

THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE

CONTENTS

- Editorial — 181
- Praise ye the Lord: Editor — 182
- Cast Care Aside — 186
- Oh: That I Knew: H. J. W. Legerton — 187
- Learning from trials: F. J. Harris — 188
- The Diary of Jessie Thain: I. A. Buckley — 190
- Jottings from a Pilgrim's Notebook — 194
- The Great Translation: W. J. Parker — 195
- William Sykes (1861-1930): F. Coxon — 198
- Christ: as the Son of Man — 200
- For Younger Readers: C. MacKenzie — 203
- The Mystery of Godliness: P. A Cooper — 205
- God's Word to Joshua — 208
- The Comings of Christ to Israel: W. J. Parker — 209
- Jehovah Shammah — 211
- The Life Story of George Neumark — 212
- Book Reviews — 213

NOVEMBER — DECEMBER 1992

THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE

Editor

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Editorial

The Apostle Paul once wrote "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Phil. 4:11). This is all the more remarkable when we recall that he was then the occupier of a prison cell. While doubtless his fellow prisoners were complaining and repining the Apostle had a deep inward contentment. He had no comforts and hardly the necessities of life — it was all in direct contrast to his earlier mode of life. What was the secret of his contentment? All too often we are discontented, we grumble and are ungrateful. One of the sins of the Israelites was that of murmuring and of being dissatisfied.

Contentment is one of the greatest blessings of life. Paul says that whatever his condition he has grace enough to meet it. He can bear the two extremes of human experience and can keep a calm and untroubled mind whichever of them he has to face.

The Apostle urges Timothy to have this same spirit of contentment — "having food and raiment therewith to be content". Life's essentials are comparatively few. When we arrived on this earthly scene we had no material possessions and when we take our journey hence we shall be similarly unencumbered.

The Epistle to the Hebrews similarly exhorts us "be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee". The recognition that God is with us to sustain us makes earthly conditions tolerable.

Contentment is one of the lost graces of today. True contentment comes from Christ alone. If you are tempted to be discontented think of all the blessings that are ours in Christ.

"Praise ye the Lord"

A Sermon by the Editor

"Praise ye the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God: for it is pleasant: and praise is comely." Psalm 147:1.

Have you noticed that the last five Psalms all begin and end in the same way; they begin with "Praise ye the Lord" and they end with "Praise ye the Lord" or if you wish you can follow the Hebrew "Hallelujah". It is a wonderful beginning and ending to the Psalter.

We want to dwell a little on the subject of praise. Prayer is many sided and, in order that our prayers might be balanced, it is good to remember there are at least five different kinds of prayer all of which should find a place in our devotions. There is praise; confession; intercession; thanksgiving and petition. But we are concerned with the subject of praise, and praise is giving to God the glory that is due to His Name, and praise is the best antidote in the world to self-centredness, because in praise we are wholly taken up with God. We are shut up to Him. We magnify His greatness and His majesty and the perfection of His Being. We marvel at His creation and the wonder of His redemption and our hearts well up with praise and gratitude to Him. "Praise ye the Lord." says the Psalmist.

Now the Lord's Prayer, which is sometimes called the "Pattern Prayer" or the "Model Prayer" begins, you remember, with a concern for God's glory, **not** our own needs, or our own longings. It begins "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed by Thy Name." We concentrate on His Name and the doing of His will, and that prayer that the Lord gave us is very much the model or pattern for our own private devotions and, indeed, in our public worship too.

So we are concerned with the subject of praise. When we would think of God in the perfection of His being we would take up the words of the hymn,

"My God, how wonderful Thou art!
Thy majesty how bright,
How beautiful Thy mercy seat
In depth of burning light!"

It is interesting to note that there are more calls to praise in the Bible than there are to prayer. The Bible has a good deal to say on the subject of prayer. Prayer, we read, is the very breath of life; prayer is essential; a day without prayer is an unsatisfactory day to say the least and we are bidden to pray without ceasing. But most Christians know the value and the necessity of prayer, but I wonder do they know the same concerning praise? Should we omit praise any more than prayer, because, as I have said, praise is something that is due to God. It is the least that we can do in return for the many benefits and blessings that He has bestowed upon us, and so, when you take up the Psalms, you will find that they are full of calls to praise. Many of them begin with prayer and they end with praise and the last word of the Psalter in the 150th Psalm sums up in one sentence the burden of everything, "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord." So our text says, "Praise is pleasant; it is comely" that is, it is good and delightful; it is always appropriate; it should be a characteristic of the true child of God, a token of a heart that

is renewed by grace. And praise, we shall find, is beneficial to ourselves, and, if we had more of it, we should be greatly blessed. It would lift us above the trials of life. It would help us to bear the heat and burden of the day, and there is nothing that oils the wheels of life like praising God. Praise will end murmuring. I was reading the other day something about Billy Bray — a new Biography just been published within the last year or so — He was a famous Cornish preacher; he was very illiterate in his early days but he was wonderfully converted, and the great thing about Billy Bray was that the thought of praise was always with him; whatever his situation he would always say "Surely we must praise the Lord". So we should.

Praise too, is a preparation for eternity, because there, when you take up the last part of the Bible, you will see a glimpse of heaven and there is great activity there. True enough, God's people serve Him in heaven, but they also praise together. Well, we shall be out of our depth if we have not learned to praise Him here on earth. But, you know, we can offer no real praise until the heart has been renewed. There must be reconciliation before there can be acceptable praise, but if we have tasted that the Lord is gracious, let us not fail to bring our daily tribute of praise to Him.

It is interesting to read in the Psalms how David says that he prayed three times a day, evening, morning and at noon. Daniel, when the edict went forth regarding the worship of God he took no notice; he kneeled three times a day with his windows opened towards Jerusalem and prayed.

In Psalm 119 we find the Psalmist saying, "Seven times a day do I praise Thee." He lived his life in the attitude and atmosphere of prayer. Praise, surely, is one of the highest functions of life. Take, for instance, that much loved Psalm 103. At the very outset the Psalmist gives some reasons why he should bless God. He begins, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name, Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases." These are some of the reasons why the Psalmist says we should be in an attitude of praise and thankfulness. Notice also what he says, "And forget not all His benefits." Some people have excellent memories for remembering the bad things — wonderful memories for recalling the troubles and losses and sorrows they have endured. They don't seem to be remembering the brighter days, the mercies and the blessings that God has showered upon them. Well, David, takes himself to task and says, "And forget not all His benefits." Surely we should praise God for all our blessings for our faculties of mind and body, but I wonder if we do that? I was quite moved the other day watching the television (and I am no television addict) but the other day there was one of these thalidomide babies, now a grown man, and he had no arms, only stumps, and no legs, and yet this fellow had triumphed wonderfully over his disability. He had learned to swim, and it was quite moving to see him getting into the pool. I wonder if we thank God for our faculties of mind and body so that we are able to think and move and live a normal life? Do we thank Him for our homes, for our friends, for our loved ones — surely we ought to! You remember how beautifully it is put in the General Thanksgiving. "We bless Thee for our creation, our preservation and all the blessings of this life, above all, for Thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ." And surely, if we think on these lines, we shall take up the Psalmist's word and say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul". Too often we count our sorrows and forget our blessings, but when we begin to look on the positive side we see how endless is the list of blessings which call for our praise.

Take up the Book of Psalms again and you will find this coming through time and time again. 34th Psalm, "I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth." Psalm 108, "O God, my heart is fixed, I will sing and give praise." Psalm 145, "I will extol Thee, my God and King, and I will bless Thy Name for ever and ever; every day will I bless Thee, and I will praise Thy Name for ever and ever." "Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised, His greatness is unsearchable; one generation shall praise Thy Name unto another and shall declare Thy mighty acts." Yes, all the year round, all the day long David would endeavour to bless God. Or, to take up George Herbert's lovely lines in the 17th Century:-

"Seven whole days, not one in seven
I will praise Thee."

Why should we praise God? Why, because He commands us to do so! That in itself is sufficient. Listen to the 100th Psalm, "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise," and then also because of His goodness to us. We can never surely express our gratitude for saving grace because the believer, as he looks back, will remember that once he was lost and now he is found; that once he was dead and now he is alive unto God, or, as Peter puts it, We are "to show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light", **and the more we know of God's grace, surely the more we shall praise Him.** Every day has its mercy and we should bless God for it, and when Sunday is over you may have something to bless God for even on Monday morning as you get up even with the 'Monday blues'. **there will be something to bless Him for, for there is never an affliction but there is a consolation.** You remember the lines of Joseph Hart:-

"How good is **the God** we adore
Our faithful, unchangeable Friend,
Whose love is as great as His power
And knows neither measure nor end.
We'll praise Him for all that is past
And trust Him for all that's to come."

The Bible itself is full of examples of praise. "One generation shall praise Thy works unto another." The Bible is punctuated with outbursts of praise. They arise spontaneously. Away back in the Old testament when God had brought Israel out of Egypt this was the great song of praise that went up, "I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously." Or in the beginning of the Gospel dispensation you remember when Zacharias was told he would have a son who was to be John Baptist, the great forerunner or our Lord, he was dumb until the event took place, and then when the child was born and the day arrived for the naming of the child we read that his tongue was loosed and he spake and praised God and said, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel." That was his first reaction — to bless God. You remember that great chapter 2nd of Acts where the early Church were praising God and having favour with all the people. Yes, and on a very dark day and a very dark night there was Paul and Silas in the prison at Philippi with their backs bleeding. Oh they had done nothing amiss — they had only been faithful in their commission to preach the Gospel, but they had to pay the price thereof, and this is what we read, "At midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises to God." They praised Him in the prison And what about Psalm 139? That is a wonderful Psalm where it says, "I will praise

Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

Well, praising and blessing, as I have said, is the occupation of heaven, and it ought to be the occupation of the Church on earth. Notice in Psalm 145. "Every day will I bless Thee, and I will praise Thy Name for ever and ever." You see, David believed in the immortality of the soul; he didn't expect to end in oblivion, but he would go on praising God through eternity. The cool hand of death cannot silence the song of praise. "I will praise Thee" says David, "for ever and ever." It is as though he had said 'If there were two eternities I will spend the time praising and blessing God.' We remember Joseph Addison's lovely hymn:-

"When all Thy mercies O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view I'm lost
In wonder love and praise.

Through all eternity to Thee
A thankful song I'll raise,
But O eternity's too short
To utter all Thy praise."

Praise will always last. We pray now, but there is coming a day when prayer will be needed no more because faith will be lost in sight and hope will be fulfilled. As Isaac Watts puts it:-

"Our days of praise shall ne'er be past
While life and thought and being last
And immortality endures."

or as William Cowper, the great evangelical poet of Olney in Buckinghamshire puts it:-

"Then in a nobler, sweeter song,
I'll sing Thy power to save
When this poor lisping, stammering tongue
Lies silent in the grave."

He would then still be singing the praises of God.

And so David blessed God heartily and, while the fire was kindling he went on to greater devotion. He never grew weary. As long as he was here below he would sing praises to God, and he would resume his task hereafter.

Well, here is a lovely ending to the Psalter, "Praise ye the Lord." So, how is it with us? No doubt we pray (I trust we do), but do we praise, do we have a praising heart and a praising tongue? If not, let us ask for grace to amend our ways and to take up the Old Testament phrase, "To put on the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness" and to bless God afresh for all His goodness, "For Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty, For all that is in the heaven and in the earth are Thine, and Thou art exalted as Head above all." We end by reading in the Metrical Version the first two stanzas of Psalm 145.

"O Lord, Thou art my God and King
Thee would I magnify and praise
I will Thee bless and gladly sing
Unto Thy holy Name always.

Each day I rise I will Thee bless,
And praise Thy Name time without end.

Much to be praised and great God is
His greatness none can comprehend."

"Praise ye the Lord, for it is good to sing praises unto our God, for it is pleasant, and praise is comely." We cannot do better than end with the ascription,

"And now to God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost be ascribed, as is most justly due, all might, power, dominion and praise, both now and for evermore, Amen."

M.H.

Cast Care Aside

"Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you." 1 Peter 5:7

It is a happy way of soothing sorrow **when** we can feel — "**HE** careth for me." Christian! do not dishonour your religion by **always** wearing a brow of care; come, cast your burden upon your lord. You are staggering beneath a weight which your **Father** would not feel. What seems to you as crushing burden, would be to Him but as the small **dust** of the balance. Nothing is so sweet as to

"Lie passive in God's hands,
And know no will but His."

O child of suffering, be thou patient; God has not passed thee over in His providence. He who is the feeder of sparrows will also furnish you with what you need. Sit not down in despair; hope on, hope ever. Take up the arms of faith against a sea of trouble, and your opposition shall yet end your distresses. **There** is **One** who careth for you. His eye is fixed on you, His heart beats with pity for your woe, and His hand omnipotent shall yet bring you the needed help. The darkest cloud shall scatter itself in showers of mercy. The blackest gloom shall give place to the morning. He, if thou art one of His family, will bind up thy wounds and heal thy broken heart. Doubt not His grace because of thy tribulation, but believe that He loveth thee as much in seasons of trouble as in times of happiness. What a serene and quiet life might you lead if you would leave providing to the God of providence! With a little oil in the **cruse** and a handful of meal in the barrel, Elijah outlived the famine, and you will do the same. If God cares for you, why need your care too? Can you trust **Him** for your soul, and not for your body? He has never refused to bear your burdens, **He** has never fainted under their weight. Come, then, soul! Have done with fretful care, and leave all thy concerns in the hand of a gracious God.

C.H. Spurgeon
Morning & Evening Meditations.

Oh: That I Knew

Harold J. W. Legerton

If we have been in the situation of attempting to console and comfort a fellow-believer at a time of depression and sore affliction, we will have felt the need of divine wisdom sweetened with the love of Christ. We may learn much about this ministry from the Book of Job. It was good of Job's friends to visit and talk with him in his distress, and yet Job gathered no comfort from their denunciatory and critical speeches, so much so that, in chapter 23, he as it were turns his back upon men and cries out: "Oh that I knew where I might find HIM! That I might come to His seat!". When he had finished his further lamentation, Bildad the Shuhite put in his brief interpolation (chapter 25), stating a great truth, contrasting the greatness and holiness of God with the degraded state of puny man: "How can a man be justified with God? . . . the stars are not pure in His sight, how much less a man that is a worm?" Great and solemn truth, but is that all Bildad could say? Was there no hope for poor sinful man? Job's reaction (chapter 26) is not surprising: "How hast thou helped him that is without power? How savest thou the arm that hath no strength? . . . Hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is? . . ." That is just the point; the Shuhite had spoken truth, but not the whole truth; he had not "plentifully declared" the truth.

Yes, says Job, I am aware of the might and glory of God and note that all is naked and open before Him. "These are parts of His ways, BUT how little a portion is heard of HIM? . . . who can understand?". Or, in Paul's words, (Romans 11:33): "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!"

It was the LORD HIMSELF Whom Job sought; the creation, the glory, the holiness, all speak of Him, but it is He Himself Who alone can satisfy the distressed one. "Sir, we would see Jesus"; yes, we know of His works, His miracles, but we are not satisfied until we see HIM. "How little a portion is heard of HIM!" We may seek to console with wise words, with theory, with philosophy, but

"Now none but Christ can satisfy,
None other name for me!
There's love and life and lasting joy,
Lord Jesus, found in Thee".

Philip went to Samaria and "*preached Christ* unto them" (Acts 8:5); He met the Ethiopian eunuch "and *preached unto Him Jesus*" (Acts 8:35). Paul declared: "I am determined not to know anything among you, save *Jesus Christ* and Him crucified." (1. Cor. 2:2). Yes, it is in the person of Christ alone that true consolation is to be found. No wonder the gracious invitation is given through Isaiah (55:6): "Seek ye THE LORD while He may be found. . . ." Yes, Bildad, you are quite right to extol the majesty of the Most High and the nothingness of the creature, but you miss the burden of Job's need and rightful yearning: "Oh that I might find HIM".

Thomas Brooks ("Heaven on Earth") sums it up for us: "The person of Christ is the object of faith. It is Christ in the promises that faith deals with. The promise is but the shell, Christ is the kernel; the promise is but the casket, Christ is the jewel in it; the promise is but the field, Christ is the treasure that is hid in that field; the promise is a ring of

gold, and Christ is the pearl in that ring; and upon this sparkling, shining pearl, faith delights most to look . . . Faith hath two hands, and with both she lays earnest and fast hold on King Jesus. . . . 'O Lord Jesus,' says the assured soul, 'Thou art my light, Thou art my life, Thou art my love, Thou art my joy, Thou art my crown, Thou art my heaven, Thou art my all'."

There cannot be greater comfort to the afflicted soul, to the wounded spirit, and the tortured body than the dear Son of God Who "hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows . . . the chastisement of our peace was upon HIM".

In his anguish, Job exclaimed: "Oh that I knew where I might find HIM". The Lord heard His longing and appeared to him, so that Job was able to say: "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee" (42:5). He was humbled before God Who "gave Job twice as much as he had before . . . the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than the beginning."

Mr Legerton is a Trustee of the Gospel Magazine. He was for many years secretary of The Lord's Day Observance Society..

Learning from trials

F.J. Harris

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"Come, and let us return to the LORD: for He hath torn and he will heal us; He hath smitten and He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us: in the third day He will raise us up and we shall live in His sight."

Hosea 6: 1-2

The God with Whom we have to do is a God of infinite grace, boundless love and matchless mercy. But He is also a God of holiness, righteousness and justice. Although these attributes no longer terrify true believers, because they know that the holy and just judgment of God which would have condemned them to a lost eternity has been satisfied by the sacrifice of a Substitute, that blessed One Who suffered in the place of sinners, yet they also know that it is a truth clearly revealed in Scripture that 'whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth.'

The words at the head of this letter reveal a God Who tears and smites, and a God Who heals and binds up. He sometimes tears His children that He may teach them and He sometimes smites them in order to sanctify them. Yet because He loves His own with an everlasting love, His promise is that however hard the affliction He lays upon them He will heal and He will bind up the very wounds He has Himself inflicted.

We notice firstly that this text teaches us that our trials come from God. Some may put them down to ill fortune, others may blame their fellow men or the devil, but it is a wise course to recognise that ultimately all trials come from God. Whether He permits them, as when He gave Satan permission to afflict Job, whether He allows circumstances to work against us or whether He intervenes immediately in our lives, it is all the same

for it is God alone who 'worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.' We will do well, in any and every difficulty, to say with Eli, 'It is the LORD: Let Him do what seemeth Him good.' 1 Sam. 3:18. We read of Aaron that he held his peace when his two sons were slain by fire because it was the fire of the Lord, Lev. 10:3. Similarly the psalmist said, 'I opened not my mouth because Thou didst it.' Psalm 39:9.

If we learn this lesson it will deliver us from unnecessary and sinful murmuring and will be an incentive to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God and to learn from trials the lessons He would teach us.

Can we not draw a lesson from natural history? The psalmist wrote, 'I have seen the wicked in great power, spreading himself like a green bay tree . . . ' No axe is laid against such a one, no disease rots his leaves. Compare that with the vine which bears fruit and you will see that every year at the proper season the pruner ruthlessly cuts away many of its branches and shoots. And why? 'That it may bring forth more fruit.' John 15:2.

Now it is apparent from the context of the verse (see Hosea 5:14 and cf 13:7f) that when we read of the Lord 'tearing' there is a comparison to a lion rending its prey. The Lord seems suddenly to bring us down and by terrible trials to lacerate us. So Hezekiah discovered as he compared God's dealings with him to a lion breaking his bones, Isaiah 38:13. But Hezekiah also gives the reasons for God's dealings with His children in so apparently harsh a manner — 'O Lord, by these things men live and in all these things is the life of my spirit; so wilt Thou recover me and make me to live.' Isaiah 38:16.

Similarly, when we read that the Lord not only tears, but smites, it indicates again the severity of a trial — as though we are beaten black and blue. But once again the word of God provides the key — 'The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil' Proverbs 20:30. There is always a purpose in the trials a loving Father lays upon His children.

Secondly, let us ask 'What shall our response be if we feel that the Lord has been tearing and smiting us?' Our text tells us — in faith we are to return to the Lord. What! to the God Who has torn and smitten us? Yes, for if we have been exercised by the trials laid upon us, He will receive us, He will heal us. He will bind us up again. As a surgeon, who lays his patient upon the operating table and cuts him deeply, intends that his patient be healed, so our gracious God, 'Though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies.' Lam. 3:32. God never afflicts without having an intention to heal and bind up. Though we may feel almost lifeless yet the text contains a blessed promise, 'After two days He will revive us.' There may be a period of utter wretchedness but it will end for the text goes on, 'in the third day He will raise us up and we shall live in His sight.' As the hymnwriter says:

'Come let us to the Lord our God
with contrite hearts return;
Our God is gracious, nor will leave
the desolate to mourn.

His voice commands the tempest forth,
and stills the stormy wave;
And though His arm be strong to smite,
'Tis also strong to save.

Long hath the night of sorrow reigned;
The dawn shall bring us light;

God shall arise and we shall rise
With gladness in His sight.'

Oh my dear friends, our God is abundantly willing to pardon, to heal, to bind up. Shall we be less so? Does any one of us consider that he or she has been more greatly offended by anyone than our God has by every one of us? And if He, the glorious, thrice holy sovereign of heaven and earth will receive us: if we read of Him, 'To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses though we have rebelled against Him' what possible reason can we have for acting coldly towards our fellows? Would we be like that unhappy servant who, having been forgiven a huge debt by his master, went out and refused to forgive one of his fellow servants a very trifling debt? Matt. 18:23-35.

Let us take courage in all our afflictions — we are in the hand of the God Who loves us. As David said, after his foolish decision to number the Israelites, 'Let me fall now into the hand of the Lord for very great are His mercies' 1 Chron. 21:13. However He deals with us it is for our good. Though He has torn, He will heal us; though He has smitten, He will bind us up. But let us not fail to learn from our trials.

'Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.' Hebrews 12:11.

The Diary of Jessie Thain

ISA A. BUCKLEY (Winchcombe, Glos)

Few books have had a greater influence among the godly folk of Scotland, and indeed of many other nations, than the Memoirs and Remains of Robert Murray McCheyne by Dr. Andrew Bonar.

One September day in 1964 I had the joy of visiting St. Peter's Church, Dundee. I saw McCheyne's vestry and pulpit, and held his Bibles in my hand. How tiny the written notes in the margins. I stood by his grave for a little time and read the lovely words of the memorial stone. It was a precious and sweet experience.

The Memoir contains three letters to a lady, Mrs. Thain of Heathpark, Blairgowrie. There are also letters to J.T. and A.T., and a poem on the death of J.T. "a believing boy."

This family seem to have resided part of the year at Heathpark, and part in Dundee, where they attended St. Peter's.

A.T. was Alexander Thain who became a Free Church minister. In his old age Andrew Bonar wrote "Last night I had been dreaming a great deal of being with McCheyne, Alexander Thain, and some others. Is the Lord wishing by this to excite in me more intense conviction? . . . More prayer? . . . more love?"

The daughter of the family was called Jessie, and McCheyne's sister Eliza and she were close dear friends. It would appear too that a deep bond of affection existed between McCheyne and this godly young woman.

When McCheyne was in Edinburgh preparing to leave for the Holy Land Mrs. Thain wrote to him, "May the Lord prosper your journey for His own glory and your good. . . . Poor Jessie has felt your absence all along very much; and now that it has come to this crisis she is cast down. May she find that Jesus is ever near, though her Pastor is far away, who has so often gladdened her heart when proclaiming redeeming love. She has been anxious to have a class in your Sabbath School. . . . She feels she is able to do very little." McCheyne replied, "I shall be quite delighted if Jessie is able to take a small part in the Sabbath School. She knows it is what I always told her — not to be a hearer of the word only, but a doer. It is but a little time, and we shall work no more here for Him. . . . Tell Jessie to stay herself upon God. Jesus continueth ever, He hath an unchangeable priesthood. Others are not suffered to continue by reason of death."

In April 1844 when the Memoir first came to hand we find Jessie writing to her dear friend Eliza McCheyne, "You ask me what I think of the Memoirs and Remains. Mr. Bonar kindly sent Mamma a copy. I began it the evening it came, and as I could not rest until I read it, I finished the Memoir next day. . . . It is indeed most savoury; and don't you feel it very quickening, dear Eliza, to see what the dear subject of it attained to? Oh, to have such a sight of sin as he had, and to prize the blood of sprinkling as he did."

Jessie Thain's little Diary was prepared for publication by the Rev. Murdoch Campbell (author of "From Grace to Glory"), and issued in 1955. My precious little copy is marked 3rd edition 1961. Much of it tells of sermons she heard from the lips of the Bonars and their circle, but the extracts I have chosen are of more personal matters. The Diary is very short, some 50 pages. It begins December 31st, 1843, and ends November 28th, 1847. It is thought that Jessie Thain died shortly afterwards, she would be about 25 or 26 years old.

31st December 1843.

I have often intended to note down things of interest to me; but have through much procrastination, never yet fulfilled my intention. I would now wish to do so, that I may not forget my own multiplied evil doings, or the manifold mercies of the Lord. . . . O Lord save me from having nothing more than sleepy desires, . . . Again I earnestly prayed Him to open up to me a door of usefulness . . . a way whereby I may serve Him, living no longer unto myself but unto Him who died for me and who rose again.

1st January 1844.

Although I have met in the year that is past, with what has cost me many a sorrowful hour, yet how much is there of cleaving to the dust — how little of a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.

14th January.

Went to the school last Sabbath evening. Was very weary on returning home, but thankful that I had been able to go. Oh that the Lord may use me as the weak instrument of lasting good to the souls of these dear children.

23rd January.

Attended last week at this time the children's meeting at Coupár. . . . The children were addressed in a most solemn manner by Mr. Andrew Bonar on the necessity of their coming to Christ, and that for three reasons:-

1. Because their danger is very real.
2. Because their sins are very great.
3. Because Christ is willing to receive them.

28th February.

Had a sweet letter on Monday from Eliza McCheyne in which she speaks of some scenes of the past. Her affectionate kindness is often very affecting. . . . Last Sabbath was a quiet day at home on account of the snow. Two years that day it was since dear Johnnie departed" to be with Christ, which is far better." (this was the J.T. of the Memoirs.) The events of the day were rising up before me, among others the evening visit of one who was so faithful and yet so tender and sympathising in the home of sorrow. (R. M. McCheyne.)

23rd March 1844.

Went to Dundee where I have not been for a year past. . . . The sight of St. Peter's spire, as we drove into town quite upset me. During the few days I was there, in the midst of everything else, the thought was constantly present before me *that he was away*. Walked in the afternoon to the dear spot where our friend's remains rest, and felt so overcome while standing there that I couldn't realise anything; but oh, how applicable are his own words to himself:-

"The precious dust beneath that lies,
Shall at the Voice of Jesus rise,
To meet the Bridegroom in the skies,
There, there, we'll meet again."

With lingering steps and wistful looks I left the spot and even the outward walls of that dear church touched many a cord in my bosom and told many a tale to my aching heart.

25th March 1844.

It is not easy to put down this date, for it is a year to-day since our beloved friend entered into rest. He no more feels a weak body, nor does he mourn over his own sins and over the sins of others. . . . The Lord Himself make up to me what I have lost in him; for the more I see of others the more do I feel persuaded that I shall never see his like again. . . . O Lord enable me from this day forward to go up from the wilderness leaning upon the Beloved, having my eye fixed intently on the Canaan beyond — that better and heavenly country.

16th August.

Oh for a tender heart to mourn over the sins of the past years, and also for a thankful spirit to praise the Lord for all the way by which He has led me. Surely I should raise up a stone of remembrance — an Ebenezer — for hitherto hath the Lord helped me. And as I advance in years, may I grow in grace and in the knowledge of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

25th March 1845.

It is two years since our invaluable friend entered into rest. It was an event which must ever be a solemn and affecting one to me. The Lord took to Heaven one who had been blessed more to me than all else in the world besides. Thanks be unto Thy name, O Lord, for all Thou didst for him and by him, and for all that my poor soul received from Thee through him.

6th April.

I have only been once within the courts of the Lord's House since the middle of January owing to a tedious illness. . . . Great exhaustion accompanies the cough.

4th May.

It is now nearly four months since this illness made its appearance. Oh Lord grant that I may never be impatient under Thy dealings, and enable me to ask in a humble enquiring spirit — not in a murmuring one — “Wherefore contendest Thou with me?” . . . Oh Lord prepare my understanding and heart, by giving me much knowledge and great devotedness so that I may spend my days in Thy service on earth, if this be Thy will, or if Thou art soon to call me Home, may my soul be made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

8th September.

I left the pleasant city of Edinburgh — where, with Mamma I spent a month — with much regret. Not a little sorry to say farewell to dear friends. But with none did I feel so much to part as with dear Eliza McCheyne, for my affections are entwined around her in no ordinary degree. Will it ever be ordered that our lots be cast near each other? The Lord grant that our friendship may be very profitable to us both, and that we may meet at length in that blessed land where parting is unknown.

Heath Park — 17th May 1847.

It is five weeks to-day since we came out here for the summer months. The Lord grant they may be pleasantly and profitably spent. . . . Many and varied anxieties have of late filled my heart, so that I would not like to live over again such a winter. And yet with how many outward comforts has the Lord crowned us during the past months in Dundee.

28th November 1847.

Now that we are home again, may the sins of the past summer be forgiven and may our heavenly Father bless us temporally and spiritually, providentially and graciously, and enable us to act in such a way as shall be pleasing in His sight. The Lord be pleased to restore dear Mamma to her wonted health, in kindness long spare both our parents, making them blessings to us, and us comforts to them. And may my brother be taught of Thee and have the peace of Thy children.

. . . Eternal thanks for causing him to seek Thy face, and now make him the happy means of leading many to that glorious One Whom he hath found. And, O heavenly Father, I entreat of Thee to lay Thy hands upon us and show us a token for good. Our gracious God be pleased to say to us “From this day will I bless you . . .”

This is the last entry in the Diary. Jessie Thain has been for long years safe Home in the Land of Light. Her heart is sad no more.

Rev. Murdoch Campbell closes his introduction to the little book with these words:-
 "We felt that it was not in vain that God had so long preserved this precious fragment of spiritual autobiography from the pen of one of His children.
 And who knows but that other daughters may also, in reading her words, seek an interest in the Prince of Life."

References.

Memoirs and Remains of Robert Murray McCheyne by Andrew Bonar is published by The Banner of Truth Trust.

The Diary of Jessie Thain edited by Rev. Murdoch Campbell, M.A. was published in 1955. Mr. Campbell's excellent book "From Grace to Glory" is also published by The Banner of Truth Trust. My dear Mother loved this book and gave copies to many others.

Jottings from a Pilgrim's Notebook

John 12: 1-11

Attitudes to the Lord Jesus for us to ponder

It seems to me that Mary and Martha planned this meal as a time of thanksgiving for the restoration to them of their brother and as a time of fellowship. Martha poured out her love in her service — she served, this was her way of life. Mary took her most precious possession, she anointed her Lord and John says "anointed the feet of Jesus with it". Mark says she anointed His head but John noted she also anointed his feet with this very precious perfume. It was the Lord who said she anointed Him for His burial. If she knew He would rise again, this was an act of faith and love that gave pleasure to our Lord. Judas whose God was money saw her gift as waste and a loss to himself. He complained.

Lazarus was present as one whose very presence testified to the deity of Jesus. Many people came to see Lazarus, this man whose existence was solid proof of the claims of Christ. The priests were too blinded by opposition to the Lord Jesus, that they plotted to murder Lazarus. What a revelation of their condition!

What then is our attitude to Christ? Have we any experience of His love, for which we want to give thanks? Has He saved me from sin and death and hell? Has He brought me to know God and Himself personally? He has given me His peace and joy and love? How ought I to show my thanks? Like Martha by serving Him in the ordinary things of every day life. Like Mary in giving to Him the most precious things in my life, yea, in giving Him my heart. Like Lazarus, that my life may testify to His power and His work in me. May it be so Lord, Amen!

The Great Translation

W. J. PARKER (Colwyn Bay)

God our Father "who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." Colossians 1:13

In our world to-day thousands of people have become refugees. We recall the Boat people from Vietnam. England, Canada, and other western countries are a second home for many who have fled from warfare, injustice, inequality, famine, and oppression. Hebrews 11.16. calls it seeking a better country. It was the same in Abram's days. He moved away from the oppression and immorality of Ur of the Chaldees, to the land of Canaan. This urge to seek a better country is a God given notion, fulfilled only when we enter the kingdom of Christ. Paul describes it as having the eyes opened, and turning from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. John Bunyan described it as a Pilgrim's Progress. Christians are the pilgrims. It is a work of God in love and grace.

Paul prays for the believers in Colosse and uses careful words to describe this experience of 'translation'. Let us note these words and measure our christian stature by them.

He describes christians as being "filled with the knowledge of God's will." This can only come by careful study of the scriptures, which are God's revelation of His will.

He also describes them as 'strengthened with all might'. The Holy Spirit is the power of God in our lives, and leads us particularly to patience, long-suffering, and joyfulness. Our thankful lips are filled with praise.

He finally declares that we are delivered from the power of darkness. Paul teaches that the christian has power within to overcome the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil. He is to put off the works of the flesh, and put on the new man, which is renewed after the likeness of Christ. (Col. 3.8-10)

Consequent on this experience, Paul declares that the christian is made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Note that this is not that we 'are being made meet', but that 'God made us meet'. That is the justifying work of the Father through our faith alone in the redeeming work of Christ on the cross. We are adopted into the family as the children of God.

Now this translation is related to three great discoveries as we learn to appreciate the Person, and work of our Saviour, and grow in the knowledge of Him.

I. Christ in Creation. Conviction.

The first discovery is that Christ is pre-eminent in Creation. Who is Christ? He is all that a man may see of God. He was begotten of God before time began, by an eternal generation. He was the agent of God in the creation of the natural world; and He upholds all things by the word of His power (Heb. 1.3). From Him comes all government, all history, all truth, righteousness and moral stature. (1 Cor. 1&2)

The first revelation of God in scripture concerns His moral nature. God is righteous. (Gen. 1.). God is holy and man has sinned against the moral laws of God. Man stands condemned by his selfish exploitation of nature, and his self-centred relationship with both God, and his fellow men. In the language of Bunyan this is where man picks up his burden of guilt for sin. Human conscience is quickened when it is realised that Christ is the

Sovereign Lord of the created universe, and we have to do with Him. In fact it was men like ourselves who crucified Him. He has announced that He will one day come again to Judge all men, the living and the dead, for their words and their deeds.

John Newton wrote of the Judgment Day:

At His call the dead awaken,
Rise to life from earth and sea;
All the power of nature, shaken
By His look prepares to flee:
Careless sinner,
What will then become of thee?

II. Christ in Redemption. Conversion.

The Second great discovery is that Christ is also pre-eminent in Redemption. God is seen to be love. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (Jn. 3.16). Paul said, "God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5.8) Redemption is God's initiative in salvation, and also wonderfully, it is the completion of His eternal purpose in creation. Such grace arouses gratitude, breaks the bondage of the will towards sin, and opens the gateway to all christian experience. William Williams wrote a Welsh Hymn:

There is a path of pardon In His blood;
There is sure salvation In His blood
The law's full consummation,
A Father's approbation —
Hear Zion's acclamation! In His blood —
Atonement and redemption in His blood.
O come ye sons of Adam, And rejoice:
Now trust the God of Abraham, And rejoice
O hasten, happy sinner
To life in Christ for ever,
To bonds that nought can sever: O rejoice!
In full and glad surrender Come, Rejoice.

The principle is, that payment God will not twice demand. First at my bleeding Sureties hand, and then again at mine. And so will come assurance as expressed in Toplady's hymn;

A debtor to mercy alone
Of covenant mercy I sing;
Nor fear, with Thy righteousness on,
My person and offering to bring;
The terrors of law and of God
With me can have nothing to do;
My Saviour's obedience and blood
Hide all my transgressions from view.

This is where Pilgrim's burden falls from his shoulders, to be carried no more. Faith leads to assurance, and arouses confidence, not in itself, but in Christ, and His promise of full

and free salvation. This is the conversion experience, accepting what God so freely gives us. But this is not the end of the christian experience, or pilgrimage. There follows a further discovery concerning Christ.

III. Christ and the Church. Consecration.

The third discovery is that Christ is pre-eminent in the Church. Christ is called the Head of the Church (Eph. 5.23). In 1 Cor. 11.3 He is called the Head of every man. In Colos. 1.18. He is called the Head of the body, the church. These descriptions imply a very close organic relationship. Christ is no other-worldly Saviour. As Paul told the Ephesians in Acts 17.27, God is not far from every one of us. In John 14.23, Jesus told his disciples, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him; and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." This means that God dwells in the lives of the faithful. A beautiful description of this is given in Hosea 2.19-20 where God likens it to a marriage between Christ and the Church. "I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies". This is Christ's part. Then comes the bride's part, "I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness; and thou shalt know the Lord." So to Christ's invitation, Come unto me, He adds "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest unto your souls."

What is this yoke of Christ? It is His devotion to the salvation of mankind. We are called as disciples into this same fellowship of service. Our calling is to bear witness to the message of salvation to those within our reach. Paul it was again who said in 1 Cor. 1.21-23, "After that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Men cannot find God, or salvation, by the wisdom of the world. They need the message of the Gospel. Christ calls us, as he called his early disciples, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." To be involved in Christ's mission, is to pick up our new burden as pilgrims. This is to be translated into the kingdom, walking worthy of him, Jesus Christ, "who is the faithful witness, and the first-begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen." (Rev. 1.5-6.)

God looks not at the elegance of your prayer, to see how neat they are; nor yet at the geometry of your prayers, to see how long they are; nor yet at the arithmetic of your prayers, to see how many they are; nor yet at the music of your prayers, nor yet at the sweetness of your voice, nor yet at the logic of your prayers, but at the sincerity of your prayers, how hearty they are. There is no prayer acknowledged, approved, accepted, recorded or rewarded by God, but that wherein the heart is sincere and whole . . . God loves a broken and contrite heart, so He loathes a divided heart. God neither loves halting nor halving.

Thomas Brooks.

William Sykes (1861-1930)

FRANCIS COXON

William Sykes was born at Barrow-in-Furness on the 24th July, 1861. Both parents died while he was young; his mother when he, the youngest of her four sons, was only six weeks old, and his father, Captain Sykes (a sea-captain) when he was only seven years of age, and he was brought up by his maternal grandmother.

I. HEADMASTER AT BEWCASTLE, CUMBERLAND

Mr. Sykes' first occupation was that of teaching; and while he was headmaster at Bewcastle, and became providentially, into intimate relationships with the rector of that place, Titus E. Laurie, of whose life and ministry details are found in "The Gospel Magazine," 1893: pp. 419-420; 616; 805. It was from Mr. Laurie, his spiritual father, that William Sykes was established in "the doctrines of grace," which he ever loved. It is of interest to record that Titus Laurie was ordained by Samuel Waldegrave, bishop of Carlisle, of distinctive Calvinistic views, and whose writings include "New Testament Millenarianism, or, the Kingdom and Coming of Christ," of which it has been written, "Probably no work in the English language advocates the historic interpretation of prophesy more learnedly and exhaustively than do these Bampton Lectures."

II. THE SPHERES OF WILLIAM SYKES' MINISTRY

William Sykes was ordained in 1889, and his first curacy was at St. Clement's, Broughton, Manchester. In the following year became curate to T. W. Weston, at St. John's, Tunbridge Wells; and in 1891, to Carbrook, Sheffield. After four years there, he was given the parish of Hillsborough and Wadsley Bridge, Sheffield, where he remained twenty-four years. In Sheffield he did much open-air work, addressing crowds of people, and answering with patience and God-given wisdom all questions put to him. He took a great Protestant stand, and well-known in Sheffield on account of his voluminous newspaper correspondence on controversial subjects. Mr. Sykes was a prominent Orangeman, being for many years, and up to the time of his death, Senior Grand Chaplain of the Orange Order, and Grand Chaplain for all England of the Grand Royal Chapter of Ireland. In 1919, Mr. Sykes accepted the living of Audley, North Staffordshire, which he resigned, 1927, on account of serious illness.

III. FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE SOVEREIGN GRACE UNION, 1913-1930

In 1913, William Sykes became the first President of "The Sovereign Grace Union," which he held till his death in 1930. He was chairman at the Annual Conferences held in Camberwell, and among the speakers were: J. K. Popham, editor of "The Gospel Standard;" Thomas Houghton, editor of "The Gospel Magazine;" J. W. Tobitt, editor of "The Gospel Advocate;" Henry Atherton, of Grove Chapel, Camberwell; J. E. Hazelton; J. Raven; Ernest Roe; G. A. Alexander; W. Sinden; G. Alexander; J. P. Wiles.

We would quote briefly from William Sykes' Presidential Address, May, 1917:

"I feel it is incumbent on my part to give you a few illustrations of the false teachings so much prevalent everywhere at the present stage of the history of the visible church. The prophetic Word gives us plain warning that 'in the latter times some shall depart from the faith,' that there shall be 'a form of godliness', and that 'the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.' The fulfilment of these and similar Scriptures are

clearly evident to all true students of the sacred writings. False doctrine is a canker permeating the whole of the outward churches. In the few instances I am about to give, I shall not touch the Roman apostacy nor its ally Puseyism. Neither will I refer to Socinianism, nor those mushroom heresies infesting our land today. I consider them all to be heretical. I shall quote from Protestant Evangelicalism tainted with the virus of Arminianism. I begin with a reference to what is called "The Keswick Week." I quote from the 1916 convention. "God can do it if only you will let Him have the chance."

"Who really will let Him have His own way, and will really let Him in? There is nothing that God cannot do with the *man or the woman who is ready to let Him* have absolutely His own way. He asks you to *admit*. It is His pleasure that the door should be openable from the inside. You have got to do it. . . . There are bits of the building of which you know the key is in your pocket, and not in His hands."

Who is going to refute such misconceptions of the character and sovereignty of God as taught by these false teachers except it be through such an agency as the Sovereign Grace Union? Nebuchadnezzar *ris*es in judgment upon such perfidy, for "He (God) doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou.?" Daniel 4:35. Comp. Matt. 11:24; Luke 10:14.

SOVEREIGN GRACE, by the President, William Sykes

Sovereign grace o'er sin abounding,
Ransomed souls the tidings swell;
'Tis a deep that knows no sounding;
Who its breadth or length can tell;

On its glories, Let my soul for ever dwell. John Kent 1766-1843.

God's Word has been given primarily to teach His people the will of the Lord. This ought to be our grand motto: "The Bible to teach and the Church to preach." We are children in the school of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here then is our lesson. Grace knows no merits. The Word expresses the character of the Trinity towards God's adopted children, and bespeaks His dealings with them in salvation. No deeds of theirs can in the slightest degree merit God's favour; neither can any demerits hinder the accomplishment of Jehovah's purposes. What is meant by "Sovereign" grace? This title inculcates the fundamental truth that "All Things Are Of God." The origin of all things is the absolute will of God; everything depends upon His appointment.

The sovereignty of the Almighty is manifested —

In His Grace; "Even so, Father for so it seemeth good in Thy sight." Matt. 11.26. The sovereignty of God shines brightest when we view Him shedding the lustre of His countenance upon the objects of His choice in the covenant of Grace. Sovereign Grace predominates in things appertaining to life and godliness. The wise and prudent in their own estimation are excluded. The babes, helpless in themselves, have the glorious realities of eternity revealed to them because "good in Thy sight." What Sovereign Grace! Yes, all is centred in God.

In His Glory; "The glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them." John 17.22. God's glory is the final purpose of all things. "Whom He justified, them He also glorified." Romans 8.30. Dear reader, cannot you and I sing with overflowing heart,

Oh! to grace how great a debtor, Daily I'm constrained to be!
 Let that grace now, like a fetter, Bind my wandering heart to Thee.

Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, 1707-1791.

IV. HIS LATER DAYS

Serious illness in December, 1927, led to the resigning of the pastorate at Audley, and eventual retirement to Southborough, near Tunbridge Wells, where he passed away, August 30th, 1930. "Having served his own generation by the will of God, he fell on sleep," and interred in St. Peter's Churchyard, Southborough. On the gravestone erected later, includes the inscription:

Who departed this life in the faith of God's Elect,

August 24th, 1930, in his 70th year

"Absent from the body — Present with the Lord" — 2 Cor. 5,8.

"In Thy presence is fulness of joy" — Psā. 16.11.

"Whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the
 Image of His Son." — Rom. 8.29.

"The Word of our God shall stand for ever." Isa. 40.8.

The volume written by William Sykes, "The Salt of the Covenant," Lev. 2.13, was published in 1908. The volume was republished by The Sovereign Grace Union, 1932, re-edited by his son, William Dodgson Sykes, with whom the present writer enjoyed happy relations during the period of Mr. Sykes' editorship of "The Gospel Magazine," in correspondence and visiting my address, "a brother beloved, specially to me," Philemon 16. His son Stephen Whitefield Sykes, is the present bishop of Ely, but, alas, speaketh not the language of his revered father, or grandfather.

Christ: as the Son of Man

William Sykes (1861-1930)

If we look at Christ as "God the Son" we must go beyond all time in order to understand the manifestation of the love of God in sending Christ as "the Son of Man". If we go beyond all time we shall then be enabled to see the Covenant, the everlasting Covenant, which was made between the Three Persons in the Glorious and the Blessed Trinity, and we shall see that all the arrangements were then made for the work, the words, and everything which the Lord did whilst He was down here upon earth.

In the first place I want to observe about Christ as God the Son, that it is a Trinitarian revelation. In Hebrews x. 5 you will find a remarkable expression which is used by Christ as God the Son, when, or just before, He came into the world. "When He cometh into the world, He said unto His Father, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me." Hence we see the Father's work respecting the body for Christ. Then again we come to Hebrews ii. 14, and there we find it is stated "As the children

are partakers of flesh and blood, He likewise Himself took part of the same." He took! Here is the active work of Jesus Christ as the Son of Man. "He taketh not hold of angels (I am quoting the marginal reference), but of the seed of Abraham He taketh hold." I notice that Witsius has a very important remark to make. He says that Jesus Christ took not hold of angels for the purpose of their deliverance, but He took hold of the children of Abraham, His beloved family, that family which in the Epistle to the Ephesians, the Holy Ghost by Paul says was "chosen in Him before the foundation of the world." He took hold of the seed of Abraham for the purpose of *their deliverance*. Again in Luke i. 35, we have the work of God the Holy Ghost. The Father's work was to design and prepare the body, the Son's work was to take that body, and the Holy Ghost's was to form that body. When the message of the angel was given to the Virgin Mary, it was that "the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, therefore, that Holy Thing Which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." Hence, then, we are called upon to view the Lord Jesus Christ when coming into this world and taking our nature upon Him as the work of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

Continuing this subject, we find another threefold reference to this Trinitarian work. You take that prophecy from Isaiah ix., written by God the Holy Ghost, "Unto us a Child is born": then you read in Philippians ii. 7, "He made Himself of no reputation" (here is the Son); then you turn to Romans viii. 3, and you have what to me is a most striking passage, in which it says, "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." The expression "sinful flesh" to me is one of very deep importance. It is not *innocent* flesh, but "the likeness of sinful flesh." We find Him as the "Emmanuel, God with us," not as a human person, but taking the human nature, and having the Divine nature, the two natures forming one Person — the Lord Jesus Christ. I will now ask you to note in Hebrews ix. 24, 26, 28, one English word, "appear," and you will find that word has a threefold meaning with respect to the Lord Jesus Christ. In the 26th verse it is His appearance here upon earth — "He *hath appeared* to take away sin" (past); 24th verse, "*now to appear* in the presence of God for us" (present); then in the 28th verse it is, "He *shall appear* the second time" (future). I want to occupy the few minutes that are given to me in speaking of these three appearances.

The first appearance and its object is stated in the 26th verse — "He hath appeared to take away sin by the sacrifice of Himself," and I look at the very commencement of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the remarkable phrase "Son of Man" occurring about eighty times in the Gospels. I notice that in Matthew viii. 20, "The Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." There you have that which is so comforting to the Church of God, the providential dealing of God with His Son Jesus Christ. Whilst not for one moment would we think of Him divesting Himself of His Divinity, whilst we always think that He is both God and Man, and because He is God and Man in one person we not only say "He knew no sin," "He did no sin," but we also say "He could not sin" (and hence you see the glory and the beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ before He came into the world; and when He came into the world victory was assured, because of His essential Deity). Yet He Who was the Lord of glory came into this world the poorest person that possibly could be. He lived in absolute dependence on the supplies of His Heavenly Father in order that He might be fed, clothed, and have a place of rest. Those few women of whom we read in Luke's Gospel who ministered to Him in His necessity were raised up of the Father in order that these providential mercies should be given to Jesus as the

Son of Man. Is there not something here to illustrate His sympathy with us, His beloved and chosen people?

Look at His utterances. "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" "My meat is to do the will of My Father." Consider the whole life of Jesus and you will find that from beginning to end it was a carrying out absolutely in every detail the work His Father had given Him to do. Why did He live at Nazareth? Refer to Matthew ii. 23, and you will find why. Because He had to fulfil Scripture — "He shall be called a Nazarene."

Look at the words which He utters in His instructive parables. Why did He speak these parables? To fulfil prophecy. Turn to John xii. 50 for the commandment of the Father — "And I know that His commandment is life everlasting; whatsoever I speak therefore *even as the Father said unto Me so I speak.*" So that the words the Lord Jesus Christ uttered, and which the Holy Spirit makes to be such sustaining consolation to God's people, were words which were agreed on between Him and His Father before He came into our world.

Once more, in respect to this glorious Son of Man. We notice the wonderful power that He used in the miracles He performed. Turning to Matthew ix. 6 we find that significant expression, "The Son of Man hath power on earth." I would note that assertion. It was the power which was given unto Him as Son of Man.

Look again at the work of the Holy Ghost when Jesus went up to be tempted in the wilderness. "He was led up of the Spirit to be tempted," says Matthew; "The Spirit driveth Him," says Mark; and we see in His temptation, and all through His life, that He acted in the power of the Holy Spirit.

We must consider also His death. Look at the suffering He endured in Gethsemane, look at His sufferings upon the cross. Why did He suffer so upon the cross? He suffered in order that He might "take away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." He suffered there, as it is written in 1 John iv. 9, that "We (the beloved) might live through Him." We note those sufferings of the Son of Man as the couplet has it —

"As the Son of Man He suffered and bled and died;
But as God in Man He satisfied."

And as we behold Christ's sufferings upon the cross we see there that which is written in the 53rd of Isaiah "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." We see the sins of the whole elect family of God laid upon Him. Not "I lay my sins on Jesus," but the Lord laid my sins there, and the sins of all His people, upon the Lord Jesus Christ. We see our sins laid upon Him — *imputed* to Him. We by faith behold Him as the expiatory sacrifice, as our Substitute.

Just for one minute we come to the fact that *now* Jesus is upon the throne. He is there on the throne of grace. One passage I must ask you to notice — that in which it is said that He sympathizes with us! He is sympathizing there now at the right hand of our Heavenly Father; *there* He knows exactly what we need. *There* He feels more intensely than we can feel. "We have a High Priest Who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Christ as Son of Man is tenderly sympathizing with all His suffering members here upon earth.

And lastly, He will come again, and when He does come again, it will be to *receive his people to Himself*, "to send forth His angels to gather together His elect from the four

winds," it will be that they shall be with Him, to rejoice with Him over the salvation that He has procured for them.

For Younger Readers

CARINE MACKENZIE

THE LOVING FATHER

We recently made the short trip on the ferry from Kyle of Lochalsh to the island of Skye. This is quite a short crossing taking only a few minutes on the roll on/roll off car ferry. When we had safely parked the car we decided to get a breath of fresh air up on the top deck on the port side of the ferry. From that vantage point we could see the other cars coming on. Several other passengers had the same idea as us and left their cars to stretch their legs and have a look around. We noticed one family coming out of a large caravanette — a dad and four little children. The father put a little green jacket on one little boy about 3 years of age and then turned to do the same to the other three youngsters. The next thing we noticed was a member of the crew sprinting up the car deck from the stern right to the fore deck. The little boy had left his father and wandered along the car deck, up the ramp at the bow of the boat. Just in time the crew member reached him and grabbed him away from danger. How easily he could have toddled right up to the edge and into the sea. The crew man returned the boy to his father. We might have been inclined to give the boy a row for wandering away and causing the problem but the father was so glad to see his little boy safe and sound that he just gave him a big hug and smile.

We read in the Bible about a father like that. His son had strayed away. He had left home and misused his money and his time and talents. When he eventually came to his senses he decided to go back to his father's house and ask to be one of the servants. When his father saw him coming he did not give him a row, but he welcomed him with open arms and gave him a big hug. The father then had a big celebration feast to mark his home coming. His brother was upset at all the fuss. Why did the father not give his wayward son a row for causing so much heartache and trouble? The father was just so glad to see his son back again.

This is the story that Jesus told to help us to understand how God welcomes a sinner. When we sin we stray away from God, but God is so glad to welcome sinners back to himself. Those who repent and, seek forgiveness through trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ are more than welcome.

As on-lookers on the ferry, we felt that the little boy should have been reprimanded. We did not love the boy as his father did. The elder brother in the story was displeased at the overwhelming welcome given to his young brother. His attitude was very wrong.

Let us take care to have the right attitude to other sinners. The offer of mercy is given to them. There is power in the blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse the worst sin.

PUZZLE

The Bible tells us a lot about God's love for sinners. We love him because he loves us. Find the missing words which speak about love. The initial letters spell out one of the wonderful gifts that a loving God gives to his people.

1. We love him because he _____ loved us. 1 John 4:19.
2. For God so loved the world that he gave his _____ begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life. John 3:16.
3. In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he _____ them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old. Isaiah 63:9.
4. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and _____ himself for me. Galatians 2:20.
5. And the Lord make you to _____ and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you. 1 Thessalonians 3:12.
6. I love the Lord because he hath heard my _____ and my supplications. Psalm 116:1.
7. Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the _____. John 13:1.
8. Greater love hath _____ man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. John 15:13.
9. I love them that love me; and those that seek me _____ shall find me. Proverbs 8:17.
10. And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is _____ abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. Romans 5:5.
11. Who shall _____ us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Romans 8:35.

The Mystery of Godliness

P. A. COOPER (Quorn, Leics)

"And without controversy great is the mystery of Godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." I Tim. 3.16.

The Apostle, writing to Timothy, the young pastor, is telling him how to rule in the church and how believers should behave. "You are", he says, "the place of God's habitation. God dwells in you". Oh that people might see this and understand this. We are brought by grace to trust Him and this is the mystery of God's dealing, and we are to so live that those outside may see that God is with us. The apostle refers to the household of God, v.15. The Lord preserves the church in the world to uphold his truth among men. Wherever the gospel is preached, believed, practised by men of God then it becomes evident that God is with them, not otherwise. Over many churches the word Ichabod could be written, ie the Glory has departed. God, puts the deposit of truth in the hearts of his people.

God dwells in light unapproachable. But he has revealed himself in a way most wonderful. He dwelt in a man. That man was Christ Jesus the Lord and in him men saw God, the God who cannot be seen. You see our Lord Jesus makes the unseeable seeable, the invisible visible. In contemplating the great mystery of God being manifest in the flesh we are thinking of the vital and essential truth that has never changed and must be maintained among us. It is not a question for debate. These things are believed and held to be true by all real believers, and the words of our text are brief but exceedingly weighty. The Apostle says, "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh."

Now the mystery is in the tremendous meaning of those words. The words themselves could not be clearer, there is no mystery there, Paul is not putting forth a theory nor even an opinion, he is stating facts. And there is no mystery about the facts, the mystery is in the immensity of the meaning of the facts. Here then is a summary of the gospel. It is in six little sentences believed by many scholars to be an ancient hymn which was used in the early church. The form of the sentences are poetic: Manifest in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen of angels (those who are nearest the throne of God), Preached unto the Gentiles (those who are in the opposite end, that is afar off), Believed on in the world, Received up into Glory.

The lines as they stand are instructive, for example the first couplet deals with the descent of our Lord Jesus coming from highest glory to lowest earth. The last is the ascent back to the glory from which He came. There are many parallels in this ancient hymn if you look closely. However, we have six great points of essential truth and all of it is without controversy: that is, the church of God believes this implicitly although outside in the world it is rejected.

In the New Testament there are six great mysteries. There is the mystery of the incarnation, there is the mystery of Christ's union with His church (Ephesians 5), there is the mystery of our calling, the calling of the Gentiles, (Ephesians 3). There is also the great mystery of the blindness of the Jews as shown in Romans 11, and the tremendous mystery of our resurrection which Paul sets forth in 1 Cor. 15.

If you understand those mysteries you are beginning to be wise unto God.

1. God manifest in the flesh. God the invisible, then was manifest. You see God the eternal spirit dwelt in flesh. It simply means that God became incarnate and dwelt in a human frame. He who is adored by angels lay in a manger. We rejoice over this every Christmas time, it is ever our joy to declare that He became like us, He who oversees the world was as a man, made to sleep and to suffer and to die like us. It is absolutely tremendous and almost beyond our comprehension. In our Lord Jesus God is near to us, He is indeed our Emmanuel, not manifest in angel's nature but in man's nature, the very seed of Abraham. So it means there is a distinct bond between the glorious God who made us and our tiny selves. It brings us near to Him, blessed be his name, near to us. Here is an exceeding wonder: the excessive glory of the infinite, God who cannot be seen by human eyes becomes manifest to man. God manifested to us we see Him. Ah, the absolute God would blind us in His majesty, the God of Sinai would crush the soul, it is no wonder that the very mountain trembled. But we see him in Jesus and here He is set forth, in the wonder of His grace and mercy. He who went from His manger to the cruel cross, and from the cross to the tomb, and from the tomb to His home in glory, reveals God to us. Look at Him and you see God. Have you seen God in our Lord Jesus? you cannot be right about anything unless you are right about Jesus and see God in Him.

2. He was Justified in the Spirit. When He came in the flesh it might have been doubted who He was. He came to poverty, weakness and disrepute: who was this man, whence had He learned, to what school did He go? The secret is this the Spirit of God was His in unmeasured fulness, and it was because of this that men knew who He was. As a child He baffled the rabbis, as a man He confounded those who sought to trap Him in His speech. Never man spake like this man, they said. When they brought to Him this question "Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar?" "Render" He says "to Caesar what is Caesar's but to God what is God's". And when they brought the fallen woman to Him, expecting Him to be as ruthless as they were, He said "Where are thy accusers? Neither do I condemn thee." So full of the Spirit was our Lord Jesus that He could look at a man and read his heart, He knew all things and as John testified in his gospel, He had no need that anyone tell Him about any. His words commanded the elements. They were able to say of Him "He doth all things well." This was because He was vindicated by the Spirit, the Holy Spirit made His Spirit strong. It was this anointing that made Him chief of all. Note also that the Spirit bore witness to Him, both at His baptism and His transfiguration. Beloved, the Jesus we preach has been justified by the Holy Spirit. He is the witness supreme and He says this, "This is the son of God". Have you the witness of the Spirit within? It is the same thing the Spirit of God witnesses with our Spirit that we are children of God. That's the second great point.

3. He was seen of angels. Yes angels gazed upon our Lord Jesus Christ, and saw God manifest in Him. Up until His incarnation they gazed upon His majesty, He was their Lord and their King. But now in Christ they saw not majesty but love condescension, pity and tenderness as they had never seen before. These attributes of God they saw in Him. Yes, I believe angels and archangels did gather there, they watched Him in the manger, they tracked His course among men, they waited on Him in the wilderness, watched

Him as He moved amongst men. One came to His aid in Gethsemane, they rolled the stone from His grave, sat upon his sepulchre, and I believe they bore Him to the glory in triumph and majesty, and they saw Him and they saw God as never before. That is why they sing "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." Have you seen Him with the inner eye?. How awful that He be seen of angels, but not seen by you? May you like the angels be able to see Him.

4. He was preached unto the Gentiles. Is this part of the mystery you may say? Yes it is. Until Jesus came there were no preaching of the Gentiles, they were outside the pale. Gentiles were referred to as dogs. They might snatch a crumb from under the table but that was all. But when our Lord Jesus ascended to glory He was proclaimed to the Gentiles. The truth you see was for us, for you and for me. He was preached unto the Gentiles.

We ought to pause and remember that He was preached. Note that it is by preaching, this is the glorious way God has proclaimed his truth, by telling forth of the glorious message about our Lord Jesus. We must never down grade the pulpit: the Word must be preached it is essential. This is the trumpet call of heaven: the gospel must be preached, He must be spoken about to the Gentiles. The early church knew the gospel had to be spread abroad and they preached it everywhere. In Athens, Rome and Asia the gospel was preached unto the Gentiles. Have you heard the gospel? Much more important still, have you obeyed its dictates?

5. He was believed on in the world. Now this is a tremendous thing: the world at the time of the coming of our Lord Jesus was steeped in cruelty vice and shame, its sins were indescribable. It's that world in which he was believed. He is still believed on in the world. Nothing matters till this is done. When men in this present evil world believe on Him it is the very work of God, it is a mystery, it is divine.

6. He was received up into glory. He often said this. He made no secret of it, He came from His Father, and the Apostle John says He dwelt in the Father's bosom. He came to do the work of redemption: having finished the work He went back and was received up into glory. He had ended the work He had come to do, He had paid the full price for us. He is now everlastingly exalted, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. That is where Jesus is today, at the right hand of the majesty of God on high, King, acknowledged not because He made the universe, but also because He had redeemed the world and shed His blood. From that glory He will return.

These truths believed will sanctify your heart and life and make you what you ought to be.

Eternity to the godly is a day that has no sunset; but to the godless is a night that has no sunrise.

Thomas Watson.

God's Word to Joshua

Joshua 1:8

There is a close connection between Deuteronomy and Joshua, the narrative continues uninterrupted. Deuteronomy closes with the death of Moses: Joshua begins with the commissioning of a new leader. No man is indispensable, God's work goes on; He buries His workmen but carries on His work.

Joshua was a small man in comparison with Moses. He belonged to a bold minority, one of the twelve spies sent out to spy out the land of Canaan. He and Caleb had the courage of their convictions and spoke with confidence of the ability of the Israelites to take Canaan because God was with them.

Now as he succeeds Moses and prior to embarking on the conquest of Canaan, he was urged to take the Word of God as his constant companion. "This book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth but thou shalt meditate therein day and night . . ." Alone in his tent morning and evening he was to nourish his soul on God's Word, at the same time ordering his daily life by its precepts.

Joshua was assured of the presence of God in the task assigned to him — "as I was with Moses so I will be with thee". He was to experience the same presence as Moses had. We too can be conscious moment by moment of the divine presence — see Hebrews 13:5, 6.

Further, Joshua was to experience the power of God. He was very conscious of his inadequacy and weakness. He knew that every inch of advance would be contested by the enemy, but all God's commands are his enablings.

He was urged to place the Word of God at the very centre of his life. Bible study is essential if we are to make steady progress in the Christian life. We should read the Bible:

(i) Because of what it is — the Word of God.

"Here are the lively oracles of God", to quote from the Coronation service. Here we may hear God's voice and discover His plan for our lives. The Bible is not to be trifled with but trusted. It should be read with reverence and expectation.

(ii) Because of what it says

It tells us the ultimate truth about God and man; about sin and salvation; about life and death. It demonstrates how the failure of man is more than met by the faithfulness of God. Its message is centred in One who is always the same — see Hebrews 13:8.

(iii) Because of what it does

The Bible exercises a profound influence upon those who read it with honest intention. It is able to make us wise unto salvation (2. Tim: 3:15). It is able to build us up in our most holy faith. It will inform the mind and quicken the conscience. Although it has come through the centuries it is up to date and very relevant.

We are to make practical use of the Bible. We should:

(i) Feed upon it

"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth", was the word given to Joshua. When reading a book with keen interest we sometimes say we are devouring it. Let the

Bible be food to your soul — see Jeremiah 15:16.

(ii) *Meditate upon it*

“Thou shalt meditate therein”. It is not enough to read the words of Scripture — we must let the truth we read enter into us and become part of us. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly” was the Apostle’s word to the Christians at Colosse. We are to live in subjection to the Word and bow to its authority.

(iii) *Act upon it*

“That thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein”. The truth we read must be lived out in our daily lives. We are to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things (Titus 2:10). We need to guard against being hearers only — for if we fail to do so we have thereby engaged in an act of self-deception. The truths of the Bible must control our actions and transform our characters.

How thankful we should be for the priceless treasure of the Word of God.

“Who can tell the pleasure,
Who recount the treasure,
By Thy Word imparted
To the simple hearted”.

M.H.

The Comings of Christ to Israel

W. J. PARKER (Colwyn Bay)

John 1. 11-14. “He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God. And the Word was 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.”

I give you five facts from God’s eternal purposes in these words.

I. We beheld his glory.

Who is this that came from Edom? (Isa. 63) It is the majestic God. The eternal, the infinite, the all-knowing, the all powerful. It is the Creator of the heavens and the earth; the designer of all the beauty, the harmony, the music, the love and compassion seen both in nature and grace. It is He whose Spirit upholds all things, and inspires all good things.

II. The Word was made flesh. The Son of God was born on earth through the faithful Virgin, Mary. But what an apparent catastrophe was to follow. The world knew Him not.

And His own people, the Jews, received Him not. So the chosen leaders, both Jews and Gentiles concurred in His crucifixion. Was this not a divine revelation of the corrupt and wicked, sinful hearts of mankind?

III. But before coming, God had made a Covenant with his faithful servant Abraham, and gave him this promise? In thy seed shall all nations of the world be blessed. (Gen. 22.18.) He chose His people Israel, and the tribe of Judah in particular for the fulfilment of His purpose — all the blessings that flow from the incarnation of His Son Jesus, the Christ.

IV. But what Parables Jesus taught! All was not lost at the cross. In fact all was won! God was in complete control, and all was going according to His Covenant plan.

Hear what Jesus said:

i. In Matt. 21. v. 33ff. is the Parable of the Landowner and his Vineyard. The Landowner went on a long journey, so he sent his servants to collect rents from the keepers. They slew them. Then he sent his son. They slew him too, and said, Now, the vineyard will be ours. They were the early humanists!

This is exactly what happened, the world slew the prophets, and then the Son of God.
ii. In Matt. 22. v. 1ff. is the parable of the King's marriage feast for the marriage of his son. All the invited guests refused to come! So, the king sent his servants to invite as many of the poor and needy as would come. The wedding was filled with guests! What did Jesus mean? The Jews, the covenant people would not come, they were unworthy; but the Gospel opened up the marriage feast to whoever would come. This opened up the way for our fifth fact.

V. The Church was born.

The Holy Spirit calls whosoever will come to the Saviour shall be grafted into the number of God's chosen people. The fact of Christ's atonement for sin on the cross, was the basis for the foundation of the Church, 'saved by grace alone'.

'But' is God's word. It explains the grace of God in providing salvation from sin; in permitting evil, the evil of the cross, and changing the calamity into triumph and victory. There is a verse in James 4.6, which explains: 'The spirit within us lusts to evil, but He giveth more grace'. Salvation, as well as creation is God's gift. All goodness is God's gift. In 1 John 2.29 we read, 'He that doeth righteousness is born of him.' So the work of the Holy Spirit is a new birth unto righteousness. The birth of the Church, and the new birth of all believers will cause us to ask a question.

But what of the Promises of God to Israel? Was God defeated?

Has He broken His word? By no means!

God's purposes mature with time.

Christ promised to return. In John 14.3., we read, 'I will return and receive you unto myself.'

Three great changes will occur when Christ returns:

1. The Jews will be converted as a nation, and accept Him as their Messiah. Paul explains this in Romans 11. v. 11-15, 25-27. His first coming was to provide an atonement for both Jews and Gentiles, and also to found a Church for all people on the basis of faith.

His second coming is to reveal Himself fully to both Jews and Gentiles and bind them both into the Church.

2. The dead will at His return rise again for the day of Judgment. Rev. 20. 11-12.

3. God will then form the new Heavens and the new Earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. (Rev. 21. 1-4.)

This is the reason for the Season of Advent. Not merely to remind us of Christ's first coming as Saviour, but to teach us to look forward to that glorious day when He will come again, in majesty to judge both the living and the dead.

But for to-day the glorious consequence of Christ's saving work, from the incarnation to the cross, is that — As many as receive Him, to them He gives the right to become the children of God, through faith in His name.

Let us in our prayers plead that both Gentiles and Jews will turn away from the wars of hate and nationality, and turn in faith to the Son of God, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Jehovah Shammah

"Whereas the Lord was there." Ezek. 35:10.

Edom's princes saw the whole country left desolate and counted upon its easy conquest, but there was one great difficulty in their way — quite unknown to them — 'The Lord was there', and in His presence lay the special security of the chosen land. Whatever may be the machinations and devices of the enemies of God's people, there is still the same effectual barrier to thwart their design. The saints are God's heritage, and He is in the midst of them, and will protect His own. What comfort this assurance yields us in our troubles and spiritual conflicts! We are constantly opposed, and yet perpetually preserved! How often Satan shoots his arrows against our faith, but our faith defies the power of hell's fiery darts; they are not only turned aside, but they are quenched upon its shield, for 'the Lord is there'. Our good works are the subjects of Satan's attacks. A saint never yet had a virtue or a grace which was not the target for hellish bullets: whether it was hope bright and sparkling, or love warm and fervent, or patience all-enduring, or zeal flaming like coals of fire, the old enemy of everything that is good has tried to destroy it. The only reason why anything virtuous or lovely survives in us is this, 'the Lord is there'.

If the Lord be with us through life, we need not fear for our dying confidence, for when we come to die, we shall find that 'the Lord is there'; where the billows are most tempestuous and the water is most chill, we shall feel the bottom and know that it is good; our feet shall stand upon the Rock of Ages when time is passing away. Beloved, from the first of a Christian's life to the last, the only reason why he does not perish is because 'the Lord is there'. When the God of everlasting love shall change and leave His elect to perish, then may the Church of God be destroyed, but not till then, because it is written, JEHOVAH SHAMMAH, 'The Lord is there.'

C.H. Spurgeon
Morning & Evening Portions

The Life Story of George Neumark

I was born in Germany in the 17th Century and was sent to a good school in Germany and took a great interest in foreign languages, including English and Swedish. When I was old enough to start work I obtained a job in Hamburg with a Shipping Company. I found some good lodgings with a dear Godly Woman, and took with me a violin, which I had learnt to play in Germany. All went well for a few years, then I became ill, and could not work. My employers had to obtain other help and I became unemployed. This was a heavy trial to me as I had no money to pay my landlady, so when I was feeling better I felt I must sell my violin. So I went to a pawnbroker, (a Jew, whose name was Nathan), when he had looked at my violin he said it was not worth much and could only give me 10 shillings for it. (present day value, 50p) I was very sorry and upset but felt I had to accept it.

I turned to go out, but hesitated and turned back and asked Nathan if I could have just one more tune on my violin. So I sat on a stool and began to play, and the words of a Hymn seemed to flow into my heart, also a tune to go with it, then I gave the violin to Nathan, and went out of the shop. I came into contact with a gentleman who spoke to me and asked me who it was that was playing and singing, and said "I could not turn away from it". So then I told him my story, and how I came into the position I was in. He then said "This is remarkable" and went on to say "I am working with the Swedish Ambassador in Hamburg and he is in need of someone who can read and understand the Swedish language. Would you like to come with me to see the Ambassador," and I answered YES. I went and was offered the job at far more money than I had at my previous employment.

How blessedly true are the words of the Hymn:

"God moves in a mysterious way His Wonders to Perform."

This is the Hymn I composed and sang,

Leave GOD to order all thy way
Trust in Him, Whate're betide
Thou then will find in the evil day
Thy all-sufficient Strength and Guide,
Trust in GOD, whose Mighty Love
Builds on a ROCK which cannot Move.

(From The Little Gleaner, 1908)

Adoption gives us the privilege of sons; regeneration the nature of sons.

Stephen Charnock.

God is to be trusted when His providences seem to run contrary to His promises.

Thomas Watson.

Book Reviews

Sent by Jesus. D. B. Knox. The Banner of Truth Trust. Hardback. pp 85. £5.50.

Dr Knox was Principal of Moore Theological College, Sydney, until he retired. He now assists at the newly founded George Whitefield College in Kalk Bay, South Africa. He is therefore well fitted to advise on ministry in the churches.

In this book he writes very simply and clearly on deep subjects, the nature of the ministry, its origin, form, and purpose, in the mission of the Church. Following this he gives advice on preaching and teaching techniques, and specifies areas that are sadly lacking to-day. He stresses that we must be Christ centred.

He deals with various present day problems in a scriptural manner, the masculine terminology of the deity, the place of women on the ministry, and the problems of denominationalism in the Church. The last chapter is a very encouraging study on 'The Joy of Ministry'.

There is an appendix in which the author outlines a training course for ministers, based on his vision of the ongoing work of Moore College.

This book would be a most helpful present for any student considering offering himself for ministry. It also is a challenge to the Church to return to a more biblical organisation of our congregations.

W.J.P.

The Life of John Duncan. A. Moody Stuart. The Banner of Truth Trust. Hardback. pp 231. £6.95.

A. M. Stuart was minister of St. Luke's Church, Edinburgh, of which Duncan as a member and elder.

John Duncan, son of a shoemaker, had great qualities and ambitions from boyhood. He aimed at a chair in Hebrew! After apostasy, worldiness, and heresy, he was converted through the visit of César Malan, of Geneva, who persuaded him that Jesus was the Christ.

Before ordination he took the rural charge of Persie Chapel, Perthshire, with great success. Then he was called to Duke Street Gaelic Chapel, Glasgow, where he married Miss Tower, who died following the birth of their second daughter.

In 1841 Dr Duncan was appointed Church of Scotland minister to the Jews in Buds-Pesth, on the Danube. Before going, he married a widow, Mrs Torrance, who shared his missionary enthusiasm. They were very successful and kept open house for the Jewish people. Among the converts were names such as Saphir, Edersheim, and Tomary (of Constantinople). Dr Duncan took great interest in the Protestant Continental Churches.

The Disruption in the Church of Scotland altered all his plans. He and all the missionaries threw in their lot with the Free Church, and Duncan was appointed first Hebrew professor of the New College. Many of the anecdotes which make up this volume were supplied by Miss Robertson, later his housekeeper. This interesting biography could well be read together with the volume called "Rich Gleanings", (sermons, addresses, and lectures of Dr Duncan), published by the Free Presbyterian Press. They are complementary.

W.J.P.

Advancing in Adversity. Six Papers read at the 1991 Westminster Conference. Available from John Miller, 55 Warwick Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR4 8NH.

Four of these lectures centre on the Puritan era, and the life and writings of Richard Baxter in particular, as revealed in his books, *The Christian Directory*, and *The Saints*

Everlasting Rest. The four form a very intimate and detailed study of christian life in England during the Puritan period.

One paper, outstandingly topical, outlines 'The Reformation in Eastern Europe: Progress and Decline'. Topical because it outlines the root causes of the present awful conflict around Bosnia, between Moslem and political Christian groups.

Another paper, by Eryl Davies, 'The Angry God, the place of Hell in Preaching', defends the Bible teaching against the ideas of annihilation, conditional immortality, or universal salvation. The author recently published a new edition of his book 'An angry God.'

The other authors are Iain Murray, Robert Sheehan, Robert Oliver, John J. Murray, and Leith Samuel.

W.J.P.

The Godly Man's Picture. Thomas Watson. The Banner of Truth Trust. Paperback pp 252. £2.95.

Watson was a late Puritan, and the easiest of them all to read. These pages are a series of his teaching sermons on the Christian life. It could be an excellent book for a new Christian. Watson describes the basic things in the godly life, and then goes on to details. Finally there are practical helps to godliness and a call to perseverance, with counsel and comfort.

It could be useful in personal Bible study or in groups, and would be ideal for adults just admitted to Communion.

W.J.P.

The Inner Sanctuary. Charles Ross. The Banner of Truth Trust. Paperback pp 247. £3.50.

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The Hon. Secretary

At their annual general meeting in July the Trustees of *The Gospel Magazine* agreed unanimously to appoint Mr. David Hughes, who has recently moved from Ramsden Heath, Essex to Battersea, SW11 to be Honorary Secretary.

Mr. Hughes has lately taken early retirement from the Ford Motor company at Dagenham. Prayer is sought that Mr. and Mrs. Hughes may be divinely blessed in this new work. Announcement is to be made of Mr. Hughes' address when he takes over the responsibility of Hon. Secretary.

The Rev. Gordon Hill, who became Hon. Secretary nearly 28 years ago, and Mrs. Hill, who has been fully involved in the work, will now be relinquishing the responsibility.

The Gospel Magazine, and *The English Churchman* and *St. James's Chronicle* have been closely linked together since the last century. This came about when the owner and Editor of both was the Rev. James Ormiston, of King's College, London. He was a prominent Protestant, and free grace evangelical. After ordination in the Carlisle diocese, Mr. Ormiston ministered in Islington, London: from 1875 to 1880 he was the first Vicar of Holy Trinity, Old Hill, Staffordshire, from whose clergy in the current century the Rev. H.R.H. Hill, and the Rev. Tom Shaw became Gospel Magazine Trustees. From 1880 until 1915 Mr. Ormiston was Rector of St. Mary-le-Port, Bristol city. The Trustees of both publications continued to have patronage responsibility with reference to St. Mary-le-Port, which was destroyed (except for its tower) in the last War. The Rev. Wm. Dodgson Sykes, Rector of St. Mary-le-Port, was Editor of *The Gospel Magazine* (1951-1963); while regular contributors — "Damaris" (Dr. Lydia Houghton), and Miss Ruth Cowell, were members of the congregation for very many years.

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