. It is the quality of life behind the spoken word that gives it effect.

(g) *They were men who were sensitive to the voice of God*, verse 2. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, 'the Holy Ghost said, separate me Barnabas and Saul'. We are not told how the Holy Spirit spoke; we are just told that He did speak, which shows us that this church knew the intimate ministry of the Holy Spirit. Barnabas and Saul were there and the call of the Holy Spirit became a conscious fact in their own experience and they knew that they were being spoken to. There are many ways of sending a message to a friend. There is a telegram, letter, telephone or messenger, but if your friend is to get the message punctually, one thing is necessary. He must be at the address when the message is received. What a tragedy it would have been if Barnabas and Saul had been absent from this particular meeting when the Holy Spirit was calling *them* to be separated unto missionary endeavour. The 'call' *may* be received at a missionary rally, but these men received their call to the mission field in the local church prayer meeting.

III. THE ATTITUDE OF THE CHURCH TO THE CALL OF THESE MEN.

(a) *They recognised immediately that these men were being called*. See verse 3. The laying on of hands upon these brothers, in the light of Old Testament teaching, was a picture of identification. Aaron placed his hands on the head of the live goat as he confessed the sins of the children of Israel, and it was regarded as an act of identification and transference, the sins of the whole nation being thereby transferred to the animal. Similarly, these believers in Antioch were identifying themselves completely with the call of these men to the work of the ministry. No one should go forth into Christian service without the benediction and the blessing of the oversight and membership of the local church.

(b) *They took the call seriously*. Although earlier they had fasted, now, later on, they give themselves to fasting again, and then 'they sent them forth'. They did not try to hold on to them although these

two men were among the choicest in the church membership. They recognised that God was sending them forth to a larger ministry. Notice the amazing co-operation between the local church and the Holy Spirit, verse 4. 'So they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost.' The church was so at one with the mind of God that the Holy Spirit in heaven did His part and sent these men forth, and the believers in the local church did their part and they also sent them forth. So there was this intimate co-operation between the Lord and the local church.

Now this is the kind of blueprint for Christian service. A church that is under the sovereignty of Jesus Christ; a church whose members know something of the direct and personal work of the Holy Spirit; a church from which people are sent forth and these people are characterised by fidelity to the local church, by certain gifts that have been patiently exercised within the local church. They are a people who can work together in a team spirit before ever they get any call to wider ministry. They are a people who are prepared to put secondary things in the background, that spiritual things may have priority. They are a people sensitive to the voice of God; they are a people who are recognised by the local church as men and women for whom the Lord has a larger field of service.

THE BEST MATCH — *continued from page 64*

to make him ready for the consummation of the marriage above: You know, when Abraham's servant saw that Rebekah consented to be Isaac's wife, he then gave her 'jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and rich raiment', Gen. 24 : 53. So the blessed Spirit of God having gained the soul's consent to be espoused to Christ, and the marriage knot being tied between them, now he dwells in the soul to deck and adorn him; now he gives him jewels of gold and silver, furnishes and beautifies him with all divine and heavenly graces: He dwells in him as an indeficient spring and fountain of all grace and gracious dispositions, till he has lodged him safe in the arms and bosom of his sweet husband above. Thus, at length, the espousals or marriage relation is made up between Christ and the soul. And O how blessed is the soul, blessed be the day that ever thou wert born; blessed the womb that bare thee and blessed the paps which gave thee suck; blessed gospel which revealed this sweet Christ to thee, and blessed Spirit that has tied this happy knot between him and thee.

For Younger Readers

DAVID LIVINGSTONE, IV

Mary's death took the heart out of David. He wrote his children about it, no doubt to comfort them, but perhaps to relieve the thoughts of his own mind as well. To one of the older ones he wrote: 'Dear Agnes, I feel alone in the world now, and what will the poor dear baby do without her mamma? . . . All she told you she now enforces, as if beckoning from heaven. Nannie dear, meet her there. Don't lose the crown of joy she now wears, and the Lord be gracious to you in all things. . . . I pity you on receiving this, but it is the Lord. Your sorrowing and lonely father.'

It was difficult for the children to be parted from their father at a time like this, but a joyful reunion was in store. In 1864 Livingstone came home, after sailing his boat to India to sell her there. On his first arrival home his mother did not know him. Neither did he himself recognise his youngest boy: Thomas had grown so much. But soon they were playing all together, as in days gone by, and Anna Mary was telling him 'that she preferred Garibaldi buttons on her dress'.

Not long after arriving home, David went down the Clyde again to see the launching of a Turkish frigate from Napier's yard. Agnes was with him, and so was the Turkish ambassador. At one railway station, the crowd, seeing the carriage in which Livingstone was, began to cheer. 'The cheers are for you,' Livingstone immediately said to the Ambassador. 'No,' he replied, 'I am only what my master made me; you are what you made yourself.'

Travelling to Bath, with Agnes still with him, David gave a lecture to 2,500 people. This public speaking was a thing that always made him feel ill, and it was not long before he was engaged in something else that he hated doing, too. He started writing another book. For eight months he stayed at Newstead Abbey, and the room where he toiled over his book became known as 'The Livingstone Room'. Then, on 15th April, 1865, came a very special day. Agnes was called by her father and told to take up his pen in her hand. What for? 'Just write FINIS at the end there,' her father said.

On Monday, 19th June, David received a telegram to say that his mother had died the previous day. Just before the end, David's sister Agnes had said, 'The Saviour has come for you, Mother, You can lippen (trust) yourself to Him?' 'Oh, yes,' had been her reply. David was

thankful to God that he was able to attend the funeral, remembering how his mother had said in 1858 that she would like 'one of her laddies to lay her head in the grave'. He was glad of the privilege 'to pay the last tribute to a dear good mother'.

Shortly after this, Livingstone was asked to attend the prize-giving at Oswell's school in Hamilton. He didn't want to go, because he was afraid he would be asked to speak. He did go, and he had to speak. This turned out to be his last public address in Scotland, and the end of his speech to the children we would do well to heed today: 'Fear God and work hard'.

It was soon time for David to return to Africa. He had been asked to go as an explorer only, and had refused. He was going as a missionary, but had agreed to combine the work with searching for the source of the Nile. He said goodbye to his children. It was a long goodbye and a loving one, for he had the feeling that it would be his last.

But his letters to his children, while on the way to Africa, were not dreary and sad. To Agnes he wrote about some passengers being seasick, and of a cure which he thought would be as good as the old one for toothache: 'take a mouthful of cold water, sit on the fire till it boils, and you will suffer no more from it'. In the same way he wrote, again to Agnes, about a visit to the Sultan's palace in Zanzibar: 'After coffee and sherbet we came away, and the wretched band now struck up "The British Grenadier"', as if the fact of my being only five feet eight, and Brebner about two inches lower, ought not to have suggested "Wee Willie Winkie" as more appropriate'. Livingstone hated pomp, and this was why he felt the irresistible urge to laugh when the band blared forth in his honour. Fortunately he succeeded in concealing his mirth until beyond the public gaze.

More seriously, writing later to Thomas, Livingstone raised the matter of his son's life-work: 'Whatever you feel yourself best fitted for, "Commit thy way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He will bring it to pass". One ought to endeavour to devote the peculiarities of his nature to his Redeemer's service, whatever these may be'.

At the time when Livingstone wrote these words of advice to his son, he himself was needing all the peculiar qualities of his own nature to carry on his work in Africa. Time and time again he felt himself poised for victory, and every time the prize seemed snatched from his grasp. He plodded over endless miles in this direction or that, but never could he discover the source of the Nile. He might easily have given up, but he had promised he would search, and search he did right to the end.

Engrossed as he was in his journeys in the interior, David knew nothing of the stir going on in the outside world. One group of the

natives with him had proved useless, and at the first excuse they had all left him and returned to the Coast. When they got there, they pretended that they had not deserted Livingstone at all, and invented a story about him and the rest of the party. There had been a fight, they said, and Livingstone had been killed. After the battle they had returned to bury him in a shallow grave. When this story reached Britain, people did not know what to say. Most believed it, and the story of his life appeared in many papers, as if he were now dead. However, some refused to believe that the great explorer had died, and sent a search party to investigate. They did not reach Livingstone himself, but as they travelled inland they soon discovered enough evidence to prove that he was in fact alive.

1867 was the year in which Livingstone discovered Lake Moero, but it was also the year in which he lost his medicine chest. It was stolen by a carrier. The experience was to Livingstone like receiving the sentence of death. Over many years he had developed his own ways of treating himself for fever. Now he had no medicine, and he began to suffer fearfully. His strength just sapped away: he could no more retain it than hold back an ebbing tide. He speaks of lying helpless outside his hut. He tried to get up, pulling with both arms on the door-posts. But when he was just upright he fell again, hitting his head on a box.

In the years that followed, till 1871, Livingstone had a bitter cup to drink. Certainly, he was doing work of value from the geographical point of view. But he was disappointed in most of his helpers, and disheartened by the degrading effects of the slave trade. In his body he was suffering greatly and he had no medicine to dull the pain. Then, in June 1871 he had to return to Ujiji. He did not choose to return himself, but those with him had lost heart altogether. One consolation, as he dragged himself wearily over the five hundred miles journey, was that at Ujiji he would find supplies. He got to Ujiji all right, but there were no supplies. Instead, he found a wretched Arab who had sold off all Livingstone's supplies, having learned through the Koran that he was now dead! With everything else, he had lost 3,000 yards of cloth and 700 pounds of beads. As David sat in Ujiji, a dark cloud seemed to have settled over him and his doings. His body was a bag of neglected bones. Then, one morning, he raised his head at the sound of Susi's excited voice. 'An Englishman,' he gasped, 'I see him,' and off he went. Glancing down the trail, the lonely missionary saw a caravan approach with an American flag at the head. It was Stanley. He was the first white man Livingstone had seen for five years, and what a welcome he gave him! Not that he said much at first, for

he could only say again and again, as he gazed at his visitor in unbelief, 'You have brought me new life, you have brought me new life'.

It was on the 14th of March, 1872, that they parted. Stanley had pled and pled with his new friend to return with him to civilisation, but Livingstone's mind was made up. He would remain in Africa until his work was done. On the morning of the 14th, Stanley had intended to be off at 5 a.m. Three hours later he was still finding things to do, just to prolong the pleasure of the great man's company. At last Stanley set off, and Livingstone began a weary vigil as he awaited supplies to be sent by Stanley from the Coast.

Turning inland for the last time, it was as if Livingstone had heard a call from the very heart of Africa. The hour of death was near and he must seek a hiding place in the land he loved where he could end his days. As the weeks passed, his strength steadily decreased. At last his faithful followers had to carry him.

On the last day of April, 1873, Livingstone lay delirious in Chitambo's village at Itala. At four in the morning of the first of May the watching boy ran for Susi, who came at once to his master's hut. Together they peeped in. A candle by the bedside shed a shaky light on a scene that filled them both with awe. The great explorer, on his knees in an attitude of prayer, his head sunk in his hands on the rough pillow, had gone on the greatest journey of all.

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Quotes from Livingstone

This issue sees the conclusion of the series on Livingstone in 'For Younger Readers', and we thought that adult readers might find it thought-provoking to read a number of extracts from Livingstone's own writings. They take us quickly through his eventful life, and give greater insight than any commentary could provide into his personality, some of the difficulties he met with in his work, the faith and patience which he showed, and his views on some aspects of missionary work.

Of his conversion, which took place when he was about 20 years of age, Livingstone wrote:

Great pains had been taken by my parents to instil the doctrines of Christianity into my mind, and I had no difficulty in understanding the theory of free salvation by the atonement of our Saviour, but it was only about this time that I began to feel the necessity of a personal application of the doctrine to my own case. The change was like what it may be supposed would take place were it possible to cure a case of 'colour blindness'.

During his first years in Africa, Livingstone came face to face with the trials which missionaries, as parents, face:

Missionaries expose their children to a contamination which they have had no hand in producing. We expose them and ourselves for a time, in order to elevate those sad captives of sin and Satan who are the victims of the degradation of ages. . . . In regard to even the vestige of a home my children are absolutely vagabonds. 'When shall we return to Kolobeng? When to Kuruman?' 'Never. The mark of Cain is on your foreheads. Your father is a missionary.' Our children ought to have both the sympathies and prayers of those at whose bidding we became strangers for life.

Livingstone was not many years in Africa when he conceived the plan of seeking a way to the West Coast. He hoped that this would open the interior of Africa to civilising influences, and that he would find a healthy spot for the establishment of a mission station. The

directors of the London Missionary Society were concerned that he should have the company of a colleague in this tremendous undertaking, but Livingstone replied that, of those available, they could not be spared from their work, or would regard this venture as tempting providence, or were not suited to the task. He went on (April 1852):

Independently of this I consider that, when in the habit of constantly looking to the Divine hand for guidance in all our movements, when no one possessed of a small measure of suitability and willingness makes his appearance, we ought to conclude to go alone. I am not given to despondency or lowness of spirits. I enjoy a perpetual flow of good spirits. I felt more perplexity in reference to parting with my family and about my pecuniary affairs, and concerning which I lately wrote you, than I ever did in my life before. Had Mr. Oswell* not presented us with about £170 since we came here, I should have been in a fix. He clothed Mrs. L. and family in a manner we never anticipated. This I state in confidence to you. It would offend him to make it public. But it makes me comparatively easy in mind, and I am fully convinced that I am in the path of duty. The prevalence of the African fever makes me ponder over the subject of death, but after reviewing the whole subject I ask what I am good for if I cannot trust God to manage that, so that His glory will be promoted whether I live or die. I have, too, an abundance of work in prospect, and I hope you will pray for me that I may be kept pure and uncontaminated by the heathen, and that the great aim of preaching peace and good will may be constantly before my mind.

While still waiting to embark on the main part of this expedition, Livingstone wrote to a friend in Cape Town:

You very kindly say you fear for the result of my going in here alone. I hope I am in the way of duty. My own conviction that this is the case has never wavered. I am doing something for God. Have preached the gospel in many a spot where the name of Christ has never been heard, and would work still more in the way of reducing the Barotse language if I had not suffered severely from fever. Exhaustion produced vertigo, causing me, if I looked suddenly up, almost to lose consciousness. This made me give up some of my sedentary work. But I hope God will accept of what I can do. The temperature in the shade is about 100° Fahr. during the day, and often 90° at 9 o'clock at night. But a merry heart doeth good like a medicine. If I allowed my mind to dwell constantly on the miserable degradation, wickedness and

(*An explorer and game hunter. He was with Livingstone when he discovered Lake Ngami in 1849.)

sad prospects of the people here, I might become melancholy and soon die. But we have a fair world, and all the wonderful works of our Father in it, and I believe we ought to allow our minds to dwell on the beautiful more than on the evil. I am never low spirited. It might be different if I had a crusty companion. I have experience in the matter. And my thoughts never turn with any longing except for my family. I think we are immortal till our work is done, not on the platform only but on the pestilential plains of the glorious Leeambye.*

By travelling from the interior to Loanda, Livingstone had opened up a trade route to the west coast. He confidently expected that honest trade would be established, and that slave-trading would, as a result, die in this area. However, he had not found a really suitable spot for a mission station, and he was therefore hardly back in the interior when he left again for the east. In the course of this hazardous journey, in January 1856, he wrote:

Thank God for His great mercies thus far. How soon I may be called to stand before Him, my righteous Judge, I know not. All hearts are in His hands, and merciful and gracious is the Lord our God. O Jesus, grant me resignation to Thy will, and entire reliance on Thy powerful hand. On Thy word alone I lean. But wilt Thou permit me to plead for Africa? The cause is Thine. What an impulse will be given to the idea that Africa is not open if I perish now! See, O Lord, how the heathen rise up against me as they did to Thy Son. I commit my way unto Thee; I trust also in Thee that Thou wilt direct my steps. Thou givest wisdom liberally to all who ask Thee—give it to me, my Father. My family is Thine. They are in the best hands. Oh! be gracious, and all our sins do Thou blot out.

‘A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On thy kind arms I fall.’

Leave me not, forsake me not. I cast myself and all my care down at Thy feet. Thou knowest all I need, for time and for eternity.

Two months later, when he was about 300 miles from the east coast, he wrote to the Secretary of the L.M.S.:

The kind interest which many of my countrymen have shewn in my work makes me feel deeply grateful, and somewhat ashamed withal at having done so little to deserve it. Many would have done much more than I could effect, and done it better. . . . I am not so elated in having performed what has not, to my knowledge, been done before in

(*A branch of the Zambesi River.)

traversing the continent, because the end of the geographical feat is but the beginning of the missionary enterprise. May God grant me life to do some more good to this poor Africa.

On this journey down the Zambesi, Livingstone discovered what he was sure would be an ideal spot for the establishment of a mission. However, when he got to the coast, he found a letter waiting for him which fairly dampened his spirits. To the friend in Cape Town he wrote:

I got a letter from the Directors, by way of Mosambique, in which I am told that 'they are restricted in their power of aiding plans connected only remotely with the spread of the gospel'. And they add that, even though certain obstacles (fever, tsetse, etc.) should prove surmountable, 'the financial circumstances of the Society are not such as to afford any ground of hope that it would be in a position within any definite period to undertake untried, remote and difficult fields of labour'. I had imagined in my simplicity that both my preaching, conversation, and travel were as nearly connected with the spread of the gospel as the Boers would allow them to be. The plan of opening up a path from either the East or West coast for the teeming population of the Interior was submitted to their judgment, and secured their formal approbation. I have been seven times in peril of my life from savage men while laboriously and without swerving pursuing that plan, and never doubted but that I was in the path of duty. Indeed, so clearly did I perceive that I was performing good service to the cause of Christ, I wrote to my brother that I would perish rather than fail in my enterprise. I shall not boast of what I have done, but the wonderful mercies I have received will constrain me to follow out the work in spite of the veto of the Board. If it is according to the will of God, means will be provided from other quarters.

During his first visit home, Livingstone gave a memorable lecture to a vast audience at Cambridge (December 1857). He appealed for missionaries, and then went on:

Education has been given us from above for the purpose of bringing to the benighted the knowledge of a Saviour. If you knew the satisfaction of performing such a duty, as well as the gratitude to God which the missionary must always feel, in being chosen for so noble, so sacred a calling, you would have no hesitation in embracing it.

For my own part I have never ceased to rejoice that God has appointed me to such an office. People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. Can that be called a sacrifice which is simply paid back as a small part of a great debt owing to our

God, which we can never repay? Is that a sacrifice which brings its own blest reward in healthful activity, the consciousness of doing good, peace of mind, and a bright hope of a glorious destiny hereafter? Away with the word in such a view, and with such a thought! It is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege. Anxiety, sickness, suffering or danger, now and then, with a foregoing of the common conveniences and charities of this life may make us pause, and cause the spirit to waver, and the soul to sink; but let this only be for a moment. All these are nothing when compared with the glory which shall hereafter be revealed in, and for, us. I never made a sacrifice. Of this we ought not to talk when we remember the great sacrifice which HE made . . . 'who being the brightness of his Father's glory and the express image of his person and upholding all things by the word of his power when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high' . . .

I beg to direct your attention to Africa: I know that in a few years I shall be cut off in that country, which is now open; do not let it be shut again.

At the beginning of his account of his first travels in Africa, Livingstone had warned readers that he did not intend to dwell on missionary work which he had already done. Rather it was his purpose to focus attention on the great amount of labour which now called to be done. However, we do get a glimpse of his work as an evangelist now and then, as in this account of an incident during his second missionary journey (September 1860):

On the last occasion of our holding Divine service at Sesheke, the men were invited to converse on the subject on which they had been addressed. So many of them had died since we were here before, that not much probability existed of our all meeting again, and this had naturally led to the subject of a future state. They replied that they did not wish to offend the speaker, but they could not believe that all the dead would rise again: 'Can those who have been killed in the field and devoured by the vultures; or those who have been eaten by the hyenas or lions; or those who had been tossed into the river and eaten by more than one crocodile—can they all be raised again to life?' They were told that men could take a leaden bullet, change it into a salt (acetate of lead), which could be dissolved as completely in water as our bodies in the stomachs of animals, and then reconvert it into lead; or that the bullet could be transformed into the red and white paint of our wagons, and again be reconverted into the original lead; and that if men exactly like themselves could do so much, how much more could He do who has made the eye to see, and the ear to hear! We

added, however, that we believed in a resurrection, not because we understood how it would be brought about, but because our Heavenly Father assured us of it in His Book. The reference to the truth of the Book and its Author seems always to have more influence on the native mind than the cleverness of the illustration.

It was during this second trip, when the party was about 100 miles from the mouth of the Zambesi, that Mary Livingstone died. From his letters at this time we see clearly into the heart of one who wept like a child over his wife's lifeless body. In 'For Younger Readers' we have already seen part of a letter which he wrote to one of his daughters:

Dear Agnes, I feel alone in the world now, and what will the poor dear baby do without her mamma? She often spoke of her, and sometimes burst into a flood of tears, just as I now do in taking up and arranging the things left by my beloved partner. . . . I bow to the Divine hand that chastens me. God grant that I may learn the lesson He means to teach! All she told you to do she now enforces, as if beckoning from heaven. Nannie dear, meet her there. Don't lose the crown of joy she now wears, and the Lord be gracious to you in all things. . . . I pity you on receiving this; but it is the Lord. Your sorrowing and lonely father.

A fortnight later Livingstone wrote:

For the first time in my life I feel willing to die.

1861 brought Bishop MacKenzie and his colleagues out to set up the Universities' Mission. It was at this period that Livingstone became even more aware of the horrors of the slave trade:

Next afternoon we halted at the village of an old friend, Mbame. . . . After resting a little Mbame told us that a slave party on its way to Tette would presently pass through his village. 'Shall we interfere?' we inquired of each other. We remembered that all our valuable private baggage was in Tette, which, if we freed the slaves, might, together with some Government property, be destroyed in retaliation; but this system of slave-hunters dogging us where previously they durst not venture and, on pretence of being 'our children', setting one tribe against another, to furnish themselves with slaves, would so inevitably thwart all the efforts, for which we had the sanction of the Portuguese Government, that we resolved to run all risks, and put a stop, if possible, to the slave-trade, which had now followed on the footsteps of our discoveries. A few minutes after Mbame had spoken to us, the slave party, a long line of manacled men, women and children, came wending their way round the hill and into the valley, on the side of which the village stood. The black drivers, armed with muskets, and

bedecked with various articles of finery, marched jauntily in the front, middle, and rear of the line; some of them blowing exultant notes out of long tin horns. They seemed to feel that they were doing a very noble thing, and might proudly march with an air of triumph. But the instant the fellows caught a glimpse of the English, they darted off like mad into the forest; so fast indeed that we caught but a glimpse of their red caps and the soles of their feet. The chief of the party alone remained; and he from being in front, had his hand tightly grasped by a Makololo! He proved to be a well-known slave of the late Commandant at Tette, and for some time our own attendant while there. On asking him how he obtained these captives, he replied he had bought them; but on our inquiring of the people themselves all, save four, said they had been captured in war. While this inquiry was going on, he bolted too. The captives knelt down, and in their way of expressing thanks, clapped their hands with great energy. They were thus left entirely on our hands, and knives were soon busy at work, cutting the women and children loose. It was more difficult to cut the men adrift, as each had his neck in the fork of a stout stick, six or seven feet long, and was kept in by an iron rod which was riveted at both ends across the throat. With a saw, luckily in the Bishop's baggage, one by one the men were sawn out into freedom. The women, on being told to take the meal they were carrying and cook breakfast for themselves and the children, seemed to consider the news too good to be true; but after a little coaxing went at it with alacrity, and made a capital fire by which to boil their pots with the slave sticks and bonds, their old acquaintances through many a sad night and weary day. Many were mere children about five years of age and under. One little boy, with the simplicity of childhood, said to our men, 'The others tied and starved us, you cut the ropes and tell us to eat; what sort of people are you? Where did you come from?' . . .

Eighty-four, chiefly women and children, were liberated; and on being told that they were now free, and might go where they pleased, or remain with us, they all chose to stay; and the Bishop wisely attached them to his Mission, to be educated as members of a Christian family. In this way a great difficulty in the commencement of a Mission was overcome. Years are usually required before confidence is so far instilled into the natives' mind as to induce them, young or old, to submit to the guidance of strangers, professing to be actuated by motives the reverse of worldly wisdom, and inculcating customs strange and unknown to them and their fathers.

To appreciate how dark was the shadow which the slave trade cast

over Livingstone's soul, we must remember as we read the following that Livingstone tended to underestimate rather than exaggerate:

When endeavouring to give some account of the slave trade of East Africa, it is necessary to keep far within the truth, in order not to be thought guilty of exaggeration, but, in sober seriousness, the subject does not admit of exaggeration. To overdraw its evils is a simple impossibility. The sights I have seen, though common incidents of the traffic, are so nauseous that I always strive to drive them from memory. In the case of most disagreeable recollections I can succeed, in time, in consigning them to oblivion; but the slavery scenes come back unbidden, and make me start up at night, horrified by their vividness.

On March 19th, 1872 (Livingstone's fifty-ninth birthday) he wrote:

My Jesus, my King, my life, my all; I again dedicate my whole self to Thee. Accept me, and grant, O gracious Father, that ere this year is gone I may finish my task. In Jesus' name I ask it. Amen, so let it be.

In speaking of finishing his task, Livingstone no doubt thought in part of the aim of this third expedition: the discovery of the source of the Nile. But his mind must also have been occupied with what was now the heaviest burden on his heart:

To me it seems to be said, 'If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, behold we knew it not, doth not He that pondereth the heart consider, and He that keepeth thy soul, doth He not know, and shall He not give to every one according to his works?' I have been led, unwittingly, into the slaving field of the Banians and Arabs in central Africa—I have seen the woes inflicted, and I must still work and do all I can to expose and mitigate the evils.

No one can estimate the amount of God-pleasing good that will be done, if by divine favour this awful slave trade, into the midst of which I have come, be abolished. This will be something to have lived for, and the conviction has grown in my mind that it was for this end I have been detained so long.

The last words which Livingstone penned (April 27th, 1873) were:

Knocked up and remain—recover—sent to buy milch-goats. We are on the banks of the Molilamo.

More significantly, he was on the banks of Jordan; in four days he passed over to the other side.

A few more extracts from his writings will give an indication of Livingstone's views on some aspects of missionary work.

On missionary priorities:

Civilisation, the lower end of our missions, ought perhaps to sink lower still. If the love of Christ enters the heart, civilisation follows in due course.

After referring to the early death of Bishop MacKenzie, Livingstone commented on the quality of men required for missionary work:

In giving vent to the natural feelings of regret, that a man so eminently endowed and learned, as was Bishop MacKenzie, should have been so soon cut off, some have expressed an opinion that it was wrong to use an instrument so valuable merely to convert the heathen. If the attempt is to be made at all, it is 'penny wise and pound foolish' to employ any but the very best men, and those who are specially educated for the work. An ordinary clergyman, however well suited for a parish, will not, without special training, make a missionary; and as to their comparative usefulness, it is like that of the man who builds an hospital, as compared with that of the surgeon who in after years only administers for a time the remedies which the founder had provided in perpetuity. Had the Bishop succeeded in introducing Christianity, his converts might have been few, but they would have formed a continuous roll for all time to come.

On the question of financial support for missionaries, Livingstone introduced some views after noting that no missionary whom he had ever met had combined his spiritual work with commercial trading:

The Jesuits in Africa were wiser in their generation. They were a large community, and went on the plan of devoting the abilities of every one to that pursuit in which he was most likely to excel. One studied natural history, another literature, and a third, skilful in barter, was sent in search of ivory and gold-dust, that while pushing forward the mission to distant tribes he might yet afford pecuniary aid to the brethren whom he had left at the central settlement. We Protestants provide missionaries with a bare subsistence, and are unsparing in our praise of them for not being worldly-minded when our niggardliness compels them to live as did the prodigal son. I do not need to speak for myself, and for that very reason I feel at liberty to interpose a word in behalf of others. It is quite possible to find men whose devotion to the work of spreading the gospel will make them ready to submit to any

sacrifice. What, however, can be thought of the justice of Christians, who not only work their agents at the lowest terms, but regard what they give as charity!

Regarding general missionary strategy, and the comparison of short-term and long-term aims, Livingstone wrote:

The influence of the sacred scriptures in the true negro language will be immense. If we call the actual amount of conversions the direct result of missions, and the wide diffusion of better principles the indirect, I have no hesitation in asserting that the latter are of infinite more importance than the former. I do not undervalue the importance of the conversion and salvation of the most abject creature that breathes. It is of overwhelming worth to him personally. But, viewing our work of wide sowing of the good seed relatively to the harvest which will be reaped when all our heads are low, there can I think be no comparison.

It seems necessary in pointing out a large new field and counselling its immediate occupation, that I should advert to this subject, for we have been amused once and again of late with the 'discovery' that concentration of missionary agency is what is needed, and not that sowing beside all waters which led you to send Morrison* and Milne to be lost among 300,000,000 idolators, and the Church Missionary Society to look to the Antipodes and Patagonia and East Africa, with the full knowledge that charity begins at home. The question involves various elements which I have not the means of solving. I therefore speak with diffidence, though any report within my reach during the past ten or twelve years seems to say, 'the more concentration the less success', i.e., if you increase missionaries so that they bear a proportion of more than one to 2,000 or 3,000 of the population, in ten years the proportion of communicants will be very much less per man employed than if the proportion had been one to 20,000 of the people. I refer to Africa alone, and, as it has been held forth as an example of the good effects of concentration, it is singular, if you glance at the numbers of communicants and numbers of missionaries, the one is in inverse ratio to the other, though it is believed that there is not much difference in the standards of admission.

Finally, as to the spirit in which missionary work should be approached, Livingstone unconsciously set a high standard by his own example, writing at a time when he was harassed by many difficulties:

Oh, how far am I from that hearty devotion to God I read of in

(*Robert Morrison, who went to China in 1807.)

others! The Lord have mercy on me a sinner. When employed in active travel my mind becomes inactive and the heart cold and dead, but after remaining some time quiet the heart revives and I become more spiritually minded . . . I have been more than usually drawn out in earnest prayer of late for the expedition, for my family, the fear lest —'s misrepresentation may injure the cause of Christ, the hope that I may be permitted to open this dark land to the blessed gospel. . . . **There is a great deal of trifling frivolousness in not trusting in God.** Not trusting in Him who is truth itself and faithfulness, the same yesterday and for ever! It is presumption not to trust in Him implicitly, and yet this heart is sometimes fearfully guilty of mistrust. I am ashamed to think of it. Ay; but He must put the trusting, loving, child-like spirit in by His grace.

FOR FURTHER READING

The following books were used in the preparation of articles on Livingstone, and are recommended for further reading:

Life of David Livingstone: by W. G. Blaikie.

The Life of David Livingstone: by Mrs. J. H. Worcester Jr. (Moody Press pbk.).

Livingstone's Missionary Correspondence 1841-1856: Ed. by I. Schapera.

A Popular Account of Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa.

A Popular Account of Dr. Livingstone's Expedition to the Zambesi and its Tributaries.

These last two contain Livingstone's own account of his first and second expeditions respectively.

Note: Some months ago we received a suggestion that we should publish details of source books used in the preparation of articles, so that readers could follow up subjects raised. We thank the reader for this suggestion and intend to act on it where appropriate.

CONTINUING OUR WITNESS

The continued ministry of *The Gospel Magazine* has, under God, been made possible in part through bequests and legacies. Such remembrance by readers when settling their affairs would be much valued by the Trustees as they seek to maintain the testimony of the Magazine.

MILESTONES

We have heard with regret of the death in London of Mrs. Phebe Moynihan, and extend our sympathy to her husband and all her family. Mrs. Moynihan was the last surviving child of Mr. and Mrs. George Alexander, and her passing means the severing of links with the Gospel Magazine of the past. Mrs. Moynihan's late sister contributed many articles to these pages under the pen-name *Follower-on*, and, going further back, her late father wrote articles for the Gospel Magazine for upwards of 50 years.

Death is the last captivity from which Christ will deliver His people. With that thought in mind, we re-issue part of an article contributed by George Alexander in 1908, entitled,

DELIVERANCE FROM SPIRITUAL CAPTIVITIES

So the Lord liveth that brought the children of Israel up out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage. As blessed Toplady—

‘He lives to carry on
His people’s cause above.’

How great in the eyes of elect angels is the mercy which puts into the heart of a fallen, ruined sinner, the enquiry and cry—‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’ ‘It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out of the land of Egypt; this is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.’ Yea, by the Israel of God who constituted His Gentile elect, for these also see by faith the same glorious attributes of wisdom, power, goodness, longsuffering, and faithfulness, displayed in that Gospel of their salvation that has come to them in power and in much assurance; that hath quickened their souls, opened their blind eyes, and unstopped their deaf ears; that tender mercy of our God; that Day-spring from on high that hath guided their feet into the way of peace.

This same great and blessed Jehovah who thus by the Gospel calls sinners out of darkness into His marvellous light—and it is a marvellous light—liveth to deliver them out of all the spiritual captivities they afterwards get into, and carried away with, when their hearts, once warmed with the love of God in Christ Jesus, get cold, and become insensate, or when they, with Paul, find themselves carried captive to the law of sin in their members. Surely, that is a grievous

spiritual captivity to a dear child of God which brings him to say with John Newton—

‘ ’Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought:
Do I love the Lord, or no?
Am I His or am I not?’

And yet, is it not blessed for a poor sinner to be sincerely exercised with such a point? Surely, surely, such an one is not Moab settled on his lees and not emptied from vessel to vessel.

. . . As all David’s captives were recovered (I Samuel 30 : 18), so all Christ’s, including the ‘scarcely saved’ (I Peter 4 : 18), the ‘sinner converted from the error of his way’ (James 5 : 20), the ‘brother that has sinned a sin not unto death’ (I John 5 : 16), and all and every ‘uttermost’ sinner who comes back unto God by Him—the alone, the only Mediator between God and man. For of all whom His eternal Father gave Him in His eternal counsel of peace and eternal purpose of sovereign mercy. He hath lost none.

G.A.

A milestone of another kind is reached this year in the history of the Banner of Truth Trust. 1977 is the twentieth year since the establishment of the Trust, and we rejoice with them as they look back with thankfulness over these years. We feel sure that the move to establish the Trust was of God, and that it is He who has crowned this important work with success. We thank the Rev. Iain Murray for permission to quote below from the article with which the December issue of the Banner Magazine begins.

‘This month commences the twentieth year since the time when, in December 1957, the first titles to be published by the Trust appeared. Sometimes when we reflect on the role which the books have played in these two decades we feel “like unto them that dream”. At the beginning of this work we were given faith to believe that books by practically unknown authors would powerfully influence many who read them: we believed it because the works of the authors—Watson, Whitefield, Edwards and others—had both honoured God and been honoured by God to the enriching of the Church in former days, yet the *extent* to which such authors would sell in the second-half of the twentieth century was to be far greater than any of us realised. Younger Christians who read these lines may find it hard to believe that just one generation ago the authors above named were known only to a

comparative handful of people in Britain and that no regular publishing house existed in this country committed to the furtherance of the doctrines of grace as formulated in the historic creeds and confessions of the Protestant Churches. A. W. Pink, who died in 1952, came to accept the fact that no British publisher was interested in his writings, and John Murray's outstanding work, *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied*, which appeared in the States in 1955, could find no U.K. publisher at that date.

When the Trust began, it was an openly-expressed opinion in the world of religious publishing that a programme so heavily dependent on 'out-of-date' authors could not possibly succeed. After all, for decades there had been little or no demand for Puritan books in the second-hand book market and it was reasonable to suppose that nothing—not even low prices or attractive jackets—could make people buy books which they did not want. But the truth is that in God's purposes a change in the spiritual climate was coming in the 1950s—there was a sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees—and the Trust, far from being the cause of the change, was but one of the agencies raised up to meet the need of a spiritual hunger in many lives and churches. That is how we understand what happened and we do not therefore agree with an opinion expressed in a recent *Crusade* magazine where the writer, reviewing developments in evangelical life in the past 21 years, spoke of 'the revival of Reformed Theology' as 'sparked off largely by the setting up of the Banner of Truth Trust which flooded the market with shelves of inexpensive reprints of Puritan classics'.

When the Trust began, none of us who shared in the beginning had any opinion how long it would last. We knew that publishing houses are but temporary agencies in God's hands. We recalled, too, how some of the most honoured Christian publishing houses of the past have survived only in name long after their real spiritual usefulness was gone. Many of the books we now publish were once published by others and no doubt they will be published again in future ages when the name of the Trust will have ceased to be a part of the living world. Certain it is that no human institutions are permanent and irreplaceable.

Our business is to be faithful in the opportunities given us in the present and in that respect we are deeply thankful to be starting this twentieth year with four of the best books we have ever published. One is a reprint, namely *Whitefield's Letters* (1734-1742), being volume 1 of his *Works* which were published in 6 volumes in 1771 and have never

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BOOK REVIEWS

IN THE BEGINNING. E. J. Young. Banner of Truth, pp. 117. 60p.

E. J. Young who taught the Old Testament at Westminster Seminary, Philadelphia for over thirty years was recognised as one of the outstanding conservative scholars of our day. Many a hard pressed divinity student has doubtless been helped to weather the storms through the guidance of his Old Testament introduction. Here however, the great Old Testament scholar demonstrated that he could also communicate the truth at a popular level. This series was originally delivered as addresses at the Toronto Baptist seminary and as a result they bear the fresh mark of their spoken character.

Dr. Young was deeply persuaded that Christians as a whole need to have a firm grasp of the biblical doctrine of creation, and what better way of achieving this than by studying the first three chapters of Genesis! The trouble is that so much of a destructive nature has been written that many young Christians who have faced this attack at school, may feel an underlying uncertainty, so that they are hesitant as they read Genesis 1-3. Is it legend or myth or is it really history? Is it compatible with the theory of evolution or does it teach a unique doctrine of creation? Was there an actual fall or is Genesis 3 a parable? These and allied questions are dealt with in a simple and forthright style which none the less emerges out of a profound consideration of the issues involved. Here is a great scholar, a great lover of the Bible, and above all a great lover of the Lord of the Bible, introducing us in a refreshingly simple way to the great basic truths of Scripture.

EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY, Lectures on Doctrine. A. A. Hodge. Banner of Truth, pp. 402. £1.25.

This is another series of popular lectures, though obviously what was considered a 'popular' approach when they were delivered in Philadelphia in 1886, will now appear as more dated in style. However they do still retain something of their original character, so that they will provide an admirable introduction for someone who wants to start reading theology and is deterred by some of the more weighty tomes. Let me hasten to add that not only beginners but more experienced readers will benefit from Hodge.

The lectures range widely over the whole theological field, dealing with the doctrine of God, the Person and work of Christ, the doctrine of Scripture, of the church and the sacraments, of heaven and hell.

All are handled with a sure touch, for here is a great thinker who has reflected much on God's revelation. Yet, although there is deep conviction, for Hodge was a dogmatic theologian in the true sense of that much maligned word 'dogmatic', there is also a very gracious spirit when he has to differ from those whom he recognises as his brethren. Thus while he is quite prepared to designate 'Arminianism in the abstract as an historical scheme' as 'a heresy', he insists that 'the case is essentially different when we come to consider the great co-existing bodies of Christian people calling themselves respectively Calvinists and Arminians'. So, he maintains, 'the Arminians think and speak very much like Calvinists when they come to talk with God in either the confession of sin or the supplication for grace . . . On the other hand the Calvinist thinks and speaks like the better class of Arminians when he addresses the consciences of men'. Lest any anxious reader of this review has an uneasy feeling that the Banner is slipping from its Calvinistic convictions, he had better read the remainder of that lecture by Hodge on Predestination, which should re-assure him!

Of course you will not agree with all his positions. If you are a Baptist you will query his advocacy of infant baptism, but you will have to muster strong arguments, and I trust you will shew as much Christian courtesy as Hodge did in the controversy. Then again there will be queries raised—I would love to be able to ask him what he meant on p. 218 by the statement: 'Through him (i.e. Christ) have all the scattered rays of true religion in all ages and to all people been revealed. Through his atonement not only all adult believers, but all dying in infancy, all idiots, and all who have been saved by any extraordinary means known only to God, are reconciled to God, and stand absolved from guilt.'

Did I say at the outset that this is a good introduction to theology for beginners? Perhaps it has become clearer why I had to qualify that, for the queries he raises in your mind will drive you back to serious reflection on the Word. But then that is the best tribute that one can possibly pay to an author, that he forces you to think!

LETTERS OF JOHN NEWTON. Banner of Truth, pp. 191. 60p.

John Newton is known to many as one of the great trophies of grace of the eighteenth century awakening, as 'the old African blasphemer'—to quote his own description of himself. To others he is author of many of the Olney hymns—of 'Amazing grace' or 'How sweet the name of Jesus sounds' and many others. To others he is the driving force behind Wilberforce in the crusade against slavery. Here he appears in another role as that of letter writer. This was a ministry

closely related to his basic task which was that of a pastor. Those who have read something of Newton's loving care of the poet Cowper when the latter was in the depths of mental gloom, or of the readiness of so many to consult him for advice, will recognise that he was a man with a warm heart as well as a cool head. Indeed these letters are simply an extension of his pastoral counselling.

In a day when correspondence has degenerated into brief notes and when books of spiritual advice are, all too often, slight productions if indeed they have not been reduced still further to a series of formulae, Newton's letters seem to belong to another world. These are not a few thoughts quickly tossed off, but serious reflections on vital issues, the fruit of mature reflection on the truths of Scripture, and of a deep knowledge of human nature. A very wide range of issues is covered—Communion with God; Advice on the work of the Ministry; Family worship; How to keep close to the Lord—these and many others are covered with biblical perception, warm sympathy and with personal application. 'It is the Lord's will,' he said, 'that I should do most by my letters.' The verdict of succeeding generations has endorsed his conviction.

H. M. CARSON.

JOHN CHARLES RYLE: *Evangelical Bishop*. P. Toon and M. Smout. 123 pp. £3.75. James Clarke, Cambridge.

Readers of THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE will recall a series of articles some two or three years ago by Michael Smout on J. C. Ryle, who worked for 37 years as a parish minister in East Anglia in the last century before spending the last 20 years of his life as the first Bishop of the new diocese of Liverpool, which at that time (the last two decades of the nineteenth century), was the second city in the British Empire. Now Mr. Smout, who is himself a clergyman in the Liverpool diocese, and the Rev. Dr. Peter Toon, a lecturer at Oak Hill Theological College, have together produced the fullest life of Ryle yet published.

The work has three chapters, each with a convenient number of sub-sections. J. C. Ryle, who was born in 1816, was sent to Eton, and then went on to Oxford. While a number of influences were used in bringing Ryle to an experience of saving grace it was the emphatic reading of the Second Lesson at Evening Prayer one Sunday afternoon in an Oxford parish church which sealed home the truth of the Gospel upon his heart in a personal and saving manner. The passage included Ephesians 2 : 8, 9, 10.

In 1841 Ryle was ordained by Charles Sumner, the evangelical

Bishop of Winchester. After working with characteristic vigour and zeal in two Hampshire parishes, Ryle began his two long Suffolk ministries, first at Helmingham, and then at Stradbroke, in 1843. Not only was he an able preacher, and an earnest pastor, he was gifted as a writer too. Thus by means of his many tracts, his *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels* (7 volumes), and his published platform addresses delivered all over the country, Ryle became known to a multitude of readers—and his works continue to be published and republished right down to the present day.

Early in 1880 Ryle was nominated as Dean of Salisbury, but before he could be installed in that office the call came to become the first Bishop of Liverpool. He was then 63 years of age, yet he devoted himself with much vigour to the great task of providing spiritual ministry for the fast-growing city and diocesan area.

The two authors have produced a very readable work indeed. Costs however have unfortunately limited its size, which has meant that while Ryle's life is well covered, and his writings and theology are indicated, yet discussion of theological matters is somewhat restricted. Nevertheless Bishop Ryle's position as a Calvinist: his attitude to the rising ritualism of the time; to theological liberalism (views which his son Herbert, Bishop of Winchester, sad to say, espoused); and to the Keswick Convention movement—all these matters are plain and clear. Indeed Ryle's strength is to be seen in the steady unwavering convictions which he held throughout a long life, and which were set out in such forthright terms in his writings and utterances. He was steeped in the Word of God, and in the teaching of the Reformers, the Puritans, and the early Evangelicals.

Dr. Toon's and Mr. Smout's book is a valuable record of one whom his successor at Liverpool, F. J. Chevasse, described as 'that man of granite, with the heart of a child'. A reading of this book should turn many to study afresh Ryle's writings for themselves. We took down a volume of the *Expository Thoughts* (John, vol. 1), and from it give a quotation which well illustrates Ryle's stand and style.

In the Preface to his first volume on John, Ryle explains that his *Expository Thoughts* have now become so extended that John is in fact a complete Commentary. He says that in a day of abounding vagueness and indistinctness on doctrinal matters it is the duty of all advocates of clear, well-defined, sharply-cut theology to demonstrate that their views are thoroughly borne out by Scripture. This, Ryle tells us 'I have endeavoured to do in this Commentary'. He adds that the reader will see at a glance 'that I belong to that school in the Church of England which, rightly or wrongly, is called "Evangelical"'.

He will see that I have no sympathy whatever with either Romish or Neologian tendencies. He will see that I hold firmly the distinctive theological views of the Reformers and doctrinal Puritans, and that I totally disapprove of the loose and broad theology of some modern schools of divines'. He goes on 'I feel no hesitation in avowing that I believe in the "plenary inspiration" of every word of the original text of Holy Scripture. I hold not only that the Bible *contains* the Word of God, but that every jot of it was written, or brought together, by Divine inspiration, and *is* the Word of God.' Thus Ryle speaks, and the candid reader must admit that, in contrast to so much that passes for scholarship today, there is nothing hesitant, ambiguous, or equivocal about him. Men of such decided conviction could be of much use today if the Lord is pleased to grant a reviving to his Church.

The volume before us provides a wealth of footnotes, indicating the sources drawn upon by the authors. Footnote 104 (p. 115) is apparently missing; and there are a few typographical slips. In a list of 'books edited by or introduced by J. C. Ryle' (p. 123) his eleven page 'Estimate of Manton', which appears in volume 2 of James Nisbet & Co.'s 22 volume edition of *The Complete Works of Thomas Manton, D.D.* (1871), could well be added. It contains a lively defence of the Puritans. 'If anyone,' says Ryle, 'wants to buy a good specimen of a Puritan divine, my advice unhesitatingly is "Let him buy Manton", and he will find he is possessed of real literary gold.' If you wish to know more about Ryle's life and ministry buy Toon and Smout. And if you desire to be warmed in heart and taught in truth, then buy Ryle.

GORDON HILL.

MILESTONES — continued from page 87

since been reprinted. In our view these Letters are altogether as valuable as his Journals. The second-hand copy belonging to the present writer has long been one of his most treasured books. It leads the reader straight into the spirit as well as to the events of the 18th-Century Revival. The other three volumes are all being published for the first time, Dr. Lloyd-Jones on *The Christian Warfare* (continuing his series on Ephesians), J. Gresham Machen on *The New Testament: An Introduction to its Literature and History*, and Volume 1 of *The Collected Writings of John Murray . . .*