

THE

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THE  
**GOSPEL MAGAZINE**

*Incorporating the Protestant Beacon and The British Protestant*

"JESUS CHRIST, THE SAME YESTERDAY, AND TODAY, AND FOR EVER."

"ENDEAVOURING TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND  
OF PEACE."

"COMFORT YE, COMFORT YE MY PEOPLE, SAITH YOUR GOD."

New Series  
No. 1393

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## **EDITORIAL**

I am writing in the aftermath of the events of the past months—some of them brutal, some sordid, some tragic. We have seen the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia and rumours have flown that Rumania might share the same fate. In the U.S.A. the scenes in Chicago saddened and disgusted not only foreign observers but many Americans—wasn't it an American who referred to Chicago as Prague West? In Nigeria the slaughter goes on and the pathetic crowds of homeless, sick and starving folk wait hopelessly for relief. Meanwhile the interminable blood-letting in Viet Nam continues, and at home crime, labour troubles and economic problems remain the continuing factors in a sick society.

If anyone requires proof of the total depravity of man he has only to open his eyes and read his newspaper, or open his ears to listen to radio bulletins. Of course, the Christian does not need to look as far afield as that, for a glimpse of his own heart quickly convinces him of the truth of Paul's words, 'I know that in me, that is my flesh, dwelleth no good thing'.

What we are seeing today, however, is not only the miserable plight into which man in his ungodliness brings himself, but the utter inadequacy of all the remedies he has devised. Communism, declared by its propagandists to be the hope of the nations, has shown itself in the streets of Prague, as it did in Budapest in 1956, and as it has done in prison cells for a generation, a foul evil, destructive of men.

Nor has nationalism provided an answer. It is in the name of that very thing that hideous atrocities have been perpetrated in the new nations of Africa, just as they were practised in the past by the Europeans and by ourselves in these islands.

Wealth, security and sex—the other hopes of the twentieth century—have proved no better. All they have produced is the feverish mentality of the Bingo hall, the mad craze for

luxury, the illegitimacy, venereal disease and broken homes which increasingly disfigure national life.

But if the twentieth century proclaims the moral bankruptcy of man, the supreme tragedy is that it also declares the spiritual bankruptcy of many of the churches. Against the background of abounding wickedness and human misery the World Council of Churches met at Uppsala, and the Anglican bishops at Lambeth. But where was the prophetic voice calling the churches to repentance? Where was the confession that the real crime of the churches has been the abandonment of the apostolic gospel? Where was the humble call to the churches to return to submission to the Word of God? There were words in plenty and processions to gild the occasion. But the rugged voice of the Reformers and the Puritans was absent. Yet it is such a voice we need to hear.

For there is an answer! The lands which today suffer from the consequences of man's sin have heard that answer in the past. Czechoslovakia? It was in fifteenth-century Bohemia that John Hus proclaimed the gospel until silenced by the persecution of Rome in a martyr's fire at Constance; it was in Moravia that Zinzendorf and his friends experienced a mighty visitation of the Spirit which in turn made a profound impact upon the evangelical revival in eighteenth-century Britain. Nigeria? The Ibo and Ibibio churches in Biafra and the believers across the rest of Nigeria have stood for that same gospel. And Viet Nam? While the guns roar around Saigon the preaching of the gospel there still draws men from a worse fate than death at the hands of men.

The day may be dark and the outlook bleak. But it has often been like this. It was so when Paul cried defiance against all the powers of darkness—'I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth'. It was bleak when Athanasius stood all alone 'against the world' and fought for the truth. It was dark when Luther took his stand at the Diet of Worms and cried, 'Here I stand, I can do no other'.

In a day when discouragement easily makes inroads, and fears for the future paralyse the believer, we must stand fast for the Word of God. Around us is a great cloud of witnesses. There is not only that company unseen by human eyes who are now before the throne; there is also a noble company—in Rumanian gaols, in Russian labour camps, in Chinese prisons. With one voice and with an authority begotten by suffering they urge us as Paul once called the Philippians—'So stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved'. **H. M. CARSON.**

# **The Church the Muslims See**

H. GENET

Are Middle Eastern countries ninety-nine and nine-tenths per cent Muslim, fanatic and impenetrable? Most Christians in the West seem to believe this is so.

Muslims are fanatic, at least in the mass, and they often seem impenetrable. It is even true that less than one-tenth of one per cent in these lands are Protestant. But there are some four million in the Middle East who are not Muslim. More than three million of these call themselves disciples of Christ. Western Christians have forgotten them.

If you were to take an approximate sampling of citizens of Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq, all core Middle East countries, you would find about this distribution, according to statistics compiled from the U.N.O. Demographic Yearbook, A. H. Hourani's "Minorities in the Arab World" and "The Middle East", a Europa Publication: For every thousand Muslims there would be one hundred and seventeen non-Muslims. Ten of these would belong to quasi-Muslim groups such as the Druze, a Muslim-pagan compromise; four would be Jews.

## **LESS THAN ONE PER CENT.**

The remaining one hundred and three would call themselves Christians, but only one of them would answer to the name Protestant. There would be three Roman Catholics and fourteen Greek Orthodox. The average Western Christian would be a little puzzled at the affiliations of the vast majority—the remaining eighty-five.

Forty-five would number themselves Coptic Orthodox. You would find thirteen Maronites. There would be eight Armenian Orthodox and seven Greek Catholics. Three would answer to Coptic Catholic and three to Syrian Orthodox. Two each would respond to the names Assyrian and Syrian Catholic. And there would be one apiece of Armenian Catholic and Chaldean.

It should be evident that when a Muslim pictures a Christian in his mind, he sees neither a Protestant nor a Roman Catholic. What is the man he pictures like?

Actually he would be a man very like himself. The Middle Eastern Christians' social characteristics are those of the Arab

society as a whole; their points of similarity are more numerous than those of difference.

#### CAMOUFLAGE.

Take the Copts of Egypt for example. Their resemblance to the Egyptian Muslims is due not simply to similar racial stock and environment, but also to the tendency of minorities to adopt the ways of the majority as a sort of protective colouring. It is also due to the spread of Western civilisation which is threatening to destroy Coptic and Muslim traditions alike.

The bulk of the Copts, as of the Muslims, are peasants living in the villages of the Nile Valley and delta. They produce the same crops, suffer the same oppressions and face the same economic problems. They have similar customs for birth, marriage and death—similar superstitions and folk-lore; similar relics of a former Nile-worship.

The urban Copts, like the rest of the urban population, are in a process of transition from the traditional way of life to one at least superficially westernised. It may be that, being Christians, they have been able to advance a little more rapidly than the Muslims on the way of westernisation; but it is the same process through which both are going. Ultimately, it may remove many of the differences between them.

While the Copts and most other minority groups are outwardly almost indistinguishable from their Muslim neighbours, the Armenians and Assyrians have neither language nor religion in common with their Muslim Arab neighbours. Both people are very tenacious of their individuality, embittered by persecution in recent history, and with something of a persecution mania which so often is a cause no less than a result of persecution. Some members of the younger generation, however, are reconciling themselves to their situation and are learning Arabic and attempting to adjust themselves to their context.

#### NATIONALISM.

Traditionally these minorities have not regarded themselves as possessing any but a formal allegiance to the new nationalist governments, whose actions they watch with fear and suspicion. They look on the nationalist movement as at best alien—at worst, hostile to them.

Today, however, non-Muslim groups are increasingly supporters of Arab nationalism. But nationalism does not mean social interchange among Christians and Muslims. The Christians still form a social unit, or a series of inter-connected social units, which are related with the Muslim community only in a formal way. This is especially true of the older

generation. In the smaller towns and villages, traditions still rule unchecked, and the old social exclusiveness of the sects still persists.

Economically, the Christians do not differ from the Muslim peasants. It is only in the large towns that the economic structures of the Christian communities diverges from that of the majority. Education does nothing to diminish community differences, but rather the opposite, since for the most part it is under community control. The Christian communities are more highly educated than the Muslims, as a rule, and this leads to differences in their social and economic structure. Besides, the Christians, in general, are receiving a different kind of education from the Muslims. This is particularly true of the Uniate Christians, who have gone far toward adopting French civilisation and the French language as their own.

The existence of the closed communities of the past was inseparably linked with the feudal or village economy. Now better communications are linking regions and villages with one another and changing the whole organisation of rural life.

#### WESTERNISATION.

The introduction of freer social customs from the West, the spread of education and the growth of the idea of the nation are all helping to make the younger generation less conscious of its confessional ties, and may, in the end, succeed in breaking down barriers between the sects.

What is even more important, an urban industrial and commercial life is developing, with the necessary individualism of urban life. These factors are weakening the strength of community loyalties. At the same time they may produce new sources of discord. The new indigenous Muslim middle class xenophobia may easily transfer itself to middle class Jew and Christian, who on the whole take more easily to commercial and professional life than the Muslims.

This, externally, is the Middle Eastern Christian. But what is he like inside? What does he believe? How is it different from the beliefs of Western Christians? If the Christian communities were divided according to this criterion, they would fall into Protestant, the smallest group, and these four main groups:

*The Greek Orthodox*, or the adherents of the Orthodox Eastern Church, which is really a group of independent churches using the Byzantine rite. Historically these churches grew out of the four eastern patriarchates (Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria and Constantinople) which, from an early date, tended to diverge from the western patriarchate for several

reasons. The final split took place in the 11th century. From that time on, with the exception of a brief period of reunion in the 15th century, the Eastern Church has continued to reject the claim of the Roman Patriarchate to universal supremacy.

Doctrinally, the main point at issue between the Eastern and Western Churches is that of the procession of the Holy Spirit—the Western Church maintaining He proceeds from the Father *and* the Son; the Eastern Church maintaining He proceeds from the Father only. But there are also various divergencies in ritual and discipline, such as the married priesthood.

The Orthodox Eastern Patriarchate of Antioch is almost completely Arab as to its hierarchy, laity and liturgy; in the Jerusalem patriarchate the upper clergy are Greek, the lower clergy and most of the laity Arab; in that of Alexandria there are both Greek and Arab elements.

*The Nestorians.* The Nestorian Church grew out of the Christological controversies of the fifth century. The Antioch school of theologians emphasised the distinction between the divine Logos and the man Jesus to the extent of obscuring the real union between them. Their doctrine was condemned by the Council of Ephesus (A.D. 431), but continued to find adherents in Syria, Mesopotamia and Persia, where, for reasons not wholly theological, a strong Nestorian Church grew up. It sent out missions across Asia as far as China. Both mother-church and missions, however, were largely destroyed by Tamerlane in the 14th century. Today, the Assyrians of Iraq and Syria are all that is left of them.

Doctrinally, the distinguishing mark of the Nestorian Church is its rejection of the statements of the Council of Ephesus and that of Chalcedon (A.D. 451) on the nature of Christ. The Church has a distinctive Syriac liturgy.

*The Monophysites.* The Monophysite doctrine represents a reaction against Nestodianism. It emphasises the union between Christ and the man Jesus to the point of maintaining that Christ was not only one Person but also one Nature, a divine one. Formally condemned by the Council of Chalcedon, this doctrine continued to exist, particularly in Egypt and Syria, where the Monophysite movement was partially a separatist revolt against the Byzantine government and Church. Eventually the Monophysites formed three independent churches, which were placed on a level with the Greek Orthodox Church by the Arabs in the seventh century. They are:

(1) **The Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt.** This rejects the profession of faith drawn up at Chalcedon and all ecclesiastical authorities except its own patriarch. It has a distinctive liturgy in Greek, Coptic and Arabic.

(2) **The Syrian Orthodox or Jacobite Church,** which was revived and organised by Jacob Baradai in the sixth century. Its doctrinal position is the same as that of the Copts, but it has its own Syriac liturgy and an independent hierarchy.

(3) **The Armenian Orthodox Church** was organised in the third century and became independent as a national church in the fourth. In the sixth century it rejected the formulation of Chalcedon and adopted a form of Monophysitism which is slightly different from that of the Copts and Syrian Orthodox. The Armenian Orthodox is still a national church, to be found wherever Armenians live, and has an Armenian liturgy.

An offshoot of Monophysitism was a **Monothelite doctrine**, that Christ possesses both a divine and a human Nature but only a divine Will. After being favoured for political reasons by the Emperor Heraclius in the seventh century, this doctrine was condemned by the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 680. It then survived only among the Maronites of the Lebanon, who themselves abandoned it in the 12th century..

*The Roman Catholic and Uniate Churches.* These fall into two classes:

(1) **The Roman Catholics of the Western or Latin rite,** fully a part of the Roman Catholic Church and subject to the direct jurisdiction of its hierarchy.

(2) **The Uniate Churches:** churches or members of churches which were formerly heretical or schismatic in Roman eyes, but which at some time in the past abjured these doctrines which the Roman Church regards as heretical and acknowledged the Papal supremacy. They were allowed to retain their own rites and customs, such as the marriage of parish priests (although this is becoming rare in practice), and were granted autonomy under their own selected patriarchs. In general they are very jealous of these privileges.

Six Uniate Churches exist in the Arab countries:

(a) **The Greek Catholic Church:** ex-Greek Orthodox; Greek liturgy.

(b) **The Syrian Catholic Church:** ex-Syrian Orthodox; Syriac liturgy.

(c) **The Armenian Catholic Church:** ex-Armenian Orthodox; Armenian liturgy.

(d) **The Chaldean Catholic Church:** ex-Nestorians; Syriac liturgy.

(e) The Coptic Catholic Church: ex-Coptic Orthodox; Arabic liturgy.

(f) The Maronite Church: ex-Monothelite; Syriac liturgy.

It may be noted that the Maronite Church differs from the others in that it accepted Papal supremacy as a whole, while the others have been built up out of individual members of other churches still existing, who acknowledged the Roman supremacy as a result of the activities of Catholic missions or for other reasons.

This, then, is by and large the Christian Church the Muslims see. It is a church of icons or statuary, of incense, and usually of chanting in unfamiliar languages. It is a church of the letter and not the spirit. When the Muslim rejects Christianity, this is his conception of the faith he spurns.

Early Protestant missionaries to the Middle East attempted to work for revival within the existing churches. They soon became disillusioned, and concluded they must form their own churches. Small evangelical Protestant segments have been formed out of many of these established churches. And in our day there has been the breath of revival in the Coptic Church.

Christians in the West must begin to remember the long-forgotten Arabs—the three million who call themselves Christian.

—*Reprinted from 'Message' by permission of the Arabic Literature Mission, 22 Culverdon Park Road, Tunbridge Wells.*

## **ANNOUNCEMENT**

Owing to the rising cost of printing and postage it will be necessary to increase the cost of the magazine. Details will be given in the November issue.

# CALVINISM IN GUANABARA

1555-1558

PETER TOON

In the spring of 1556 John Calvin received two important letters. One was from Nicolas Durand de Villegagnon, whom the reformer had known when he was a student in Paris, and the other was from the French Admiral, Gaspard de Coligny. Villegagnon's expedition, comprised of two ships and a full complement of men, had left France in July, 1555, with the intention of finding a haven in the New World where Protestantism could make a new life free from the persecution they were experiencing in certain European countries. On 10th November, 1555, the two ships anchored in the bay of Guanabara (now Rio de Janeiro) where the sailors were cautiously welcomed as allies against the Portuguese by the Tupinamba Indians. Villegagnon and his men proceeded to settle on a small island (now called Villegagnon) within sight of the mainland and to build a fortress they called Fort Coligny.

In the belief that he had found a suitable haven, he decided to send back one of the ships to France with letters to Coligny and Calvin requesting that Protestant pastors and settlers be sent out both to strengthen the colony and 'to indoctrinate the savages and bring them into the knowledge of salvation'. The Huguenot Admiral favoured this missionary venture and sent the letter to Calvin with one of his own, commending the scheme to him. Calvin also thought the scheme a good one and proceeded to organise a small party to go to Brazil.

Volunteers were not easily found in Geneva, since rumours of the tropical heat and cannibalism of the Indians deterred many who would otherwise have gladly gone. Eventually two pastors, Pierre Richier and Guillaume Chartier, eleven artisans and five female servants agreed to go. Leaving Geneva on 16th September, 1556, the party sailed with others, recruited by Coligny, from Honfleur on 19th November. After a hazardous voyage the three ships arrived at Fort Coligny early in March, 1557, where Villegagnon heartily welcomed them and promised that they could establish the Reformed Church according to the Word of God. For the first time in the New World the Lord's Supper was celebrated on 21st March

according to Reformed practice, and two weeks later the first Protestant marriage ceremony took place, performed by Pastor Richier. Two of the servants from Geneva married two men who had been part of the first expedition. Thus things got off to a good start and it seemed to the pastors that life on the island could be modelled on Genevan theocratic lines.

Unfortunately, Villegagnon, not content with his military and civic duties, soon began to interfere in the administration of the church and its discipline. He appeared to want to make the service of Holy Communion into a Roman Catholic Mass. This was a great disappointment to the Genevans, for they had entertained high hopes of Villegagnon. Now he had revealed himself to be a wolf in sheep's clothing. After several weeks of argument and discord, it was agreed to send Pastor Chartier back to France and Switzerland to confer with the churches and with Calvin, whom Villegagnon considered to be 'one of the most learned men who have appeared since the apostles'. A few weeks before Chartier sailed to France, Pastor Richier had written to Calvin about the possible evangelisation of the Indians of Brazil. 'We entertain no hope,' he wrote, 'of completely winning them for Christ, although this really must be the most important thing of all.' Efforts were being made to teach them the basic elements of the Christian Faith even though the problem of language and lack of interpreters was acute. He was patiently waiting until 'the adolescents, of which some are already living among them, learn the language of the Indians'. Yet, he concluded, effective evangelism could only take place if more settlers were sent out. Unknown to Richier, plans were being made to send 10,000 Protestants from Spain, France, Belgium and Holland to Brazil, but they were dropped when Villegagnon's treachery became known.

As soon as Pastor Chartier was gone, Villegagnon showed his true colours by calling Calvin a heretic and praising the Roman Catholics. Then he gave all the hardest tasks on the island to the Genevans. Because they remonstrated with him he tried to starve them, and when this measure failed he drove them off the island. On 15th October, 1557, they went to live in an Indian village on the mainland, where several Frenchmen were already living. Since food was short, they had to trade all their belongings to the Indians for food. They made some efforts to preach to the Tupinambas and even considered the possibility of moving inland, but fear of savage tribes deterred them.

Some details of the experiences of these days were recorded by one of the Genvans, Jan d Léry, who, on his return to Europe, published *Histoire d'un voyage fait dans le pays du Brasil* (La Rochelle, 1558). 'I remember an example,' he wrote, 'of how the catechization of the Brazilian Indians would have been an easy matter had we persisted in their indoctrination.' One beautiful day, accompanied by three Indians, he set off in search of food. So impressed by the luxurious vegetation, the brightly coloured birds and the tropical sun in its glory, he felt compelled to sing aloud Psalm 104, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul'. The Indians listened intently and then asked him to explain his song to them and tell them what made him so happy. In the best way that he could, for he did not know their language very well, he told them of the only true God, the Creator of all the things they could see and touch, the forests, the hills, the animals and the heavens. It was not an easy job, for their language did not contain many of the words he needed to convey the idea of a supreme deity who loved the creatures He had made. Even so, he managed to keep his hearers listening intently for at least half an hour. They were so impressed with his talk that they presented him with their most cherished possession, a domesticated aguti (a South American rodent about the size of a rabbit).

Léry did not have any first-hand knowledge of the cannibalism of some of the inland tribes. 'Let us not abominate too much,' he wrote, 'the cruelty of man-eating savages. There exist among ourselves some creatures as abominable and detestable.' As an example of European savagery he told of the Protestant martyrs in Lyon whose dead bodies were cut up and the fat sold in public auction, whilst the hearts and livers were cooked and eaten by the assassins! But he had essentially a sad tale to tell: 'in spite of all our preaching not a single individual . . . wanted to confess Jesus Christ as his Saviour'.

The Genevans could not remain on the mainland for ever. Fear of attack from both Indians and Villegagnon made them decide to return to France on the first available boat. On 4th January, 1558, they boarded an old battered ship, named *Jacques*. After only a few hours at sea, the overloaded vessel began to leak and ship water and it was decided that some passengers and cargo would have to be put ashore. Five of the Genevan artisans volunteered to return and were put in landed near Fort Coligny, where Villegagnon received them the lifeboat and told to row themselves to land. In fact they with seeming goodwill; but as the *Jacques* struggled back to

France, the five men at Fort Coligny became the object of the commander's hatred. First, he accused them of being spies and then he ordered them to write down their religious beliefs. When he read their statements, which were all excellent brief expositions of the Protestant Faith, he fell into a blind rage. Four of the Genevans were strangled and thrown into the sea. The other, André Lafon, was preserved because he was the only tailor on the island.

When the account of the first Protestant martyrs of the New World was printed in Jean Crespin's *Acts des Martyrs* (Geneva, 1564) it was prefaced by the following words: 'A barbarous land, utterly astonished at seeing the martyrs of our Lord Jesus Christ die, will some day produce the fruits that such precious blood has been at all times wont to produce.' The fulfilment of this prophecy did not come in either the sixteenth or the seventeenth century, and not even in the eighteenth century. Protestant evangelism in Brazil began in earnest in the nineteenth century and continues to this day. At least half of all the Protestants in Latin America are to be found in Brazil and some churches, especially of the Pentecostalist type, are receiving great numbers of converts in our day. Let us pray that 'the fruits that such precious blood has been wont to produce' will be seen even more in this century.

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NOTE: The letter from Richier to Calvin is to be found in the Amsterdam edition of Calvin's correspondence, 1667. In 1941 a Portuguese translation of Léry's book appeared, edited by P. Gaffarel and entitled *Viagem a terra do Brazil*, published at Sao Paulo. I do not know of any English translation of Léry's book, which must be regarded as one of the greatest travel stories ever written. Certainly it was very popular in the seventeenth century in Europe.

*I should be happy if I had an errand to this world but for some few years, to spread proclamation and love letters of the highness, the highness for evermore, the glory, the glory for evermore of the Ransomer whose clothes were wet and dyed in blood!—SAMUEL RUTHERFORD.*

# A Nation Under Judgment

H. M. CARSON

*A sermon preached in Westminster Chapel  
on Sunday evening, 26th May, 1968.*

'Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord:

'And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it.

'In that day shall the fair virgins and young men faint for thirst.

'They that swear by the sin of Samaria, and say, Thy god, O Dan, liveth; and, The manner of Beer-sheba liveth; even they shall fall, and never rise up again.' Amos 8 : 11-14.

'I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.' God speaks not only to individuals but God speaks also to nations. As you read through the Scriptures, both in the Old and the New Testament, you find again and again a prophetic word spoken to nations. Now I know that many of the messages are directed to one particular nation and to a special nation at that; a nation with a unique destiny, a nation with a unique calling—the nation of Israel, and obviously one cannot simply take what God said to Israel and apply it to our nation today. But when you go to the Scripture you find that God not only speaks to Israel, He has a word also for other nations and it is to nations as such. You can think of some of the great prophecies of the Old Testament; the prophet Jonah and later on the prophet Nahum, are called to speak a prophetic word from God to Nineveh and to Assyria, the great enemy of Israel. Ezekiel, Isaiah, Jeremiah—all of them have messages concerning the nations, and so also this prophecy of Amos, while it is primarily concerned with the Northern kingdom of Israel, has a more general application. So I believe that this prophecy, and indeed many of these prophecies in the Old Testament, have a very real bearing upon our national situation today. Indeed, as you listen to Amos' message you feel as if he is speaking not to a situation in the eighth century before Christ, but directly to our situation at the present time.

What was the context of Amos' prophecy? What was the situation in which he delivered these great words of judgment from God? He was speaking to a privileged people, to a nation which had known the hand of God upon them for

centuries, and in fact the very origin of the nation had been an act of God. When they were in Egypt centuries before, they had simply been a medley of tribes. They had been exploited and ground down by the Pharaohs. It was God's redeeming act which not only brought them out of Egypt, but constituted them as a people. Their national existence was due to God's grace and goodness, and down through the centuries their preservation as a nation depended on that same gracious providence. They could look back over the centuries and there were many times when it seemed as if the life of the nation must come to an end, but God had graciously intervened and there they were, still in the land.

But it was not merely that they had enjoyed a national continuity over a period of centuries, but they had that which is truly a blessing to any nation, the knowledge of the word of God; they had the Scriptures. For centuries they had had the law of Moses, which God had given to His people. They had the ten commandments, the moral standard by which the individual, the family and the nation could govern its life. They had the inestimable privilege that God had revealed His truth to them. As well as that truth, God had given them men to declare the significance of His revelation. He had given them godly kings, men raised to a position of eminence in the nation and yet realising that their calling was primarily to declare the Kingship of Jehovah. He had given them prophets, men who spoke with authority, men who could say 'thus saith the Lord', and declare God's word to the people. This was a nation that was singularly privileged, but it was a nation that had gone sadly astray.

When they turned their back on Egypt centuries before and when God gave them His word, the word came to them, 'Thou shalt remember all the way the Lord thy God hath led thee; beware, lest thou forget'. But they had forgotten, forgotten God's past mercies, forgotten all that God had done for them and they had turned aside. Idolatry had come in. If you had asked them, 'Do you believe in Jehovah the God of Israel?', they would have said emphatically, 'Yes', but the religion of Jehovah, the pure worship of the Lord of Israel, had been overlaid by idolatrous practices, so that what went on at the shrines in that Northern kingdom was barely recognisable as the worship of the Lord. And with idolatry there had come the inevitable unrighteousness. When a nation turns aside from God, inevitably there comes corruption in national life, and Israel was demonstrating this fact. There was social corruption. There was a lack of concern for other people.

People were too anxious to get rich at any price; the profit motive was the dominant consideration in the land, and if it meant that some people suffered, if it meant that people were impoverished by others becoming affluent, well, so much the worse for them. The person who pushed hard got to the top and that was the only thing that counted. They were prepared indeed to employ sharp practice in business; falsifying the balances by deceit in order that they might gain in further wealth. It was a luxury-loving society. Amos speaks in scathing terms about their wonderfully furnished houses and their provision for every luxury. They were interested in everything that would make life comfortable and pleasant, and yet there was the darker shadow in it all. This wealthy society, this luxury-loving society, had its poor, its exploited, and there was the growth of violence so that the safety of the ordinary citizen was in peril. This was a nation that had turned its back on the things of God. There was immorality, blatant immorality; there was moral perversion. And what made it so much worse was simply this: that there were religious leaders who were prepared to condone the immorality of the day. In fact they were prepared to throw a cloak of ecclesiastical respectability over the foulness that was being perpetrated at the very shrines where men purported to worship the Lord Jehovah.

And I wonder, as I have been speaking, have you been thinking, 'Is he speaking about Israel in the eighth century B.C. or is he speaking about Britain in the twentieth century A.D.?' because so much of what Amos describes in these pages is applicable to our own situation. Here is the affluent society. Here is a situation where people are concerned with money and the things which money can buy. Here is a nation where everything is in terms of prosperity and luxury as standards of living rise higher and higher. Here is a nation in which pandering to covetousness and cupidity has become a dominant factor, so that we are now teetering on the brink of having a national lottery, capitalising on what seems to be running right through national life, this desire to possess, to have, to enjoy, even if other people may suffer in the process. The affluent society—yes, and the permissive society. Read of the immorality in Israel, and think of the immorality that abounds around us. The standards of the ten commandments flouted? No, we have moved beyond the stage of their being flouted, they are now dismissed as being irrelevant. Chastity? It is laughed out of court and is no longer a matter for consideration. Wherever you turn you find a steady decline, moral perversion of every kind is being introduced, and the sad

situation has been reached when the laws of the land are beginning to legalise things which are an abomination in the sight of God. This is twentieth century Britain, and like Israel, we have our false prophets. We have the 'new theology' which instead of standing and rebuking the foulness of the day, is with its situational ethics condoning a great deal of what goes on. The 'new theology' says 'In the name of love'; the Bible says 'In the name of lust'. This is our situation. Amos? A voice in the remote distance, speaking to a nation centuries ago? No, I believe this is the word of the living God for our own immediate situation.

Amos is speaking about judgment. It is not fashionable to talk about judgment in these days, and yet I believe that it is a word that needs to be thundered out in this land. Our nation needs to hear that we are under the judgment of God Almighty, and unless there is a marked turning back to God, one can only see that judgment becoming even more severe in the years ahead. Amos speaks of a God who is still on the throne. These people imagined that they could manipulate religion to suit their own convenience. They imagined that they could go their own way and plan their own future, that they could dismiss the things of God as of no account. But God remains supreme and God always is supreme. God reigns. He is the sovereign Lord God Almighty. Men may imagine they can dethrone Him, they may imagine that they can dismiss Him; they can ignore and forget Him, but inevitably they discover that the Lord remains the sovereign Judge.

This is so in the life of the individual. Do you remember Pharaoh in the Old Testament? You get two commentaries upon Pharaoh. On the one side Pharaoh hardened his heart, he refused to listen to the word that God was speaking through Moses and Aaron; but there is the other comment, 'God hardened Pharaoh's heart'. On the one side there is this rejection, this refusal to accept the word of God, and on the other side God acts as the Judge and He brings a judicial hardening upon Pharaoh's heart, so that this man who has refused reaches the point where he is incapable of receiving. He has turned a deaf ear to the word of God and now God gives him a spirit of stupor so that he can neither understand nor receive the word that is being spoken. Pharaoh hardening his heart moves to the point where the Judge acts and Pharaoh can no longer hear. As the apostle Paul, in a very solemn chapter in the epistle to the Romans, comments on this whole situation: 'He has mercy on whom He will have mercy and whom He will He hardens'. We must never imagine that God

Almighty is waiting for our approval. God Almighty cannot be summoned just when we choose to summon Him. Some people imagine that Jesus Christ is pathetically waiting for them to confer their favour upon Him, and if we refuse to confer our favour He retreats rather like a defeated parliamentary candidate in an election. Nothing could be further from the truth! This is the sovereign God, and if He saves us it is by His amazing grace. If Christ stoops to us in our need, it is infinite condescension and we need to beware lest we try to assert our sovereignty, and by rejecting the word or ignoring the word, we find to our eternal loss that we are dealing with the Judge of all the earth.

God is Judge in His church. Church history is a constant reminder that while God uses churches to bring blessing to men, God is never tied to the churches which He uses. There may come a time when God who has blessed and used a church, may remove that church. Turn to the opening chapters of the book of Revelation. Here were churches where the gospel had been preached, where men and women had come to know the Saviour, where the Scriptures were read, where worship was offered on the Lord's Day, and yet the Lord of the church is speaking in solemn tones and He says, 'I will remove your lampstand. You are intended to be a light, and if you fail to show forth that light, I am prepared to act in judgment upon you'. Some people seem to think that the failure of the church is synonymous with the failure of God, as if a failing church is a comment on the fact that God cannot deal with the situation. A failing church may indeed be the demonstration that God is on the Throne, that God is not tied to His instruments, that God can deal with a church and remove that church.

There are areas of the world which have been described as lands of vanished churches. North Africa, for example, where for centuries Islam has been established. The churches of that area produced some of the great men of the early centuries; men like Tertullian, men like Augustine, two of the greatest theologians in the history of the church. They were the product of those North African churches, but those same churches failed to rise to their day of opportunity. They failed to reach out to the pagan tribes in the interior. They were too busy with their ecclesiastical squabbles, and God in judgment removed them. There are churches in this land where the gospel was once faithfully preached and they have ceased to be churches at all in any real sense. You would not need to go very far from this building before you would find buildings

where once the gospel of Jesus Christ and Him crucified was the theme and the preaching was in demonstration of the Spirit and power, and yet quite clearly that gospel is no longer being preached. In fact the very fundamentals of that gospel are being denied and derided and God has clearly removed the lampstand. We need to beware. God, I say, is never tied to His instruments. God raises a church and God uses that church as a means of great blessing, but we do well to tremble and realise that we are always dependent upon the continuing mercy of God.

The same thing is true of a nation. God may bless a nation in many ways; God may pour out His benefits upon a particular people. He may do as He has done for us. He may give us, as a nation, the word of God. This has been the amazing privilege of this land, that for centuries we have had the Bible in our own mother tongue so that anyone may buy a Bible and read there the word of salvation. Down the centuries He has given us, in this land, men of God who have preached that word and have written upon that word. But the God who has blessed is the God who can equally cast aside a nation. He has used this nation in past years. From our shores have gone out thousands of men and women to take the gospel to the far ends of the earth. But God is not tied to our nation. It may be that unless there is repentance God will set us aside completely. God was on the throne when He led Israel out of Egypt, when they went triumphantly through the Red Sea, when the hosts of Egypt were overwhelmed. God was demonstrating His sovereignty then, but He was demonstrating His sovereignty just the same when that same nation of Israel stumbled out of their shattered capital and went those weary miles into exile in Babylon. God was sovereign when He raised up Imperial Rome as an instrument to chasten the Jews in 70 A.D., when the Roman legions marched into Jerusalem. It was a word of judgment, a word that had been spoken by Jesus Christ Himself. But God was still the reigning King when the barbarians were pouring across the Alps into Italy, into proud Imperial Rome itself in the fifth century, crushing the city and smashing the empire. God is the God of the nations. He raises up a nation for His own purposes and He can as easily set aside a nation. 'The Lord is King'; we have already sung that hymn this evening, and how true it is. The Lord is King. He is the Lord of hosts, the God of the nations, the God of history. We do well to realise that when we come before such a God, we should come 'with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire'.

Now what is this judgment? Well, Amos has already spoken about different aspects of the judgment. There were economic troubles in the land, and he says these were a token of God's displeasure. Our tragedy today is that in all the economic malaise of the nation, solutions are sought here and solutions are sought there, and very few seem to realise that the real heart of the trouble is not in the economic realm at all, it is in the moral and the spiritual realm. This is not to say that there are not economic problems which have to be met with economic solutions; but there is a moral problem. The very heart of the nation is corrupt and that is why every economic solution which is produced fails to meet the situation. But this was not the most devastating judgment. Amos speaks here of this judgment, 'I will send a famine upon the land'. Famine? The very word would put horror into the heart of any Israelite. Famine? It meant starvation, it meant disaster. But God is speaking of a different kind of famine: 'not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the word of God'. A decline in preaching, this is a judgment upon any nation.

Now someone may say, 'But this is a preacher speaking; this is the voice of the professional; this is the man who preaches the word and is finding little response, so inevitably he reacts and preaches words of judgment upon an unresponsive congregation'. Is that the kind of man Amos was? Listen to him earlier in his prophecy. Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, the typical ecclesiastic, is talking to Amos and he is saying that Amos is just prophesying for what he can get out of it. And Amos replies, 'I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son, but I was a herdman and a gatherer of sycamore fruits, and the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel'. Any preacher who truly preaches the word of God is not there to rehearse his religious opinions, to comment on the contemporary situation, and certainly not to demonstrate his own eloquence or his own learning. He is there because God has laid hold upon him, because God has sent him, because God has given him a word which he must deliver. Listen to Jeremiah: 'When I would be silent, the word was like a fire in my bones and I could not restrain, I had to speak'. Listen to the apostle Paul: 'Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel'. The true preacher of the word of God is a man who has been put in trust with a message and, like Ezekiel, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear, this word must be declared. Amos was no time server, he was not interested in popular esteem, he was

not concerned about people's opinions of him as a prophet or a preacher. He must give the word of God and he says, 'A sure indication of the state of spiritual decline in the land and of God's withdrawal of His blessing, will be the decline of the prophetic word; there will be a famine of hearing the words of the Lord'.

In days of blessing in the church of Christ, the preaching of the word has always been at the very centre of the church's life. In days of spiritual decline, preaching has become a secondary consideration. Ritual or human wisdom, or in our modern situation, entertainment, takes the place of preaching. But when God proposes to do something in His church, and through His church in the nation, He raises up preachers, and it is through the preaching of the word that things are accomplished in His name. Go back four centuries to when England was slumbering spiritually, beset by superstition and error. God raised up Hugh Latimer, one of the greatest preachers ever to use Anglo-Saxon. He goes out to preach the reconciling grace of God and to stir the nation. Go back two centuries and in this city, someone visiting the pulpits and going round the churches, said he could not find anything that seemed to be distinctively Christian. No wonder that both London and the land were in such an immoral condition. But God raised up preachers—yes, there were the great preachers like George Whitefield and John Wesley, but there were many, many others, raised up all over the country to preach the word; and it was through the preaching of the word that God brought revival to the churches and blessing to the nation.

When God purposes to judge a people He withdraws from them this blessing of the preaching of the gospel. 'I will send a famine, a famine of hearing the word of God'; and today we are moving into such famine conditions. If you read any of the theological journals or some of the Christian papers, you will find that preaching is being questioned. Should a man stand up and declaim like this? Is this the way the truth of God is to be conveyed? There is a tendency to substitute human wisdom for the declaration of the word of God—in fact, it is no longer human wisdom that is being offered, it is human doubt. If you listen to some of the interviews on television when the theologians get together, it seems to be a competition as to who is in the greatest confusion and who has the least to say. We need a return to prophetic preaching, a declaration of the truth of God. Yes, but evangelicals are by no means immune from the present malaise. They claim to believe in the importance of the preaching of the word, but in

their practice they deny the very thing they stand for, and they seem to have decided that preaching is not sufficient but it must be augmented by all the new paraphernalia which is being brought in in order to bring people in, to make them receptive, to condition them for whatever response is being required. We need to realise that all this speaks of the judgment of God. God says, 'Thus I will judge a nation, I will remove from them the testimony, the preaching of the word'.

You can see some of the results here: 'They shall wander from sea to sea, from the north even to the east'. Wandering, without any real sense of direction. There is a sense of aimlessness about it all. Here is a people no longer hearing the word of God, no longer listening to the testimony from heaven, and as a result the whole of national life has lost any real direction. Are we in that situation? Yes, I believe we are. I believe that is why there is a great deal of cynicism about politics and political life and it is a very serious matter when this happens in a democracy. Why is there the slump even in people taking the trouble to go out and vote? Why is there this general attitude which says, 'It will just be the same whatever party is in power'? There is a sense of a nation drifting they know not where. There is no real sense of direction among us. People are wandering here and there, because there is no clear word from the Lord. God, I believe, is speaking to our nation, speaking through His word, speaking although men seem so slow to hear. 'They run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord and they shall not find it.' There are many people who are running to and fro, looking for a word, wanting to find something that will meet their need. This day of spiritual decline is significantly the day of the emergence of the cults of all kinds. Wherever you turn you find their emissaries distributing their literature, establishing their centres, trying to woo people to accept their particular position. There is the resurgence of spiritualism, which always appears at a time of spiritual decline. There is a resurgence of witchcraft. There is an interest in astrology. All these things are simply tokens of a people who know not where the truth is to be found. God says, 'I will send a famine in the land', and when that famine comes, the nation shall simply be aimless, without any direction, without any purpose, for there is only One who can give purpose, and that is God Himself. And there is only one way in which that word comes—it is through the preaching of His truth.

Amos speaks of the consequences. He speaks about the young people of the nation, 'In that day shall the fair virgins

and the young men faint for thirst'. Why does he speak about the young of the nation? Well, for one thing, the old had their memories; they had memories of earlier days when God had blessed, they had memories of the word which God had spoken in the past. But the young people who were growing up all around Amos, were growing up in this atmosphere, in this tainted environment, and they were not hearing the word of God. Their thinking and their living were being conditioned by the atmosphere they breathed. There is another reason surely why Amos speaks about the youth of the day. The youth in any period are the nation of tomorrow. Our young people today will be the parents in a few years' time. They will be the leaders of the nation; and when the youth of a nation is corrupted, when the youth of a nation is tainted by the loss of moral standard in the community, inevitably the corruption spreads into the very heart of national life. 'Young people,' he says, 'fainting for thirst.' They are wanting something, desperately wanting something, but not finding; they are desperately wanting satisfaction, searching here and there for it, and still not finding. If you know anything of young people today I am sure you will agree with me that they are desperately wanting something. Why is there student unrest—not simply in America and France, but in our own country? It may not have reached the proportions of France; it may not have exploded into violence, but I believe there is a simmering unrest, and it is because many young people feel that this society offers them nothing. It offers them luxury, it offers them security, it offers them money, but you cannot continue to offer these things and really offer satisfaction. So many young people today feel the utter aimlessness and pointlessness of the whole thing. Is that not why many of them are turning to drugs, because they are looking beyond this present structure of society, and they feel that the whole thing has failed them? There seems to be no future and so they are turning this way and that. 'This,' says Amos, 'is the condition of a land when the word of God is no longer sounding clearly.'

He takes you one final step and in the closing statements of the chapter he speaks about the ultimate disintegration of the whole culture and the whole civilisation. Idolatry? Yes, but idolatry with its accompanying unrighteousness reaches its ultimate ending when the whole thing collapses because of its own inner corruption. When the Roman Empire fell it was not simply because the invading tribes from central Europe proved too strong for the defences of Italy and of Rome. The Roman Empire collapsed really by virtue of its own moral rotteness.

There was no longer any moral fibre and they were not fit to resist the hardy barbarians who poured in across the Alps. And I believe our society is in danger of disintegrating because of the moral corruption that is eating the very heart out of our nation. When Amos prophesied he spoke a word concerning what was still in the future. God says, 'I will send a famine upon the land, a famine of hearing the words of the Lord', but that future famine had not yet become a reality. After all, Amos' voice was still sounding; Hosea was still preaching; and the famine, the cessation of the preaching was still in the future. The tragedy was that so few listened to Amos, so few responded to his warning. They went on and on until finally judgment fell upon Israel; the Assyrians came in and the nation was carried into exile. They had been warned but they failed to listen to the word of warning.

I have been speaking tonight about national judgment and that judgment is not yet full. There are, I believe, many signs in the land of God's judgment upon us as a nation. Final judgment, final disaster may yet be in the future, but I believe God is speaking a word of warning. This is not a God with whom we can trifle. This is not a message that we can treat with contempt. When God speaks we do well to give heed. If a man voices his opinions and his religious theories, obviously we can consider them and we can dismiss them. But when God speaks, the God who 'now commands all men everywhere to repent', we do well to give heed. Someone has doubtless listened to the gospel of the grace of God being proclaimed from this pulpit on many occasions. You have heard Christ and Him crucified being set forth as the only Saviour for sinners, the only One who can bring men to God, the only One who can give hope for time and eternity. It may be you have thought of this, considered it, and perhaps in the indefinite future you think you will probably receive it. I say, beware; you have no guarantee that there will be that future. The God who hardened Pharaoh's heart in face of his rejection is still the God who deals with men and women. The God who gave a spirit of stupor, as Paul calls it in Romans, is still the God who deals with men when they trifle with His gospel, and leaves them in their sin and leaves them in their ignorance. I say to any such, 'Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return unto the Lord and He will have mercy upon him and to our God for He will abundantly pardon'. I cannot say to you, 'Well, leave it until later; consider it as a possibility for the

future'. I say, 'Now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation'. I believe tonight I preach under the shadow of impending judgment. The famine of hearing the word of the Lord begins slowly. It may begin in some heart here tonight. It may be the last time you will hear this word preached. It may be that someone is so annoyed, so irritated that they will go away and say, 'I do not want to hear that kind of preaching again'. I say, beware lest 'Christ crucified', the message which speaks of the cleansing blood of the Lamb of God, becomes so much a matter of irritation that you reject it and are rejected by God.

To those of you who know the Saviour, those of you who are concerned about the state of the land, those of you who are burdened at heart about the nation's life, and about the young people of our nation, what is the message? Are we to stand like so many, feeling that the situation is beyond us? No, the God who spoke through Amos was thundering words of judgment, but really they were words of mercy. Here were warnings coupled with intreaty. God was denouncing sin, God was speaking of judgment in order that men might be brought to their senses and brought to seek the Lord. I say, judgment has not yet finally fallen upon our land. We still have an open Bible. We still have freedom to meet together on the Lord's Day for worship and there is still liberty for the preaching of the gospel. We need to praise God for this and we need to pray that God in His mercy may yet avert this judgment which seems to hang so heavily over the land, that God will turn back our nation to Himself. 'Righteousness exalteth a nation'; but righteousness can only come from one source, from the Righteous One, Jesus Christ Himself. We need to pray that God in His great mercy and grace, in spite of our sin, in spite of our backslidings and our wanderings, our coldness and our deadness, that God will yet visit His church. We need to pray that He will come in such mighty power that churches where the gospel is still being preached may no longer be merely citadels for the orthodox but may become centres from which men and women will go out to storm the centres of sin and of darkness in this city and this land; that they may point men and women and young people to Jesus Christ the Saviour, the all-sufficient Saviour, the One of whom we have been singing this evening, 'Worthy O Lamb of God art Thou, that every knee to Thee should bow'.

# Doctrinal Definitions

## THE ATONING WORK OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

### I.

P. TUCKER

Throughout His entire life, the Lord Jesus Christ was an incessant worker. We remember His words, 'My Father worketh hitherto and I work'; 'I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day, the night cometh when no man can work'. We think of His work as a soul-winner. We think of His deeds as a benefactor, when He healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, and raised the dead. We think of His labours as a preacher and teacher. Yet there was another kind of work which in a sense constitutes the supreme work and mission of the Lord Jesus Christ. His death upon the cross, and all that results from that death, constitute the supreme work, the work for which He came into this world. We speak of the atonement as the work of Christ because the atonement was something accomplished: i.e., the death of the Lord Jesus was not accidental, it was not something unexpected that overtook Him at the age of 33. Had He chosen, He could have avoided the way of the cross, but He deliberately chose that way. We speak also of the atonement as the work of Christ because of all the benefits that spring from it: our reconciliation with God; our forgiveness of sins; our justification before the Father; and possession of eternal life. There is no blessing that comes to the believer which does not spring directly from the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### I. THE UNIQUE IMPORTANCE OF CHRIST'S DEATH.

Our Lord differs from any other man in this matter, that the thing of pre-eminent importance in relation to the Lord Jesus is His death. Now the thing that matters where the ordinary man is concerned is his life. As soon as a man dies, his usefulness on earth ceases. And yet here is the Lord Jesus in the full vigour of His manhood, 33 years of age, surrendering His life on the cross and crying triumphantly, 'It is finished'. A great cry of victory and of achievement. He had accomplished the very thing which He came into the world to do. In His case it was accomplished not so much through His life, though that is important, but primarily and principally through His atoning death upon the cross. There are several reasons why the death of the Lord Jesus Christ was so important.

1. *Because it is foretold and foreshadowed in the Old Testament.*

This doctrine of the atonement runs right through the Old Testament like a scarlet line. The cross pervades all Scripture.

(a) *The historical books prove its necessity.* See Gen. 3, where we have the historic account of the fall of man. Some people say that it does not really matter whether you believe the early chapters of Genesis so long as you believe in the atoning work of Jesus Christ. My answer is very simply that you cannot begin to appreciate the nature of the atonement unless you know the reason for the atonement, unless you know why it is necessary for man to be reconciled to God. And here is man in sin. Here also we have the first prophecy concerning the atonement, see vv. 14, 15. There is as much Gospel in Gen. 3 : 15 as there is in John 3 : 16. The seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head. The prediction is that the Devil would be finally defeated and overcome by the Seed of the woman. But the Lord Jesus could not accomplish this triumph over the powers of darkness without Himself suffering. In chapter 4 of Genesis, we have Abel bringing the blood sacrifice, the substitute offered that the sinner might be justified and accepted. In Gen. 22 we have the account of Abraham on Mount Moriah, note v. 13. Here was an offering provided in the stead of Isaac, but it is just a foreshadowing of the substitutionary work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

(b) *The priestly books pre-intimate its sacrifices.* In Leviticus we have the great system of offerings, the Levitical priesthood, the Tabernacle with all its crimson ritual, the brazen altar where the offering could be brought by the worshipper, the Holy of Holies where on the day of atonement the High Priest went in and made expiation for his own sins and then for the sins of the whole people.

(c) *The Psalms portray the experiences of Calvary.* In the Psalms we see more into the heart of the Lord Jesus than we do in the account given in the Gospels because we are taken deeper into the experiences somehow. Take Psalm 22 : 1, 7, 8, 14, 16. Whereas this Psalm has a first reference to the immediate circumstances of David, it has this deeper prophetic element that was fulfilled in the death and sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Turn to Psalm 40 : 68. The writer to the Hebrews in chapter 10 : 7, takes up that very quotation and applies it to the mission and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. So there is not a sacrifice in the whole created realm of this world that was adequate for the demands of God's righteousness and so the Lord Jesus comes as that sacrifice.

Again in Psalm 41 : 9. David is writing of his own experience, but it has a deeper meaning, for it refers to the betrayal of the Lord Jesus by Judas Iscariot, for we find our Lord in the upper room quoting this reference and speaking of the act of Judas as a fulfilment of Scripture.

(d) *The prophetic books foretell its sufferings.* They tell of the suffering of Christ and of the glory that should follow. Think of Isa. 53; Lam. 1 : 12; Dan. 9 : 26; Zech. 13 : 7. See also Luke 24 : 20, 25, 27.

2. *It is prominent in the New Testament.*

The last three days of our Lord's earthly life occupy some twenty-eight pages in the Gospel records, quite out of proportion to everything else that is recorded concerning Christ. This is the one thing which the writers emphasise, and every detail is brought into prominence. When we turn to the Epistles we notice something very strange. The great messengers of Christ are taken up primarily with the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is not one of His miracles that I can find in any of the Epistles. They hardly record any of His teachings, or sayings. But they do again and again emphasise His death and His resurrection. And when we come to the last book of the Bible, we find that the Lamb is the centre of Heaven's glory and Heaven's worship.

3. *It is the chief purpose of the Incarnation.*

Jesus Christ did not become man as an end in itself, but as a means to an end, and that end was His atoning death upon the cross. See Mark 10 : 45; Heb. 2 : 14-15, 9 : 26; 1 John 3 : 5.

4. *It is the foundation theme of the Gospel.*

The cross is essential to Christianity. This makes the Gospel different from any other religion. Others rely on the teaching of their founders and not upon their death. When the Lord Jesus Christ came to His cross, it was a triumph. In 1 Cor. 15 : 1-4, Paul gives the epitome of the Gospel. Note that the first thing he told them was that 'Christ died for our sins'. Chronologically that is not the first thing in the Gospel, but theologically and foundationally His death comes first. This is essential for our faith and for our salvation. He died for our sins in order that we might not have to die for them. That is why the Gospel is such good news.

## II. THE UNIQUE NATURE OF OUR LORD'S SUFFERINGS.

There is a very real sense in which our Lord Jesus suffered throughout His entire life. He is spoken of in Isaiah 53 as 'a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief', but we must not confuse the sufferings of our Lord's life with those of His

death. The sufferings of His life were preparatory, but the sufferings of His death were different both in quality and in purpose from those of His life. The sufferings of His life can be summed up under three headings:

1. *The were sufferings which were due to His character.*

He was holy and harmless and undefiled and separate from sinners, and found Himself in the presence of uncleanness and moral imperfection and the corruption of fallen humanity. Therefore His holy soul recoiled at the sins of men. But that suffering was not a vicarious suffering.

2. *There were sufferings due to His compassion.*

Again and again we read that Jesus was moved with compassion. When Jesus was moved with compassion He was suffering with that soul. See Matt. 8 : 16-17. Therefore, when we read of our Lord carrying and bearing sickness it means that He took them on His heart. He carried them in a sympathetic identification with the sufferer, but there was nothing substitutionary about that kind of ministry.

3. *The suffering due to anticipation of the cross.*

Remember John 12 : 27, and the Garden of Gethsemane. All these things belong to His life suffering. But on the cross uniquely He is our Substitute. There uniquely He is paying the penalty of sin; there uniquely He is offering Himself as 'the one sacrifice for sins for ever'.

It is therefore the clear teaching of the New Testament that our Lord's sufferings upon the cross were substitutionary and vicarious since He acts as our Redeemer and as our Representative.

*(To be continued)*

*None other doctrine does establish faith or make men humble and thankful unto God. And finally, that none other doctrine makes man careful to obey God according to His commandments, but that doctrine only which so spoils man of all power and virtue, that no portion of his salvation consists within himself; to the end that the whole praise of redemption may be referred to Christ Jesus alone.—JOHN KNOX.*

# MARY

F. H. CHAPLIN

Because the Papacy has over-rated the mother of Jesus even to the point of encouraging idolatry, those who are not joined to this system have all too sadly negligently relegated her to the background of Christian profession and research. The Scriptures have given such information concerning her as is not only of great value for edification, but also for a safeguard against any possible misrepresentation of such a person even to the border of worshipping her to serve unworthy purposes.

The whole subject would seem to divide itself into three parts.

- A. Thoughts on the ancestry, life and character of Mary, the mother of the Lord Jesus.
- B. Thoughts upon the person of Mary as presented by the Papacy.
- C. Thoughts upon the conclusions of some who deny the 'Virgin birth' of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## THE ANCESTRY OF MARY.

The ancestry of Mary as distinct from that of Joseph is apparent when reference is made to the genealogies recorded in Matthew and Luke. Matthew traces the royal line of Joseph through Jacob his father, back to Solomon and David, and so back to Abraham; Luke traces the human line of Mary through her father Heli (Joseph's father in law) by quite a different line, back through Nathan to David and so on much further back to Adam whom God created, and Mary also through him, Mary was therefore entirely and only human.

That two genealogies were desirable and necessary and therefore set forth in the New Testament reveal the wisdom of God as to the truth and the reality of the Divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures; the purpose being, on the one hand, to show that through Joseph the descent came through the *line of the kings* from David according to God's promise; and that through Mary *after the flesh* the Messiah would come through Nathan and David; then on the other hand to show the power and faithfulness of God in fulfilling the promise given in the Garden of Eden, "The Lord said unto to serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Genesis 3 : 14-15.)

That the circumstances in which this notable promise of

God to Eve are historical and not merely 'Jewish legend' according to the 'modernist' is demonstrated—at any rate by those who accept the certain knowledge and integrity of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Apostle Paul: and the Apostle Jude—by their references to this matter.

The Lord Jesus Christ said 'Have ye not read that He Who made them at the beginning, made them male and female, and God said "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and they twain shall be one flesh"? Wherefore they are no more twain but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.' (Matthew 9 : 3-6.) From whence did He get this but from Genesis 2 : 23-24? this is also recorded in Mark's Gospel (chapter 10 : 6-9).

This great statement is repeated by Paul in the Epistle to the Ephesians (ch. 5 : 31), the Apostle believing in the genuine history of Genesis chapters 1-3 emphasizes its truth also by writing to Timothy 'For Adam was first formed (note—not "born") then Eve, and Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, was in the transgression' (1 Timothy 2 : 13-14) and again to the Corinthian Church Paul writes 'But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve by his subtlety so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.' (2 Corinthians 11 : 3.) Then finally as to Paul's testimony, we read in his letter to the Roman Church—'Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of Him Who was to come.' (Romans 5 : 24.) Now to connect a mythical Adam to a real Moses in a line of descent would be quite incongruous, especially coming from the Apostle Paul; and further, it may be added, the Jews would not be likely to trace back their father Abraham to a mythological Adam. (1 Chron. 1 : 1-28.)

Leaving Paul we now have the reference to Genesis 5 : 22, where in his Epistle (verse 14) *Jude* writes—'And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, etc.' We find that in Genesis 5 : 19, counting backwards, and also in 1 Chron. 1 : 1-28 we find this statement to be correct.

From some source *Job* also had knowledge both of the being and transgression of Adam when he said 'If I cover my sin as Adam by hiding my iniquity in my bosom.' (Job 31 : 33.)

#### THE LIFE OF MARY.

Having now established the facts of Genesis chapters 1, 2, 3 in conjunction with Mary's genealogy, the first event in her life recorded in Scripture can now be considered by referring to Luke 1 : 26-38.

In verse 26 it is noted that it was the sixth month with Elizabeth, which is confirmed by the angel in verse 36, and that it was now to Nazareth of Galilee that Gabriel was sent to Mary. It was the angel Gabriel who talked to Daniel over five hundred years before away in Babylon. (Dan. 8.) So it is very evident that neither time nor space affect the activities of those in the world of spirits, or indeed, the Lord God Himself.

It is also of importance to notice that the virgin espoused, or engaged, to Joseph is said by the angel to be blessed *among*, not *above*, women; and that Mary's anxiety and reflection upon what the Angel said to her was characteristic of her, as two other instances given in chapter 2, vv. 19 and 51 (to be referred to later) prove.

Mary's hesitancy in accepting the announcement of the Angel (v. 34) lay in the fact that she was only engaged, or espoused—not married to Joseph. This hesitancy was quickly dispersed by what the Angel told her as to the working of God the Holy Spirit upon her in due course that she might give birth to a son. We observe no doubt as to whether the child would be a son, and so they are to give Him the name Jesus, as recorded in Matthew's Gospel—'for He shall save His people from their sins' (1 : 21).

The announcement of the kind of child, and the manner of His coming, reveals a message of the utmost solemnity and importance. His birth will be under the direct authority and working of the Lord God Himself, hence the reference to the Angel's knowledge of the condition of Mary's cousin, Elizabeth (v. 36), and that God is not necessarily bound by the laws of nature, especially when fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah that 'a virgin, or maiden, shall be with child and bring forth a son' (Isaiah 7 : 14). Such considerations would have completely convinced Mary of the integrity of the Angel and so enabled her to say, 'Behold, the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word'.

This strong act of faith on the part of this excellent and gracious young woman lends thought to some other aspects of this exceptional character; three serious reactions would have arisen in her mind because of the likely discrediting of her explanations by her friends and others. First, her own chastity. Second, her betrothed husband's attitude (this is very clearly set forth in Matthew's Gospel, 1 : 18-25). Third, her position in the eyes of the Law of Moses (Deut. 22 : 21): 'Then shall they bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house; and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she

die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father's house, so shall ye put evil away from among you'. Even in the face of this, her trust in God was so great that He would stand by her, she became completely willing to submit herself to His will and goodness.

After the *heavenly* announcement to Mary comes the *human*, which must have deeply impressed itself upon her mind to confirm her that the acquiescence of her will to the Divine word had been the right and the realistic course to take. So we learn that Mary went to the hill country of Judea in order to visit her cousin Elizabeth, from whom she learned the words recorded in Luke's Gospel (1 : 42-45), and in response to which we have Mary's own remarkable words in Luke 1 : 46-55.

These words of Mary reveal some very interesting and instructive matters. Notwithstanding the trend of religious instruction by the scribes and pharisees in the way of tradition and drawing away from the Word of God (see the Lord's comment upon this at a later date recorded by Matthew 15 : 6, 'Thus have ye made the Word of God of none effect by your tradition'), she, but a rural maid and a native of *Nazareth*, had taken a holy pleasure in the study of the Word of God. She certainly would have heard it read in the synagogue, 'For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach Him, being read in their synagogues every Sabbath day' (Acts 15 : 21). She would have followed up its teaching in other ways. This knowledge clearly shows itself by her reference to the Old Testament, for she joins in the spirit of praise with Hannah, the mother of Samuel (1 Samuel 2 : 1), also with David in many of his psalms of praise; even of Habakkuk, when he said of God that 'He is the God of his salvation' (3 : 18)—compare with vv. 46, 47.

The spirit of prophecy, also, that was upon her was truly remarkable, for in verse 48 she says, 'For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed'. Men have reflected, from time to time, ever since upon her life and character down to today, and have come to the just conclusion that she was blest indeed; further, when she reflects upon what would take place in her, she attributes it to the power and holiness of her Creator (v. 49), and not only does she ascribe power and holiness to the Lord, but mercy also to those who fear Him from generation to generation so that men may have confidence that needed mercy is still available. She speaks of the strength of the Lord; His knowledge of men's hearts; His over-ruling providence of men, and His faithfulness in fulfilling His word

to Abraham, and especially in His relationship to the promise of the Messiah, of whom she would be the mother according to the flesh—see Paul's epistle to the Galatians (3 : 16), 'Now to Abraham and to his seed were the promises made. He saith not "and to seeds", as of many: but as of one, "And to thy seed", which is Christ'.

#### THE BIRTH OF JESUS.

The next event for consideration is the record of the circumstances and birth of Jesus Christ as recorded in the Gospel of Luke (2 : 1-7). What is recorded in the Gospel of Matthew in chapter 2 did not take place until at least a month later, which will be shown when that chapter comes under consideration. The coincidences of the birth of Jesus which took place at Bethlehem rather than at Nazareth are very striking, and more so because of the words of Micah (5 : 2), 'But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me who is to be ruler in Israel: whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting'. The Roman authorities, under Caesar Augustus, had decreed that this taxing, or enrolment, should take place just at this juncture in the life of Mary, although Roman law had decreed it earlier. The circumstances of the great and of the humble coalesced in the Divine foreknowledge and purpose that the Son of God should first breathe, as a man, the air of Bethlehem, the city where David dwelt, in fulfilment of this prophecy of Micah made some seven and a half centuries before. A few weeks, or even days, more or less in Mary's life would have made all the difference as to this great purpose of God, and the same would have been the case had the *execution* of the decree been delayed or forwarded; but that could not be—life's details are in Divine hands.

The great upset of their normal lives in having to journey from one place to another in obedience to this decree would naturally have created anxiety in the minds of Mary and Joseph. The journey could not be hurried, neither must it be delayed—it was compulsory; and what must have been her consternation on reaching Bethlehem that no proper accommodation was available for her in the inn, and that all that could be done was to go to a near-by stable and to place her infant son in a manger. What a long and tedious journey it would have been in those days—some seventy miles. Then, on arrival, there was the further anxiety of having to accept uncongenial accommodation. All this would, no doubt, have been a very natural and acute trial of Mary's faith in God, from whom she had received such promising and wonderful

news concerning herself and her son. How often is true faith in God severely tested! But Mary had honoured God's faithfulness by saying to the messenger from God, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word'.

That God will honour those who honour Him, the following events clearly show. 'And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night, and lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid, and the Angel said unto them, "Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people, for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord; and this shall be a sign unto you, ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger"; and suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good-will toward men", and it came to pass as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, "Let us now go even into Bethlehem and see this thing that is come to pass which the Lord hath made known unto us". And they came with haste and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger; and when they had seen it they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child; and all that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the angels; but Mary kept all those things and pondered them in her heart; and the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, as it was told them.' (Luke 2 : 8-20.)

Though this vision to the shepherds and of their subsequent action had primarily to do with the Son of Mary, they reveal several important matters in relation to Mary herself. The candour of a true historian is very valuable when he refers to the natural emotions of the people who are involved in the incident that he relates, and this is not infrequently the case in Holy Scripture. These shepherds were truly afraid of what was happening, as they might well be—and there were several of them, for it was not just the imagination of one of them. It was only when they were bidden not to fear that their minds were calm enough to listen to what was said to them, and to see and hear the host of angels following up the information given them by one of the angels. This rang so true, though supernatural, as to prevail with them to go to Bethlehem (doubtless to leave some of their company behind to guard the

sheep), and there prove for themselves the truth of the message given to them. Their information was received by all those about Mary with wonder—but what must it have meant to Mary herself after the arduous journey at such a time and the natural vexation that must have been felt upon arrival to find no suitable accommodation? Her tried faith must have felt much consolation at the goodness of God from what she heard from the mouth of the shepherds. She had already heard from the mouth of the angel Gabriel the words, 'Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins', and now 'He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord shall give Him the throne of His father David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob, and of His kingdom there shall be no end' (Luke 1 : 31-33). Now the shepherds say, 'For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord'. She had already spoken of God in her song when she was with Elizabeth—'My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour'. But what would she also have thought and felt when these strangers told her they knew where to find her and the Babe, and that the Babe would be lying in a manger! Oh, what compensation to tried faith does the Lord afford to all who really trust in Him!

In verse 19 the Evangelist comments thus: 'But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart'. In a similar way also he writes concerning her in verse 51 of the same chapter. The repetition is striking, for it draws attention to another aspect of the character of this gracious person. The power of reflection is a great gift and of much value through life. It shows a steady and well balanced mind, and certainly prevents a deal of thoughtless speech and conduct, and when this is exercised with pure and sincere motives incalculable good will follow both for the one possessing the gift and for those upon whose behalf it is exercised. In view of Mary's subsequent life, both as to what is recorded in Scripture and what might be expected in the normal course of the life of a busy woman, and a mother of a considerable family, to be endowed with this quality of mind was surely a gift much to be desired.

Finally, as to this vision of the angels: the narration of the events recorded there is confirmed in its integrity by the artless and spontaneous words in the 20th verse, just such as an honourable historian would write—'And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for the things they had heard and seen *as it was told unto them*'. The joy felt from what they had been told had been borne out by what they had actually seen.

(To be continued)

# A PHILISTINE LAMENT

Based on 1 Samuel 4 : 16.

Dagon the fish-god we served that day.  
'Be strong and quit yourselves like men',  
So our leaders urged:  
Afraid lest we fall under the sway  
Of the people of Jehovah.  
Once already our armies had met  
In battle at Aphek, fierce and bloody.  
Then Israel was smitten,  
Great holes torn in her ranks, and yet  
Now we were worried.

Into their camp had come the Ark  
Of the Covenant of Jehovah of Hosts.  
Now their god would fight!  
We sat that night in the cheerless dark  
And cried 'Woe unto us'.

For we had heard of Jehovah's Power,  
How long ago He mocked the Pharaoh;  
Filling the land with plagues,  
Delivering His people in a glorious hour  
Of majesty and might.

But we fought, and Israel was smashed,  
Thirty thousand men were killed,  
And their Ark was taken!  
How our drums and cymbals clashed—  
Dagon ruled triumphant.

Aye! Dagon was our god that day  
And into his temple we took the Ark,  
Setting it by his feet.  
We did not know Jehovah's sway;  
Bitterly we learned.

How can pen or tongue describe  
The scene in Ashdod in those days—  
The frightened howl of the priests  
As they found Dagon lying beside  
The Ark of the Lord Jehovah.

Next day more anguished was their cry—  
Dagon lay on his face on the ground.  
Dagon? A lifeless stump.  
Head and hands removed—and why?  
Jehovah is supreme.

The hand of Jehovah was heavy upon us,  
Striking us down with loathsome plagues.  
Who can stand before Him?  
Seven months He dealt with us thus  
In seven different cities.

Wherever we took the Ark of God  
The plague followed, and grew worse.  
Now we see our folly,  
The foolish thing we did by Ashdod,  
Handling the Ark as we did.

So we sat paying the cost  
In our own bodies for our own wrong,  
Till the Ark was restored.  
Oh—what would it be to suffer His wrath  
From now to the end of the age.

Friend beware. Treat not lightly  
With such a Great and Holy One.  
Fear Him and serve Him,  
For He rules the earth, He is mighty.  
'Tis a terrible thing to fall  
Into the hand of a *living* God.

—P. HALLIHAN.

# BOOK REVIEWS

**THE WAY OF PEACE.** Horatius Bonar. Evangelical Press and Sovereign Grace Union. 106 pp. 4s. 6d.

Bonar wrote from the Calvinistic side of the fence. In this evangelistic booklet, he quoted the Institutes and Luther's works. Man is totally unable to help himself. Chapter 10, 'The Want of Power to Believe', reduces man completely. 'The Holy Spirit is as indispensable to your believing, as is Christ in order to your being pardoned.' Without the Spirit's direct and almighty help, there could be no hope for a totally depraved being at all.'

Yet he was not opposed to evangelism. He co-operated readily with Moody during the Edinburgh campaign, and entertained Sankey in his Manse.

Perhaps his remarks on 'law-work' are too facile. He attempts to show from The Acts that preaching about Jesus broke the hearts of the impenitent, and concludes 'The Gospel was the apostolic hammer for breaking hard hearts in pieces.' He omits to mention that the audiences in Acts had been trained in Old Testament laws, and, as we know, 'through the law comes the knowledge of sin'.

It is, I know, very dangerous to criticise a book for what it does not contain, but in view of the number of 'drop-outs' then and now, it is a pity that an evangelistic booklet should not deal with the other half of the gospel—the reception of the Holy Spirit by faith (as explained, say, in Galatians).

The book is dated by references to lords sending carriages for poor cripples. To this extent it is a period piece, though its exposition of the grace of God is heart warming.

R. N. CASWELL.

**CHRIST MANIFESTED.** John Fletcher. Rushworth Literature Enterprise. 96 pp. 5s.

The saintly John Fletcher stood with Wesley in the 18th century Calvinistic-Arminian controversy. In fact, he resigned as Principal of Trevecca College because of this.

This reprint gives us a series of his letters to a friend troubled by doubts. Dr. Lloyd Jones contributes a foreword and David R. Smith an introduction and an appreciation of Fletcher. I was puzzled by Dr. Lloyd Jones' castigation of a modern 'Corinthian and fanatical interest in spiritual phenomena' which a reading of Fletcher should rectify, though this worthy himself prophesied and saw examples of healing. In fact, are such phenomena and inward knowledge of Christ mutually exclusive?

In his introduction, D. R. Smith goes aside to suite those who preach *decision*. We are now being told that 'even unconvicted persons should *decide* to put their trust in the Saviour'. This sniping is poor stuff and has little or nothing to do with Fletcher. He should be allowed to stand by himself as a messenger to our times. He is of age, let him speak for himself.

The Bible is full of manifestations of God, some inward and spiritual, others 'outward' and 'visible' (at least to the recipient). How much of either may the modern Christian expect? John 14 : 18-24 makes it clear that inward manifestations should be experienced by every Christian. Surprisingly this locus classicus is not emphasized by Fletcher. Outward manifestations (visions and voices) are more difficult. Paul certainly had visionary experiences more than once. Angels delivered apostles from prison. Fire rested on the 120, they spoke other languages, they laid hands on people that they might also receive the Holy Spirit. Is there any good reason for saying that these are excluded nowadays? Some, indeed, claim to be experiencing them. Fletcher's letters, then, written at a time of great revival, will help with a question which exercises a great many who are concerned with the manifestation of living Christianity.

R. N. CASWELL.

**FAIR SUNSHINE.** Jock Purves. The Banner of Truth Trust. 206 pp. 5/-.

In an age of pressures to conformity within the church, accompanied by theological confusion, misunderstanding and bitterness amongst Evangelicals, *Fair Sunshine* is a book to read. Amidst the race for reunion and the courting of Romanism well might we be delivered from a pseudo-protestantism and have again people who will not listen to 'timber-tuned preachers' having no ear or voice for the music of true Protestantism. Perhaps it doesn't measure up to Smellie's 'Men of the Covenant' or other classics, but it is a useful primer for people who have lost touch with the covenanting martyrs and is reasonably priced within the range of most pockets.

Based on magazine articles which were published later in two books, 'Sweet Believing' and 'Fair Sunshine', they appear in a new format under the latter title. As a result there tends to be some repetition, but for all that the story is worth repeating and this is necessary as a basic discipline in teaching.

There are several useful insights into the background of Scottish culture, with comments on R. L. Stevenson, who got

his style from covenanting writers, and on Sir Walter Scott, who, though no reliable judge of their principles, drew some of his most interesting characters from them.

The historical setting is usefully sketched in outline by S. M. Houghton. This is of enormous benefit to those who find it difficult to place the story and to follow it in its ups and downs and meanderings in time. The chronological summary is a helpful tool.

Through twelve chapters we are introduced to James Guthrie, Hugh Mackail, Richard Cameron, David Hackston, John Brown, the Margarets (martyrs of the Solway), John Nisbet, James Renwick, James Mitchell, William Gordon, John Dick, and Donald Cargill. Herein lies the weakness of the book. Too much is attempted in too brief a space, for in addition to the characters mentioned the author meanders to deal with other covenanting worthies and their worthless opponents.

But then he is not so much concerned to deal with men and matrons, maids and boys. It is their faith lived forth which is the theme. 'Their faith held no lifeless opinions.' Not for them the dichotomy of so much modern evangelical piety, which divorces creed from conduct and dialectical theology which separates the historic fact from existential experience.

Not for one moment are we given the impression of plaster saints. These are men and women with all the moods and failures of the common run. Their dark deeds form a fitting backcloth for the radiant foreground of a singing faith. No excuse is offered for those who believed it right to take up the sword against the swordbearer. Rather condemnation, howbeit with sympathetic understanding, is shown for those who indulged in murderous acts of revenge.

But these pages of history shine fairer with the steadfast faith of those who wouldn't bow. They spurned the palace and the mitre, and gladly faced the pillory and the scaffold. They knew full well the honour conferred upon them to be called the children of God. They treasured the experience of new birth and fellowship with the Christ. The privilege of preaching the everlasting gospel was precious and the responsibility burdensome. So Donald Cargill said, mounting the scaffold, 'The Lord knows I go up this ladder with less fear, confusion or perturbation of mind, than ever I entered a pulpit to preach'.

Dying with Christ, death had no terrors for them. So Hugh MacKail could cry in ecstasy, 'How good is the news! Four days now until I see Jesus!' They knew their God as sovereign,

disposing all things for His glory and their good. They lived in the light of eternity.

In a world with the horrors of Vietnam and the tragedy of Czechoslovakia, read again of these men and women who gave us so much. At least the reviewer would agree with the author, 'To them we owe our way of life, our constitution, our institutions, our commonwealth, and our honoured place among the nations of the world. But for them our place and that of the U.S.A. would have been low down among the Romanist nations, with the grimly-attendant dire consequences of such a plight, the menace of atheistic Communism'.

'Whose faith follow.'

'Give me, my God! a heart as mild  
And plain, as when I was a child.  
That when Thy Throne is set, and all  
These conquerors before it fall,  
I may be found preserved by Thee,  
Amongst that chosen company,  
Who by no blood here overcame  
But the Blood of the Blessed Lamb.'

W. MARTIN SMYTH.

**TOURIST IN ISRAEL.** S. M. Houghton. *The Banner of Truth Trust.* 220 pp. 5/-.

Another book on the Holy Land! Well may the purchaser hastily lay down the volume and use his money for another book or even help the refugee situation created in the Holy Land to some extent by the bungling of the British diplomacy. It all depends on how one looks at things. One may be convinced that it was a masterly stroke of genius that Britain pioneered the founding of modern Israel or sold out on the Arabs. Indeed, one may not have a book on the Holy Land and so this could be a 'must'.

In keeping with the 'Banner' tradition, it is well produced with a bonus of twelve pages of photographs and a useful index. But whether the reader will agree with the publishers' blurb that it is 'occasionally enthralling . . . always lively', trial will tell. He certainly will agree that the style is coloured by the scholastic world from which the author has recently emerged. The reviewer traced at times a tendency to pedantry, as in the spelling of Cwmran for the more usual Qumran, and the little bit about his failure to meet Dr. Yadin, to whom he had a letter of introduction.

Touches like the latter, however, arise because the account is intensely personal. This makes it so different from other similar works and is justification for its publication. At the

same time it is also its weakness as well as its strength. The author's predilections, theological, historical, ecclesiastical and cultural, shine through. One reacts or responds in so far as personal predispositions coincide.

Your reviewer thinks the book is worth buying for the poems it contains, including one by Mr. Houghton entitled 'Israel'. The reprint of R. Murray McCheyne's 'The Sea of Galilee' is delightful. May pastors pray with him,

'Oh! give me, Lord, by this sacred wave,  
 Threefold Thy love divine,  
 That I may feed, till I find my grave,  
 Thy flock—both Thine and mine.'

There is movement throughout the book, from the excitement and tension of a first flight by air to the expectation and thrill of fulfilled prophecy of Scripture with which it concludes. The flight itself is an opportunity to travel by time machine from the maddening modernity of a faithless Britain, through a France of 1918 war to a Rome welcoming Paul via Appii Forum and the Three Taverns; from Geneva, 'Calvin's city', to Amman, capital of Jordan.

History is briefly sketched in and the reader is made aware of changes in the Middle East situation even in the year in which the author visited the land. We learn with regret that the warden of the Garden Tomb was shot during the conflict of June, 1967. But happiest of all for the Biblical scholar, connections between the modern scene and the Biblical story are made. So the land is visited from Amman to Jerusalem, where we linger a little before proceeding to Samaria, Bethany, Bethlehem, Hebron and Petra. A chapter on the Lower Jordan Valley is followed by an excursion to Masada and several on Galilee, before ending at Caesarea Philippi and the Syrian border.

He doesn't hesitate to query traditional sites and suggests reasons for a better choice. Whilst others collect relics, he prefers stones—in spite of weight restrictions—and he clearly has little time for the garish architecture and commercialised churches of a debased Christianity.

Sometimes his own theological position shines glaringly through, especially when he sets forth an apologia for the lady who wished to be baptised in Galilee or that the Lord, despite the Baptist's objections, insisted on 'immersion beneath the muddy waters'. Some would be prepared to debate the identification!

Occasionally light is thrown upon some difficult Biblical passages, such as 'the gutter' in 2 Samuel 5, when the Jebusites

were overthrown by David. But not only exegetical help is found, but also interesting light from archaeology is thrown upon the Scriptures. It is a delight to meet one who does not use the doubtful armour of archaeology to bolster up faith in Scripture. The arguments concerning a late or early date for the Exodus are set forth *à la* Garstang/Kenyon. The Bible is true and archaeology does not prove its truth. It helps to an understanding of it.

A veritable cockpit! The womb of the world. Call it what you like, Palestine is certainly the focal point of history. Here God chose to lead His people. Here Messiah came. As we read this book may we catch the contagion of the Messiah who is coming again. Perhaps we could end on no better note than by quoting an extract which the author uses from Professor Sayce: 'I lunched one day with the British Consul and noticed that there was a vacant place at his table. He was a very efficient consul, a good scholar, and an authority upon ancient art, and I was therefore much surprised at being told that the vacant place was always there, as my host expected that it would be occupied by our Lord at His second Coming'. May we each be expectant and ready. W. MARTIN SMYTH.

#### CONTRIBUTORS THIS MONTH

Dr. R. Caswell, Coleraine Academical Institution, Co. Derry.

Rev. F. H. Chaplin, Eastbourne.

Mr. H. Genet, Field Secretary, Arabic Literature Mission.

Rev. W. M. Smyth, B.A., B.D., Alexandra Presbyterian Church, Belfast.

Mr. P. Toon, M.Th., Lecturer in Divinity, Edge Hill College, Ormskirk.

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The new format of the magazine is to comply with the new Post Office Regulations which were originally due to come into force this autumn but have been postponed for a few months.

# DAMARIS

In September, 1934, *Damaris* made her first contribution to the *Gospel Magazine*. Since then, for thirty-four years she has continued to produce the monthly Young People's story. Her neatly written manuscript with the number of words carefully noted in the margin has been a familiar item in the editor's post month by month.

Now *Damaris* feels the time has come to lay down her pen. Her retirement from the task coincides with her retirement from medical practice in Bristol. General Practice does not leave a great deal of leisure time and one must be all the more appreciative of the unfailing supply of contributions.

I am sure that many will feel that the veil of anonymity should now be lifted. *Damaris* in fact bears an honoured name—her father, Rev. Thomas Houghton, was himself an editor of the *Gospel Magazine* and a stalwart in the defence and propagation of the reformed faith.

To Dr. Lydia Houghton we say a warm 'thank you' for her long service and we add an equally warm word of good wishes—may God give her a happy retirement and continuing usefulness in His service.

# Young People's Page

## THE OVERCOAT POCKET

Waterloo was over, and English troops were being demobilised. One soldier, a middle-aged man disabled by a crushed leg, and using a crutch, came up to the stage-coach standing outside a Bishopsgate inn. Seeing his disability, a tall fine-looking man on the coach-top sprang down, and helped the soldier to a seat beside him. Friendly inquiries showed that after being invalided out of the service, the man was on his way home to his two daughters. 'I've enough to live on,' said the man, 'and my daughters are good steady girls, so I'm sure of a good home—though I'd rather be at work again if my leg would let me.'

His fellow-traveller sympathised, and then began to talk about being in the services himself, under a splendid Commander with very good pay. The soldier was interested, though puzzled; but when he presently found that his companion was talking religion, he was frankly disgusted, muttering that he didn't want no dealings with parsons. But there was no escape for him, and the unwilling hearer was compelled to listen to an earnest explanation of the gospel!

The journey ended, and both travellers alighted. The parson said a cheerful goodbye, begging the soldier to read some papers he handed him. 'Then you'll see what a happy thing it would be for you as well as for me to find mercy in Christ!' He said in parting. The soldier took the papers reluctantly, thrusting them into his overcoat pocket. He saw his daughters coming forward, and gladly turned away to meet them.

Mary and Jenny had a dressmaking business in their own home. By much hard work, they were able to keep things comfortable. Their father was pleased with the look of the house; but the pain in his leg often made him complaining and unreasonable. The girls, brought up by their Christian mother, were true believers, and eager to adorn the doctrine of Christ; so they bore patiently with grumbles and complaints, doing their best to make the soldier comfortable.

'Mary,' said Jenny, coming in one day, 'see what I've found in Father's pocket!' and she held out the bundle of tracts. 'Father's pocket!' said Mary; 'I never saw these before.' 'It's his greatcoat,' said Jenny; 'he hasn't worn it since he came home, so I was giving it a shake in the yard; and these papers fell out.' 'They've not been read,' said Mary; 'see how clean they are inside!'

The girls looked at each other. 'Let's tell Father we've found them,' said Jenny; 'then we'd have a chance to talk of these things.' But Mary was wiser. 'Put them back in the pocket again,' she said; 'he'll only be angry if he thinks we're trying to teach him.'

It was Wednesday, the day of the weeknight service at church, which both girls tried to attend. There was a cold east wind, increasing the pain in the wounded leg; the soldier was unreasonably exacting all day, constantly interrupting the girls' work. When evening came, Mary told Jenny to go to the service, whilst she stayed in with their father. Jenny did not like it, but gave in and hurried off.

'How is it you haven't gone out?' said the soldier during the evening; 'I thought you were both off to church or chapel tonight?' 'I'm not going,' said Mary cheerfully. She sat down to work, trying to give pleasant answers to her father's grumbles. 'It's chilly tonight,' he said; 'I'll have my greatcoat, I think.' Mary sprang up to get it. 'This is a good warm coat,' said its owner, 'nice and roomy.' He pulled it close about him, and began to feel in all the pockets.

Mary watched him as she bent over her work. When he came to the pocket with the papers in, he seemed puzzled. Drawing them out, he looked at them, paused, and then raised them up as if to throw them in the fire. Mary held her breath! but her father changed his mind, and began slowly to examine the tracts. Putting them back in the pocket, he became very silent. Mary sewed on steadily.

At last her father spoke. 'How long have you and Jenny taken to churchgoing and that?' he asked. 'Taken to!' said Mary; 'it was Mother taught us to care for our souls—that's why we go to church.' 'Ah yes, I know your mother was that way,' said the soldier, and he began to talk of old times. 'Your mother was a good woman, and she bred you up right,' he said at last; 'but there's different ways of being good, and a soldier's goodness lies in fighting for his country!' 'What kind of goodness did you mean, Father?' said Mary timidly. 'Goodness? Why, if I'm good, I'm good, and there's an end to it! What have you to say against that?' 'I only meant,' said Mary, 'I might be a good dressmaker, but not a good woman!' 'You mean, I might be a good soldier and not a good man?' said he sharply. 'I'm not speaking of you, Father,' said Mary, 'but surely some soldiers might be very wicked men!' and she told him of some soldiers who had attacked Mr. Hart the parson, because he tried to get a man out of the public house one night; his wife and children were starving whilst the husband drank the money away.

The soldier said, 'That parson must be a stout fellow, whoever he is!' 'Mr. Hart!' said Mary, 'he's our clergyman, the one Jenny's gone to hear tonight.' 'What's he like to look at?' said the soldier. 'Very tall,' said Mary, 'greyish hair, and such a kind firm face.' Her father said nothing, but he at once felt sure that it was Mr. Hart who had given him the tracts. He took one out, and read it in silence.

Jenny was greatly interested to hear what had happened; but both girls were taken by surprise the next Sunday morning, when their father appeared in his best clothes, saying he had a mind to go to church with them. It was the first time since his return; neither he nor the girls made any comment on the service. On the following Wednesday, both girls had such pressure of work that they could not think of going to the service. They worked on all evening, somewhat surprised that their father, without saying anything, had gone out. But when supper-time came, the soldier walked in, saying 'Girls! I've been to church—thought I'd pass the time there while you were so busy!'

From that time the father never missed going to church with his daughters both on Sundays and Wednesdays. He said little, but the girls remarked that he often spent time alone in his bedroom, and that the Bible which they had put on his table was often moved from its place.

One Wednesday evening, the three were about to set out for church when an old comrade dropped in for a chat. 'Can't stop to talk now,' said the soldier, 'I'm going to the lecture.' 'Why! whatever's that?' said the visitor. 'Why, it's a sermon and prayers at the church—do you good to come too!' 'Not me,' said the visitor, 'I'll come back another day when you're not going to church!' This was said with a sneer as he turned away.

That night when the service was over the soldier followed Mr. Hart to the vestry, where he was taking off his gown. He reminded the parson of their travelling together on the coach, and described how the tracts he had given him, and the behaviour of his daughters, had led him to study the Word of God. 'And it was your preaching that brought me to understand, sir,' said the soldier frankly, 'and I just want to thank you, for I have indeed found mercy in Christ, like you said to me that night.'

Mr. Hart listened with the deepest interest, and in the conversation that followed it became evident that his fellow-traveller was indeed a completely changed man. His pride and self-righteousness were gone, and now he humbly rejoiced in the forgiveness of his sins and the peace with God which the

Lord Jesus Christ's atoning death had brought for him.

When Mary and Jenny learnt that it was their own Mr. Hart who had first given the tracts to their father, they looked back with thankfulness and wonder to all the little orderings of Providence which led to this second interview. The soldier grew in grace, and became an energetic 'missionary' in the parish, reading to the sick, seeking out the lost, and constantly witnessing a good confession.

DAMARIS.

### SCRIPTURE ENIGMA No. 174

The whole: Classed with magicians and sorcerers.

1. How the waters came out of the rock.
2. Clothing of the woman, whose cup was full of abominations.
3. David thought that those brought by a good man would be good.
4. It corrupts.
5. Samuel asked Saul the meaning of their lowing.
6. Paul asked Philemon to prepare him one.
7. The woman of Zarephath had a little in a cruse.
8. Paul said she was brought up at the feet of this man.
9. Ahohab was this as well as a cunning workman.
10. The Lord saw the disciples toiling in this.
11. Lot's wife became a pillar of this.

### SOLUTION OF No. 173

The whole: Chronicles.

1. Cain (Gen. 4 : 9).
2. Herodias (Matt. 14 : 6, 8).
3. Rachel (Gen 29 : 20).
4. Olympas (Rom. 6 : 15).
5. Neriah (Jerem. 36 : 4).
6. Intreat (I Tim. 5 : 1).
7. Candle (Prov. 31 : 18).
8. Lamps (Matt. 25 : 1).
9. Elkanah (I Sam. 1 : 8).
10. Sychar (John 4 : 5, 6).