

NOVEMBER–DECEMBER 2016

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The Gospel Magazine

The uncaredful answer • Remembering John Philpot • The Race

Contents

161	Editorial.....	<i>The Editor</i>
163	The uncaredful answer.....	<i>A sermon by the Editor</i>
168	A Sermon on Matthew 6:10.....	<i>J van Lodensteyn</i>
169	Eyes to see.....	<i>Carine Mackenzie</i>
171	Studies in Ezekiel.....	<i>P King</i>
172	Remembering John Philpot.....	<i>The Editor</i>
174	A Sermon on Matthew 6:24–34, Part 2.....	<i>Martin Luther</i>
176	The Race	<i>Wallace A. Bell</i>
179	Studies in II Peter	<i>The Editor</i>
184	Studies in British Church History	<i>Edward Malcolm</i>
188	Gleanings from the ministry of the Gospel	<i>Peregrinus</i>
191	Book Review.....	<i>Various</i>

1766–2016

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

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

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

These texts, which have been associated for so many years with *The Gospel Magazine*, give some indication of what this bi-monthly stands for. We seek to present the Lord Jesus as the only Saviour for a lost world: to edify the people of God; and to promote unity among believers, ‘the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace’.

The Gospel Magazine is believed to be the oldest religious periodical still being published. One distinguished former editor was the Rev. Augustus Toplady, whose famous hymn, ‘Rock of Ages cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee’, was first published in these pages.

The Trust Deed of *The Gospel Magazine* is defined in terms of the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion of the Church of England, but the magazine itself is non-denominational. We aim to provide variety in unity, publishing articles from a wide diversity of past and present writers committed to ‘the faith once delivered to the saints’.

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THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE

Incorporating the Protestant Beacon and the British Protestant

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

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

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

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EDITORIAL

TO remind readers of *The Gospel Magazine* that 2017 is the five hundredth anniversary of the Protestant Reformation ought to be superfluous. Such a date ought to be engraved on our minds, and set before our eyes at all times. The glorious gospel liberties, the free mercies of Christ, and the blessing of an open Bible in the common language are but three of the many and glorious privileges that are ours as a consequence of that event.

It would be true to say that it was not one event, but a series of them, beginning with Martin Luther’s own conversion, and his clear understanding of that liberating doctrine of justification by faith—liberating, that is, from the errors and corruptions of the medieval Church, liberating from the power of a grasping priesthood, under the headship of the Antichrist, liberating from the endless, thankless and finally unattainable round of works deemed necessary for personal salvation. The process began with Luther’s conversion, but quickly encompassed the whole of the medieval system, exposing its flat contradictions to the Word of God.

The process took time. Men may have been converted quickly or slowly, but society

and nations took a long time to be moved. In some cases, as in the history of our own nation, the glories of the gospel only became apparent when the people who had first begun to taste them had them taken away by the accession of Queen Mary I. Only when they began to see what they would lose of Romanism were permitted to regain the ascendancy did they lean to forsake those superstitions and errors, and turn to Christ in faith. What a change came over our nation as a consequence, opening the way for the Puritans, for the high scholarship of the Elizabethan period and beyond, and for the production of works and commentaries on which many still rely for their clear and faithful exposition of God’s Word.

How sad, then, that forces were at work which aimed to thwart the Protestant Reformation in this land. Aside from the insidious work of the Jesuits during Elizabeth’s reign in particular, we know that Archbishop Laud worked to de-Protestantize the Church of England. He may have been no friend of Rome, but he was no friend of the Reformation either.

We know that, after the restoration of the

monarchy, many in the Protestant denominations in England and elsewhere were seduced by that humanism which has become known as The Enlightenment. A greater darkness can hardly be imagined. The truth of God's Word was openly denied, and science was elevated into the high position it holds today in the minds of the vast majority of our friends and neighbours.

Since then, the rise of Anglo-catholicism within the Established Church, and of a non-conformist ritualism elsewhere, has served to blur the borders between Rome and the Protestant Churches. As liberalism and ritualism have worked their harm upon churches, so the siren call of social action has provided and apparent point of unity. That such social action, in spite of high rhetoric, has no true foundation in the gospel, is of no concern to its advocates. So long as the churches are seen to be doing something, why look too closely at their mandate for doing it?

One effect of all this was the visit of the then-Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Michael Ramsay, to Rome. He met the then-Pope, Paul VI. A 'Common Declaration' was issued in which the two men spoke of their desire to 'leave in the hands of the God of mercy all that in the past has been opposed' to 'Christian charity'. They aimed to promote 'sincere efforts to remove the causes of conflict and to re-establish unity.' The concrete outworking of this was seen in two things. First, the Church of England engaged in liturgical revision, altering the form of wording in the service of Holy Communion so that those who wished to could read it as teaching transubstantiation. Secondly, the two bodies set up the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission, or ARCIC. This series of dialogues, running from 1967, and still ongoing, began with a false premise. The second document produced was entitled, 'The Authority of the Word of God and its Relationship to the Church' and shows that, in the minds of the representatives, the Reformation had been about authority; is the

authority of the Church over or under the authority of Scripture? This is considered to be a purely procedural concern. Rome's well-known position is that the Church declared which books are and are not canonical, and so the Church's authority is superior to that of Scripture. Protestants have, traditionally, taken a different view. The false premise here is that the Reformation debate about Scripture was a necessary consequence of the primary debate, on the way of salvation. The great matter facing Martin Luther, and every sinner whose conscience has been awakened to his guilt before God, was this; how shall a man be right with God? Luther said the answer is our being justified by faith. Rome said, and still says, that in the administration of the sacraments righteousness is infused into the individual. All the agreed statements that have come from ARCIC and from Evangelicals and Catholics Together, from the joint RC-Lutheran talks, and any other one cares to mention, proceed on this basis. Agreeing that both Scripture and the Church have authority, they pass over the issue of justification and assume the Reformation question has been answered.

This is not all water under the bridge. The present Archbishop of Canterbury joined the present Pope for a service to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Ramsay's meeting with Paul VI. Rome and the Church of England are determined to reach full rapprochement. Were it not for the ordination of women, and the Anglican Church's ambivalent attitude towards homosexual clergy, there would, it seems, be no solid obstacle to full reunion.

We know which way the wind is blowing. Rome has a way of waiting patiently until her former enemies come suing for peace. She has learned to modulate her tone. She no longer threatens and demands, but woos and whispers. Let us be fully persuaded in our own minds regarding the truth of Christ's gospel, and let us be prepared to stand for it, no matter what happens around us.

THE UNCAREFUL ANSWER

A SERMON BY THE EDITOR

Daniel 3:16-18

The answer the three friends gave in reply to Nebuchadnezzar's threats and ungodly demands provides us with a clear and simple view of authority and how we are to see it. Their situation appears straightforward; as subjects and servants of this pagan king they must obey his ungodly demands or face the terrible consequences. Their answer, however, did not speak to this but to their standing as servants of the King of kings. They considered not the consequences of disobeying Nebuchadnezzar, but of disobeying the Lord God. In this they provide us with a clear and godly example, that we may be encouraged to give the same answer in all situations where we are called upon to declare for whom we stand.

In considering these verses we will begin by examining the background to the situation here, then the king's reaction, before finally looking at their response.

1. The background

'Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits...' (3:1). Why? The previous chapter records the matter of the king's dream and the interpretation of it. In his dream the king saw a great image, 2:31, and this represented him and the empires that should come after him. Each was progressively portrayed as less glorious than its predecessor. The day would come when all empires would fall before the kingdom of Christ, being the stone not cut by man's hand, 2:34.

Specifically, Daniel had told King Nebuchadnezzar, 'Thou art this head of gold' (2:38). It would be difficult to deny that such words played on the king's pride. Satan seized on them to ensnare the king into committing

this act of idolatrous and blasphemous folly. It is as though the king, knowing God likened him to the golden part of the image, considered it as permission to make such an image. That the Lord had shown him in his dream that the image, from its head of gold to its feet of mixed iron and clay, would be ground to powder seems to have passed the king by. All he saw was that he was the first, the head, and a golden head at that. So are sinners incapable of being taught the things that would make them wise, because their wickedness blinds them to the truth.

We may add that, although the world is filled with hatred against true religion—against the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and against those who believe it and live by it—yet the world loves to have religion, and to profess to honour it. The active rejection of religion is a relatively modern phenomenon, although most of its proponents tend to elevate science into the place of religion. The honouring of religion is seen in the way in which prayers are to be had at certain public events, especially those connected to our armed forces. Yet anyone who hears the prayers knows that they are devoid of reference to Jesus Christ, of confession of sin, of words of repentance, or of any expressions of faith in anyone but man himself. The rites and ceremonies are honoured; the heart and spirit of religion is not. Nebuchadnezzar was glad to use religion for his own end.

The end here is perhaps the very thing before us, the accusation and condemnation of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. These were slaves who had been elevated to very high office. Others had been passed over, and bore a bitter grudge. Had these very Chaldeans advised the king to make the

golden image, in the knowledge that these despised Jews would not worship it? Such is the deceit and cruelty of the unregenerate heart.

When the dedication ceremony was over 'certain Chaldeans' accused 'the Jews' of failing to participate in this idolatrous act, 3:8–12. This accusation need not have been made against all the Jews, especially if the majority, broken in spirit by the exile, compromised their faith by falling down when the trumpets blew and the other instruments played. Yet if any Jews, and especially those most prominent in public life, and in the royal court, would not bow down, then how long would it be before the rest would begin to find courage to refuse the king's will? An example must be made of these men. They must be destroyed for the good of the empire, as well as to advance the careers of those who had been overlooked for promotion in their favour.

We have here the same spirit that was at work among those who accused our Lord Jesus Christ. They were moved with envy, and tried to entrap our Lord with all manner of questions and tests. What upset them was both the way in which the people turned from hearing them to hearing him, and the way in which he criticised their teaching by failing to uphold their doctrines and practices. Of course, the reason why he did not do as they did, or speak as they spoke, was that they acted and taught against the word of God. They were not faithful instructors in the faith once delivered. As blind leaders of the blind they hated the one who was light, and who gave light. And so they must accuse him.

The Chaldeans who accused the three friends looked to gain a victory over their hated enemies, who were not their enemies, but who had been raised to high office because they honoured the Lord. It was his good pleasure to cause them to prosper, not that they might be wealthy and powerful, but that they might be better placed to bear public witness to their heavenly Father. And so the golden image was set up, and the nation

called upon, on pain of death, to bow down before it. This was the situation with which the three friends, and everyone else, was confronted. How should they react to such a trial?

2. The king's reaction

When the accusation was made, and the three friends were brought before the king, we note that Nebuchadnezzar believed the accusation without investigation, and that he demanded an answer, not of words, but of action. So vv.13–15. Just in case the seriousness of the situation had escaped them, he reminded them of the fate promised to all who failed to bow down.

Here again we see something of the way in which the world behaves towards those with whom it disagrees. There is no attempt at investigation and understanding. Rather, there is an assumption that they are right and we are wrong. How is this view justified? We disagree with them, and so we must be wrong. This is the pride of fallen man, which elevates itself above the revelation of God.

Nebuchadnezzar could justify his anger on at least two grounds. In the first place, he was king, and had absolute authority over all his subjects. His word was law, and nothing could oppose it. Any who did oppose it were therefore subject to his judgment. And yet the king was foolish in this. He failed to grasp the lesson of the dream and its interpretation, recorded in the previous chapter. There, he had awakened from a troubled sleep knowing that he had dreamed something significant, but unable to recall its details. Being able to consult wise men, and being foolish enough to believe their exaggerated claims, he required them to tell him what he had dreamed, as well as to give him its interpretation. They, not unnaturally, accused him of being unreasonable, 2:10–11. He responded by setting out to kill all the wise men, who were proving themselves to be of no use to him whatsoever, and were therefore all guilty of being liars and charlatans.

As we well know, Daniel gave a wise answer, calling for time to seek the Lord God, and ask him to answer the king's matter. The Lord graciously answered Daniel and his three friends, whose prayers he heard. Daniel was able to tell the king both what he had dreamed, and what it meant.

The fact of the answer proved, as the king would himself testify, v.47, that Daniel's God is 'a God of gods, and Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets'. The king had assumed that, since most of his wise men could not tell him what he wanted to know, all wise men were equally liars and cheats. That Daniel was given the answer ought to have alerted the king to an obvious truth, that wisdom comes not from men, but from the God of heaven. It ought also to be obvious that the wisest of men therefore are those who have faith in this God, and who are obedient to his will. Therefore the wise response of the king should have been to ask not, why do these men think they can resist my will, but am I opposing the higher will of the living God in requiring this thing of these Jews?

The second ground of justification for the king was the fact that he ruled over and empire of mixed nationalities, religions and cultures. This was an inevitable consequence of military conquest. The king had a problem, and it was the same problem faced by Pharaoh after the death of Joseph. Among the people of the land was a group that had a very different culture and religion from that encountered among any other people. They had strict rules and opinions. The Romans discovered that it was better to allow the Jews the peculiarities of their religion than to try to force them to conform to the common culture of their rule. Pharaoh responded by enslaving the Israelites, and Nebuchadnezzar responded by trying to impose one religion and culture on all his people.

And yet Nebuchadnezzar had been given a clear instance before of the folly of this attitude. His chief eunuch had taken in hand the education of the best of the Jewish

captives, 1:3–7. Among them were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah—these last three being given the Babylonian names of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. They had all been given the best food, being meat from the king's kitchen. Daniel and his three friends would not defile themselves with the king's meat or drink. The only explanation we can reasonably offer as to why they considered this food to be defiling was that it had been offered to idols. These four young people would rather honour the food laws of Israel than enjoy the luxuries of the king's own cuisine. Therefore, knowing they could not expect meat slaughtered according to the Mosaic law, they refused all meat, and kept themselves to a vegetarian diet. The chief eunuch was afraid that their health would suffer, and that he would be held responsible. They convinced him to give them a trial period, 1:12–13, the result of which was that he changed the diet for all the students, 1:15–16. The king was by no means ignorant of all this, since he undertook the examination himself, 1:19–20. We cannot imagine that they allowed him to think that their wisdom and health were a result of eating lentils rather than meat; he was informed that they had done this to honour the Lord God of their fathers, and to be obedient to his word.

Therefore any thought in the king's mind that all his subjects should be made to worship in one way only ought to have led him to see that the only religion to be followed was that of Daniel and his friends. The followers of no other gods had been blessed as they were, and the servants of no other religion were able to serve him as they could and did.

Here we see the folly of worldly wisdom. When the scribes and Pharisees and doctors of the law witnessed the miracles of our Lord Jesus Christ, they ought to have been moved to consider the power at work, and so see the hand of God. Furthermore, their supposed knowledge of the Scriptures ought to have taught them that all of this was foretold, and that the one who did all these things was

at the very least a might prophet. In fact, the testimony of John the Baptist was that the one in whom God worked in this remarkable manner was none other than Israel's Messiah. Wisdom, therefore, dictated that they receive him as such, forsake their own opinions, and put their trust in him. Pride would not permit such a response. Unbelief overwhelmed them, and they clung to their opinions. We see how Agrippa confessed to Paul, 'Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian' (Acts 26:28). What held him back? The fear of men? Pride? Many things hold a person back from faith in Christ. Worldly wisdom loves to convince itself that it has all the answers, and can see more clearly than these foolish Christians, who follow fairy stories and myths. What the world cannot see is that God has shown himself to the world in many clear ways, but their cleverness blinds them to his mercies. May God mercifully open the eyes of the blind to see Christ.

3. The response made

The three friends made a very instructive response to the king. To begin with, they showed that they did not recognise the king's authority in this matter. 'We are not careful to answer thee in this matter.' That is, 'Our care is not to answer you in this matter because we are not answerable to you for it.' Note the wisdom of this answer, as well as its boldness. It is of the order of Peter's answer to the Council, Acts 4:19—'Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.' Why? Because, as Paul wrote in a different context, 'Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?' (Romans 14:4). If we serve the Lord God, the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, then it is to him that we are answerable, and not to any other. Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego may have been servants of Nebuchadnezzar, and answerable to him in all those matters in which he was competent to judge, but they were answerable first to God in those matters in which he

has reserved competency. They placed their love for the Lord above their duty to the king. This dictated their behaviour. May it do so for us.

In this they prefigured the way in which the Lord Jesus Christ answered the high priests, Herod and Pontius Pilate. His answer was mostly that of silence. Why? Not because he had nothing to answer. The guilty either pour out lies and excuses or, when they know they have been caught, they keep quiet. Our Lord kept silence because he was not being judged by these men, or by the world at large, but by God the Father. He stood before God's judgment seat. He gave answer not for himself, but for those for whom he had made himself surety, from Abel to the very last saint who will believe on him before he comes again in glory. When God justified the believers of the Old Testament it was because he knew that Christ would die for them. Therefore, had Christ not done so, their salvation would have been lost, and God would have been made to be a liar. But God is not a liar, and his promises are yea and amen. Therefore Christ must be justified of God, and so he kept silence before his accusers, in order that he might suffer to save his people. His silence honoured his ministry, and saved us; the three friends would keep silence before Nebuchadnezzar that they might honour their witness, and cast themselves on God's mercy.

Secondly, they expressed their confidence in the power of God to save. So v.17. Our God, they affirmed, has power to deliver us from the flames. How could they make such a claim? They had not been delivered from the exile, nor from becoming servants of this heathen monarch. What deliverance had they known to give them this confidence? When the king had been troubled by his dream but had forgotten its content, he had called upon his wise men to tell him both what he had dreamed, and what it meant. If they could not do this, he would have them all put to death. Why? Because they claimed

a knowledge and a wisdom above that of ordinary mortals. Very well, let them show it. But they could not, and even though the wise men accused the king of unreasonable behaviour, 2:10–11, the sentence of death went out against all them all, including Daniel and his three friends. These four gave themselves to prayer, and the Lord answered them. He showed the dream and its meaning, and so he saved them from certain death. This was a mighty demonstration of his divine power and glory, and no less mighty that would be needed to deliver them from the fiery furnace. They had therefore seen the power of God to save, and so they could say with confidence that he could do so again. This is true faith, in that it reaches beyond the apparent limitations of any situation to the power of God who is above all things. Have we such faith?

Thirdly, they did not presume on God's saving mercies. So v.18. What counted for them was not whether their stand for the Lord would be answered by his saving them, but that their standing for the Lord was what was required of them at that and every moment. Is the Lord worthy of our love, praise, honour and obedience? Then he is more worthy of these things than we are of life itself. Some have been granted grace to stand fast even to death, who seemed to have done little in life before. But more have been granted grace to stand fast in death who stood fast in life. These here knew that the Lord has power to save, but they knew that above all they must honour him.

Application

Here we must draw a clear distinction between present and future salvation. It is a great snare to many to believe that faith in Jesus Christ must mean the end of all earthly troubles. This seems to have been the error of those to whom James wrote his epistle. When we become Christians, what do we find? In Matthew 5 we find the Beatitudes. They who are meek, who hunger and thirst after

righteousness, and who live as those who have been made one with Christ, are then told, 'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven'. They have come to Christ in faith, repenting of their sins, and showing their faith by fruitful good works. Their spiritual standing is not in doubt. What do they receive for this? Persecution, the hatred of the world, and the cruelty to which Satan can turn people when he has liberty so to do. The faith of such people does not deliver them from trouble, but brings upon them in waves. This is the path to which the faithful are called, and in which we must walk. Let us know and be sure that these things are written for our learning.

This means that the deliverance, or salvation, for which we look is not to be measured as the world measures. It is not about our being saved from suffering now, but about our being delivered from the wrath to come. 'Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell' (Matthew 10:28). The deliverance for which we look is eternal, heavenly and incorruptible. We look for a crown that fadeth not away. We look for the Lord who shall come from heaven to judge the living and the dead, and who will reward every man according to his works. We know that this deliverance is the one worth having. The people of Nineveh may have been spared destruction through the preaching of Jonah, as Judas Iscariot enjoyed the benefit of Christ's stilling of the storm. Both he and they are not benefitted eternally by these things since neither has any part in the eternal salvation. Stephen, on the other hand, was not minded to answer his accusers wisely, but told them the plain, unvarnished truth; they were wicked rebels who had followed in the ways of their fathers in rejecting the salvation of the Lord. Except they repent quickly, they would come under the most severe sentence of eternal damnation. Stephen, and Paul, and these three friends,

and many others down the centuries, counted not their life dear, but were willing to give up all for the sake of Jesus Christ.

How shall we bear these things? By remembering that our Lord Jesus Christ is worthy of all our worship, obedience, love and service. He gave himself for us, and we live because he died. Shall we deny him to save ourselves a little trouble in this life? He did not save himself, and so became our Saviour. Let us not save ourselves, but be willing to

lose all in this life for Christ's sake that we might gain heaven instead. There is something worth having. There is a prize worth contending for. When the Israelites came out of Egypt it was not that they might live in a desert, but in a land flowing with milk and honey. To get there required great sacrifices. Let us be will to make all such sacrifices as are demanded of us, for Christ's sake, that we may gain heaven and be with him who is the only Saviour. AMEN. ¶

A SERMON ON MATTHEW 6:10

PART VIII

BY J. VAN LODENSTEYN (1620–1677)

Supplied by A W DE LANGE (Scherpenzeel, The Netherlands)

‘Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven’ (Matthew 6:10)

AND how would this not free you of a thousand needless cares!

Why all this wandering? Is it not because you have not surrendered yourself God? Is it not because you remain stuck in self-love? If you had surrendered yourself to God, you would go, in a manner of speaking, without care in a leprosy house.

And if you willed as God willeth, you would say continuously: He is the Lord and that is my Salvation, that God only is glorified by me.

You would sing continuously: Hallelujah! God liveth and is King is heaven, where the Lord is worthy of the eternal hallelujah.

Now you shall say, show me the means to come to this. But, O Christians, even though I shall point out the means, the means could not bring you there without the Spirit. The Spirit, the Spirit, the Spirit hath to instruct you here, would we grasp it and exercise it.

I know no other means to point at than that you:

- a. would know your God in his glory and highest power (John 17:3). This made Job, Eli, David, Paul and all great men so able in their great self-denial and it shall help you there under God's blessing, because all our self-love sprouts out of insufficient knowledge of the Lord our God.
- b. lie then continuously at the door of God's grace and pray that he will reveal himself to you, and say regularly: ‘Lord, if it doth please thee, give me a ray of thy Spirit, let me know thy greatness, so that I may get out of my self-love.’ But do all this always with a suitable submission.

And Christians, your work shall not be vain in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Amen. ¶

EYES TO SEE

CARINE MACKENZIE

A friend of mine is beginning to lose her sight. She cannot read without a strong light and a magnifying glass. She finds it difficult to sew and bake. Her vision is too blurred to recognise someone from across a room. But she is thankful for the little bit of sight she has. Some people are completely blind and can see nothing. What a wonderful gift God has given us—the gift of sight.

How are we using that gift? Are we using our eyes for good purposes or in a sinful way? The first step in Eve's fall into sin in the garden of Eden was when she saw that the forbidden fruit was good for food. Then she took it and ate. The serpent had persuaded her that her eyes would be opened to discern good and evil (Genesis 3:4–6). Adam and Eve's eyes were opened to see their nakedness and sin.

Sin with us often starts with a look. King David saw Bathsheba bathing and that led to a chain of sin—covetousness, adultery, lying, murder. David was brought to repentance for this sin—he confessed to the Lord and prayed for forgiveness and restoration. God did show him mercy.

‘Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity’ (Psalm 119:37) is a good prayer for us. Some books, television programmes, films, adverts can present to our eyes scenes that can lead us into sin of mind and action. Our eyes should be used to look at things that are true and pure and lovely. ‘Look unto me,’ the Lord says ‘and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else’ (Isaiah 45:22).

Jesus is the only Saviour, the only way to heaven. We have to live our lives, ‘Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.’ He endured the cross for us, despised its shame and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:2).

When Moses and the children of Israel were travelling through the wilderness, God sent fiery serpents among them to punish them for their complaining. Many were bitten. Some died. The people confessed their sin and asked Moses to pray for them. The Lord told Moses to put a serpent of brass on a pole and set it up in the camp. Whoever just looked at this serpent of brass was cured and lived (Numbers 21:4–9). Jesus reminds us of this incident, in telling us to look to him. ‘As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life’ (John 3:14–15). Looking to Jesus in faith and trust is the only cure for sin. We have nothing to do—only look to him. He has done it all for us.

When the Lord Jesus was on earth he cured several people of physical blindness. What an amazing transformation in their lives.

Sin makes us spiritually blind and Jesus alone can work the amazing transformation in our life, giving us light and spiritual sight through the Gospel. We understand what he has done and He gives us the faith to trust in him.

BIBLE SEARCH

Find the missing words from each verse. The initials of your answer will spell out the subject of the story.

1. And when the woman saw that the tree was _____ for food ... she took of the fruit thereof and did eat (Genesis 3:6).
2. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on _____ (Habakkuk 1:13)
3. And Laban said unto him, I pray thee, if I have found _____ in thine eyes, tarry (Genesis 30:27).
4. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such _____, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless (2 Peter 3:14).
5. And God _____ her eyes, and she saw a well of water (Genesis 21:19).
6. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were _____ on him (Luke 4:20).
7. Behold, as the eyes of _____ look unto the hand of their masters ... so our eyes wait upon the LORD our God (Psalm 123:2).
8. Now the eyes of _____ were dim for age, so that he could not see (Genesis 48:10).
9. We _____ for the wall like the blind, and we _____ as if we had no eyes (Isaiah 59:10).
10. That which was from the beginning, which we have _____, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life (1 John 1:1).
11. God shall wipe away all _____ from their eyes (Revelation 7:17).

STUDIES IN EZEKIEL

P KING (HAILSHAM)

Chapter 43

GOD IS CENTRAL TO ALL WORSHIP

The temple now described and metaphorically re-instated, the glory of God returns. This glory came from the east, which is the side of the temple where the chambers were described (40:10), and indicates the devotional aspect of the temple. God announces to Ezekiel the permanence of his presence among the people (v.7); no more will the 'Church' be defiled. This will be the perfect Church, stretching into eternity, and we know it today as the Church of Jesus Christ. Everything is described in detail so the people know how to worship and live in such a perfect place. Notice the law of the house was to be in the whole area, not just in the holy of holies as in the old order. In the new order no place is different to another so all people can come to God, feeling the closeness, a privilege given to the priests in the past. Every believer is now a priest enjoying access and nearness to God.

It may seem strange that vv.13-27 describe the old order of sacrifice which is done away with in the new order, but here it shows the continuing communion and fellowship in the new temple. The way is now open for the people to sacrifice and this is described by reference to the way the captives understood. There will be worship and devotion in the New Jerusalem, Ezekiel is saying, but everyone offers the burnt offering, for all are priests to God.

Having the advantage of seeing this prophecy fulfilled in our time we can easily explain

the content in New Testament language, but the Jews tried to see it all in the future. We look for new heavens and a new earth, which is as new to us as the new order was to the captives. The glory of God will shine then in a way we cannot understand with all evil destroyed (v.7). In Judah the glory of God was veiled in the most holy place, but here the glory came into the place (vv.1-6) unhindered. It was as Paul describes in Ephesians 5:14, an awakening from sleep. This is the gospel that eventually spread through the world, enlightening people's minds to the invisible God of salvation. Amazingly the vision is the same as at Chebar (v.3) when God was angry, for the message and glory are the same in anger and mercy!

Lesson for today.

- a. The glory of Jehovah shines in all his works.
- b. Jehovah's glory is abundantly satisfying.
- c. Divine government is based on holiness.
- d. True repentance is a humbling consciousness of sin (v.10).
- e. Worship is essential to the growth of the soul.
- f. Worship is only acceptable when offered to the divine standards—that is a sacrifice (v.27).
- g. Salt is required to season the offering and our religious actions (Colossians 4:6).

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

TO BE CONTINUED

REMEMBERING JOHN PHILPOT

THE EDITOR

This year marks, according to some sources, the birth of John Philpot. The name may not be familiar to many today. Born into a good Hampshire family, Philpot was a graduate of New College, Oxford. When the Six Articles of Henry VIII's reign were enacted, Philpot chose to travel abroad. This indicates that he was a man of Protestant sympathies, if not more. Returning to Winchester, he was appointed a lecturer in the cathedral, and at some unspecified date was appointed Archdeacon. Were it not for Mary's accession, and her attempts to undo the Protestant Reformation of Edward VI's reign, we might never have heard of Philpot. In the providence of God, however, he was destined to become a faithful contender for the truth.

Philpot's troubles began in October 1553. Queen Mary summoned Convocation with the intention that they should assist her in her work of de-Protestantizing England. The exact nature of the work became apparent very quickly when they were presented with the Book of Common Prayer and the Catechism. This latter, it was alleged, had been introduced and authorized in the name of Convocation, without them ever having consented to it. They should, therefore, demand its withdrawal. Since it contained the same errors concerning the 'sacrifice of the altar' as those contained in the Book of Common Prayer, it would be wise to withdraw this latter work as well.

The error alleged against both works was that they openly denied the real presence—that error and superstition that teaches that the bread and wine become the very body and blood of Christ, while retaining the look, feel, taste, smell, and all physical qualities of bread and wine.

Convocation was invited to speak openly, as conscience dictated. It would seem, from

what transpired, that Mary intended her party to use this liberty. Philpot considered that it applied equally to all, and stood up, with five other men, to express doubts as to the wisdom of withdrawing the works.

The ensuing debate went on for several days. To begin with, the Roman party acted as if there could be no serious challenge to their dogma, and they mounted a very weak defence. As the strength of the Protestant party's position became apparent so the number of Romanists increased who weighed in against them. It is perfectly clear, reading the account in Foxe, that the Protestants had far the better of the argument. For his part in the matter, Philpot was imprisoned for eighteen months, before being brought before a committee to be examined of his heresy.

The account of the examinations, which to begin with were informal, but which later became formal and lengthy, can all be found in *Acts and Monuments*, Volumes 6 and 7 of the 8-volume edition published by the Religious Tract Society. Readers with access to the internet can search for the full text at www.johnfoxe.org. The value of these records is that we see both how the Medieval Church argued its case from tradition, and from a limited reading of the early Fathers, and how the Reformers were able to answer them from the same Fathers, and from Scripture. It is also clear that Rome never intended to win the argument, only to justify her sentences of death, pronounced against the Reformers.

It was clear from the beginning that Philpot was marked for death, since he had been so forward in opposing Mary and her minions. He was eventually burnt at the stake on 18 December, 1555.

While in prison he wrote a number of letters, which Foxe has reproduced. He also wrote the following prayer.

A PRAYER TO BE SAID AT THE STAKE, OF ALL THEM THAT GOD SHALL ACCOUNT WORTHY TO SUFFER FOR HIS SAKE.

Merciful God and Father, to whom our Saviour Christ approached in his fear and need by reason of death, and found comfort: Gracious God and most bounteous Christ on whom Stephen called in his extreme need, and received strength: Most benign Holy Spirit, which in the midst of all crosses and death, didst comfort the Apostle St. Paul, with more consolations in Christ, than he felt sorrows and terrors, have mercy upon me miserable, vile, and wretched sinner, which now draw near the gates of death, deserved both in soul and body eternally, by reason of manifold, horrible, old and new transgressions, which to thine eyes (O Lord) are open and known: Oh be merciful unto me, for the bitter death and blood-shedding of thine own only Son Jesus Christ. And though thy justice do require (in respect of my sins) that now thou shouldest not hear me, measuring me with the same measure I have measured thy Majesty, condemning thy daily calls: yet let thy mercy which is above all thy works, and wherewith the earth is filled, let thy mercy (I say) prevail towards me, through and for the mediation of Christ our Saviour. And for whose sake in that it hath pleased thee to bring me forth now as one of his witnesses, and a record bearer of thy verity and truth taught by him, to give my life therefore (to which dignity I do acknowledge dear God that there was never any so unworthy and so unmete, no not the thief that hanged with him on the cross): I most humbly therefore pray thee that thou wouldest, accordingly, aid, help, and assist me with thy strength and heavenly grace, that with Christ thy Son I may find comfort, with Stephen I may see thy presence, and gracious power, with Paul and

all others which for thy names sake have suffered affliction and death, I may find so present with me thy gracious consolations, that I may by my death glorify thy holy name, propagate, and ratify thy verity, comfort the hearts of the heavy, confirm thy Church in thy verity, convert some that are to be converted, and so depart forth of this miserable world, where I do nothing but daily heap sin upon sin, and so enter into the fruition of thy blessed mercy: whereof now give and increase in me a lively trust, sense, and feeling, where-through the terrors of death, the torments of fire, and pangs of sin, the darts of Satan, and the dolours of hell may never depress me, but may be driven away thorough the working of that most gracious Spirit: which now plenteously endue me withal, that through the same Spirit I may offer (as I now desire to do in Christ by him) my self wholly soul and body, to be a lively sacrifice, holy and acceptable in thy sight. Dear Father, whose I am, and always have been, even from my mother's womb, yea even before the world was made, to whom I commend my self, soul and body, family, and friends, country and all the whole Church, yea even my very enemies, according to thy good pleasure, beseeching thee entirely to give once more to this Realm of England, the blessing of thy word again, with godly peace, to the teaching & setting forth of the same. Oh dear father, now give me grace to come unto thee. Purge and so purify me by this fire in Christ's death and Passion through thy Spirit, that I may be a burnt offering of sweet smell in thy sight which livest and reignest with the Son and the holy God, now and ever more world without end. Amen.

Death will blow the bud of grace into the flower of glory.

Thomas Brooks

A SERMON ON MATTHEW 6:24–34, PART 2

MARTIN LUTHER

14. Thus it is with those who serve this god, mammon. The true God is still of some use, he serves the people, but mammon does not, it lies quiet and lets others serve it. And for this reason the New Testament calls covetousness idolatry, since it thus desires to be served. However, to love and not to enjoy may well vex the devil. This all now experience who love the god, mammon, and serve him. Whoever has now no sense of shame and does not turn red, has a brazen face.

15. Thus now it is with the word, 'serve'. For it is not forbidden to have money and possessions, as we cannot get along without them. Abraham, Lot, David, Solomon and others had great possessions and much gold, and at the present day there are many wealthy persons who are pious, in spite of their riches. But it is one thing to have possessions and another to serve them; to have mammon, and to make a god out of it. Job also was wealthy, he had great possessions and was more powerful than all who lived in the East, as we read in the first part of the book of Job: yet he says, in Job 31:24–25: 'If I have made gold my hope, and said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence; have I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because my hand had gotten much?'

16. The sum of all is, it is God's will that we serve not gold and riches, and that we be not overanxious for our life; but that we labour and commend our anxiety to him. Whoever possesses riches is lord of the riches. Whoever serves them, is their slave and does not possess them, but they possess him; for he dare not make use of them when he desires, and cannot serve others with them; yea, he is not bold enough to dare to touch it. However, is he lord over his riches, then they serve him, and he

does not serve them; then he dare use them, as Abraham, David, Job and other rich persons, and he casts his care only upon God, as St. Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians 7:32. Hence he aids the poor with his wealth and gives to those who have nothing. When he sees a person without a coat, he says to his money: Go out, Messrs. Dollars, there is a poor, naked man, who has no coat, you must be of service to him! There lies one sick, who has no medicine. Go forth, Squires Anneberger and Joachinesthaler, you must hasten and help him! Those, who act thus with their riches, are their lords; and all true Christians surely do this. But those who save piles of money, and ever scheme to make their heap larger instead of smaller, are servants and slaves of mammon.

17. He is a lord of mammon who lays hold of and uses it for the sake of those who need it and lets God rule, who says in Luke 6:38: Give, and it shall be given unto you; have you nothing more, you surely have me still, and I have still enough, yea, I have more than I have given away and more than can ever be given away. We see here and there many pious poor people only for the purpose that the wealthy may help and serve them with their riches. If you do it not, you have the sure proof that you hate God. He, whom the sentence does not terrify, that he will hear on the day of judgment, can be moved by nothing. For he will hear then from God: Behold, thou hast hated me and loved that which could not protect itself against rust and moth. Ay, how firmly you will then stand!

18. Hence the sense is, we must own some possessions, but are not to cleave to them with our hearts; as Psalm 62:10 says: 'If riches increase, set not your heart thereon.' We are to labour; but we are not to be anxious about

our existence. This the Master says here in our Gospel in plain and clear words, when he thus concludes: 'Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink: nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on.'

19. And he now uses a reasonable and natural form of speech, by which to close, that they are not to be anxious for the nourishment of their lives; for reason must conclude and yield that it is as Christ says, when he gives the ground and reason of his discourse by asking: 'Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment?'

20. As if he would say: You turn it just around, the food should serve your life and not your life the food. The same is true in respect to raiment; the clothing should serve the body, thus the body serves the clothing. The world is so blind that it cannot see this.

21. Now we must here have a high esteem for the words of the Lord. He says, 'Be not anxious;' he does not say, Labour not. Anxiety is forbidden, but not labour; yea, it is commanded and made obligatory upon us to labour until the sweat rolls down our faces. It is not God's pleasure for man to tramp around idly; therefore he says to Adam in Genesis 3:19: 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken.' And as Psalm 104:22–23 says: 'The sun ariseth, man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening.' We are not to be anxious, this is forbidden; for we have a rich God who promises us food and clothing; for he knows what we lack, before we are concerned and begin to pray.

22. Why then does he not give us what we need without our labour? Because it is thus pleasing to him; he tells us to labour and then he gives it; not because of our work, but out of kindness and grace. This we see before our eyes; for although we labour every year in the field, yet God gives one year more than another. Therefore, we are fools, yea, we act contrary to God's will, when we are worried as to how to scrape together gold and riches,

since God gratuitously and richly promises that he will give us all and will abundantly provide for our every want.

23. However, one may say: Does not St. Paul tell us to be diligent, as in Romans 12:8: 'He that ruleth, with diligence,' and there immediately follows verse 11, 'In diligence, not slothful?' In like manner to the Philippians 2:20, he says of Timothy: 'For I have no man likeminded, who will care truly for your state.' And Paul himself in 2 Corinthians 11:28 boasts that anxiety for all the churches presses upon him. Here you see how we are nevertheless to be anxious. Answer: Our life and a Christian character consist of two parts, of faith and of love. The first points us to God, the other to our neighbour. The first, namely faith, is not visible, God alone sees that; the other is visible, and is love, that we are to manifest to our neighbour. Now the anxiety that springs from love is commanded, but that which accompanies faith is forbidden. If I believe that I have a God, then I cannot be anxious about my welfare; for if I know that God cares for me as a father for his child, why should I fear? Why need I to be anxious, I simply say: Art thou my Father, then I know that no evil will befall me, as Psalm 16:8 says: 'I have set Jehovah always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.' Thus he has all things in his hand; therefore I shall want nothing, he will care for me. If I rush ahead and try to care for myself, that is always contrary to faith; therefore God forbids this kind of anxiety. But it is his pleasure to maintain the anxious care of love, that we may help others, and share our possessions and gifts with them. Am I a ruler, I am to care for my subjects; am I a housefather, I must take care of the members of my family, and so forth, according as each one has received his gifts from God. God cares for all, and his is the care that pertains to faith. We are also to be interested in one another and this is the care of love, namely, when something is given to me, that I be diligent so that others may also receive it.

24. Here we must be guarded, lest we make a gloss, instead of understanding simply the words as they read: Be not anxious for your life. God says: Labour, and if you accomplish nothing, I will give what is needed; does he give then see that you rightly distribute it. Do not be anxious to get, but see to it that your domestics and others also receive of that which God has given to you, and that your domestics labour and receive a Christian training.

25. Am I a preacher, my anxiety should not be where to receive what I am to preach; for if I have nothing, I can give nothing. Christ says in Luke 21:15: ‘I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to withstand or to gainsay.’ But if I have that I ought to be anxious for others to receive it from me, and that I endeavour to impart it to them in the best form possible, to teach the ignorant, to admonish and restrain those who know it, rightly to comfort; the oppressed consciences, to awaken the negligent and sleepy, and put them on their guard, and the like, as St. Paul did (1 Tim. 4; 2 Tim. 3, Tit. 3) and commanded his disciples Timothy and Titus to do. My anxiety should be how

others are to receive something from me; but I am to study and pray to God. Studying is my labour, this is the work he desires me to do, and when it is his pleasure he will give. It can indeed happen that I may study a long time and he gives nothing, a year or more, and when it is his pleasure, he gives as long as it is pleasing to him. Then he gives copiously and to overflowing, suddenly in an hour.

26. Thus a housefather also does, he attends only to that which is commanded him, and lets our Lord God arrange as to how he will give. When he gives, then man is concerned how to impart it to his family, and he sees that they have no need as to the body and the soul. This is what the Lord means, when he says we are not to be anxious for our food and raiment; but he certainly requires us to labour. For thou must be a long time behind the oven until something is given to thee if thou dost not till the soil and work. True it is, God can easily nourish thee without thy work, he could easily have roasted and boiled corn and wine grow on thy table; but he does not do it, it is his will that thou shouldst labour and in doing so to use thy reason.

TO BE CONCLUDED

THE RACE

WALLACE A BELL (San Dimas, California)

Hebrews 12:1–4

The Christian life is likened to a race. Those who follow Jesus are therefore runners in a race. This race may be likened to a cross-country race, which passes over a varying topography. This race is up hill, and along a narrow way which has many furrows and other hazards along it. Varying climate

conditions may also make it more difficult; too hot, too cold, stormy or rainy.

Certain words may be used in connection with the passage before us. Each may be applied to the spiritual race in which the follower of Jesus is involved.

1. Exertion—‘*Let us run*’

Those who profess to be followers of Jesus must exert themselves. Nothing comes without exertion. Timothy was told to ‘stir up the gift’ that was within him.

We must exert ourselves to read and study the Word of God. We must exert ourselves to pray and be involved with all aspects of the Christian life as set out in the Word. It always amazes me how many professing followers of Jesus are so involved in exerting themselves in other pursuits, and yet are so sloth-like in matters much more important—matters of the soul. This year the Olympic Games were held in Rio de Janeiro. They show us what exertion is! So ‘Run’ Christian, run! Exert yourself today and every day as the athletes did in Rio for corruptible prizes. Yours are incorruptible. You are nearer to meeting Jesus now that when you began reading this article.

2. Endurance—‘*with patience*’

The Christian life may be a long run or a short one. Whichever it is, endurance is required. Just as when running on the mountain path, there are many things which might trip us, so that we stumble, but we must pick ourselves up and race on. What we are by nature would hinder us. Remember, we are born-again sinners. A saint is not sinless. Need I list the things which trouble your conscience? I think not, they are evident to you. You know what they are. The Holy Spirit convicts us. He enabled you to come to Jesus, and he is still at work in your soul. The old nature is ever present with us, and would stop us from pressing on. We say, ‘What is the use? I’ll just lie here where I fell. I can’t endure.’

We, also, besides our old nature, have an Enemy who is just as alive as God himself. He is called the Devil, and is likened to a lion and a serpent. Both are dangerous, though different in their manner of attack. One is more open. The other is more subtle. Luther put it well, ‘our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe; his craft and power are great; and

armed with cruel hate, on earth is not his equal.’ Little wonder he’s called ‘that old serpent’. He’s been around for a long time, and has great expertise. But we must run on. We must repent and be converted as David and Peter did after they fell.

Get up! Endure! In theology it is called the Doctrine of Perseverance. ‘He that endureth unto the end shall be saved.’ ‘He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.’

3. Example—‘*looking unto Jesus*’

As you look up to him in heaven, look back through the fog of time to when he was here on this very earth. As you look back, look up. The Jesus who was here on earth is alive in heaven. Jesus exerted himself. He left heaven to come to this earth to be the Saviour of his sheep. Do not just read your portion of Scripture and rush on. The Old Testament uses the word ‘Selah’, stop, pause, think This is what it means to look unto Jesus. Do not just recite words in prayer. Commune with a Person. Here is the example of endurance ‘par excellence’, the perfect example. He endured the contradiction of sinners. He endures the cross. He was in all points tempted like as we are. Think of Gethsemane. Think of Judas betraying him. Think of his being led, like a sheep, to a fraudulent trial. Think of Peter denying him. Think of the mocking. Think of the crying of the crowd. Think of the scourging. Think of the crown of thorns. Think of your Jesus hanging in nudity upon a piece of wood called a Cross. Hear his cries: ‘Vox crucis.’ He endured the cross, despising the shame. He knew how shameful such an execution was, but he disregarded it out of love for his sheep. Here is your example which urges you to endure. ‘Man of sorrows, what a name for the Son of God who came, ruined sinners to reclaim. Hallelujah, what a Saviour.’

Notice the word is ‘looking’. You have looked initially, now you are called upon to look continually, not just once or twice, but

always, constantly, minute by minute, for as you run. You never know what is going to arise. There is nothing that you will be called upon to go through that he did not go through. He is your EXAMPLE.

4. Encouragement

a) In this present life. Christ is ‘the author and finisher of our faith.’ He who ran the race before us is the one who started us in the race. He is the author. Just as a horse is started and ridden by the jockey, so Jesus, by his written Word and Holy Spirit, gives starting faith. In talking with the Jewish Rabbi, Nicodemus, Jesus called this the New Birth. ‘Ye must be born again.’

The Holy Spirit, the third person in the Godhead, in God’s supernatural way, enters the life of the sinner, inhabits him, and enables him to believe the Word of the gospel. Jesus likens his work to the invisible wind. There is no true follower of Jesus who has not had this experience. Jesus said, ‘must’. It is a matter of the heart and not of the head only. In other words it is a miracle. It is a new creation. God gives and you have. And what he gives he does not retract. The gifts of God are without repentance. You have either been justified, or you have not. There is no middle ground, and, if you have been born again, you know exactly what I am talking about. Jesus is not only the author of our faith, but is also, ‘the finisher’. As we run, he enables us to keep on believing. The poet put it well, ‘When I fear my faith will fail, he will hold me fast.’ Jesus enabled me to begin to follow him 65 years ago. Like Calvin, I had ‘a sudden conversion’. The initial faith he gave me then, through his Word and Holy Spirit, is still within. I am a temple of the Holy Spirit. Boyd Munger called it ‘My heart, Christ’s home’.

John Newton expressed it well. ‘Through many dangers, toils and snares I have already come. ’Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.’ This truly is, as Newton called it, amazing grace! As I contemplate it I rejoice, and sometimes

say aloud, ‘I believe!’ ‘In my heart there rings a melody.’ What a gift! Who hath made me to differ from another? What do I have that I did not receive? Just think of the unsaved who cannot say this with the understanding and from the heart. Their state is pitiable. ‘He that hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.’ ‘Unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.’ He is able. He has the power. He who created the good seed of his Word also creates the good ground which receives it, and what he plants in this ground is eternal. It is eternal life.

b) Encouragement in considering the life to come—‘who for the joy that was set before him ... is set down at the right hand of the throne of God’

Jesus is experiencing joy and victory. You are going to be with him. As he is, we who are his followers will be. If you have followed him in this life, you will follow him into the next. You will share in his joy and victory.

You will share in joy unspeakable and full of glory as you worship him in that place which he has prepared for his sheep. His work to present a perfect atonement for the sins of his sheep is finished. It is time to celebrate!

As recipients of his victory we share both now and ever in eternity. That Jesus has arisen is only part of the story. Jesus has ascended and is alive right now. Indeed, this is the crowning truth to keep in mind as we run. Sadly many of his professed followers only look back to him, instead of up to him. We need to look both back and up. He is the same Jesus now as he was when he was here. He who was on the tree is now on the throne. He was on that cross now wears the crown. Article IV of the Articles of the Episcopal Church states it well. ‘Christ did truly rise again from death, and took his body, with flesh, bones and all things appertaining to

the perfection of Man’s nature: wherewith he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth, until he return to judge all Men at the last day.’

Many have a distant Jesus, who is merely historical. They assent to the truth but have no heart experience. ‘He is risen’ has become a slogan, especially when Jesus is added to the worship of the pagan Astarte, but without the reality that he is alive, active and able right now. This is sad, especially if it be found among those of us who profess to be sound in doctrine.

Dead orthodoxy may reflect a dead soul, and for such, Hell awaits. Run, then, looking up to the living, reigning Lord Jesus. Your joy will remain, and your victory, because of his, is secure. Many have run this race before us, indeed, ‘a great cloud of witnesses.’ Let us run after them, looking unto Jesus.

5. Exhortation—*‘let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us’*

What is sin? The answer to Question 14 in the Shorter Catechism of The Westminster Standards gives a succinct answer: ‘Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the Law of God.’ This is our battle. The Apostle Paul fought it as he ran: ‘For that which I do, I allow not; for what I would that do I not, but what I hate, that do I.’ If you have born again, you know when you sin. The thunder of conscience roars, or the still, small voice whispers, ‘Don’t do that, or don’t leave that undone.’ Lay that sin aside.

Struggle with it until you put it away. The struggle may be hard, but God has provided the follower of Jesus with Armour. Use it: especially ‘the Shield of Faith’. Luther, who experienced this life-and-death struggle, said, ‘The birds may light on the branches, but don’t let them build a nest there.’ More subtle and difficult, however, may be the laying aside every weight. A weight may be something that is not sin in itself, but retards you in the Race; television, sports, love of money, property-acquisition, a habit, addiction to tobacco, even love for others above the Lord. The list can be extended. You know in your heart the meaning of what I am writing.

Such a weight or weights will retard your progress. You cannot run a race with weights in your hands. God says, ‘Lay it aside.’ Whom will you obey? ‘Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.’ Will it be your sinful self, or the Saviour who loved you and gave himself for you, even unto death. He shed his precious blood. Sins and weights may bring forth terrible chastisement from the Lord, for whom he loveth he chastizeth. Weights are really worth nothing by comparison. Essentially they are a waste of time, effort, and many times money. Replace them with the Word, prayer, and service to him who has run before you. Compare the hours you spend on frivolities. Repent and be converted. The Finish line is ahead. Jesus waits there. How well are you prepared for that meeting? ‘Prepare to meet thy God.’

STUDIES IN II PETER

EDWARD MALCOLM (Reading)

1:5-7—The Exhortation. Christians, to whom the Apostle writes, have been given ‘all things that pertain unto life and godliness’,

1:3. He now speaks of those things, and shows how we are to act as stewards to whom the care of these things has been entrusted,

rather than as beneficiaries who have been enriched by them. Commentators take a different approach to the Apostle's intention here, depending on when they are writing. Older commentators concentrate on the call to give 'all diligence', and show that it is necessary for believers to quick to act, instant in service, ever ready to show forth our thankful love to our heavenly Father in works of grace. This is without doubt a correct reading of Peter, for it is not enough for us to think that some small acts of service, offered from time to time, will be sufficient to justify the great blessings which have been poured out upon us. Modern commentators add something else, based on the classical usage of the word 'add'; rich citizens would sometimes pay for the equipping of a warship, or for the financing of a theatrical performance, as a matter of civic pride. So they see Peter as saying that Christians ought to manifest their pride (in a right manner) in their blessings through Christ by being extravagant in their service. In practice there may be little to choose between these two, in that our putting forth such evidences of pride in our calling will involve zeal, being instant in service.

In calling on believers to add virtue to their faith, Peter is not requiring anyone to improve on their own good works. It is a common error to view our faith as a work, in that we can mistakenly believe that we are justified because we have faith; God, seeing that we possess faith, is therefore moved to account us righteous. Such an opinion is dangerous, since it makes faith into a work, and we ought to know that by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.¹ Faith is a gift,² and that which is given is not earned. Therefore we dare not think that we are justified *because* we have faith; rather, we are given faith, and so are enabled to lay hold on Christ, the only fit and proper object of faith, that through him we might be justified.

Now, if faith is a gift which we must

1 Galatians 2:16

2 Ephesians 2:8

exercise, it follows that these other things are gifts. If we must add virtue to faith, then it means that virtue is given to us, and is to be used in the same way, although to a different end; we are not justified on the ground of virtue any more than we are justified on the ground of faith. But whereas faith is the instrument or title deed given to us that we may have a part and share in the blessings of God in Christ, virtue is a consequence of that gift of faith. We have been made partakers of the divine nature, and so we are to manifest that divine nature, in so far as the quality of it has been communicated to us. Good morals, which is the meaning of virtue, ought to be natural to believers. Such, however, is the effect of the fall on us, that we need to be exhorted to bring them out.

Together with good morals we are to increase in wisdom or knowledge, being wise unto salvation. Temperance, or sober thinking, sets us apart from the rest of mankind, since we are to think clearly from a renewed mind. Patience is that waiting for the promise, an earnest expectation that what the Lord has promised he will do. Godliness is that manifesting the divine qualities in us. Brotherly kindness are those acts of love which ought to be commonplace among believers. Charity may be shown to those who are of the household of faith, or to those who are outside. Our neighbour is whoever is in need, regardless of all other considerations. If we are to show kindness to our enemies, how much more ought we to do so toward those who, if not our friends, are yet not our enemies.

None of this is natural to mankind in his fallen state. He may do some of these things some of the time to some of the people, but only the Christian is both called upon to do all for all at all times, and he is granted grace to do so as well.

1:8-9—The reason for this Exhortation, the first and second. *For if these things* need not be doubtful, as if there will be Christians

who lack them. Rather, he is saying, 'Seeing these things are in you', to motivate us to act accordingly. He gives two reasons why we should be careful to obey him here.

The first reason is given in the rest of v.8. Some boast of knowing Christ who have not been born again. There is no newness of life in them, no manifestation of the graces and gifts of the Spirit. Such are unfruitful. Those, however, who are zealous for the Lord, who add these things to faith, show that they have been born again. The reason for exhorting us to do this is not that we might be better able to pretend to be Christians, but that we would be careful regarding our own condition, to make sure that we have a solid and sure ground for claiming to be Christians. It is better to be known for a Christian because others give us the name of Christian, than because we call ourselves such so often that people begin to think that is must be true.

The second reason is given in v.9. Faith never exists alone; there is no such thing as naked faith. If faith is present in us by the gift of God, then other gifts are also given to us. Thus if we claim to have faith but produce no other evidences then we are in danger of trusting in faith alone, and of making it rather than Christ the ground of our salvation. Furthermore, we are in danger of not understanding the first principles of the Christian faith, that it is life worked in us by Christ, and not a set of rules which we are meant to follow as best we can. Since Christ has worked faith in us, it follows that we must show that we live, otherwise the truth of the matter is doubtful, and we may yet be dead.

1:10-11—The Consolation. Having exhorted his readers to act as stewards of the gifts and graces entrusted to us, v.5ff, and having warned of the danger of not doing so, in terms of what such failure may reveal about the true state of our faith, v.8f, Peter now adds a word of consolation, vv.10-11.

There are two things being said here—the first is that we have a duty to make our

calling and election sure, and the second is that in so doing we will never fall. What do these things mean?

First, regarding calling and election. 'The election and eternal foreknowledge of God in themselves are indeed sufficiently settled and man does not need to make them more so. The calling is also effectual and certain.'³ Peter is not saying that the matter of calling and election themselves are uncertain, as if we need to do something to secure them. Rather, he speaks of the difference between the absolute decree of God on the one hand, and the conditional effect of the decree on the other. In plain terms, God called out a people for himself before the foundation of the world,⁴ and sent forth his own Son to redeem them in the fulness of time. Since Christ came to save the elect, there can be no doubt that the elect will be saved. Since none are saved but by faith, it follows that all the elect, being called in the Gospel, will believe it. Thus Peter is not concerned about the effectual nature of election or our calling from God's part; the matter is not in doubt. His concern is with the conditional aspect, which is our understanding of it. It is not conditional in the sense that we must do something in order to become elect, or in order to be able to hear the effectual call; rather, we need to have a proper understanding of our calling and election in order that faith be strengthened.

So why does Peter mention 'calling' before 'election', since it is clear that the decree of election must precede the call? Two answers can be given. The first is that Peter speaks of the lesser before the greater, in order to emphasise the greater. Calling depends on election, so is the lesser. The other answer is that we only know our election through the effectual call; we know we were elect in Christ because we were granted faith to believe the Gospel when it was preached to us. So Peter accommodates his words to our experience.

3 Luther, p. 245

4 Ephesians 1:4

This is the conditional aspect; we only become aware of election because we have believed the Gospel.

What, then, of those who, believing the Gospel, have no understanding of election? We must be clear that it is possible to be saved and have no understanding of election. It is perhaps a different matter to be saved and to deny election, as some do, since the Bible does teach it. But not everyone has opportunity or means to learn what the Bible teaches; ignorance in this matter is not a barrier to salvation, but an open denial of the truth is harder to accept.

Furthermore, Peter is giving us here a clear and compelling reason to accept the doctrine of election. Consider the alternative; if we did not believe the Gospel because we had been chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, why did we believe it? Because we are wise, or good, or different from others in any way? Was it our choosing that caused us to believe, in that we decided to accept what we were being told? The fundamental flaw in that position is that it makes salvation dependant on us, not simply on Christ. It means that Christ may have died in vain, if nobody could be persuaded to believe the Gospel. Since Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost, it is inconceivable that his death could have been in vain. Yet the view which places the burden on our accepting the truth does exactly that.

Peter's compelling reason for accepting the doctrine of election is this, that a right understanding of the doctrine, a right view of our effectual call, is a great strength to faith. As one old writer put it, 'He singles forth *calling* of all things else, calling upon us to make it sure, and thereby election will be made sure, that is, made sure to your faith. It is not that election is not sure without it, 'The foundation of the Lord standeth sure' before he calls, but it is not made sure to our faith thereby.⁵ In short, the benefit of what

5 Thomas Goodwin, *Works*, Vol IX p. 277 (Tanski Publications)

Peter is saying is that we know that our salvation is of God when we believe the doctrine of election and effectual calling. If we do not, then we are always in danger of thinking that we must contribute something to our salvation, or risk losing it.

What has all this to do with the preceding verses? Simply this, that none can do these things, adding to faith virtue etc, unless they have been called in the electing purposes of God. So when we see that we can add to faith virtue and so on we have an incontrovertible proof that we have been effectually called. Peter is not saying, Produce good works and so be elect; he is saying, You are elect, so produce the works of faith and thereby prove your election. The word 'sure' means 'reliable', 'unwavering', 'valid'. He will use it in v.19 of Scripture. He is saying that we need to have confidence in the fact of our being elect, in the fact of our effectual call. These are strengths to faith. The evidences of faith, in obedience and a holy life, testify to the reality of our calling and election. They are the fruit which prove the health of the tree of which we are but branches.

This is why Peter goes on to give his reason for making our calling and election sure, 'for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.' 'Never fall' cannot mean 'never fall into any sin', else none have ever obeyed this instruction of the Apostle; indeed, it is an instruction none could obey. What he means is, that those who labour to show their true standing before God by being fruitful in good works are kept by the grace of God until the day of judgment. As calling and election are works of God's grace and power through the Lord Jesus Christ, so our being kept from falling can be ascribed to the same source. Thus we have here a reason to praise the power of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ—'For that it engaged to 'keep you from falling' in this life; that is, both from apostasy, which you have seen others run into, and in this life from falling into gross sins, which is Peter's sense of

falling.⁶ Those who fall into gross sin act as if they were never the objects of grace; continuing in them puts them in mortal danger. One remedy against such falling is a proper sense of our calling and election. This is the same point made by Tobias Crisp in the first part of his sermon on Jesus Christ the Way, the Truth and the Life. Jesus Christ is the way from the wrath of God, because he has died to satisfy that wrath. If we have been elected and called effectually we are beneficiaries of his atoning death; we are therefore free to live in obedience to Christ all our days. 'With regard to those who feel in themselves the efficacious working of the Spirit, Peter bids them to take courage as to the future, because the Lord has laid in them the solid foundation of a true and sure calling.'⁷

All of this is explained in the next verse. 'So' or 'in this way' 'an entrance shall be ministered' or 'supplied' to you. That entrance is into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. That entrance is supplied abundantly or richly. The meaning is, that the Lord will grant us such an abundance of grace that we will always be led into the kingdom of Christ. The underlying imagery is taken from the journeyings of Israel from Egypt to Canaan; their departure from Egypt did not bring them

6 *Ibid*, p. 213

7 Calvin, p. 378

to Canaan in a moment, but they had to endure many hardships. Like them, we have crossed the Red Sea, and so are accounted dead to our old life. Like them, we must face the tests of faith before we come to the bank of Jordan. The grace of God is supplied to us continually to bring us through that testing time to the entrance of the kingdom. What keeps us steadfast and sure is the knowledge that we have been elected to the kingdom of God by grace, we are not coming merely of our choosing. This knowledge ought to strengthen us to bear every burden and face every trial, as being but steps on the way to our eternal home. Since we have been elected and called effectually, our right and title to heaven is not in doubt. This does not lessen the degree of trials on the way, but it gives us the strongest possible motive to persevere on the way. If we are promised heaven, with all its glorious blessings, we will surely allow nothing to keep us from heaven. This is why we must be fruitful in good works, as evidences of the grace that is in us, and as proofs of our being called and elected in Christ.

Having set out the true situation of the believer, and having shown us strong motivations to godly living, Peter now moves to instruction, vv.12–21. He begins by explaining why it is necessary for us to be so instructed, vv.12–15.

TO BE CONTINUED

This also is the reason why nothing can come at us, but that it may do us good, if the God of mercy is round about us, about us on every side, then no evil thing can by any means come at us, but it must come through this mercy, and so must be seasoned with it, and must have its deadly poison by it taken away. Hence Paul, understanding this, saith, 'And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God.' But how can that be, did they not come though the very side of mercy? And how could they come to us so, since Satan trieth to wound us deadly in every or in some private place, if mercy did not compass us round about as with a shield?

STUDIES IN BRITISH CHURCH HISTORY

THE REIGN OF QUEEN MARY (1553–1558)

EDWARD MALCOLM (Reading)

Edward VI died on 6 July, 1553, and the Duke of Northumberland moved immediately to secure the settlement he needed. Four days later Lady Jane Grey was brought to the Tower of London, a royal palace, and preparations were begun for her enthronement.

The ground of Lady Jane's ascension to the throne was tenuous, to put it mildly. Henry VIII had passed certain Acts during his reign which might be interpreted as showing that the king had power to name the line of succession. Northumberland, desperate to retain his head, leaped from this possibility to a reality which convinced nobody. Henry VII had fathered four children, two boys and two girls. The first boy, Arthur, died young, and his second son, Henry, succeeded to the throne. Of the two girls, one, Margaret, married James IV of Scotland, thus bringing about the Stuart succession at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and the youngest, Mary, married the Duke of Suffolk. She had two daughters, Frances and Eleanor. Frances's husband, Henry Grey, was given the dukedom of Suffolk. Eleanor married the Earl of Cumberland, and had one daughter, Margaret Clifford. Her older sister Frances had three daughters, the eldest of whom was the Lady Jane Grey. The interpretation placed on Henry VIII's Acts allowed Northumberland to bypass the usual line of succession in favour of a more distant one. He could discount Mary Tudor since she had been declared to be illegitimate, as had Elizabeth. The marriage of Margaret Tudor to a foreign king could justify the exclusion of her line, leaving Northumberland with Mary

Duchess of Suffolk's line. He eldest daughter, Frances, was very much alive, and therefore ought to have been at the top of the succession order. Northumberland did not wish to relinquish his power, and the advantage of having a teenaged girl as queen who would follow all his advice, was all too clear.

Northumberland, and the rest of the Council who agreed to this scheme, had overlooked two vital matters. The man in the street believed that Mary Tudor ought to be queen. Most were unconvinced regarding the annulment of Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon, and believed Mary to be the true heir. While they would no doubt have agreed that Edward ought to succeed ahead of his elder half-sister, his death left only one option; Mary must reign. Secondly, Mary herself was determined to reign. She almost certainly had friends within the Council, and she acted with such speed when Edward died that she must have been tipped off even sooner than Northumberland's friends were informed.

Northumberland sent men to contain Mary at Hunsdon, but they found she had already departed—not, as they first thought, to the Continent, but to East Anglia. She quickly amassed an army some 30,000 strong, even from among the more staunchly Protestant populace. When eventually Northumberland caught up with her, his army of some 3,000 retired in haste. Mary's advance on London was unstoppable, and she was greeted by huge, cheering crowds as she went. Lady Jane Grey, on the other hand, was met with sullen silence when she went out in public. Nobody

had anything against her, although her husband, Northumberland's son, was openly hated. Nicholas Ridley preached a sermon asserting the illegitimacy of both Mary and Elizabeth, which was not well received. The mood of London was distinctly hostile to Northumberland's scheme, and when Mary arrived it was over very quickly. Even the Duke of Suffolk, Jane's father, proclaimed Mary to be the legitimate queen, although not fast enough to save his head.

Others, however, were saved by Mary's coming. These included Bishops Gardiner and Bonner, the former of whom would complain about his imprisonment, but who, during his incarceration, had liberty to write six volumes of theology, and some Latin prose and poetry. None of his enemies would have such liberty.

When even the most ardent supporter of the Duke of Northumberland saw that Mary would become queen, those in power moved to retain their positions. Mary was in no rush to make alterations, for those who had governed during Edward's reign were still useful during the period of transition. Mary was willing to use them to her advantage. What few, if any, understood at this stage, was the true character of this Tudor woman. As we shall see, the seemingly still waters did indeed run very deep. However, as 1553 drew to a close, it seemed that business in England would carry on very much as usual. Were it not for two issues, the reign of Mary Tudor might have gone down in history as a good reign. Those two issues were foreign policy, and the religious settlement.

Mary's foreign policy

Both the French and the Spanish, the two great powers in Europe, took a very keen interest in England's affairs. Henry II of France had been courting the Scottish, and Mary, granddaughter of Margaret Tudor, was a good candidate for the throne of England. Henry supported the Protestant cause in England in order to subvert the attempts of

the Spanish to overthrow the succession, but he intended to get his woman onto the English throne and thus keep Spain out of both Scotland and England.

Spain, on the other hand, looked to England to provide the necessary buffer between Scotland and France, and so resisted the machinations of Henry II and his ambassadors. For Spain, the accession of the daughter of Catherine of Aragon was a great triumph, although the victory would soon prove to be hollow.

The effect of this was to give a real urgency to the question of the royal marriage. If Mary chose a French husband then Henry II would have won a diplomatic coup of immense proportions. If, on the other hand, she chose a Spanish husband then the waning fortunes of Charles V would in some measure be restored, since he would have a controlling interest in one of the most powerful nations. Whom would Mary choose?

For Mary, the choice of a husband was not simply a matter of diplomatic advantage. We know that her younger sister, Elizabeth, would use the possibility of marriage as a tool in negotiating with foreign powers. For Mary, marriage was not a political tool. It is perhaps too easy to overlook Mary's parentage. She was certainly the daughter of Henry VIII, a Tudor through and through, who believed with absolute certainty that the royal will was directed by the divine will, and so could not err. But she was also the daughter of Catherine of Aragon, a Spanish princess, a staunch Roman Catholic, and, it must be acknowledged, a most loyal wife until her marriage was declared null and void. Mary learned all she knew about marriage from her mother. A husband, she was taught, ought to command the respect and devotion of his wife. She must obey him in all matters matrimonial. In order to do so, she had to have confidence in him. This meant, for Mary, that her husband would have to be a Roman Catholic, and a Spaniard to boot. It is thought that the Moorish influence in

Spain had coloured the Spanish understanding of marriage, so that something of a Mohammedan spirit existed. If Mary would not wear a physical veil, she would wear a metaphorical one where her husband was concerned.

Marriage for Mary, therefore, could only be to Philip of Spain. The English government foresaw problems, and made certain stipulations. These included clauses barring Philip and his successors from gaining any interest in the English successors, while at the same time guaranteeing any heirs from the marriage the right to the Spanish succession. Philip would be named King, but only Mary would be able to confer offices of church and state. Even these concessions were not sufficient to quell the unrest a foreign match was arousing. Many had hoped Mary would marry within England, and several names had been put forward. None, however, matched her expectations of a husband, and when the matter was raised before the foreign ambassadors, Mary replied bluntly that her marriage was her own affair. Almost all the country, including loyal Roman Catholics, disagreed. Spain was untrustworthy, and the marriage treaty was no defence against Spanish intentions.

So hated was the match that at the beginning of 1554 Thomas Wyatt led an armed group into London. It is true that he had intended to raise his rebellion on 18 March, but some of his co-conspirators grew nervous and divulged the plans. Although forced to move early, he came to Ludgate having received in addition to his initial 4,000 troops the forces of the Duke of Norfolk who were meant to oppose him, and having beaten the Earl of Pembroke's forces, and having passed those of Winchester in Fleet Street without a fight. But Ludgate would not open to him, and he was trapped. Wyatt surrendered immediately.

The government knew how close run the affair had been. Had Ludgate opened, London would almost certainly have fallen,

and even now there were many who wished it had. The queen's religion was a major source of concern, and her marriage to a Spaniard only made matters worse.

In a bid to calm the situation Mary was determined to show leniency to the rebels, who included several noble family heads. Gardiner urged her in a sermon on 11 February to show mercy instead to the commonwealth by cutting off its 'hurtful members'. Other members of the Council took the opportunity to settle old scores. Lady Jane Grey and her husband were beheaded on 12 February, even though the rebellion had been nothing to do with them. She was not yet sixteen and a half, a mere pawn in the intrigues of others. A number of noblemen were executed, as were some commoners. When the conspiracy took in Mary's sister Elizabeth, the French ambassador pressed for her execution. She managed to retain her sister's favour by attending mass, although Mary did not believe Elizabeth had been converted to Romanism. On 18 March, the day the rebellion was meant to have begun, Elizabeth passed through Traitor's Gate to what seemed to be certain death. But when London Protestants began to openly celebrate their Protestantism, and when Thomas Wyatt's head was removed from the gibbet, and when a jury acquitted one of the conspirators, the government saw the benefit of ending the blood-letting, lest further rebellion follow.

Mary learned the wrong lesson from Wyatt's rebellion. Rather than fear its near-success, she rejoiced over its sudden collapse. Convinced that no power could stand against her, she pressed ahead with the marriage plan. Parliament offered no opposition, although further safeguards against Spanish benefits were put in place. The wedding took place in Winchester Cathedral on 25 July 1554, presided over by Bishop Gardiner.

On 20 November Cardinal Reginald Pole arrived in England.

Mary's religious policy

Many promises had been made by Mary's friends in her name when she was uncertain of success regarding the throne. Having gained the throne, those promises quickly evaporated. She was marrying a Roman Catholic king, and she intended to present him with a Roman Catholic country.

On 13 August 1553 Dr Gilbert Bourne narrowly escaped death when a dagger was thrown at him while preaching at Paul's Cross. He had prayed for the dead, and denounced Bonner's imprisonment. Mary turned the situation to her advantage. She arrested John Bradford—even though he had helped to save Bourne from the mob—and John Rogers, both of whom were prebendaries of St Paul's cathedral. Thomas Becon, who had recanted in 1534, was also arrested. On St Bartholomew's Day the mass was re-introduced into half a dozen city churches, and it was claimed that this was by popular demand rather than by any commandment. Mary had banned preaching on 18 August, which deprived the Protestants of their best weapon, and eleven days later Gardiner began to license preachers, all of whom were devoted to the Romanist cause. Gardiner was a bully, who intended to terrify people out of the religion by law established. The door was opened to allow men such as Peter Martyr to leave England, and the continental weavers of Glastonbury were encouraged to return home. Soon, senior clerics began to follow. Few were expelled, but the change in the wind was unmistakable. Ridley was in prison as one who had abetted Northumberland

over Lady Jane Grey; Hooper was sent to the Fleet on the ground that he owed the government money, as was Bishop Barlow. Hugh Latimer, though warned to flee, was sent to the Tower for breaking the prohibition on unlicensed preaching. Cranmer followed on 14 September, both for his strong advocacy of the Lord's Supper over the mass, and for his part in Northumberland's plans. The way was open to pack the episcopate with Roman Catholics.

When Parliament sat in October 1553 it agreed to restore the religious settlement as it had been in the last year of Henry VIII's reign. Convocation sat at the same time, and although Archdeacon Philpot led opposition to the dismantling of Edward's settlement, the royal will won the day. But two things did not change. The queen remained Supreme Governor of the Church of England, and the Pope was given no power in this realm.

Mary moved against all married bishops, declaring them to have voided their ordination vows by having taken wives, and so justified their removal. Many dioceses remained vacant, as did the two sees of Canterbury and York. Mary would not be rushed into filling them until she was ready.

On 4 March all the Acts passed by Parliament during its previous session were required to be imposed by the bishops, but they were not to mention the royal supremacy in so doing. Thus Mary intended to do away with her supreme governorship by stealth. Some 1,500 clergy were deprived of their livings in the visitations which resulted from this. ¶

TO BE CONTINUED

To converse with angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect, is much; but to see Christ, and to converse with Christ in our glorified nature, is the great desire of our hearts: and to know more of him, and of God in Christ, is that which we are born unto, as we have passed from death unto life; so that all the pleasant entertainments we have here in gospel-ordinances and promises, only serve to sharpen our spiritual appetites after heaven our home.

Richard Bentley

GLEANINGS FROM THE MINISTRY OF THE GOSPEL

PEREGRINUS

We commenced our gleanings from another's weekly ministry with Ruth. From that same ministry we continue with his thoughts (somewhat expanded) on Naomi.

(2) *'And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me' (Ruth 1:20)*

WE concluded our 'gleanings' in the last issue of *The Gospel Magazine* with the return of Naomi and Ruth to Bethlehem, 1:19–21, where they returned, we are told, 'at the beginning of barley harvest' (1:22). but we are also told of the greeting given to Naomi and Naomi's response to that greeting:

All the city was moved about them, and they said, Is this Naomi? And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?'

There are three principle characters in this book of Ruth; Ruth, Naomi and Boaz. But first, we must return and consider a little of that minor character, Orpah. I say minor in the sense that she only appears in the first chapter and then disappears completely from view. However, it is important to look at her for she typifies many who are merely professors of the gospel rather than those who are actually called by God's grace out of the darkness of this world and the darkness of sin.

Orpah, then is typical, or a picture of those who have temporary faith. The Lord Jesus Christ spake in his parable of the Sower as recorded in the fourth chapter of Mark's Gospel. He spoke of the different kinds of soil into which the seed of the Word of God fell.

Amongst those hearers he describes those with temporary faith. The seed that fell on the stony ground sprang up immediately because it had no depth of earth, but they 'endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended' (Mark 4:17). They have temporary faith! It does not endure! Paul speaks of such people in his Epistle to the Hebrews 6:4–6. There has been some enlightening, they have tasted some of the blessings of the gospel, but being possessed of temporary faith, they fall away and it is impossible for them to be brought back to repentance because they put to shame the Son of God (v.6). We do have to distinguish between true faith and temporary faith. Orpah returns to her family, her land and her pagan gods. The Apostle Peter speaks of such:

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

But Ruth clave to her mother-in-law and returned with her to Bethlehem.

So we now go on to consider Naomi. And here in vv.20–21 when she was greeted by her former neighbours as they entered into conversation with her; they recognised her after all the years she had been away. 'Is this Naomi?' (v.19). And her response is, 'Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me' (v.20). Let us consider the bitterness of sin in her heart. If we have been taught by the Holy Ghost do we not know something of the bitterness of sin, the bitterness of the broken law? The word or name Marah has in the Hebrew language the meaning of 'bitterness'. You will recall that when the Children of Israel were travelling to the promised land they came to the place called Marah. 'And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah' (Exodus 15:23). They could not drink the water because it was bitter until they were sweetened by the tree shown to Moses which was cast into the waters (v.25). How much more the cross of Christ Jesus sweetens all things after we have been brought to see the bitterness of sin. 'But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world' (Galatians 6:14). We should also notice the significance of names in Holy Scripture. Isaiah 8:1–4 speaks of the prophetic significance of the name given to Isaiah's son in that it speaks of God's judgment coming speedily upon both Israel and Samaria, Assyria being God's instrument. Here, then, is Naomi speaking significantly of her experience of the Lord's dealings with her. 'The Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me' (v.20). But that name was never used again in connection with Naomi! She felt bitterness of heart, but notwithstanding she was always 'Naomi'. She was always 'Pleasant' for that is the meaning of the Hebrew name. She was always pleasant in the Lord's eyes.

If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail (Psalm 89:30–33).

She had known the Lord's visits for her transgressions, she went out full, 'and the LORD hath brought me home again empty' (v.21). What a mercy there is that word here 'NEVERTHELESS'. It is most important! Notwithstanding all her sinfulness and her wanderings to the land of the Moabites, to a pagan nation, to a nation cursed of God; notwithstanding these things, there is that 'nevertheless'. 'Nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail'. The Lord is faithful in his covenant dealings with her. The Lord is dealing with her as a child, a member of the family. 'Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall: but the LORD helped me' (Psalm 118:13). She was not given over to death for 'whom the Lord loved, he chasteneth' (Hebrews 12:6). Well, what is the cure for this bitterness? It can only be found in the Lord Jesus Christ. We have referred above to the waters of Marah being made sweet by a certain tree. Bishop Hall comments: 'For a child of God the cross of Christ makes the bitter sweet.'

'I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty' (v.21). It would seem that Naomi had a pleasant life before the family left Bethlehem. She went out full. There was no want in her life. Even when she was in Moab she had everything life could desire: a husband, her two son grown up and married—all was pleasant for her. She went out full! But she had to be brought to see as Solomon was likewise brought to see that all these things she had were vanity and of a transient nature. 'Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity' (Ecclesiastes 12:8), and one by one all her comforts were

withdrawn and taken away. Now things were so different with her. Those things she once valued were no longer hers. 'The LORD hath brought me home again empty.' The Lord dealt with her because she had been disobedient; there had been sinful disobedience and there was now an emptiness, a felt emptiness. 'And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul' (Psalm 106:15). The Lord Jesus Christ said, 'For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?' (Matthew 16:26). 'I went out' says Naomi. Here is self-will. There appeared to be no prayer for guidance; no trusting the Lord in a time of famine; no waiting upon the Lord. 'The way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps' (Jeremiah 10:23). They should have waited upon the Lord for guidance, but did not do so. 'I went out'. And now she could not restore herself. It was the Lord who brought her back.

Thou know'st the way to bring me back,
My fallen spirit to restore;
O, for thy truth and mercy's sake,
Forgive, and bid me sin no more!
The ruins of my soul repair,
And make my heart a house of prayer.

C. Wesley

Seeing peacemakers are blessed, why should they be blamed which seek to make peace between papists and Protestants, by reconciling these two religions? *Answer.* Because this is not good peace, for there is no more concord between these two religions than is between light and darkness. Whereas it is said, they differ not in substance, but in circumstances, both having the same Word, the same creed, and sacraments; we must know that notwithstanding all this yet but necessary consequent of their doctrine and religion, they do quite overturn the foundations of the Bible, of the creed, and sacraments, as in the points of *justification by works*, of *human satisfaction*, of *worshipping saints and images*, and their *massing sacrifice* and *priesthood*, may soon appear. But have they the same baptism with us? *Answer.* Baptism severed from the true preaching of the Word, is no sufficient note of a true church, for the Samaritans had circumcision, and yet the Lord says, 'they were not his people' (Hosea 1:9). Again, they hold the outward form of baptism, but they overturn the inward power thereof, by denying justification by faith alone in Jesus Christ. Thirdly, baptism is preserved in the Church of Rome, not for their sakes, but for the hid church which God has kept for himself, even in the midst of all popery. So that if they return to us, we shall accord; otherwise we may not go the them, lest we forsake the Lord.

William Perkins on Matthew 5:9, 'Blessed are the peacemakers'

The Lord is instructing her. He is teaching her that sin is a bitter thing. Naomi is emptied of all. 'The LORD hath brought me home again empty.'

In Luke 15 we read of the Prodigal Son who 'came to himself'—he had gone out full. He had taken his inheritance but now he began to be in want because he had spent all on riotous living. He was now perishing with hunger; he was empty and hungry. The Lord restores the prodigal as he restores Naomi, and as he still restores the empty sinner who is brought by the work of the Holy ghost to the Lord Jesus Christ, and who calls by faith upon him.

'They came to Bethlehem'—the house of bread. The Lord Jesus is the bread of life (John 6:35). 'To the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet' (Proverbs 27:7). Even sin, that is, the conviction of sin and its forgiveness by the Lord Jesus Christ, is made sweet, for we go on to read later in this book of Ruth that Naomi's bitterness was turned to sweetness with the birth of Ruth's first child, Obed who, of course is mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord in Matthew's Gospel (Ruth 4:17, Matthew 1:5, 6). God grant that we may be brought to see the bitterness of sin, for in doing so we will also be brought to see the sweetness of our gracious Redeemer. ¶

BOOK REVIEW

Editor's Note: *We live, regretfully, in a day when most evangelicals, and most publishers, have abandoned the Authorised (King James) Version of the Bible. Rather, therefore, than ceasing to review most books, we try to warn readers by stating if the book uses other versions of the Bible. The position of The Gospel Magazine is that the AV is the best translation, from the true text, possessing beautiful and formative English, and that it has been an instrument of blessing to the English-speaking church for over four hundred years. That we name another translation does not mean we endorse it.*

A SPIRITUAL TREASURY FOR THE CHILDREN OF GOD

William Mason

2016 \$22 + \$16 p&p ppc Reformation Heritage Books. Also available from the Protestant Truth Society bookshop, 184 Fleet St, London, EC4A 2HJ

William Mason (1719–91), one-time Editor of this *Magazine*, lived during that period of history known as The Great Awakening. Converted under the ministry of John Wesley, but later associating with George Whitefield and William Romaine, he knew he was not called to preach. Instead, he gave himself to a writing ministry. This book is a product of that ministry.

Mason was steeped in the Word of God. This is evident on every page of this book. Where he is not quoting Scripture directly, his words and phrases are fragrant with it by allusion. The Bible is used most effectively to prod the careless, to calm the troubled, and to encourage the fearful. Mason was under no illusions concerning his own spiritual state, and believed that the gospel remedies he found so suitable to his own needs would help others also.

The doctrine here is thoroughly Calvinistic, but never dry or harsh. Instead, Mason knows how to point Christians to Christ, through the Word of God, in every imaginable situation. So gentle is his tone that even the most heart-searching pieces should be received with thankfulness.

Almost every entry is only a page long, and there is an entry for morning and evening throughout the year, including leap-years. The heading texts are indexed at the rear. This printing is a reproduction of the 1834 edition, and there are one or two places where the type has been broken; in one instance 'the most nigh God' is 'the most high God'. In some places the printing is weak, but still legible. We highly recommend this volume

EJM

KNOTS UNTIED

J C Ryle

2016 £15/£10 clothbound/ePub Banner of Truth Trust ISBN 978–1–84871–682–7

Of all Bishop Ryle's books, the most controversial is almost certain to be *Knots Untied*. It is the most unashamedly Anglican, containing defences of the doctrine of infant baptism, and explanations of the misunderstood statements in the Prayer Book concerning the regeneration of infants. In its day it was controversial for other matters as well, especially among Anglicans. Ryle shows that adherence to the Prayer Book, in the way in which some of his

contemporaries adhered to it, fails to give proper consideration to the Thirty-nine Articles as the doctrinal basis of the Church of England. It is hard to escape the conclusion that this lesson still needs to be taught, and learned, among Anglicans. To be sure, few today still use the Book of Common Prayer, most preferring Common Worship, or something rather akin to the Roman missal, or a type of worship that conforms to no recognisable standard. We know that the senior clergy of the Church of England appear to act as though union with Rome were only a matter of time, and so they treat the Thirty-nine Articles as being of no relevance at all.

The strength of Ryle's writing is his simplicity and clarity. Whether he is setting forth the Reformed doctrine of the Sabbath, or speaking of The Fallibility of Ministers, or of Only One Way of Salvation, or any one of the nineteen papers in this volume, he leaves his readers in no doubt as to his meaning. His paper on Private Judgment stands as a rebuke to many, who find it easier to give up thinking for themselves in favour of believing whatever the minister preaches from the pulpit or teaches in the Bible study. This attitude is no different from that of the Roman Catholic who hands over his soul to the priest and to the Church, in the mistaken belief that obedience to them is the same as faithfulness to Christ. 'Prove all things.'

The Banner of Truth Trust is to be thanked for being bold enough to republish this volume, which has been out of print for many years. It has been subjected to criticism from non-conformists, and derided as 'Knots tied tighter'. It is our hope that, in reading again the godly words of old Bishop Ryle, many will be strengthened in their faith, and be given grace to stand firmly against the errors and decay that characterise the church in our day.

A small number of insignificant typographical errors have been noticed, but overall this is a well-produced book, and should be read as widely as possible.

EJM

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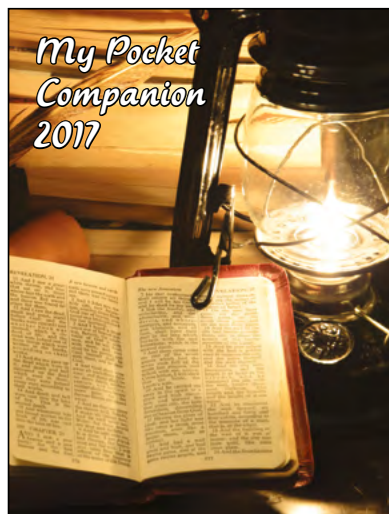
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