

THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE

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Incorporating the Protestant Beacon and The British Protestant

New Series
No. 1537

NOVEMBER — DECEMBER 1987

Old Series
No. 2537

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Editorial

In a day of great discouragement Zerubbabel challenged God's people with his cry "Who has despised the day of small things?" (Zechariah 4:10). After the return from captivity the city walls were a heap of rubble, the temple lay in ruins, and many were ready to say "the task is beyond us, let us give up the unequal struggle". Zerubbabel, confident of the ultimate success of the work, reassured the loyal remnant whose hearts were downcast.

This challenge from the walls of Zion is very much needed today. From the spiritual point of view we live in a day of small things. We need, therefore to avoid discouragement. Satan loves us to be downcast by the low state of spiritual things. He has scored a major victory if we become so depressed that we give up the task.

There is also a warning to heed. In a day of small things there is the subtle temptation to resort to more spectacular ways and unscriptural methods of advancing the work. We need to resist the craze for something big and sensational. God often works through minority movements. Gideon's army was systematically reduced from thirty-two thousand to three hundred, and the reason God gave for this was "lest Israel vaunt themselves" and take the credit to themselves.

There is evidence to show that many people are finding by experience that materialism cannot satisfy the human heart, that worldly things are transient, and that a Godless life is an empty life. Modern society is sick, as evidenced by the upsurge of crime, violence and lawlessness.

When the early church was confronted by the challenge of worldly powers it resorted to prayer, and mighty things were accomplished. A church may have efficient organisation, but if it is lacking in prayer the work will be weak and ineffective. It has been said that "the primitive church was born in prayer, and in prayer she renews her strength". Let us then pray that God will be graciously pleased to open the windows of heaven and send the blessing which is so much needed in this day of small things.

A Question Answered

"Why art thou cast down O my soul and why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him, for the help of His countenance." Psalm 43:5

A sermon preached in Trinity Church, Buxton

How thankful we should be for the Psalms that we have in the Scriptures. What would we really do without them? Whether we are on the mountain top or in the lowest valley there is always something within the Psalms that meets our need, so whether your mood is one of encouragement or discouragement, whether it is one of joy or sorrow, whether it is loneliness or fear, you will find something in the Psalms that speaks of your own particular condition. The Psalms teach us, above everything else, to pour out our feelings before God. They teach us to take our troubles and difficulties to the Lord in prayer and to pour out in His presence our burdens and He by His Spirit will bring healing and relief.

Let us look then at Psalms 42 and 43 because they are really one. You see there is the repetition in Psalm 43 that occurs in Psalm 42. They hang very much together.

Let me then sketch in the background of this great word that we are looking at. You will find first of all that the Psalmist found that **his faith was severely tested**. He felt, for one thing, separation from the temple and its worship. If you look in the previous Psalm at v.6 he is writing from Northern Palestine from the land of Jordan and wistfully he remembers the sheer joy of worship in former days how he went, as he puts it in verse 4 "with the throng, with them that made joy and praise and with the multitude that kept holyday", reminiscent of Psalm 122, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." He thinks of this and now he is separated and it is a burden to him and instead of the temple music he is deafened with the thunder of the waterfall, with the mountain torrents in spate as deep calls unto deep echoing across the valley, and this seems to symbolise his calamities, and then in verse 7 he says, "All Thy waves and Thy billows have gone over me." Here is a man that is finding his faith tested, and I ask what man or woman does not find his faith tested at some time or other and we ask why? Faith is tested, and I think also it is an indication that it is a real thing because if life went on smoothly we should never know whether it was real or just make-believe, but when it is tested, when it comes to the crunch it is a different matter. Here is David, then, tested.

Secondly, he was taunted. He was exposed to the taunts of the ungodly. Look at verse 3 in Psalm 42, "My tears have been my meat day and night, while they say continually, Where is thy God?" The words of his enemies were like a sharp sword piercing and wounding him. They ask cynically, "Where is the One that you boast of? What is God doing for you now?" They taunted him, and isn't this so up to date? Oh people say to me, "Well you reckon that God is love. It does not make sense. Look what's happening in the world. Look what has happened to me. Is God a God of love?" Or they say "God is all-powerful, why doesn't He exert His power on your behalf?" They taunt us and they say "Where is now thy God?" And sometimes those who are nearest to us become the instruments of the devil's taunts, and the outstanding illustration of this in Scripture is Job's wife. You remember how she gave in to pessimism and unbelief and she lashed out against Job and said, "Do you still retain your integrity, curse God and die. Get it over and done with." When such taunts are flung in our face sometimes the believer has to remain dumb because we cannot always explain the mysteries of providence. Cowper never wrote a truer word when he wrote,

"God moves in a mysterious way."

So here is David, his faith is tested and he is being taunted. Look again in verse 3. He is tearful. "My tears have been my meat day and night." Here is a man that is not ashamed of tears. To have faith does not mean that we are to be stoical or emotionless, unable to shed a tear. The Psalmist was moved by the cruel questions that were hurled at him by his enemies. The believer knows what it is to have a broken heart. Faith can experience anguish and agony and tears. I have been in the ministry long enough years to see strong men bowed down with tears. After all wasn't the Apostle Paul a man who was moved to tears more than once? "I tell you", he says, "even weeping of some who are enemies of the cross of Christ." You have the supreme example of our Lord Himself at the grave of Lazarus. The shortest verse in the Bible, "Jesus wept." Here is the Psalmist tearful, being taunted and tested. But there is something else. He is triumphant in the end. Though storm-tossed he believed he would be brought through to victory. Notice the occurrence of the word "yet." In Psalm 42, v.5 he says "I shall yet praise Him. Verse 8, "Yet will the Lord command His lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me and my prayer unto the God of my life." v.8, and at verse 11, "I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance and my God." Here is the hinge on which his experience turns. He instinctively knew that God would bring him out, that he would

emerge from this trial a richer and better man than before he entered it. That is the background.

So we come to this great verse at the end of Psalm 43. He asks the question "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me?" Here the burden of his theme is one of depression. He is cast down. He is full of heaviness, as he puts it he is disquieted and the Psalm reads like a sob of a wounded heart. David knew what it was to be depressed and despondent and dejected and it is an experience that is by no means uncommon amongst christians. I am fond of reading christian biography when I get the time, and I find how the saints of God have their moments of depression, when things just seem to turn in on them, and Spurgeon says most of the Lord's family have travelled the path which is here so graphically described. Yes, the Psalmist was in circumstances of trouble and sorrow, of gloom and despondency and it swept over his soul like the rush of waters that have burst their bounds. "Why art thou cast down O my soul?" What shall we do, then, when we are cast down? We may wallow in pity and of course this is the easiest thing to do when we are depressed, just to look at ourselves, and be completely occupied with ourselves and turned in upon ourselves. That is easy enough, but that is not the way out. We could complain. That is of course an easy thing to do in itself, feeling everything is wrong and saying so, but should Christians really be grumblers? But we all fall victims to it, but should we? Paul when he is writing to the Corinthians draws a few lessons about the experience of the children of Israel in the wilderness and he says this, "Murmur not as those that murmured in the wilderness." So that is no way out either. It is no use wallowing in pity and it is no use complaining or we may burden others with our troubles. Of course it is a great relief to unburden ourselves to someone else. As a minister it is often my privilege to listen to people in trouble. We may unburden ourselves to others but we must be careful we do not become a burden to them. Or we may just do nothing about it and let the depression pile up until it completely overwhelms us. "Why art thou cast down"? says the Psalmist; three times over he enquires the reason. He comes to grips with his problem and if you look back it was due to two or three things. First as we have seen, the taunts that were hurled at him, "Where is now thy God?" In v.9 he feels forgotten. He said "I will say unto God my Rock why hast Thou forgotten me?" God appeared to him just at this point as inactive as He was invisible. He was sensitive to the sharp pains that the scoffers hurled at him. Look at v.10. "As with a sword in my bones mine enemies reproach me, while they say daily unto me Where is thy God?" He comes to grips with it and he tries to find out what is the

basic issue and the problem. Why ~~am~~ I like this? He is taking himself in hand and he enquires the cause. When we are depressed we need to enquire as to the reason. It may be due to our temperament, because some are more prone than others to look on the black side of things. It is just the way they are made. They cannot help being negative in their approach to things. Sometimes it may be because we are below par physically, just as people in good health are often joyful and optimistic and yet the same people in illness or after illness are depressed and despondent. Or your trouble may be due to overwork or to your circumstances. Perhaps you are being sorely tried in some way. Something has befallen you, some great crushing burden, some great disappointment, or bereavement. It might be reaction in some way. A classic illustration of course is that of Elijah when he had been in conflict on Mount Carmel with the priests of Baal, and what a tremendous victory it was that day, but you know reaction quickly set in. In the very next chapter you find Elijah running for his life. He went a day's journey and sat under a juniper tree and said, "Lord, take away my life, I have had enough."

We need, then, to try to come to grips with our problem and find out the real reason for our depression. So here is David, he gets alone with his soul. It is not very easy to do that sometimes today because we live in such hectic and hasty days. He gets alone with himself. His faith reasons with his fears. John Trapp says on this verse, "David chided David out of his dumps." You see he speaks to himself. He takes himself in hand. But notice this, instead of answering his own question or excusing himself he immediately prescribes the remedy. Hope, or trust in God. That's the remedy, the exercise of faith. Put your whole confidence in God. Faith is something to be exercised. It is not just a mental concept. It is a reaching out; it is a trust in God, and here is David, He speaks to the Lord about his trouble. "Trust thou in God" and so we are invited to share life's deepest and most trying experiences with the Lord. That is a lovely hymn of Joseph Scrivens,

"What a Friend we have in Jesus
All our sins and griefs to bear."

Let me tell you that man wrote out of the depth of his own experience. He was engaged to be married and the night before the wedding his fiancée was drowned, and he wrote that hymn and it was not found until years after in his drawer. What a hymn! It came from such an experience. There he was all ready and set for a happy marriage and it was not to be. But here is this hymn that has enriched our praise and deepened our experience, "Take it to the Lord in prayer."

Here is David affirming his faith. And he speaks, notice, over and over again in this phrase "My God" and it is wonderful calming power to realise our relationship with God. Here is something personal; this is not just general. It is particular. It is personal. "My God." Look again, he speaks about the living God, the helping God, the help of My God, the commanding God, He is sovereign God. "He will command His lovingkindness in the daytime," but above all, He is "my God", a personal thing.

Do I speak to someone who is cast down, depressed? Here it is. We do not have to sit down and mope, we have to remember the resources that are ours in God, in Christ. The cure for depression is neither looking at our grief, nor to look back to the past wistfully, not to look round to our problems but to look away and to look up to the living God and if He is our God, and I trust He is in a personal sense in Christ, we can trust Him. We can thank Him for all that is past, and trust Him for all that's to come. Notice David says, "I shall yet praise Him." "I will be brought out of this difficulty. I shall yet praise Him."

So it is that faith rebukes despondency and hope triumphs over despair.

This is the question he asks three times over and answers it in the same way, the answer is, faith in God.

"Why restless, why cast down, my soul,
 Hope still and thou shalt sing
 The praise of Him Who is thy God,
 Thy health's eternal Spring."

That is very beautifully put.

Here, then, is my word to you, a question which is effectively answered. "Why art thou cast down?" 'Come to grips with it' says David, exercise faith, "Hope thou in God" and go on in the confidence that we shall "yet praise Him Who is the health of our countenance and our God."

May God bless His Word and may it encourage us and if we are down may it help to lift us up to praise Him Who fails not and Who says that "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Amen.

M. H.

The Surety's Baptism

HORATIUS BONAR (1808-1889)

"I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?" Luke 12:50

In this awful utterance of our Substitute as He looked forward to the cross, we have —

1. A longing for the baptism. He desired its accomplishment. He knew the results depending on it, and these were so divinely glorious, so eternally blessed, that He could not but long for it — he could not but be straitened till it was accomplished. The cup was inexpressibly bitter but the recompense for drinking it was so vast that He could not but long for the hour when it should be put into His hands. Just as He said at another time, "With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer," so here He says, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?"

2. The consciousness of fear and bitter anguish in contemplating it. He was truly man, both in body and soul. As man He shrunk from pain, He was weighed down with burdens, He was subject to sorrow; He looked on death as His enemy, and He made supplication with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death. His utterances in the Psalms are the fullest intimation of His feelings in these respects. Thus He cries, "Rescue My soul from their destructions, My darling from the lions;" "O Lord, rebuke Me not in Thy wrath, neither chasten Me in Thy hot displeasure; for Thine arrows stick fast in Me, and Thy hand presseth Me sore. I am feeble and sore broken; I have roared by reason of the disquietness of My heart." ... "My heart is sore pained within Me, and the terrors of death are fallen upon Me; fearfulness and trembling are come upon Me. Save Me, O God, for the waters are come in unto My soul; I sink in deep waters, where the floods overflow Me. I am weary of My crying; My throat is dried; Mine eyes fail while I wait for My God." Such are the utterances of His human soul under the pressure of its infinite sorrows. He did not shake off the burden, yet the weight was intolerable. He did not refuse the cup, yet its gall and wormwood were such as to wring from Him many an awful cry. He did not turn back from the anguish, or the darkness, or the death, yet He speaks as one overwhelmed with the very thought of them.

If, then, His humanity was thus proved to be true and real, altogether like our own, in everything save sin, how true and real must

have been those sorrows which thus agonized that holy yet true humanity! His burdens were all real; His pangs were all real; His terrors were all real, as were His hunger and His thirst — real as was His death upon the Roman cross, or His burial in Joseph's tomb. His divine nature did not relieve Him of one grief, or make His sufferings mere shadows. It fitted Him for being filled with more sorrow than any man could be. It conferred on Him an awful, we may say a *divine* capacity of endurance, and so made Him the subject of sharper pain and profounder grief than otherwise He could have been. So far from His suffering less truly, or to a less degree, because He was the Son of God, He was, in that very way, made capable of an amount of bodily and mental agony of which, as a mere man, He could not have been susceptible.

And as the sorrow was thus all real — increased not lessened by His Godhead — so was His substitution for us as real. "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; He was wounded for *our* transgressions; He was bruised for *our* iniquities." His endurance of our penalty was as true as was His partaking of our sorrow. It was "the chastisement of *our* peace that was upon Him." The more that we contemplate this His suffering, His baptism, the more will the whole reality of His sin-bearing work appear. He, "His own self, bare our sins, in His own body, on the tree."

3. The straitening in regard to its accomplishment. Like Paul, He was in a strait between things which pressed in opposite ways, and which must continue to press till the work was done.

(i) He was straitened between the anticipated pain, and the thought of the result of that pain. How fully was this feeling brought out in that remarkable passage recorded by the Evangelist John (12, 27), "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy Name." Here was the straitening expressed in our text; the same straitening that we find again in the scene of the garden agony.

(ii) He was straitened between grace and righteousness. Till the great sacrifice was offered, there might be said to be conflict between these two things. The reconciliation was not actually accomplished between them. Mercy and truth had not yet met together; righteousness and peace had not yet kissed each other. Between His love to the sinner and His love to the Father there was conflict; between His desire to save the former and His zeal to glorify the latter there was something wanting to produce harmony. He knew that this something was at hand, that His baptism of suffering was to be the reconciliation; and He pressed forward to the cross, as one that could

not rest till the discordance was removed, as one straitened in spirit till the great reconciliation should be effected. "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?"

Such was the baptism of the Son of God, and such the straitening of spirit, till it was accomplished. It was infinite suffering to which He looked forward; suffering from which His soul would naturally shrink; yet He could not rest till the life-time's endurance had been completed, and the great work done. He pressed forward in the path of suffering, nor did He stay, till He had reached its end. The spirit was willing, though the flesh was weak.

And now, as the result of this accomplished baptism, we have forgiveness and salvation proclaimed to us. He has finished transgression, made an end of sin, brought in everlasting righteousness, made reconciliation for iniquity. No second baptism like His is needed now. The one baptism has done the work. No second cross requires to be erected on some new Golgotha. His one cross has completed the great propitiation and brought redemption to the captive. No second death can be demanded now, by law or righteousness. The one death of the Prince of Life has secured for us the everlasting life which no other death could have done. The knowledge of this one baptism, this one cross, this one death, is all we need to put us in possession of forgiveness and life, of righteousness and glory.

What, then, remains for us but that we enter into His rest, reaping what He has sown, and gathering fruit from the vine which He has planted? So complete is the Father's testimony to the accomplished baptism of His Son, the finished work of the Substitute, that, in receiving that testimony, we receive the full measure of blessing purchased for us by that baptism and death.

Nor are the results of this bloody baptism of the Son of God limited or temporary. The eternal ages are yet to know them. There come, no doubt, first the sword, the discord, the persecution, and the fire. All these have been doing their work on earth, and shall do so yet for a little season. But ere long the sword shall go through earth for the last time; division shall disturb its peace for the last time; persecution shall seize its victims for the last time; the fire shall be kindled for the last time. And then shall come the peace and the love and the holiness. Then shall come the deliverance of creation, the reign of peace, the kingdom of glory, the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Then shall He see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied. Then shall He reap the fruit of His awful baptism. That baptism will not then seem too bitter or too terrible, when its issue shall be seen to be so glorious and eternal. Nor will the time then seem

to have been too long, even though the kingdom should be deferred for many a day; seeing there is to be so infinite a compensation for the sickness of hope deferred, and so blessed a termination of the long, long ages of delay.

The Fear of God

IAN SMITH

An address given at St. Paul's, St. Helier, Jersey.

Mr. Smith is a student for the ministry.

There is very little literature about the fear of God available. It is not a popular topic in the church. Yet the beginning of Wisdom is the fear of the Lord (Proverbs 1.7). It is not to know yourself but the fear of God. The Fear of the Lord is mentioned in scripture perhaps more than we might imagine. The Book of Proverbs, which is a teaching book starts with the fear of God. Few in our world would begin there. They would inquire within or among their own, but this wisdom does not lead to God (1 Cor.1.21). So let us know God and beginning in wisdom fear Him.

There are two types of fear in the Bible, both with relation to God; Firstly, when Moses and the tribes of Israel came to Mount Sinai God appeared. Hebrews 12 describes the mountain burning with fire, darkness, gloom and storm, a trumpet blast and a voice — "The sight was so terrifying that Moses said 'I am trembling with fear'." Here he and all Israel are simply afraid of God.

Secondly, there is an awe, respect and obedience of the most committed and reverential form stemming from a knowledge of who God is; in attributes and nature and sovereignty. Such a fear was with Isaac, and Jacob bore witness to it (Gen.31.42,53).

To know God is to fear Him, to fear Him is to begin to know Him. The saints of the Old and New Testaments declare this. We do not deny the knowledge of God in love and praise, joy and fellowship. We do believe fear complements all these.

Fools despise wisdom and discipline. This is the testimony of Proverbs 1.7. They do so because Wisdom equals the fear of God and discipline is obedient living before Him. In Hebrew thought a fool was someone who lacked morality and self control. Anyone with these would realise that they were imperfect; Christians measure that imperfection by the standard of Christ. They know that failure to

obey God leads to certain judgment and may undergo a long period of conviction of sin with the wrath of God apparently about to descend upon them. They are forced to flee to the cross for forgiveness and peace and reconciliation with God. A fear of God has driven them not to despair, except of themselves, but to salvation!

If we need encouragement to believe this then look at Proverbs 1.22. Wisdom is crying aloud in the streets, "How long will you simple ones love your simple ways". By simple is meant 'lacking in moral direction'. Wisdom is questioning, pleading and appealing to the ungodly and immoral trying to wake them up to their state and drive them to Christ. Their lives are condemned and they must begin anew, living in the fear of God. The Philippian jailor came to faith after an earthquake. He trembled with fear and was pointed to Christ. Not all are converted in this way and very few are left in fear of God all their lives, so graciously does our Lord deal with them, but a fear of God preparatory to conversion, which actually makes us afraid, and a fear of God after, that leaves us in awe all our christian lives is vital to true religion.

The first use of fear then is in salvation. Though perhaps the greatest it is not the only use. Fear is the beginning of wisdom it goes on as Psalms 111.10 says, 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, a good understanding have all those who practise it.' Yes, practise the fear of the Lord! It will lead to a good understanding, of spiritual things and especially of God. This practise of fear will serve us in governing our lives before God.

The American theologian William Shedd wrote: "Next to a deep and absorbing love of God, there is nothing so well adapted to protect against sudden surprisals as a profound and definite fear of God". The young Augustine found that only fear kept him obedient to God until he could obey out of love. St Bernard wrote: "Well would it be if the youth, in the moment of violent temptation could lay upon the emotion or the lust that entices him a distinct and real coal of hell-fire". If one feels that this goes too far hear our Lord Jesus: "rather fear Him who can kill and hath power to cast into hell", meaning God. Fear then has been instrumental in bringing to Christ, in granting understanding and as a complement and precursor of love to govern our life before God.

The fear of God can also keep us from evil. In Proverbs we read that; the fear of the Lord is hatred of evil and by the fear of the Lord a man avoids evil. Knowing how God hates evil you avoid it. We may do this through fear of God or love of God, both can serve to keep us on a course of holiness.

A fifth use of fear is to cast out other fear. Psalm 34 confirms this: "The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him and delivers them, O fear the Lord you His saints, for those who fear Him have no want." It is also good for the church. In Acts 9.31 we read: "So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace, and was built up and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, was multiplied." I have examined many books on church growth but never found this referred to. To walk in fear and comfort are not contradictions for the church or the individual believer. It is in this state that the church knew growth. Look also to Acts 2.42-43 which ends 'and fear came upon every soul'.

And 5.12ff where the discipline of the church is from God through the Apostles. Great fear again came upon the church for they were seeing what a great God they dealt with and had called them. Would that such discipline were known in the church today, yet with talk of 'restoration' and return to primitive christianity this is never mentioned. We would have the comfort of the Holy Spirit but not the fear of the Lord.

The fear of God can also assist our prayers. In this Christ is Himself our example. Hebrews 5.7 tells us: "In the days of his flesh he offered up prayers supplications with loud cries and tears and he was heard for his godly fear". If this was true for the Son of God how much more for us. His whole life was predicted as one given over to God with fear as part of the life he would lead (Isaiah 11ff v3 especially).

Scripture appeals to us to fear God. To reverence His power and authority to know His justice and perfection and to discipline our lives and to be obedient. We need have no fear as those at Mount Sinai, for we have come to Mount Zion, as Hebrews 12 tells us. There is no condemnation for those that are in Christ. We speak to the Almighty One as Father. We know that perfect love casteth out fear. Yet He shall one day be our judge. "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee and I am afraid of thy judgments" Psalm 119.120. Our God is utterly sovereign; omnipotent, God only wise. If we shall not fear Him can we expect non-christians to do so? "There are none righteous" says Paul in Romans 3 quoting Psalm 36, "no one searches for God, they have all turned away, their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness, they are swift to shed blood and do not know the way of peace." And why is this so? "There is no fear of God before their eyes". What the Psalmist saw so did Paul and so do we. Does the church then show forth the fear of God in itself and pronouncements especially its preaching and do the members of the church show forth the fear of God in their lives? Oh that we might recover this! Let us be wise in our

evangelism, in our prayers, in our christian lives, in our churches and before God. Let us begin with Wisdom — It cries out to us, Fear the Lord, O Fear the Lord!

Some Scripture references to the Fear of God

'Come, and hear, all ye that fear God, And I will declare what He hath done for my soul.' Psalm 66 v16

'Surely His salvation is nigh them that fear Him; that glory may dwell in our land.' Psalm 85 v9

'Ye that fear the LORD, trust in the LORD: He is their help and shield.' 'He will bless them that fear the LORD, both small and great.' Psalm 115 v11,13

'He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him; He also will hear their cry, and will save them.' Psalm 145 v19

'He that feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and cattle flee into the houses:' Exodus 9.v20

'And Israel saw the great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians, and the people feared the LORD:' Exodus 14 v31

'And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that His fear may be before you, that you sin not,' Exodus 20 v20

'And now Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the LORD, and His statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?' Deuteronomy 10 vv12-13

'In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence: And His children shall have a place of refuge.

The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, To depart from the snares of death.' Proverbs 14 vv26-27

'The fear of the LORD tendeth to life: And he that hath it shall abide satisfied; He shall not be visited with evil.' Proverbs 19 v23

Standing before the Living God

(The 2nd in a series of articles on Elijah)

W. J. McDOWELL (Belfast)

The first recorded words of Elijah were spoken to Ahab. He said: "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand..." (*1 Kings 17:1*).

The prophet asserted that the LORD WAS THE GOD OF ISRAEL. This was the theme of his ministry. His challenge on Mount Carmel to Israel was: "Who is God? The Lord or Baal?" His prayer at the same time was: "Hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God". His language was: "the Lord, THE God". One lexicon points out that when the article is used with "God", the meaning is "the one true God".

The Lord became Israel's God by His own choice. We have become so used to what we call democracy that we can be trapped into thinking that it was our vote, or our decision alone, that makes the Lord our God. But what would happen if He did not choose to be our God? Has He no freedom of selection?

The Lord became Israel's God by His own choice, not because they were more numerous than other nations, but because He loved them, and because He would keep the oath He had sworn unto their fathers (*Deut. 7:6-8*). What a blessing to belong to the "Israel of God" (*Gal. 6:16*). Such can say:

*"Thou hast made us willing,
Thou hast made us free.
By Thy grand redemption,
By Thy grace divine,
We are on the Lord's side:
Saviour, we are Thine!"*

There are mysteries and problems surrounding the being of God, and the working out of His purposes, but in our thinking about them we must be careful not rob Him of His prerogatives. Some words by A. W. Pink are worth repeating: "The sovereignty of God! What do we mean by this expression? We mean the supremacy of God, the kingship of God, the Godhood of God. To say that God is sovereign is to declare that God is God." We should bow before Him, and say to ourselves: "Who art thou that repliest against God?"

Elijah declared that the God of Israel was **THE LIVING GOD**. His life seems to have been governed by the conviction that Jehovah was the Living God. Man is a religious creature. The word "God" can be used for a system, or even for an idea, and some may talk glibly about "God", and not have the Living God in mind. It is evident that on Carmel Baal did not speak, nor hear, nor act. "He" was only the creation of human imagination. Jeremiah describes such things as "the vanities of the Gentiles", and the Lord says: "Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good" (*Jer. 10:5*).

Those who come to God must believe that "He is" — that "He exists" (*Heb. 11:6*). Gouge explains this to mean that we must believe "He is the true God, the only true God, such a God as He hath revealed Himself to be".

Paul affirmed that the Thessalonian Christians "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God". "Many men have a dead God still", says C. H. Spurgeon. "They do not feel that He hears their prayers, they do not feel the power of His Spirit moving upon their hearts and lives. They never take the Lord into their calculations; He never fills them with joy, nor even depresses them with fear; God is unreal and inactive to them. But the true convert turns to the living God, who is everywhere, and whose presence affects him at every point of his being. This God he is to worship, obey, and serve".

Elijah maintained that he **STOOD BEFORE** this living God. Some translate "stood" as "serve". Matthew Henry combines both meanings in his exposition. "It is He before whom I stand, to minister to him". It is twice recorded that the prophet used this expression (*1 Kings 17:1, 18:15*). Elisha, his successor, also used it (*2 Kings 3:14, 5:16*). Both these men could truly say: "I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved" (*Psalms 16:8*).

A sense of God's presence will enable a man to do his duty in dangerous circumstances. Elijah could stand before Ahab and announce the coming drought because he was also conscious of standing before the Living God. The same was true of David Livingstone. Dr F. W. Boreham tells how when Livingstone was being honoured by the University of Glasgow he said: "Would you like me to tell you what supported me through all the years of exile among people whose language I could not understand, and whose attitude towards me was always uncertain and often hostile? It was this: 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world!' On those words I staked everything, and they never failed!"

Being conscious of standing before God will help us to have a proper sense of proportion. "If we walk all the day in the light of God's countenance", says Dr A. Maclaren, "we shall not see much brightness to dazzle us in the pale and borrowed lights of earth. The vivid realisation of God in our daily lives is the true shield against the enticements of the world".

Lecturing some years ago Dr A. Kuyper remarked: "Who ever rejects atheism as his fundamental thought, is bound to go back to Calvinism". If we consider some other words from the same lecture it would seem that Elijah and Elisha might be called Calvinists! "It remained the special trait of Calvinism that it placed the believer before the face of God, not only in His Church, but also in his personal, family, social, and political life. The majesty of God, and the authority of God press upon the Calvinist in the whole of his human existence. He is a pilgrim, not in the sense that he is marching through a world with which he has no concern, but in the sense that at every step of the long way he must remember his responsibility to the God so full of majesty, Who awaits him at his journey's end".

Thoughts to Ponder

Directions for the Right Use of Temporal Blessings.

Wish for them cautiously
 Ask for them submissively
 Obtain them honestly
 Accept them humbly
 Employ them lawfully
 Impart them liberally
 Esteem them moderately
 Use them subserviently
 Forego them easily
 Resign them willingly

"Using this world as not
 abusing it." (1 Cor.7,31).

Directions for the Right Use of Spiritual Blessings.

Prize them inestimably
 Seek for them earnestly
 Ponder them frequently
 Wait for them patiently
 Receive them joyfully
 Enjoy them thankfully
 Improve them carefully
 Hold them dependently
 Grasp them eternally

"Set your affections on
 things above." (Col.3,2).

From *The Churchman's Monthly Penny Magazine*
 and Guide to Christian Truth. June 1846-May 1847.

For Younger Readers

CARINE MacKENZIE

THE CROWN JEWELS

The Tower of London attracts many thousands of visitors every year from all over the world. There are many interesting things to see and many fascinating stories of long ago. One of the most popular sights at the Tower is the Jewel House built beneath the Waterloo Barracks. The public are admitted down the stairway then through huge steel security doors into a darkened room. In the centre of the room are several cases of specially toughened glass, illuminated to display their rich treasures — the Crown Jewels.

There are several crowns in the collection. The oldest one is the St. Edward's Crown, made in 1661 and used only at the coronation ceremony. It is made of solid gold and set with precious stones.

The Imperial State Crown is not so heavy and is used by the sovereign at the State Opening of Parliament. This magnificent crown has over 3,000 gems in it including the star of Africa, part of the famous Cullinan diamond.

These majestic crowns symbolise the earthly power of the sovereign of Great Britain. Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of Lords. What kind of crown did he have? No diamonds and rubies for Him; His crown was a crown of thorns, designed to humiliate Him and cause Him pain. He endured all this suffering as a punishment for the sins of His people. Through all this suffering, He was still the King of Kings. Eventually everybody will realise that Jesus is the King of Kings. "At the name of Jesus, every knee should bow." John saw Jesus wearing a crown of gold in his vision that he tells us about in the book of Revelation.

It is most unlikely that we would ever get the chance to wear a crown like the queen. Yet the Lord Jesus has promised a crown of life to all those who love Him. This honour is given to all believers in eternity — a gift from the Lord Jesus Christ. It is far more important than the most expensive gold crown.

Another case holds the royal sceptres, the jewelled and decorated gold rods which are tokens of the monarch's position as ruler. The most splendid one has the largest cut diamond in the world mounted in its head. It is known as the Great Star of Africa also cut from the Cullinan diamond.

The Lord Jesus has a sceptre too. The sceptre of His kingdom is a sceptre of righteousness. All that Jesus does is right. His rule over His

people is totally righteous; His conquering His enemies is right and just.

Another interesting exhibit is the case containing the Sword of State. The Sword of State is carried before the Sovereign at the State Opening of Parliament. There is also the Sword of Spiritual Justice, the Sword of Temporal Justice and the Sword of Mercy which has its blade broken near the point.

These three swords are carried before the monarch at their coronation. Edward VI became king when he was a young boy of nine years. When he saw the three swords before him, he asked his courtiers "Where is the fourth sword?" "What do you mean?" they replied. "I mean the Sword of the Spirit which is the word of God. Bring the Bible too." The Bible still has an important part in the coronation ceremony.

The Sword of the Spirit, the Bible, is a sword that we should be using every day.

Satan tempted Jesus to sin. Jesus answered each time "It is written..." His sword to fight the enemy was the Word of God. We should follow Jesus' example. When we are tempted to sin, the Word of God is a sword to resist wickedness. It is good to have the Word of God in our minds, and even better to have it in our hearts and affecting the way we live.

The Crown Jewels are a unique treasure, so valuable that no money could buy them. Jesus warns us in the Sermon on the Mount not to give too much place to earthly treasures — one day they will wear away or be stolen. The real treasure that will last forever is reserved for God's people in Heaven. Nothing can break it or destroy it. It can never be stolen. It is an "inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." 1 Peter 1.4.

QUIZ

The Bible mentions many different jewels. Can you find them?

1. The price of a virtuous woman is far above _____. Prov 31.10
2. The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron and with a point of _____. Jer 17.1
3. Moses, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu saw the God of Israel and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of _____. Exodus 24.10
4. There was a rainbow round about the throne like an _____. Rev 4.3
5. The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant man seeking goodly _____. Matt 13.46
6. What is of more value than any precious jewel? Job 28.12-20

The Word made Flesh

J. C. RYLE (1816 - 1900)

"And the Word has made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth" John 1.14

The passage of Scripture now before us is very short, if we measure it by words. But it is very long, if we measure it by the nature of its contents. The substance of it is so immensely important that we shall do well to give it separate and distinct consideration. This single verse contains more than enough matter for a whole exposition.

The main truth which this verse teaches is *the reality of our Lord Jesus Christ's incarnation, or being made man*. John tells us that "the Word has made flesh, and dwelt among us."

The plain meaning of these words is, that our divine Saviour really took human nature upon Him, in order to save sinners. He really became a man like ourselves in all things, sin only excepted. Like ourselves, He was born of a woman, though born in a miraculous manner. Like ourselves, He grew from infancy to boyhood, and from boyhood to man's estate, both in wisdom and in stature (Luke 2. 52). Like ourselves, He hungered, thirsted, ate, drank, slept, was wearied, felt pain, wept, rejoiced, marvelled, was moved to anger and compassion. Having been made flesh, and having taken a body, He prayed, read the Scriptures, suffered being tempted, and submitted His human will to the will of God the Father. And finally, in the same body, He really suffered and shed His blood, really died, was really buried, really rose again, and really ascended up into heaven. And yet all this time He was God as well as man.

This union of two natures in Christ's one Person is doubtless one of the greatest mysteries of the Christian religion. It needs to be carefully stated. It is just one of those great truths which are not meant to be curiously pried into, but to be reverently believed. Nowhere, perhaps, shall we find a more wise and judicious statement than in the second article of the Church of England: "The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed virgin of her substance: so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and the manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man." This is a most valuable declaration. This is "sound speech, which cannot be condemned."

But while we do not pretend to explain the union of two natures in our Lord Jesus Christ's Person, we must not hesitate to fence the subject with well-defined cautions. While we state most carefully what we *do* believe, we must not shrink from declaring boldly what we *not* believe. We must never forget that though our Lord was God and man at the same time, the divine and human natures in Him were never confounded. One nature did not swallow up the other. The two natures remained perfect and distinct. The divinity of Christ was never for a moment laid aside, although veiled. The manhood of Christ, during His life-time, was never for a moment unlike our own apart from sin, though by union with the Godhead greatly dignified. Though perfect God, Christ has always been perfect man from the first moment of His incarnation. He that is gone into heaven, and is sitting at the Father's right hand to intercede for sinners, is man as well as God. Though perfect man, Christ never ceased to be perfect God. He that suffered for sin on the cross, and was made sin for us, was "God manifest in the flesh." The blood with which the church was purchased is called the blood "of God" (Acts 20.28). Though He became "flesh" in the fullest sense when He was born of the virgin Mary, He never at any period ceased to be the Eternal Word. To say that He constantly manifested His divine nature during His earthly ministry would, of course, be contrary to plain facts. To attempt to explain why His Godhead was sometimes veiled and at other times unveiled, while He was on earth, would be venturing on ground which we had better leave alone. But to say that at any instant of His earthly ministry He was not fully and entirely God is nothing less than heresy.

The cautions just given may seem at first sight needless, wearisome and hair-splitting. It is precisely the neglect of such cautions which ruins many souls. This constant undivided union of two perfect natures in Christ's Person is exactly that which gives infinite value to His mediation, and qualifies Him to be the very Mediator that sinners need. Our Mediator is One who can sympathize with us because He is very man. And yet, at the same time, He is One who can deal with the Father for us on equal terms because He is very God.

It is the same union which gives infinite value to His righteousness, when imputed to believers. It is the righteousness of One who was God as well as man.

It is the same union which gives infinite value to the atoning blood which He shed for sinners on the cross. It is the blood of One who was God as well as man.

It is the same union which gives infinite value to His resurrection. When He rose again, as the Head of the church, He rose not as a mere man, but as God.

Let these things sink deeply into our hearts. The second Adam is far greater than the first Adam was. The first Adam was only man, and so he fell. The second Adam was God as well as man, and so He completely conquered.

Let us leave the subject with feelings of deep gratitude and thankfulness. It is full of abounding consolidation for all who know Christ by faith and believe on Him.

Did the Word become flesh? Then He is One who can be touched with the feeling of His people's infirmities, because He has suffered Himself, being tempted. He is almighty because He is God, and yet He can feel for us because He is man.

Did the Word become flesh? Then He can supply us with a perfect pattern and example for our daily life. Had He walked among us as an angel or a spirit, we could never have copied Him. But having dwelt among us as a man, we know that the true standard of holiness is to "walk even as He walked" (1 John 2:6). He is a perfect pattern because He is God. But He is also a pattern exactly suited to our wants because He is man.

Finally, did the Word become flesh? Then let us see in our mortal bodies a real, true dignity, and not defile them by sin. Weak as our body may seem, it is a body which the Eternal Son of God was not ashamed to take upon Himself, and to take up to heaven. That simple fact is a pledge that He will raise our bodies at the last day, and glorify them together with His own.

The Revealing and Sealing Work of the Spirit

A LETTER — from Ralph Erskine to Mrs. Sarah Fisher

Your line came to my hand a considerable time after the date of it, and also at a season when I was obliged to lay it aside unopened; but lately, having taken it up again in my hand, I thought it my duty to gratify your desire by giving you some answer. I am glad the Lord hath made any poor writing of mine refreshing to you, meantime I see by your line you are under fears lest, notwithstanding the advantages you have enjoyed, you have no more but a head knowledge and several other grounds of jealousy you express about yourself, wherein you desire I may deal plainly with you. Dear Madam, though it be hard for me to write on this head to one that I know no more of than

just what your letter relates, yet there are some things dropt in it which if they be told from an upright ingenuous heart, may give some handle to shew that the seeds of grace may be really sown, and that the Lord is humbling you in order to heal you in due time.

First, you pretend you want the sealing testimonies of the Lord's grace, which you judge you would have if you belonged to Him. As to this it may be in mercy that the Lord is withholding the seals of His love and the comfortable feelings of it until you be brought to find it in a more scriptural way of believing His love. It is said in Ephesians 1;13, "After ye believed ye were sealed." The only sure ground of faith is the Word of grace and truth there spoken of and not our feelings. The felt sealing of the Spirit of promise is not to be expected before our believing the Word of promise; if we would have anything like a feeling of His love before a believing of His love, we would be ready to build our faith upon transient feelings and frames and influences, and not upon the sure word of promise. Though the revealing work of the Spirit opening the Word is prior to faith, yet the sealing work of the Spirit is posterior to it. Many are deluded that rest on feelings and build their faith of God's love not upon what God hath said but merely upon what they have felt, and as these feelings are up and down, so is their faith. It will be therefore your mercy, if the Lord be withholding what you call the sealing testimonies of His love till once you be made to give Him the glory of His truth by believing His love revealed to you in His Word, and then you may expect the comfort of it sealed to you in your heart. The woman with the bloody issue had not sensible feeling of virtue coming from Christ till once she touched the hem of His garment by faith (Luke 8;43-49.) If you expect and wait for feelings to found your faith on, they are mercifully denied you, that you may build upon a sure foundation, namely Christ speaking in the Word for the ground of your faith before you have any feeling of Him in your heart for the encouragement of faith.

Secondly, you tell me you hear others talk of sweet communion with the Lord and of their longing to be dissolved and to be with Christ, while yet the thoughts of death are terrible to you; and at the same time you complain of deadness, coldness and carnality, fearing you want love to Christ, and that those things are not the spots of God's children. Dear Madam, if you have got a view of the plague of your own heart and are indeed kept poor and needy and empty and humble under a sense of your want of all grace and goodness in yourself that Christ and His fulness may be the more precious and acceptable to you, you have the advantage of those who are enriched

with greater enjoyments, if they be lifted up with them. (Matt. 5:3-6) I hope this is the case with you and that because of what also you say afterwards in your letter, that sometimes you can rejoice in the doctrine of God's everlasting love to His chosen ones, though you cannot see your own interest in it, and are sure if ever you be saved the crown must be on the head of Christ. This looks like the language of one whom God is humbling in order to exalt, and emptying in order to fill in due time. You speak of being under many temptations, but that you do not remember any promise to have come with power for your deliverance. If deliverance has come to you from time to time according to the promise, even powerful and merciful deliverance, whether suddenly or gradual, though the promise itself has not come to you with such power or in such a manner as you think it has come to others, you should be thankful; the Lord's ways of bringing home the promise to the heart are various towards some and others. However, I know little odds between a promise poured in sweetly upon the heart, and a heart poured in sweetly upon the promise, the latter may be as sweet and sure as the former, if the promise has but in holy providence come to your mind whether by hearing, reading or musing, so as you have been helped to make it a matter of prayer and pleading before a throne of grace, be you content and bless God for it.

Many are ready to depend more upon the felt power and sweet influence by which the promise comes to them than upon the promise itself, and hence, when the power and influence is withdrawn, their faith is to seek; they cannot rest upon the bare Word of God, the bread on which the soul should live, unless like little children, they get the butter and honey of some sweet influence spread upon it. This disposition in any godly soul is much owing to the sad remains of a legal temper, that makes them seek for a ground of faith and hope more in themselves, and in what is done by them, and wrought or felt in them, than they do by going out of themselves to what the Lord is in Himself, and has wrought for them and spoken to them. Faith is most strong when it can live on a bare promise without the supports of sense. Endeavour you, Madam, through grace to trust in a promising God, giving credit to His truth, and you shall find Him in His own time a performing God, giving comfort to your heart. Seek rest, not in streams of blessings and comforts that come from Him and take various turns, but in Himself the fountain, who is still the same. If you want I should explain anything here written further, you may let me know by another line. I have not in the least studied to flatter you. I have no temptation to do so, being quite ignorant of you further than you have told me. If you please to let me know your outward station or situation in life, whether it be high or low, it will be agreeable to

me. I shall wish I may be able to do service to your soul, and if what I have written be any way useful to you and suitable to the case you wrote of to me, I will be glad if you let me know you have received this line. If it come in any time to answer any difficulties you may yet be under, you will the more readily pardon and excuse my having been so long of coming with it.

May the Lord bless all His own means of grace, and make your soul prosper,

I am, etc.

Ralph Erskine

Dunfermline. Jan. 19th, 1742.

Complaining Christians

'Be thankful'. Do not complain, but bless his name for everything. Do not quarrel with him, but be thankful. Say, 'Shall we receive good at the hands of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil? The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord'. That is the way to be at peace with him — to be thankful at all times. Bless God for your mercies and for your miseries; bless him for your gains and for your losses; bless him for your enjoyments and pleasures, and also for your aches and pains. Bless him for every hard thing that comes from him, for there is as much love in the hard as in the soft; and God is as kind when he uses the rod as when he gives a kiss. 'Be ye thankful!' Bless him from morning to night, and all through the night watches. What a mercy to have the use of one's limbs and reasoning powers! What a mercy to be out of prison! What a mercy to be out of hell! 'He hath not dealt with us after our sins.' Be thankful. Up, ye murmuring! Up, ye discontented! Be ye thankful'. Rouse yourselves, ye sullen ones! You that think you have a heavier load to carry than is meet, and say, like Cain, 'My burden is greater than I can bear' — 'Be ye thankful!' All of you, young and old, 'Be ye thankful'. That is the way to keep up your peace with God, and your peace with your fellow-men.

C. H. Spurgeon. A Sermon on Col. 3:15 entitled: 'That Horrible East Wind').

The Golden Passional (3)

A. V. McCANDLISH

The vicarious suffering of the Servant of the Lord. Isa. 53:4-6.

1. He bore our griefs, and carried our sins.

"Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." v.4.

As we read this passage it seems clear that the words apply primarily to the Jews. This will be their confession in the day of their conversion. All down the centuries the Jews have justified themselves in their refusal to believe on Jesus: saying that He was a blasphemer, and an offender against God's laws; and that He deserved to suffer, and die; and He was stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. When He comes again; and their eyes are opened to see that He was indeed the Son of God, and their Messiah; then also they see to their amazement that He did not suffer for His own sins; but for theirs. Surely, they cry, "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." The words however have a secondary application. They apply to men and women everywhere. In the ordinary way; when they read the story of the crucifixion of Jesus, they think of it as something that happened a long time ago. They view it as a story of injustice, and cruelty that really had nothing to do with them. Then, when the Holy Spirit opens their eyes, and understanding; they see to their amazement, that it was for them that He hung, and suffered on the cross. He bore the suffering that was due to them, on account of their sins; so that they could be forgiven, and saved. Notice the word *borne*. It does not mean that the Son of God, by becoming man, simply took on Himself the sorrows, and the sufferings that are the lot of all men. It conveys the idea of taking suffering on Himself, in order to take it away from us. In this verse this thought is developed; the word *griefs* (Heb. *choliy*) is literally our sickness, or disease. It is translated sickness five times in the Old Testament, and disease eight times. Hence we read in Mat.8;17. "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." Jesus had been healing all who came to Him with sickness, and disease. They came to Him to have it taken from them, so that they could be healed. Here in Isaiah 53, God is not speaking of physical healing; He is speaking of the suffering of His Servant, for the sins of men: and sin is set forth as the disease of the soul. We read, "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities."

v.5. When God opens our eyes, then we see that our Lord suffered on the cross the punishment of our sins, and only through His sufferings was it possible for us to be saved. Let me pause to ask, has God showed you, that on the cross Jesus took your sins on Himself, and bore all the suffering due to them, so that you might be forgiven, and be eternally saved? This is a divine revelation; it is not something you learn from men; and when once you see it clearly, you will never cease to wonder at His grace, and to adore your Lord.

2. The wounding of the Servant of the Lord.

"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him: and with His stripes we are healed." V.5.

Come to Calvary, and view the Sufferer. See how He was nailed to the cross, and lifted up to die. Listen to what He said: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? Why art Thou so far from helping Me, and from the words of My roaring? I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint: My heart is like wax; My strength is dried up like a potsherd: and My tongue cleaveth to My jaws; and Thou has brought Me into the dust of death." Ps.22. Why did He suffer thus? "He was wounded for *our* transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities." God "made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Cor. 5;21. Only the Son of God could take away the sin of the world. He, who was eternal; with whom there is no past, or future, must needs identify Himself with men. He became Man, so that He could take upon Himself the sins of men. It was at Calvary that He became identified with it. There He suffered the punishment for all of it. "He suffered the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." 1 Pet.3; 18. He was bruised for our iniquities, and with His stripes we are healed. "He was made a curse for us." Gal.3; 13. Here we see the precious blood that flowed to blot out all our transgressions, once for all. The dreadful bruising of the Son of God, hid for ever our hideous iniquities from the holy eyes of our Judge. The cruel stripes that He suffered, were the price of our peace, for they silenced for ever the voice of the accuser. We were healed of the incurable disease of sin, by His suffering the penalty for us. Looking at Christ crucified, Luther could say; "Thou art my righteousness, I am Thy sin." "We have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Col. 1;14. When Jesus cried with a loud voice: "it is finished, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom." He opened the kingdom of heaven for all believers. "He offered one sacrifice for sins for ever." Heb 10;12.

3. Consider the wondrous grace of God.

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." v.6.

(a) **Here we see human perversity.** All of us without exception have gone astray. The right way was God's way, and it is the way of perfect happiness. God has clearly defined it for us; "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." This would be a life of fellowship with God, and with our fellowmen; not one of hardship, and restriction. There is nothing on earth to compare with it; but we are like the sheep in a good pasture. They are not satisfied; they find a gap in the hedge where they can break out, and they find themselves on a busy road, in danger of their lives, with no pasturage, and no water. So it is with us, we have a nature that turns away from God's pasture; and instead we seek to satisfy ourselves with that which is evil.

(b) **"We have turned everyone to his own way."** This is the spirit of self seeking which is the nature of us all. We seek the things that we want, and we seek to avoid the things that we don't like. It is our nature to put self first; others only come into our programme, if they give us pleasure; or if the result brings us into prominence, or brings some profit to us. For the most part, God, who should come first; is completely forgotten, and His will is never considered. In all this we see our rebellion against God.

(c) **"And the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."** Here we see the grace of God. We deserve to be punished; but instead, God took all our sins, and laid them on Jesus. Let us take note how explicit is this word, "the Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all." As we read, "All we like sheep have gone astray," so now, "The Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all." They were laid upon Him, not by any act of ours, it was the act of God Himself. It was an act of sovereign grace; we did nothing at all to deserve it; in fact all that we did, only cried out for judgment. That cry was not unheeded; God laid our sins upon Christ in order that they should be judged once for all. Hear what God said, "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man that is My fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn My hand upon (over) the little ones." Zech. 13;7 The Shepherd was smitten as the substitute for the flock, and for His sake the scattered sheep were to be regathered, and the little ones lovingly protected by the very hand that wielded the sword against the Shepherd. Here we see the

sovereign grace of God, let us not **fear** to yield ourselves fully to our God, and Saviour, so that our lives may testify to His wisdom, love, and power.

Unto Him.....be Glory

ISA A. BUCKLEY

UNTO HIM THAT LOVED US, AND WASHED US FROM OUR SINS IN HIS BLOOD. These words from the book of Revelation remind us that the love of God is beyond our understanding, we can only worship and adore.

The Bible tells us that God's love is both collective and personal. He loves His people. He loves His people at all times and in all places. But He loves EACH ONE of His people. What a great comfort this is, not only for ourselves but as we seek to share with our Russian brothers and sisters and others who suffer great trials for the Lord's sake. The Lord loves each one of them. He knows each one of them. He is working for, and in, each one of them. ALL this is true of each one of us saved by the Lord's mercy and love.

Here is a safe resting place for heart and mind. Old or young, well or ill, rich or poor, black or white, He loves His people. He knows me, He loves me. He is working for me. How joyfully I can respond to His love and say, the Lord is my Rock, the Lord is my Shepherd, the Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me. O how wonderful is His grace in bringing us to Himself that we might know and prove His personal love for each one of His dear children.

In his book "The loveliest Story Ever Told," the Rev. Murdoch Campbell tells of a lady who said concerning this love between Christ and His people, "I have Christ in my heart. I have Christ in His promise. I have Christ in Heaven."

I have Christ in my heart.

A wonderful experience.

Ephesians 3:17.

That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.

Galatians 2:20.

Christ liveth in me.

1 John 4:15.

Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

I have Christ in His promise.

Wonderful promises.

Matthew 11:28.

Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

- 1 Peter 5:7. Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.
- Philippians 1:6. He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.
- Hebrews 13:5. He hath said I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

I have Christ in Heaven. A present help — A glorious hope.

Hebrews 4:14/16. Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God — let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

John 17:24. Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My Glory.

UNTO HIM THAT HATH LOVED US.... BE GLORY.

Love's Outreach

C. C. J. BUTLIN (Sheffield)

George Borrow's *Bible in Spain*, printed in 1842, gives an illuminated picture of the social, economic, moral and religious conditions of that country a century and a half ago. The generally backward state of the people at that time was especially reflected in the lack of care for the sick, notably for leprosy victims. In reading this book recently I was immediately struck by the contrast between the old attitude — that of ostracism of leprosy sufferers — and the modern efforts to give treatment and to provide loving care for the thousands of victims.

It will be excused, one hopes, that in George Borrow's account, one has kept faithfully to his text, in which he uses the then customary word "leper". The word, because of the stigma attached to it, has been banned by leprosy organisations and the World Health Organisation for many years, and substituted instead are "leprosy sufferers", "patients" or "victims".

The author of *Bible in Spain* tells of meeting some of these pitiable sufferers at a town near Coruna, called St. James. He says: "Accompanied by the bookseller, I visited this hospital, in which, however, I did not remain long; the wretchedness and uncleanness which I observed speedily driving me away. St. James, indeed, is the grand lazarus-house for all the rest of Galicia, which accounts for the prodigious number of horrible objects to be seen in its streets, who have for the most part arrived in the hope of procuring medical assistance, which, from what I could learn, is very scantily and inefficiently administered."

"Among these unhappy wretches I occasionally observed the terrible leper, and instantly fled from him with a 'God help thee', as if I had been a Jew of old. Galicia is the only province of Spain where cases of leprosy are still frequent; a convincing proof this, that the disease is the result of foul feeding, and an inattention to cleanliness, as the Gallegans, with regard to the comforts of life and civilised habits, are confessedly behind all the other natives of Spain."

"Besides a general hospital we have likewise a leper-house" said the bookseller. 'Shall I show it you? We have everything at St. James. There is nothing lacking; the very leper finds an inn here'. 'I have no objection to your showing me the house', I replied, 'but it must be at a distance, for enter it I will not.' Thereupon he conducted me down the road which leads towards Padron and Vigo, and pointing to two or three huts, exclaimed, 'That is our leper-house.' 'It appears a miserable place,' I replied: 'What accommodation may there be for the patients, and who attends to their wants?' 'They are left to themselves,' replied the bookseller, 'and probably sometimes perish from neglect: the place at one time was endowed, and had rents which were appropriated to its support, but even these have been sequestered during the late troubles. At present, the least unclean of the lepers generally takes his station by the roadside, and begs for the others. See there he is now.' And sure enough the leper in his shining scales, and half-naked, was seated beneath a ruined wall. We dropped money into the hat of the unhappy being, and passed on..." (pp.268/9).

How truly different today are the conditions for the patients in the care of The Leprosy Mission and other kindred bodies. Writing of The Leprosy Mission's work overseas, Dr. Ronald Goulding, Chairman of TLM International states: "It is so sad to hear leprosy patients say 'If only I had known!' Education and information are key words in all missionary enterprise and never more so than in the work of The Leprosy Mission. Teams of workers travel into isolated areas of forest and jungle to bring the message of love and hope in our Lord, and also

in the treatment of leprosy. The sharing of information not only gives knowledge about the disease and its treatment, but equally shatters the old tragic myths which have caused sufferers to be driven away from family, home and community, or to be shut away in leprosariums. The horror of the social stigma which for centuries has surrounded leprosy is gradually, very gradually, being overcome."

Dr. Goulding continues: "I am reminded of the constructive things now being done for those who not long ago would have been forgotten as 'hopeless'. Our surgeons and physiotherapists are restoring movement and ability to hands and feet that leprosy, with its subsequent neglect, has distorted into helpless claws. In one of TLM's hospitals in India there is a special department which constructs new artificial limbs for those who have suffered amputation... And what happens when a leprosy patient has the use of restored fingers and legs? It's then that a whole new day in leprosy care begins. No longer are they allowed to consider themselves cast off and useless, for occupational therapy becomes a vital part of the leprosy programme. Patients are encouraged to become useful workers, independent of charity and able to return back to society and family."

Dr. Goulding says, moreover: "These are but a few of the ways that practical care and love can be given to leprosy sufferers, but the most important factor is yet to be mentioned. Throughout all the highly skilled and dedicated work, there is a motivation arising from the person of a God who is perfect love, and whose love was revealed and demonstrated in Jesus Christ, His Son. It is the love of Christ that reaches out to the diseased, despised leprosy sufferer through the hearts and hands of TLM workers. This motive is not merely to bring new limbs but a new life and a new day in Christ, and in this TLM finds its motive and seeks to fulfil its purpose."

Thine image, Lord, bestow,
Thy presence and Thy love;
We ask to serve Thee here below,
And reign with Thee above.

John Newton

Meek and Lowly in Heart

FRANK WILLIAMS (Abbots Langley)

"Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls."

Matthew 11:29

This wonderful verse stands alone, unique in the Gospels, having no witnessing verse apart from the quotation from Zech. 9, v.9 in Matt. 21, v.5.

It was part of the Law of Israel that nothing was to be believed except on the testimony of at least two or three witnesses, and that a person's testimony of himself was not to be accepted without a double witness. This important law is argued at length in John 5, vv 31-47, so how do we find the necessary confirmation for our text which appears to stand alone? When this occurs we must look for the witnessing material in the originating Gospel, and that material may well be witnessed in other books of the Bible. So, in the complexity of presentation the witness is to be found, like a thread woven into a tapestry, seen to be a priceless divine masterpiece. This article is an attempt to trace such a thread in the contents of chapters 11 and 12 of Matthew.

It will be seen that the Holy Spirit, our Teacher, has embedded in these chapters three challenges to the validity of the Lord Jesus; one from believers, one from unbelievers, and one from a deeper Satanic level, the response to which illumines the Lord's meekness. The embedding material of these challenges constitutes a matrix of demonstrative, logical argument — spiritual truths and judgmental comment. The contents of chapters 11 and 12 witness to the truth of the statement.

The first challenge is from a man in prison; the good in subjection to evil. From Herod's dungeon came the messengers from John the Baptist. "Are you he that should come, or do we look for another?" A cry that has come up in all ages. Referring to one of the great Messiah indicators of the prophet Isaiah, Jesus says, in effect, "See what I am doing in relation to prophecy; the blind receive sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and *the poor have the gospel preached to them.*" *No payment required*, for it was not of this world's system. It is of interest that the accuracy of Scripture is such that Jesus left out the clause, "the prisoners are released". John would notice and be prepared. Are we

aware of the breadth of Isaiah 61 and 35, or of Zech. 9, v.9?

So, in the Lord's reply to John, an aspect of the meekness and lowliness of the heart of Christ is illustrated, and is it not the meek who shall inherit the earth, for they shall be made like unto Him?

The second challenge comes from the unbelieving Pharisees in Matt. 12. It follows an intensive volume of judgmental truths in the knowledge that the Father had hidden spiritual truths from the wise, and those who knew how to look after themselves in the world, and had revealed them to babes and sucklings. (The world has no time for babes and sucklings; they are expendable units).

The disciples were breaking tradition, plucking new corn, i.e. harvesting on the Sabbath, the Pharisaical Sabbath. The attack was renewed in the synagogue when a man was healed on the Sabbath. By reference to David's eating of the shewbread Jesus demolished the first accusation, and the second by logic, a logic which revealed something of the nature of Jesus; His ownership as Son, providing for His own. Then, healing by the word of power, He commanded the man with the withered arm, "Stretch forth thine hand, and he stretched it forth and it was whole like the other". As it was in the beginning, God said and it was. Jesus said, and it was. The Word shone as a light in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not, for the Pharisees went forth (v.16) and held a council against Him, how they might destroy Him. In these two incidents the Lord's power was used on behalf of others, with no advantage to Himself.

The third thrust comes from a deeper level of darkness; from the prophetic knowledge that the Servant Son "shall not strive, nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the street"; (no violence or taking by force); but a "bruised reed he shall not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory." Again, power used for the helpless.

Now comes the great sin. "This fellow doth not cast out devils but by Beelzebub, the prince of devils." But Jesus knew their thoughts. He had understood and endured this temptation in bodily weakness in the wilderness: "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." It was the Pharisaical acceptance of this offer that was their condemnation. "You, being evil, speak out of the abundance of your heart". Their own words would be their justification or their judgment.

In response to their request for a sign, no sign would be given, for those of an adulterous (spiritually) and evil generation (not of time but of type) were not able to see signs that would only react with spirituality. Only that which pertained to their "generation" would be

visible to them — His death and burial, as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish. It is omitted that they would see the Lord's coming forth in type as Jonah, or be of the men of Nineveh who repented. The resurrection cannot be seen in darkness, or by darkness. Jesus would enter death and rise again that the Kingdom of Heaven might be opened to all believers.

The sequence concludes with a terrible contrast, (ch. 12, vv. 43-50) a comment on the attack. If the healing power of God cleanses the wicked it opens the way for deeper evil. There cannot be a vacuum in human lives; cleansing must be followed by infilling, otherwise the last state is worse than the first. "Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation."

So the statement, "I am meek", is set forth and proved in three challenges. Each challenge is countered by example and witnessing Scriptural material.

Lastly, we may consider briefly what it is to be meek. As only one other individual is designated meek in the Bible we look to him, that is, to Moses, for amplification.

Moses will be seen to have had the same care for Israel as did Jesus (c/f Heb. 3, vv. 5-6); Moses, as a faithful servant, and Jesus, as a faithful son, "over his own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of hope to the end." Indeed, Moses is the type, Jesus the ante-type, for Deut. 18, v.18 records, "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren *like unto thee*."

"Like unto thee". When Israel succumbed to the worship of the golden calf of Egypt while Moses was a long time on the mount with God, "The Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people. Now, therefore, let me alone that my wrath may wax hot against them and I will consume them and *make of you* a great nation." Moses was given the option of being a new Abraham, founder of a nation and forebear of the Messiah, but his erring charges would be annihilated in the doing of it. In mammon every man has his price, and every offer has its price.

Moses was meek because he thought of others before he thought of himself. He remembered Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and God's word, and he pleaded for the people, "And the Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people."

A further witness to the meekness of Moses is recorded in Numbers 11 v.26, which states that when the Spirit of the Lord came down on the 70 elders, two others, Medad and Eldad, prophesied in the camp, Joshua, the son of Nun, leader elect and servant of Moses, said, "My lord Moses, forbid them", to which Moses replied, "Enviest thou for

my sake? would God that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them".

Moses would have rejoiced to see his flock elevated. Can we say the same of ourselves, and the brethren? Do we desire the lowly ones, and the worldly inferior ones to be blessedly elevated in the Spirit of God? Or do we prefer to maintain a differential? Jesus Himself tells us that "many that are first shall be last, and the last first."

Small wonder only two in Scripture are designated meek. So, in looking at Moses we begin to sense the magnitude of the meekness of Christ. He was of a truth meek and lowly in heart.

Thus Scripture witnesses and responds to that which the Holy Spirit testifies in our hearts; that astounding spiritual truth which appears as a paradox to the human ego — that the Son, the only begotten Son of the Father, which is the Word by whom all things were made, and without whom nothing is made that was made, is, on His own recorded and proven admission, meek and lowly in heart.

What does the meekness of Christ give us? In His own words, we cease from labour, from striving on our own behalf; we are given the ability to cast our burdens on Him, and we accept rest for our souls. We learn of Him, being yoked to Him; we respond to the love of God. In Him, and with Him, we bear the cross of our daily walk: in Him we rise in newness of life everlasting. In Him we praise and have our being.

Outlines on the New Birth

Selected from Stephen Charnock by W. J. P.

I. The Darkness of our Night.

Man, in all his capacities, is too weak to produce the work of regeneration in himself. How is this seen?

i. In a total moral unfitness for this work. ii. There is also unwillingness. iii. There is an affection to something contrary to the Gospel. iv. There is a strong aversion to tenders of the Gospel. v. This proceeds to resistance. vi. Add to all this the power of Satan in every natural man, whose interest lies in enfeebling the creature.

Therefore man cannot prepare himself for grace; he cannot produce it; he cannot co-operate with God in the first work, he can neither preserve or actuate it. There is no obligation on God by anything that may look like a preparation in man.

If regeneration depended upon the will of man as its first cause,

i. It would deprive God of His sovereign independency, ii. It puts a blot on the wisdom of God. iii It deprives God of His foreknowledge and prescience. iv. It would make the truth of God a great uncertainty. v. It deprives God of His worship, in prayer and praise.

Man by creation had a freedom of will to choose that which was really good, yet had a mutability, and could choose evil; and by choosing evil rather than good, sank his posterity into this depraved liberty which now remains. Whatever he wills, he wills freely, so that though something he wills may be materially good, yet he wills that good in an evil manner, for being overcome by sin, man can do nothing but according to that law which sin, as a master that hath conquered him, imposeth on him. Hence man is said to be dead in sin.

II. The Instrument in Regeneration. (James i.18)

We see here, 1. The Efficient of Regeneration; God, 'He' the Father of lights. 2. The Impulsive or moving cause, 'His own will'. 3. The Instrumental Cause, 'with the word of truth'. 4. The final cause, 'that we may be a kind of first fruits'.

The Gospel is the instrument whereby God brings the soul forth in a new birth. It is called the word of truth, i. In regard to the author, truth itself; and the publisher, he who was 'the way, the truth, and the life.' ii. In opposition to all false doctrines, which can never be the instruments of conversion; for error cannot convert to truth. iii. In opposition to the windy and flashy conceits of men. iv. In opposition to the legal shadows; The law was the word of truth, but referred to the gospel as the great end of it. This contains the whole and ultimate purpose of God, for saving men by Jesus Christ, and in Him enriching them with all spiritual blessings, and not by the works of the law; and thus the Spirit, which enlightens and seals instruction upon our souls, is called 'the Spirit of truth,' Jn. 14.17, as it is called a Spirit of holiness as it makes us holy; a Spirit of grace, as it makes us gracious, or as it declares the grace of God.

The firstfruits were the best of every kind to be offered to God, whereby they acknowledged God's gift of them, and desired his blessing upon them, and were given as God's peculiar right and portion. The new creature is God's peculiar portion taken out of mankind; and it bespeaks duty too: being consecrated to God by a new begetting, they should serve God with a new spirit, new thankfulness, new frames.

III. How Shall We Wait upon the Word, so as that We may be new begotten of it?

1. Wait upon the word frequently. Be often in reading and hearing, and meditating on it. How do you know but an opportunity missed might have been the best market? How do you know but the Spirit might have joined himself to the word as Philip to the eunuch's chariot while he was reading? God may have a portion ready for us, and we go without it, because we are not ready to receive it?

2. Let your hearts be fixed upon what is the great end of the word. New beginnings are the end of the gospel. Regard it not as a mere sound of words, but as an instrument of the noblest operations in the soul. We ought to read and hear it with desires to be enlivened where we are dead, quickened where we are dull, be made new creatures where we are yet but old, taller creatures where we are yet but of a low stature; not only to have our understandings instructed, but our hearts changed; to inquire after God to behold the beauty of the Lord, that we may be transformed into it; to look for God, for the kingdom of God comes nigh you in the Gospel.

3. Mind the word in the simplicity of it. Some men are more taken with colours than truth. It was the knowledge of the excellency of the promise, and not worldly eloquence, made them with so much courage slight gibbets, stakes, executioners; they had learned the truth as it is in Jesus.

4. Mind the word as the word of truth. Take it not upon the account of persons, value it for its own sake, as it is a word of truth. When men turn their backs upon the word, because the mouth does not please them they turn their backs upon God. Jn. 13:20, and perhaps upon their own mercy.

5. Attend upon the word with an eye to God. Look not for the new birth only from the word. It was the folly of the Jews to think to find life in the Scriptures without Christ;... Man's teachings direct us to Christ; God's teaching brings us to Christ; man brings the Gospel to the heart, the Spirit only brings the Gospel into the heart. Therefore let the word be attended with prayer. Before you wait upon God in any ordinance, plead with Him as Moses did. After you have been at the word go to him that you may have that wind by prayer, which you felt not at hearing.

6. Attend upon the word submissively.

7. Receive the word with faith.

8. Bind yourselves to a precept when the Spirit shows it.. Catch a promise when the Spirit opens it.

9. Serious reflection: Words must be kept some time on the mind, before they can work any sensible change. While you are musing, a divine fire may sparkle in your souls, and Christ rise in your hearts.

10. Labour to have the savour of truth upon your spirits, as well as the notion of it in your heads. Endeavour to have the savour of Christ's ointments. Cant. 1:8.

IV. The Cleansing Virtue of Christ's Blood. (1 John 1:7)

Let not the sense of your daily infirmities animate any desponding fears. If you square your hearts and lives in all sincerity according to the gospel rule, there is a provision made for your security in the blood of Christ. God will wipe off the guilt of your defects by virtue of that precious blood which hath been shed for your reparation. The apostle here supposeth remainders of sin in those that have the privilege of walking with God, and interest in the blessings of the covenant.

The blood of Jesus Christ. By this is meant the last act in the tragedy of his life, his blood being the ransom of our souls, the price of our redemption, and the expiation of our sin. The blood or death of Christ is the cause of our justification.

His Son. His sonship makes his blood valuable. Though it was the blood of his humanity, yet the merit of it was derived from the divinity. It is valuable as the dignity of the person from whom it flowed.

Cleanseth. Cleansing and purging are terms used in Scripture for justifying as well as sanctifying. The apostle interprets *washing* of both these acts. 1 Cor. 6.11. The one is the act of the Father as a judge appeased by that blood, the other the act of the Spirit as a sanctifier purchased by that blood. And so the '*washing of us in the blood of Christ*' spoken of Rev. 1.5, is to be understood of justification. Sanctification is expressed, verse 6, by 'making us kings and priests to God,' giving us royal and holy natures, to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God. The blood of Christ was shed but once, it is applied often, and the virtue of it is as durable as the person whose blood it is. The blood of Christ hath a perpetual virtue, and doth actually and perfectly cleanse believers from all guilt. This blood is the expiation of our sin and the unlocking of our chains, the price of our liberty and of the purity of our souls. The redemption we have through it is expressly called the forgiveness of sin, — Eph.1.7, by a *metonymy* of the effect for the cause; remission was an act of redemption. The Scripture places remission wholly in the blood of the Redeemer. (Heb.10:14,17,18, Matt.26.28, Acts 10:49.)

The blood and water flowing from the side of Christ upon the cross were distinct (Jn. 19:34-5.). These two signify sanctification, represented by water, and justification, which ariseth from satisfaction, represented by the blood shed for remission of sin. By virtue of his death there is no condemnation for sin, Rom. 8:1,3; by

virtue of the grace of his Spirit there is no dominion of sin. Rom. 6:4,14.

This cleansing of us by imputing this blood to us, is by virtue of union and communion with him. This union is made by faith, and upon this account we are said to be justified by faith. (Rom. 5:1.) Exhortation: Have recourse to this blood on all occasions, since it only is able to cleanse us from all our guilt. Have recourse to it by faith, resting on the power of this blood, as the means appointed by God, and intended by Christ, for the expiation of sin.

Faith as accepting Christ as a king doth not justify, but faith as accepting Christ as a priest and sacrifice, as shedding his blood. For we must accept him in that office wherein he made the atonement. He that receives the blood of Christ, as well as he that names the name of Christ must depart from iniquity, and avoid those things which break the covenant. Mingle not anything with this satisfaction; let no muddy waters of your own be mixed with this gospel wine. If we look for justification by anything else, we forfeit all right of justification by him. (Gal.5:2). Let not a day pass without fresh applications of this blood upon any defects in our walking with him; since, 'if we walk in the light', and are industrious to observe the will of God, 'the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.'

Jottings from a Pilgrim's Notebook

John 4:1-42

Let us see how the Lord Jesus enlightened these Samaritans. He began with the woman who came to the well to draw water. He told her that He could give her water that would satisfy her completely. It would be like a spring bubbling up within her, so that she would never thirst. v.14. As she enquired about it, He revealed to her the sin that He could see. v16-18. He went on to show her the nature of true spiritual worship. v.19-24. Then He revealed Himself to her as the Messiah. v.25 This woman then became His witness in the village.

v.28-30. Some believed through her witness v.39. Many others were made ready to listen to Him, and believed His own word to them. They said, "This is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world". v.40-42. Let me learn from this story. If I am to be His witness, I must first of all have a personal meeting with Him. I need to be convicted of my sin, and I need to receive His gift of eternal life. I need to learn from Him the nature of true worship; and be so filled with love for Him that I am compelled to go to others and testify of Him as my Saviour and my God. He will bring about conversions.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Life of Rabbi Duncan. David Brown. Free Presbyterian Publications, pp 511, £6.50.

'The spiritual character... of Dr. Duncan was most impressive. The child-like simplicity of the man, his profound reverence, his sense of personal unworthiness, the absoluteness of his reliance on Christ, his devotedness to the Saviour appearing in all that he said and did, deeply touched not a few of his students, and formed a powerful instrumentality in subduing them into the obedience of faith' (p. 361). That was the testimony of a former pupil to the influence of the Reverend Professor John Duncan (1796-1870), known as 'Rabbi' Duncan, who held the Hebrew professorship in the Free Church College, Edinburgh, for almost 30 years.

Unpunctual, highly absent-minded, unsystematic, and eccentric, Dr. Duncan was no model teacher. But his ministry spanned the parochial and missionary spheres as well as the academic. His work amongst the Jews at Perth in Hungary was that of a pioneer, in which he was encouraged by the Archduchess Maria Dorothea, wife of the viceroy of Hungary. His ability to deal with all sorts and conditions of men was noteworthy. Professor Duncan was a well-balanced theologian who knew conversion as a living reality: his handling of the term 'Mother of God' (pp 171-2) is a model of its kind, scriptural and sane.

A reprint of the Victorian biography first published in 1872, **The Life of Rabbi Duncan**, unlike modern works, has separate chapters devoted to home life and various sayings. Readers unfamiliar with Scottish church history in general and Presbyterian divisions in particular may wish for further light. This otherwise illuminating book, drawing much on contemporaries of the subject, holds one's interest and merits a wide readership.

J. L. P.

The New Birth. Stephen Charnock. The Banner of Truth Trust. Hardback. 584 pp. £9.95.

Some time ago, the Trust issued Vol. 4 of Charnock's collected works, "The Knowledge of God", based on sermons from John; I and II Corinth., and Ephesians. Now we have vol 3, "The New Birth", based on sermons from John iii.3,5; 2 Cor. v.17; John i.13; James i.18; 2 Cor. v.18,19; and 1 John 1.7. These discourses would not be called sermons to-day, but exhaustive Bible studies. Not exhausting, but so thorough that they grip the mind and imagination of the reader and convince him of the truth.

The titles cover "The Necessity of Regeneration"; "The Nature of Regeneration"; "The Efficient of Regeneration", (i.e. the moving cause of it); "the Word, the Instrument of Regeneration"; "God the author of Reconciliation"; and, "The Cleansing Virtue of Christ's Blood." Charnock's sermons were full of sound Bible teaching, Christian experience, and practical application. Well taught will the congregation be, whose ministers have digested these volumes. Charnock was the son of a London Solicitor, educated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, became a fellow of New College, Oxford, where he assisted Dr. Owen, of Christ Church. From there he went to Dublin as Chaplain to Henry Cromwell, and finally returned to pastor a presbyterian congregation in London.

W. J. P.

Studies in Islam

A Group who are concerned with witness to Islam have reprinted three Christian classics as follows:

1. The Sources of Islam by the Rev. W. St. Clair-Tisdall. Pp 102. £1.40.

The author was an evangelical scholar — missionary, working in

Julfa, Persia. The Muslim faith claims the Koran to be a direct revelation from heaven. This work, on the contrary, gives the evidence that the teaching of the Koran came from earlier human sources, namely, Arabian customs, Jewish Commentaries, Heretical Christian sects, and Zoroastrian sources.

2. The Muslim Christ by Samuel M. Swemer. Pp 198. £2.00.

This book outlines what the Koran teaches about Jesus Christ, and shows how to present the Bible teaching to Moslems.

3. The Moslem Doctrine of God by S. M. Swemer. Pp 120. £1.20.

This describes the character of Allah according to the Koran, and orthodox Moslem tradition. Dr Swemer was one of the worlds greatest Islamic scholars early this century. Here he shows that Islam is not another way to God, but the way to another God. For the Koran pictures God in a way that is incompatible with, and very inferior to, the teaching of the Bible.

These three volumes are authoritative, and of the highest value to any christian witness to Moslems.

4. But What is the Gospel? A.T.M.F.M.T. Publication. Pp36 £0.45p.

A booklet of thirty six pages intended to give a summary of Bible teaching for presentation to Moslems. Unfortunately it gives a rather partial view, possibly through its brevity, of sin, the covenants, and the work of the Holy Spirit (described as a Helper given to men when they have repented, and accepted Christ as Saviour).

All these books can be obtained from The Mission for Muslims Trust, Secretary: H. Young, 3 Hanover Road, Rowley Regis, Warley, West Midlands. Postage is extra to the prices quoted.

W.J.P.

The Beginnings. Word and Spirit in Conversion. Paul Helm. Banner of Truth Trust Pp 141. £2.25.

Paul Helm, a lecturer at Liverpool University has written a number of books on the christian life, but none more useful than this. He goes to the root of many vital doctrines and experiences which are in question to-day. This volume is written as a guide to clear thinking after conversion to Christ. He deals with Conviction of sin, Repentance, and the part played by Faith. He warns us that care is needed because there is a great variety of detail in conversion, and much danger of self-misunderstanding at the personal level.

He goes on to deal with the problems: What is Legalism at various stages of christian experience? He explains that the three strands in Conversion, — Conviction, Faith, Repentance, — are not three conditions to be fulfilled, but rather changes manifest in the renewed life. He also explains Faith, Assurance, and the Offer of the Gospel, refuting the charge of mechanical grace. He maintains that divine grace in conversion does not override the human personality, or freedom, but rather restores them. A chapter on the Consequences of Conversion discusses Justification and Sanctification, rebutting the charge of antinomianism from the protestant doctrine of 'by faith only'. The result of conversion is 'a deep change in the moral and spiritual direction.'

Turning to modern applications of the Gospel there are helpful passages on christian 'lifestyle', and 'language in worship', and there is an epilogue showing why it is essential to-day, as ever, to relate our experience to the teaching of Scripture, and not vice versa!

This is an important book, and well worth reading by all — young converts, teachers and preachers.

W. J. P.

Parables of Jesus. B. A. Ramsbottom price £1.95.

Mr Ramsbottom has written another lovely hardback book of Gospel stories for children. They will love having these read to them, and older ones will love to read them. Each is quite simply written, and beautifully illustrated. This one has eight full page coloured scenes, and six black and white drawings. Also in similar format are "Miracles of Jesus", and "More Miracles of Jesus."

Bible Doctrines Simply Explained price £1.60.

In this small book, Mr Ramsbottom explained as simply as possible the Bible teaching on fourteen subjects of great importance to everyone, such as, Creation, Christ, the Holy Spirit, Election, Redemption, the Resurrection, Providence (often sadly under-rated these days), and Eternal Salvation. All is explained so reverently that these messages are likely to lay a firm foundation of faith in young people, and they will bring the Gospel message home with interest to older ones. It is a deserved tribute that a second printing has been called for in less than two years.

Both these books may be obtained from: Gospel Standard Trust Publications, Brackendale Grove, Harpenden AL5 EL.

W. J. P.

Living the Christian life A. N. Martin. The Banner of Truth Trust, 31pp, 50p.

"How am I to live as a Christian? That is a matter of major importance..." From that statement of his subject, A. N. Martin proceeds to expose the fallacies of such common proposition as "freedom from tension and conflict" (which ignores "the reality of indwelling sin", "the world with its restless, aggressive pressure", "the devil with his vicious, devouring intentions", and the fact that "We are saved in hope... the best is yet to come"); ceasing to try to live the Christian life thereby suspending employment of God-given faculties; the crisis experience of Pentecostalism; the charismatic movement, and "higher life teaching".

He then positively outlines the New Testament teaching on spiritual life and growth. While warning against "the excesses of crisis Christianity", he also deprecates "this dull, lifeless, non-experimental, bland, cold kind of Christianity. Tragically, it often bears the name 'Reformed'". He adds notes on "Divine Chastisement as an integral factor in the Christian life", and the Means of Grace for which "there are no substitutes in progressing in the Christian life". A helpful insight into a practical issue.

WHERE IS HE THAT IS BORN KING?

We went to Bethlehem,
 But found the Babe was gone,
 The manger empty and alone.
 'And whither has He fled?'
 'To Calvary,' they said,
 'To suffer in our stead.'

We went to Calvary,
 But found the Sufferer gone,
 The place all dark and lone.
 'Whither?' we asked.
 'Into the heavens,' they said,
 'Up to the Throne,
 For us to intercede.'
 So then to heaven we'll go;
 The Babe is not below.

Dr. H. Bonar

**The
Gospel Magazine
and
Protestant Beacon**

“Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.”

“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today and for ever.”

Editor

Maurice Handford

1987

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Aged Pilgrim's Friend Society

Croydon Auxiliary

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