

THE

GOSPEL

MAGAZINE

OCTOBER 1969

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1766 — 1969

GOSPEL MAGAZINE OFFICE

69 FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.4

Price 1/8 per month

By Post 24/- per year

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. 1405

OCTOBER, 1969

Old Series
No. 2405

EDITORIAL

A holiday in mid-Wales will lead a Christian to praise God the Creator for all the evidence of His handiwork. But for one family at least it demanded also a visit to places where that same mighty God had come in revival blessing to His people.

Ysbyty Ystwyth is at first sight one of those strangely-spelt place names which prove such tongue-twisters to the English-speaking visitor. But to those with an interest in revival (and that should mean every Christian!) the name recalls the great days of the 1859 revival. Here is the little chapel where David Morgan preached, and not far away is the huge building which had to be erected to cope with the numbers blessed in the revival.

Llangeitho will be a more familiar name to those who have read J. C. Ryle's account of the leaders of the evangelical awakening of the eighteenth century. Here Daniel Rowland was awakened as he was reading the litany. Here he preached to the vast crowds who in days before modern transport was a fact trudged over the mountains for miles to hear the preaching of the Word. Here in what Ryle indicts as an act of incredible folly he was ejected by an Anglican establishment which repudiated his gospel. Here, too, in the chapel built for him in the village he continued to preach on and helped to establish the Calvinistic Methodism which has played such a part in the spiritual life of Wales.

But these are not days of revival. The massive chapels in the villages have in many cases become empty monuments to recall a past glory. What has happened? It is the sad story with which we are only too familiar. Modernism came to eat out the heart of Welsh non-conformity, so that the chapels in

many cases became social centres rather than citadels of the truth. At the same time, Anglo-Catholicism made its steady progress within the Anglican community, where evangelicals are now few and far between.

But this is not the first time that the people of God have faced dark days, either in Wales or elsewhere. Revival, after all, pre-supposes a condition of deadness which has been changed by the life-giving power of God. It was in the deadness of the early eighteenth century that the life of the Spirit began to be experienced. It was in the arid conditions of 1859 that the fire of God began to burn. The barrenness of today is not an occasion for depression, but a call to prayer that God would again visit His people. What God did in England and Wales and Scotland in the eighteenth century, what God did in Ulster and far beyond in 1859, He is still able to do. He may not act in precisely the same way, for there is a sovereign freedom in His working, but His power to bless and revive is unchanging. The memory of past blessings should not lead to a wistful regret that such days have gone, but should remind us afresh of the power of our God.

H. M. CARSON.

The Supreme Glory of God

ERNEST W. BACON

Two of the most profound passages in the Book of Exodus, a book full of profound passages, are to be found in chapters 33 and 34. They should always be considered together. 'And Moses said, "I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory". And He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee . . ." ' (Exodus 33 : 18-19). 'And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and fourth generation" ' (Exodus 34 : 6-7).

Andreas Osiander, the Reformer, says that this was the sweetest sermon ever preached, and that God Himself was the Preacher. Dr. Alexander Whyte asserts that this passage is by far the greatest passage in the whole Old Testament.

It was a wonderful day in the life of Moses, a life crowded with wonderful days. 'The Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friends' (33 : 11). And in the course of this remarkable conversation Moses puts a great request, and his Divine Friend makes a remarkable answer. And it is all written down for our instruction and meditation and encouragement today.

1. *THE DESIRE TO SEE GOD'S GLORY.* 'I beseech Thee, show my Thy glory' (Exodus 33 : 18). Moses, of course, already knew much of God through His age-old revelation, and Moses' own personal experience. He wanted to know more. Like the Psalmist, his soul was athirst for God, for the living God. Was your soul ever in that condition? Do you today long to know God better? This request of Moses was not mere curiosity. It was an earnest prayer, and a prayer born of the Holy Spirit. He had been brought very close to God and had learned the value of prayer. And he was in a situation of the greatest difficulty and needed the help of the Lord. A little while before, Israel had rebelled and apostatised from God, made a golden calf to worship, and lapsed into gross idolatry. There was no excuse. It was the basest ingratitude and disloyalty to the Lord who in sovereign mercy had delivered and blessed them.

No wonder that Moses was alarmed and cast down. How could he lead this obstinate nation? He was at the point of giving up the task. He prays for guidance, for divine assistance. In answer, God said, 'My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest' (Exodus 33 : 14). Encouraged by this response, Moses prays again: 'I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory'.

It was the desire of a spiritual mind. The natural mind never desires to see the glory of God. It seeks its own glory. It desires to see more of the glory of man. But the desire of a soul attuned to God, awakened by God, stirred by the Holy Spirit, valuing spiritual things more than temporal things, is to see the glory of God. Not until the fallen sinner, by the grace of God, is quickened into life eternal through Christ Jesus does he come to have a spiritual appetite and spiritual aspirations. 'More of Thy glory let me see', is the cry and the mark of the truly godly soul. When we are awakened to our spiritual state, born again of the Spirit of God, and become a child of God through faith in Christ crucified for our sins and raised again for our justification, only then do we desire to know more and yet more of God, His nature, grace, purposes and will. Desire and seek this knowledge: it is the highest and deepest of all knowledge.

Glory to us is associated with magnificence and dazzling splendour, the pomp of power and the pride of place. Our vain earthly minds think of brilliant pageantry and imposing state, scarlet and gold, sceptre and throne, and all the insignia of majesty. The coronation of the Queen, the investiture of the Prince of Wales, the state opening of Parliament—all are marked with a glory of a kind, and it has its value. But put alongside this the supreme glory—the glory of the Divine Majesty, the glory of God! 'I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory. And He said, I will make all my *goodness* pass before Thee . . . And the Lord proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth . . .' Can anything match that for real majesty? Could anything be further away from our common vulgar conception of what true glory is? This marvellous revelation of God's essential nature puts the emphasis not on power but on goodness, not on splendour but on grace. 'Show me Thy glory . . . I will make all my goodness pass before thee.'

Men have constantly sought to see man's glory and have sought and found it in various ways—human achievement, military conquest, scientific discovery, eminence in government or social position, in literature or the arts. Recently we have

been absolutely astounded by space exploration, man for the first time setting foot upon the moon. It is a remarkable scientific and technological achievement, and one cannot but acclaim the brave astronauts who made it possible, and also the scientists and engineers on the ground. It has been described as 'the greatest day in the history of the world'! What arrant nonsense! There have been many far greater days than the day when man walked on the moon. There was **that** tremendous day when God made man in His own image. The day when Christ came into the world to save sinners and was born at Bethlehem. The day on which He died on the Cross, the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world. And the day on which He rose again from the dead by the mighty power of God, vindicated and declared to be a Prince and a Saviour. There are other great days also. The day on which we ourselves were born, and the day we were born again, and that best of all future days—that great day when we shall awake in His likeness. And that other never-to-be-overlooked Day when He shall appear the second time, and all His saints with Him.

In the moon programme the glory of man has been well to the fore. One might almost imagine that the moon belongs to man, to read some of the commentators, who all seem ignorant of Genesis 1 : 16. Nothing has been said of the glory of God, who alone gave man power and ability to reach the moon. Desire above all else to see the glory of God. 'This is life eternal,' said the Lord Jesus, 'that they may know Thee, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.'

2. THE REVELATION OF GOD'S GLORY. In response to Moses' spiritual prayer God gives a surprising answer. He revealed His Name. The name, in Scripture, stands for the essential nature and character. Here is moral glory, spiritual beauty, the Eternal nature of the Living God. God's glory is His goodness; His goodness is His glory. This is the consistent revelation of the Bible. Goodness means loving-kindness, the loving-kindness so often extolled in the Psalms. But not until by Divine grace our sinful hearts are subdued and transformed by the Lord, and are in harmony with Him, do we ever see or even desire to see the glory of God. In some wonderful way God drew near to Moses and proclaimed His Name, His essential nature, His supreme glory.

Mercy heads the list. 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful . . .' This is because, of all the needs of poor, fallen sinners, mercy is the greatest. What should we do without the saving mercy of God? We should perish without pardon and

without hope! But God is merciful; His mercy endureth for ever. We need mercy because of our sin, as verse 7 shows. Pardoning mercy is in the forefront of the goodness and glory of God. He is full of compassion, ready to forgive the sinner, to relieve the needy, to raise up and make anew the fallen. The mercy of God is described in the Bible as great, plenteous, tender, abundant, and from everlasting to everlasting, on them that fear Him. In Psalm 136 the mercy of God is extolled 26 times. And Paul delighted to declare, 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us'. You and I, if we belong to Christ, saved by His grace, are 'debtors to mercy alone'.

Grace is next. 'Merciful and gracious.' Shortly before He had told Moses, 'I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy' (Exodus 33: 19). Here is sovereign grace, Divine love in action, mighty grace condescending from Heaven's high throne to fallen man in his need and sin. It is grace that stoops to lift men up and free them from the bondage of sin and Satan. It is the very heart of God revealed, the love of the Highest for the lowest, to make him anew in the likeness of His Son our Saviour. Grace is the free, unmerited love of God bestowed on the unworthy and undeserving to redeem and transform them and make them partakers of the divine nature in Christ.

Longsuffering is part of the Divine nature. Oh, the patience of God with us, sinners and saints alike; bearing with our rebelliousness and backsliding, giving us time for repentance, restoring our soul with His shepherd care, leading us through weakness and trial back to Himself. How encouraging that word of Peter—'The Lord . . . is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance' (2 Peter 3: 9).

Abundant in goodness and truth. The richness of His bounty is quite inexhaustible. He is good to the evil and ungrateful as well as to His own trusting people. 'O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in Him' (Psalm 34: 8). Paul, in Romans 2: 4, speaks of 'the riches of His goodness' and says that 'the goodness of God leads to repentance'. And abundant also in truth. All He is and does and declares and promises is true, whatever men say or think to the contrary. Eternal and infallible and unshakable Truth is the foundation of His throne. His Word is Truth; His Son is Truth; His Spirit is Truth. We can rely always and everywhere on the abiding truth of our God.

Forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. 'If we confess

our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' What a marvellous mercy to helpless, needy sinners. And the divine declaration goes on to say that He executes righteous judgment on the impenitent and disobedient. 'He will by no means clear the guilty', those, that is to say, who have not sought His grace to remove their guilt, forgive them, and bring them back to the paths of righteousness. The holiness and justice of God are part of His goodness and glory. God's forgiving mercy is upon all who seek the Lord and a clean heart and a new life; and God's declared judgment and doom on all who love darkness rather than light, and are opposed to His truth and salvation.

3. THE GLORY OF GOD IN THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST. In a great passage in 2 Corinthians 4 : 6, Paul applies the divine revelation to Moses to the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ, our God and Saviour. It is truly remarkable to realise how each of the divine attributes brought before Moses are wonderfully displayed in Christ. Not until the Word became flesh and dwelt among us did we fully behold His glory, full of grace and truth (John 1 : 14).

The Lord of Glory came unto His own, in all the true imperial majesty of mercy, grace, longsuffering, abundance of goodness and truth, forgiving sinners, and yet righteous in judgment on His foes. And His own received Him not, because they did not recognise glory when they saw it! They were dominated, as men are today, by earthly notions of glory, and not by heavenly revelation. What an exposure of man, and what a revelation of God!

Right back from the cradle of Bethlehem to the Cross of Calvary, and on to the Resurrection and Ascension, we see 'the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ'. And what glory! In Christ, and in Him alone, and in Him in surpassing excellence, all God's infinite goodness pass before us and make their deep ineffaceable impress upon us. It is all the wonderful story of grace, the gracious self-emptying of God, and the glory-light of God is upon every part of it. How merciful Jesus was to the lost and fallen ones; how gracious to the poor and sick and sinful; how longsuffering to His wayward, quarrelling disciples, and to His blind and obstinate foes; how abundant in goodness and in truth, in word and in deed, everywhere and to all men; and how divine in the exercise of His condemnation and judgment.

Where can we get a satisfying answer to the question, 'I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory'—save as we see 'the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ'? If we cannot see the glory

(Concluded on page 452).

The New Birth

H. P. WOTTON

There is a great barrier between people who have the gift of sight and those born blind. The latter have not seen the beauty of a well-kept garden, the snow-capped hills of a winter scene, or the art of man in a beautiful picture. But far greater is the barrier between those who are born again and those who are not. The physically blind have some comprehension of the things that others see because they live in the same world, but the unregenerate are cut off from the kingdom of heaven as completely as an unborn child is from the world in which we live. Jesus said to Nicodemus, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God' (John 3 : 3).

Poor Nicodemus! He did not understand Jesus because he was not born into His spiritual kingdom. He could not disassociate the word 'birth' from its physical meaning. He said to Jesus, 'How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?' (John 3: 4). 'Birth' in a spiritual context had not been filled out in terms of life by this man of the pharisees.

Here we see why the natural man does not understand the verbs 'to eat' and 'to drink' when they have a spiritual significance. He appreciates the physical enjoyment of eating and drinking, but when these things are used to describe the delights of the heavenly kingdom the words are empty to him because he has no spiritual life with which to interpret their meaning. He is out of touch with it, and he is at enmity with it as well. 'The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be' (Romans 8 : 7).

No stronger language could be used to describe the division that exists between the regenerate and the unregenerate than that contained in the Word of God. There the new birth is said to be a quickening from death to life. 'You hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins' (Ephesians 2 : 1). It is referred to as a translation out of darkness into the the kingdom of God. 'Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son' (Colossians 1 : 13). And it is said to be a new creation. 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new' (2 Corinthians 5 : 17).

COUNTERFEITS

The professional counterfeiter does not waste his time copying an ordinary picture. He chooses one that is worth a great deal of money because it was painted by a great artist. If he can make people believe that his copy is an original, he has attained his object. And if Satan can make people believe that his counterfeits are the real thing, he has attained his object also, for those who are made to believe that they are born of God when they are not are blinded twice.

Some are encouraged to think of the new birth as an event that happens necessarily in infant baptism; others that it is contained in a renouncing of outward sins; and others that it is a bare acceptance of the gospel, without its power being seen in their lives. All these things may be where there is no new birth. How important, then, that we should know what is essential to its existence, for if we are not born of God we are within the Christian community and have a name to live without the life it signifies.

In the revivals that came to New England in the days of Jonathan Edwards there were many manifestations of the power of the Spirit. But he came to see that they were not all the new birth. In his book *The Religious Affections* he has done a great work, separating that which is good in itself from that which is superlatively and essentially good because it belongs to the new creature in Christ.

A man may have a knowledge of God that does not make any difference to his character. He may prophesy in Christ's name. He may speak in tongues. He may do many wonderful works. But with all or any of these things he may remain a natural man. He may have some comprehension of the natural attributes of God, such as His great power and majesty, and still not be a new creature in Christ, for did not the devils know Him as the Son of God, trembling at the sight of His majesty and power?

HOLINESS

It is holiness that distinguishes the new birth from that which only looks like it. A sight of the beauty of the holy character of God makes all the difference between him who is born of God and him who is not. And none sees the beauty of holiness but God Himself, the elect angels, and believers born of God. Jonathan Edwards writes:

'Saints and angels behold that glory of God which consists in the beauty of His holiness; and it is this sight only that will melt and humble the hearts of men, wean them from the world, draw them to God, and effectually change them. A sight of

the awful greatness of God may overpower men's strength, and be more than they can endure; but if the moral beauty of God be hid the enmity of the heart will remain in its full strength.' And again he says, 'He that sees not the beauty of holiness knows not what one of the graces of God's Spirit is, he is destitute of any idea or conception of all gracious exercises of the soul, and all holy comforts and delights, and all effects of the saving influences of the Spirit of God on the heart; and so is ignorant of the greatest works of God, the most important and glorious effects of His power upon the creature: and also is wholly ignorant of the saints as saints. He knows not what they are, and in effect is ignorant of the whole spiritual world.'

Introduction into a holy kingdom comes only by a holy birth, which unites the believer to Christ and to all His members. Birth introduces a rational creature into a knowledge of the kingdom into which he is born. He, then, who is born into God's kingdom must have some appreciation of the beauty of holiness, for though the most far-seeing of God's children are partially sighted in this world, none are born blind.

An Open Mouth

J. K. POPHAM

*A sermon preached at "Galeed", Brighton,
on Sunday evening, 9th September, 1928.*

'I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.'—Psalm 81 : 10.

There is here a call to people who had received mercy, to thank and bless God, to make a joyful noise to Him, to take up a psalm and praise Him; for with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, He had brought them out of the land of Egypt. And it becomes us to whom God has shown Himself gracious, to thank Him; it becomes us to acknowledge that it is the Lord alone to whom we owe a song of praise for deliverance from spiritual death, from hard bondage, and for an entrance into the liberty of His dear children. When you are low, O Christian people, do not forget that your present state is infinitely better than the state you were in when you were in Egypt; that however tempted, tried, and perplexed you may be, you are not in Egypt, not in death, and not under the dominion of the devil. Forget not all His benefits in bringing you out of that place, and setting you on good ground, the ground of Christ's Person and work as the Redeemer. O forget not all His benefits.

The text also gives us a warrant to go to God with all our needs, and to ask Him for a supply, an abundant supply: '*Open thy mouth wide*'.

'Large petitions with thee bring.'

Think not only of your needs which, looked at alone, seem to be beyond supply; but rather and more at that fulness which is in God. There is a fulness in God, a fulness of grace, of wisdom, of love, of life, of power, of faithfulness: you cannot ask too much. You may shoot one arrow or two, but a prophet will stamp with his foot and say, 'You should have shot more, and then you would have been delivered more fully'. God's ordination is this, and may we be brought to it: '*Open thy mouth wide*'.

This morning, in speaking of this, I dwelt a little upon the gift of the Holy Spirit to asking sinners. I would like to add a little to what I then said on that mysterious, that most blessed, that essential blessing, *the gift to sinners of the Holy Spirit*. It is a profound subject, to be treated tenderly, rever-

ently. The gift of the Spirit is the gift of the Father to the Son, and of and by the Son to His people. The Spirit is One with the Father and the Son, the Trinity of Persons mysteriously subsisting in one divine Essence, each partaking of it fully; neither afore nor after Another is either Person in the God-head. But in the economy of grace, each Person in the Trinity has His own peculiar office and work.

The Scripture tells us distinctly the Father's position in salvation's plan; namely, that He chose a people, a bride, for His dear Son. Says the apostle Paul to the Ephesians, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: . . . having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself'. This is the Father's distinct work and place in the covenant of grace.

Equally distinct and blessed is the position of the Son of God in the plan of salvation. For He is God's Servant, God's 'Salvation unto the end of the earth', 'the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God'. The life of God is in Him, and redemption was effected by Him. When He said, 'It is finished!' the work was done. Then just for 'a little while' His disciples did not see Him, for He was in the grave, and after that little while they saw Him again, showing Himself to them by many infallible proofs, to be the same Lord Jesus who was taken and by wicked hands crucified and slain. He ascended into heaven, and is there the God of providence, the Fulness of grace, the Husband of His bride, the King in His own palace, the High Priest in His own house, and the Prophet in His own house. This is the position of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And now comes in the blessed place of the Person of the Holy Ghost. He, as the Spirit of Christ, is 'the Spirit of promise'; for the Father promised Him to His Son. Think of it. 'Behold,' says the Father concerning His Son, 'Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; Mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth; I have put My Spirit upon Him.' The Spirit was given to Christ without measure; and being now ascended into heaven, says the apostle Peter, 'He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear'. That was the gift of the Spirit in the plentiful outpouring of Him on the day of Pentecost. If we here have any grace, the Spirit gave it us; if we have union with Christ, the Spirit has wrought it; if we have an Earnest of the inheritance, the Spirit is that Earnest; if we are sealed unto the day of redemption, the Spirit has sealed us. If we have entered into any divine doctrine, the Spirit has guided us into it: 'He shall guide you into all truth'. If we are convinced

of sin, He has done it. If we see the Lord Jesus in His righteousness, going to His Father, the sight has been given to us by the Spirit. If we see that Satan, the god of this world, is bruised and overcome, the Spirit has given us that sight. And if we have seen the glory of Christ, that glory has been revealed in us by the Spirit. All of which means that we have not one atom of saving religion that has not been given to us by the Holy Ghost—a most humbling truth, but a saving, a comforting truth, as all shall know sooner or later to whom such a mercy is given. If we be Christians indeed, we live in and by the dispensation of the Spirit.

Now He is called in the gospel *'The Comforter'*. The foretold, immediate departure from them of the Lord Jesus, filled His disciples' hearts with sorrow. But He told them that there was something better for them than the continuance of His bodily presence; and that something better was the gift to them, and the indwelling in them, of the Holy Ghost, who should reveal to them things to come, and who should comfort them. Now a comforter is a relative term: it relates to some misery, some trouble, and many a fear arising out of the misery, the trouble. Let us look at this—*'The Comforter'*. When you have the pain, the shame, the misery, the trouble, of indwelling sin; when you may be saying, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' when you may be looking for your evidences and not find them; when you may be questioning whether the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost have been given to you; when you may be wondering whether you have ever heard the word of the Lord with power in your hearts—here then is room for this Comforter, here is the work for Him to do. And His comfort is indeed the comfort of love, for His love brings Him. He loves sinners, and He loves to honour the Lord Jesus in them. He loves to fill them out of the fulness of the Lord Jesus; and He brings grace to comfort them, strength to comfort them, prospects of glory to comfort them, visions of Christ to comfort them: these things He brings to them as He is the Comforter.

This is a great work, and the text says, 'Open thy mouth wide'. One says, 'But I am so utterly unworthy'. If you never get anything from God until you are worthy, you will never have a blessing. The Spirit does not come to people worthy of Him, He comes to sinners. He is to teach ignorant people, He is to comfort trouble people; He is to testify of the Lord Jesus, to make Him known, to make Him real and great and glorious: this is His work. 'He,' says Christ, 'shall glorify Me, for He

shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you.' The receiving there means that in His place and position in the covenant of grace, He shall take of the Lord Jesus Christ, both of His Person and of His work, and show the same to poor, needy sinners. This is what He is to do as the Comforter.

And this Comforter *dwells in His people*. Do you shrink from that word? do you think it cuts you off? do you feel that He does not dwell in you? Now ask the Lord to make that plain, to open it, to explain it to you. I may tell you that if you have holy desires, they come from the Spirit's indwelling; that if you have prayer, it is because He is in you 'the Spirit of grace and of supplications'. If you believe, I may say that He is the Spirit of faith working that grace; but then you will be sure to object something. But if the Spirit comes and makes it plain to you, then you will say, 'I know Him, He is in me, He dwells in me'. He can make it plain, none else can.

With respect to this divine work of the Spirit, there is another remark I would make; namely, that *He brings the Word of God, and opens that to the saints*. This blessed Book, this inspired, infallible Bible, may we go to it more and more, and may the Holy Spirit be in us as 'the Spirit of truth', to open and explain it. Ah, there is a plaster here for your sore boils, my friends, there is a standard here for you to come to, there is truth here from the lips of divine Truth. There is mercy here for the guilty, salvation for the lost, riches for the poor and indigent. What this Book contains who is able to say? But a little of it is again and again opened by 'the Spirit of truth' to the people of the living God. The Holy Ghost is 'the Spirit of truth'; this Book is the blessed evidence of that. 'Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' Inspiration is a mystery, but it is also a fact. The Scriptures teach it: 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God'; it is God-breathed. Now this Bible is as a sealed Book until the Spirit opens it, brings the contents of it, and puts them into the heart of His own life and light and power; and this it is that explains the power saints feel in certain scriptures: 'The flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.' That is what the Holy Ghost makes the Scriptures from time to time to His people: ask for it.

He is '*the Spirit of power*', whereby a sinner is enabled to resist the world, to abandon self, and to cleave close to the Saviour; needing Him, and seeing a little of His glory, the sinner cleaves to Him. Now and again the saints find this Spirit of power in their souls; and I wish you, my brethren, might answer to this, and could say, 'We have occasionally the

Spirit of power in us, bringing the Lord Jesus to us and bringing us to Him, causing us to cleave to Him, and to hold fast that which we already have, that no man take our crown'. And here I may say that this relates also to the church of God collectively. This blessed Spirit dwells in the church, and brings the Lord Jesus; and having the Spirit of power, they hold fast, and obey that scripture, 'Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace'. Such a word speaks to us here. 'Endeavouring.' That means that old nature will make difficulties; but the Spirit says, 'Now endeavour to keep that unity which I have begotten and formed in you'. The Holy Ghost in a church keeps it alive, spiritually minded, tender, humble, each person caring for the other, each being a joint and band in the body; so that the body edifies itself, and makes increases of itself in love. You say, 'We have our own cases'. Yes, and may you never lack them, but remember that the Scriptures address themselves also to churches. And 'open thy mouth wide' for the ministry, that the Holy Ghost may be in it, that there may be a testimony in your consciences to the efficacy of the truth.

And all this must come by the Spirit of power: 'God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.' Friends, do you feel your weakness, the weakness of your grace? Not that grace is weak, but that you have so little of it. Do you feel the weakness of your faith, the slow movings of your love, and the readiness of your hope to droop and sink and give way? Now the remedy for all that is the Spirit of power. And the Lord says: 'I brought you up out of Egypt, I have made you My people, have manifested you to be My people; but you are needy, you are dependent. Now open your mouth for supplies, ask Me for supplies, open your mouth wide for these.'

And the Comforter, the Spirit of God, is '*the Earnest of our inheritance*'. His gift to a sinner in any small measure is an Earnest, His movings are an Earnest, His instructions are an Earnest. When He brings the love of God, when He reveals the Person of Christ, when He seals the forgiveness of sins on the conscience, when He speaks home some blessed promise; in all these things He is '*the Earnest of our inheritance*'. An earnest of the inheritance is a part of it, and a very small part; but it is of the nature of the inheritance, of the same nature as that upon which one day the church of God will enter into full possession. What an amazing thing for you on any given occasion, to have put into your heart!—a heart made ready and empty, by conviction and exercise and teaching, to receive

such a word, such an operation, such an illumination and revelation of the Lord Jesus, as shall be to you just an earnest; as if He said, 'Now I give you this not only as a proof of My love, but as an earnest of that to which you are entitled, and on which one day you will enter'. Has He given you a word of promise? What an earnest! Has the Spirit brought the Lord Jesus, and formed Him in your heart the Hope of glory? What an earnest! Has He shed abroad the love of God in your heart? That is an earnest: think of it. You say, 'We have not had it'? That does not say you shall not have it, but it may say you are straitened. Now open your mouth, have a widely opened mouth, and God will fill it one day in giving you an answer, in giving the earnest of the Spirit.

There are many other operations of the Spirit besides those that I have named. For instance, there is again and again given a fulfilment in some measure of that word, 'I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him as most an only son, and be in bitterness for Him as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn'. And what follows? 'And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart . . . all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.' This shows that every manifestation of Christ, accompanying and answering supplications by the Spirit, will have this—a repentance and a mourning over sin that has been done. That is a great blessing, do you feel you can ask for it? You may sometimes have this in your mind, 'If I get that, a good deal of the world that I have will have to go'; and old nature says, 'Be careful, do not ask too much, else you will have to give up this and abandon that'. But faith says, 'Ask what God has promised to give, ask a full blessing'.

One more word on this great subject. The Spirit is called *the Spirit of liberty*, a free Spirit: 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty'. The veil is taken from the heart by Him, and the heart turns to the Lord. Liberty is relative; it relates to something that has gone before—bondage, fear, tormenting fear; fear of death, of hell, of God's frown, fear of judgment; fear that you may be under that dispensation wherein you cannot look to the end, fear that the veil is still on your heart. Now when the Spirit of God comes, there is liberty given from all that, and liberty to enter into the holiest: 'Having therefore, brethren, boldness', or liberty, 'to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus'. These operations of the

Spirit the saints of the most high God are in some measure acquainted with.

And now let me look at this, shall I say, divine commandment—can it be less? ‘*Open thy mouth wide.*’ It expresses the warm, earnest, living, insatiable desires of the saints of the Most High, insatiable as regards all other supplies. One says, ‘Give me Christ or else I die’.

Now that is a big request, it is an open mouth, the mouth of your hunger for Christ: ‘Give me that blessing, give me Christ, or else I die eternally’. This great commandment is an encouragement to prayer, it is according to Christ’s word in the gospel, ‘Men ought always to pray and not to faint’. There is such a fulness in Him, such a determination in Him to bless, and such an ability in Him to save, that He says, ‘Although you are oppressed, call upon Me without ceasing. Open your mouth wide and come. Come, and ask that which you need, and which I have to give’. Here let me say it is a mercy when your eye is not held steadfastly gazing on your needs, but is turned, not away from looking at them altogether, but turned to that fulness which is in the Lord Jesus to meet those needs. When we look at our needs, and for the moment see no supply, how low we sink! but when, not losing a sense of need, the eye is turned to the Lord Jesus, then despair is impossible, as Hart sings:

‘For lo, the dying Lamb
Utterly forbids despair
To all who love His Name’.

Look to Jesus, look to His cross; look to His Person, look to the gifts He has received for men, ‘yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them’. This is opening the mouth, and opening it, as the Scripture says, wide. ‘Open thy mouth wide,’

Open it for ‘*the riches of the full assurance of understanding*’: that we may say, ‘We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true’. Open your mouth wide for ‘*the Spirit of wisdom and revelation*’ in the knowledge of Christ. That as Christ is raised ‘far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come’; so you may have some little inkling of it in your own experience, being raised above self and the world and the various things that bind you.

Open your mouth wide for *the sealing of the Spirit*, that you may answer to that scripture in the Song: ‘A garden enclosed is My sister, My spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed’.

A great word that, did you ever answer to it? Did the Lord ever bring you to it? 'Enclosed' by divine mercy, by divine providence, by divine promises—'a garden enclosed'. Not a garden without water, 'a fountain sealed', locked up for the use only of the King in His garden. 'Open thy mouth wide.' Now one may say, 'My business, my family, my cares', and one may sometimes add, 'and my ambitions in this life, just dry me up. What am I to do?' Well, as God helps you, follow this direction, 'Open thy mouth wide' for these blessings. 'Open thy mouth wide' for *the sanctification of your afflictions*. 'No affliction for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yielded the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.' There is good to come out of trouble to the saints. They are to say one day, each one, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes'. 'Open thy mouth wide' that thine eyes may be *turned away from beholding vanity*, and thy soul be so hungry that thou mayest say, 'I opened my mouth and panted for Thy salvation'.

'Open thy mouth wide' for *an honourable finish to thy pilgrimage*. I speak to young people here, little children in the church and family of God. They may be saying, 'But do not always talk about the end'. But you have to come to it, you have to die and know not when. We who are older know this, and would not have one day that is behind us before us. But then this is the question, 'Shall we finish well?' The promise is this: 'Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him; for he shall eat the fruit of his doings'. For God is not unrighteous to forget his work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope. Pray, pray, pray for a good finish. That is what perhaps more than once every day of my life now I am asking—that I may finish well my pilgrimage, finish well my poor ministry, by being kept to the truth. In these respects and many others, matters of your family, matters respecting your business, respecting your relationships in life, in all these things open your mouth wide.

Now what does the Lord say? He does not set people on praying without setting before them this—the certainty of an answer: '*I will fill it*'. When your panting mouth is open for your salvation, one day that shall be said, 'Drop down, ye heavens from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness; let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation'. What an answer! 'I will fill it.'

He will fill it with a *promise* sometimes: 'I will never leave thee, I will never forsake thee'. A promise of provision:

'Bread shall be given him: his waters shall be sure'. A promise of safety: 'The munitions of rocks' shall be his place of safety. And when you hear Him speak to you thus, you will say, 'Now I have that which will last me as long as I live'. You may wonder about it later, but for the moment you say, 'I have got whatever I need, whatever I shall need'. 'I will fill it.'

'I will fill it with a revelation of the Lord Jesus.' Have you prayed for that? Do you ask for it? Is that one thing that you are asking for again and again: 'Reveal in me Thy Son, reveal in me the Person and the work of the Lord Jesus, reveal to me my interest in Him; let the glitter of this world die away from my eyes by my seeing the glory of Christ; let my poor, hard heart melt with the sight and the feeling of the glory of Christ. Lord, purge my conscience from all dead works by the blood of Christ'? Now when He answers you, you will say, 'I know that the Son of God is come. I reverence His Person, I honour His Name, I trust His blood and His righteousness for my salvation'. And you will say, 'Now I know a little of what it is to be spiritually minded; for I do mind this one thing of the Spirit—the revelation by Him to me of the Lord Jesus'. That is a filling.

'I will fill it' with *glory*. Jesus prayed that His disciples might behold His glory; and more than that, He said that the glory which His Father had given to Him, He had given to His disciples. Already they had it: in the knowledge of His Person, in the power of His word, in His blessed teachings He had given them His glory. And when they had that, they wanted more. 'I will fill it.' 'I will fill it' with *divine* love. 'In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.' 'I will fill it' with *divine* peace: 'Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you', 'I will fill it with *My* presence, and My Father will fill it with *His* presence, and the Spirit will fill it with *His* presence'. The Trinity shall dwell with sinners: think of it.

And then, friends, there is yet to come a filling that we could not bear here, when *the fulness of Christ's glory* shall fall upon and fill with bliss a spirit now freed from the body. 'The spirits of just men made perfect' have that which, as to the fulness of it, we could not bear here. I am of opinion that our bodies could bear here very little comparatively, of the glory of Christ's death. Such is the glory of justice, the glory of love, the glory of divine peace, and the glory of God's holiness, and of His goodness in giving peace, that very little of that

glory our frail bodies could bear. But I suppose no one here has had so much as to say, 'Lord, stay Thy hand, I can bear no more'. I have not had much, but I have thought that a little more would bring me to that. 'Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.' Bring large petitions, honour His fulness, His greatness, by saying, 'Lord, fulfil in me this word'. 'I will fill it—I will answer it in that abundance that shall make the soul "satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the Lord".'

May the Lord help us and enable us to obey Him in this word, 'Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it'. Amen.

(Continued from page 439).

of God in His Son, heaven help us! We must seek the Lord and His salvation while He may be found. But if we have tasted how gracious the Lord is in His forgiving and saving and renewing mercy in Christ, then, like Moses, we must make haste and bow our heads and worship and adore. And He will draw near and fill our lives with more of His abundant grace. And walking in the light of Christ, with Christ beside us and within us, we shall see clearly the vanity and hollowness and perishableness of earth's glory; and we shall see that the goodness of God so richly displayed and received in Christ is His supreme glory. And we shall find that goodness and mercy will follow us all our days.

Is That in The Bible?

J. B. ROWELL

A woman cried out with fear and anguish in her voice, 'Is that in the Bible?' There was urgency in her cry. She must *know* if there was a real answer to her problem.

This wonderful story can be simply told. A group of our fellowship were travelling across the United States in our cars. Stopping for the night in one city, we went to a Mission Hall to attend the Gospel service. We were thrilled with the message, and this writer went forward to express his appreciation to the speaker. However, before I could reach him, a certain person had hurried forward and was soon engaged in earnest conversation with him.

When she left him, her face was filled with anxiety, and I was constrained to go to her. As I approached her, she said with great earnestness and concern, 'You know, some people say they *know* they are saved'. These words were wrung from a heart in deep anguish, and with real spiritual alarm at her lack of assurance of her salvation.

Realising something of the spiritual distress she was in, I replied, 'Do you feel you cannot say "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day"?' (2 Timothy 1 : 12). This distressed one almost shouted as she replied, 'No, I cannot'. Whereupon, I asked her, 'Are you a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ?' To this she readily affirmed that she was. Replying to this, 'If you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, then the Bible gives the assurance you need, where it says in John 1 : 12, "But as many as received him, to them gave he the power to become the sons—the children—of God, even to them that believe on his name".'

The Word of God has the answer for anyone in spiritual distress. Accordingly, I said to this spiritually perplexed woman, 'You say you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and yet you say you have no assurance of your salvation. Now, what do you say to this Scripture, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God"?' I paused at this point, and reminded her that she had confessed her own belief on the Lord Jesus Christ, and then stressed the special assurance given to those who believe, and in God's own words, 'THAT YE MAY KNOW THAT YE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God'.

IS THAT IN THE BIBLE?

As I quoted these Scripture words from memory, she cried out, 'Is that in the Bible?'. So, taking her Bible, we read this Scripture together in First John 5 : 13. The Holy Spirit shed light on this precious truth, that soul-delivering assurance, and directed it to her heart in such a way that she was immediately delivered from the bondage which had beset her, and her radiant face revealed a peace which had not been hers before. It only takes a moment for the Holy Spirit to do His enlightening, convicting, converting, gracious work in a human heart, and this woman's experience seemed to be an evident proof of all this.

Entering into this new experience of 'Blessed Assurance', she immediately left me to go to her friends to tell them what the Lord had done for her, and to tell them the precious Scripture which had brought her into spiritual liberty and the assurance of sins forgiven and assurance of eternal life—'These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; THAT YE MAY KNOW THAT YE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God' (1 John 5 : 13).

Sinners are not accepted with God because they are worthy but because Jesus Christ in whom they believe becomes their acceptance with God. God says of His Son, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'; and to the believer in Christ He says, 'He hath made us accepted in the beloved' (Matthew 3:17; 17:5, and Ephesians 1:5-7).

Missionary Panorama

WEST IRIAN

One of the newest developments in West Irian has been the opening of work in the Lakes Plains area. Costas Macris has spear-headed this enterprise and he made the first journey there. He was accompanied by John McCaine, who a number of years ago sailed right round the coast of West Irian to reach his base on the south coast.

Early one moonlit morning last August the pioneers set out from Sukarnapura in a skiff and a launch. As they headed for the open sea they ran into poor weather and rough seas. The first day out they were separated and for a time lost each other. Later they lost the boat containing their fuel and supplies. By midnight of the first day they were still looking for an anchorage in choppy seas and among coral reefs.

Next day, in better weather, they reached the mouth of the Mambramo River. After changing boats they spent the rest of the day heading up-river towards the distant mountains. They grew tense as they realised that the river deepened and narrowed through these mountains and they would have to make their way through the thundering torrents and roaring rapids.

The most difficult day of the journey followed, but by the skilled seamanship of John McCaine, God saw them through and they entered the Lakes Plains area.

Both missionaries testify to the wonderful help given to them by the Missionary Aviation Fellowship. They dropped fuel on to a beach when at sea and flew in supplies several times when they were struggling up the Mambramo River.

The mission was accomplished for John McCaine, so he returned to Sentani. In his place a Dani helper came in by float plane and with Costas Macris they began searching for the Kwijon people in an area previously surveyed from the air. They had problems with inaccurate maps, and the rivers became narrow and often blocked with logs through which they had to cut their way many times. They despaired of finding a stretch of water suitable for a float plane to use. Then, as the 'Good News' nosed its way round a bend, there it was—a beautiful, straight stretch of river. God had seen them through.

Costas dropped anchor at a point where two rivers met and went ashore. The place seemed uninhabited, but within two days there were 60 people sharing their temporary hut on the bank of the river.

Twelve months later they have cleared a site for an airstrip and erected station buildings on raised ground clear of flood-water, thanks to the help given by a large group of Danis who came down from the interior to work. Down by the river there is the only suitable harbour for the launch within 25 miles.

As well as study of the language, which is believed to be the most difficult yet encountered by the missionaries, there are Sunday meetings at which there is an increasing attendance. The people are friendly and responsive to God's word, a fact which Costas Macris attributes to the prayers and efforts of the believers at Mamit, back in the Swart Valley, who have taken such an interest in the new advance. People have moved to the mission from five different river locations, and although nomads, they have started gardens and built 35 huts for this growing community.

INDIA

For eight hours she stumbled sightless along the forest paths, clutching the end of Tika's stick. With his stocky, bandy legs he plodded along in front, while his brother came last of all, carrying on his head a bulging sack containing their food and supplies. After the walk came a crowded bus and a train journey, and then the three Tharus arrived at "the Duncan" with the simple hope in their minds that her sight could be restored here. She seemed an old woman, slow to hear or understand, no flesh on her bones, and bewildered. Both eyes twitched continuously because her eyelids had turned inwards, and the constant irritation from her eyelashes had damaged her sight.

Five weeks have passed, and two operations have largely cured the irritation of her eyes, although she still cannot see, for with the healing of her sores cataracts have been revealed, and these can't be operated on for another nine months. The nourishing hospital food has renewed her vitality, and she looks years younger, even coming out with some pungent remarks which are a joy to hear. The Gospel Recording records have been played to her many times, letting her listen to God's message in her village tongue.

This morning as she squatted beside the gramophone, bent in the absorption of listening, she raised her head with the sudden straight question, 'I still can't see—why doesn't this Jesus Christ give me back my sight?' What do you answer to that one?

When next the hospital jeep goes out to the Don she will be taken home, and soon afterwards her teenage daughter will be

married to one of the Tharu believers. Pulmati, as a senior woman, will hold the reins of the enlarged household, and so will inevitably encourage or discourage them in seeking to love and serve Christ. If her own faith were firm and strong her influence would strengthen these others—or else the reverse could happen. Let us think this through what it must be like to be in her circumstances, and pray thoughtfully for her.

ERITREA

‘But your customs are not our customs; your ways are not our ways; you think differently from what we think!’ How often we have heard these words and how true they are! The longer we foreigners remain in this country the more we realise how great is that gulf of difference. It is one thing, however, to realise it, but quite another to try and do something about it. Yet the only successful way really to reach these people, whether they are educated folk or tribal people, is to adapt ourselves, our thinking, our customs to theirs, and then, and only then, shall we be able to become really one with them. This is not easy; it is difficult; but is anything too hard for the Lord? Are His promises not true? He has said: ‘Faithful is He who calleth you, who also will do it’ (1 Thess. 5 : 24). Praise the Lord, He is able to give to each one of us love, strength, wisdom, grace and patience, and to meet all our need.

One of the first tasks of new missionaries is to study the language, customs and culture of the people to whom they are sent. To know this, and to apply oneself to the task is one thing, but to put into practical application what one learns is quite another. For example, the new missionary prepares a Bible story or an everyday conversation in the language she is studying and tries it out on a group of nationals. Imagine her chagrin when, on asking them if they have understood what she has said, she is told that they do not understand English! Then again, how many of us from our homelands would ever imagine that sitting in a home with one knee over the other, so that the sole of your foot can be seen, would be equivalent to cursing the person with whom you are sitting? We just do not know these things when we first come, but it is vitally important for us to learn and conform to these customs lest we offend those we seek to reach. How necessary it is, too, to be able to converse really freely with them in their own language, both understanding and being understood.

During the past few years it has been the privilege of some of our missionaries to work among the more educated people of this land. English is taught in government and mission schools, and students who have passed their 8th Grade are

able to converse fairly fluently in that language. Here in Haicota hospital the Dresser-training programme has been in operation for the past three years. To this training course have come 8th Grade students who have also completed successfully one year of Bible School training in Keren, where further English is taught to them as well as the Bible. Here they are required to do a fairly concentrated one-year medical course which will enable them to become government certificated dressers on successfully passing the government examination.

My year in Haicota has been full of variety. Each few months seem to bring different Mission tasks, each one a challenge. My work has included supervising the clinic work, helping in the hospital, collecting and delivering water, working in the pharmacy, driving the ambulance—as an ambulance or a hearse!—and I now find myself sitting in the classroom with these Eritrean students studying the Dresser-training course with them. I have trained in Baby Welfare work in Canada and have had years of medical experience with our doctors and sisters in our clinics. I felt, however, that if it were possible to take this training course here it would be both beneficial to my co-workers, and to the students as well as to myself. The Lord has given me a real love for these young people, and because they can speak English there is a unifying bond between us.

Each day, Monday through to Friday, will find the students and myself sitting in the classroom listening to our lecturers from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., with a 15-minute break between lectures. We all admit that it is a bit warm, especially at 3 p.m., when the temperatures are well over 95 deg. F. The students also do practical work for five hours a day, so weariness of mind and body becomes quite a battle to be fought. I know they would appreciate your prayers, for though the spirit is willing they realise that 'the flesh is weak'.

How easy it is to sit in the classroom and let the old mind wander! And one is even more prone to do this if the words in the lecture are new and difficult. The problem of coping with the language, quite apart from the subject matter of the lecture, can be overwhelming. Certainly it is not easy for them, and we all realise this, but since I have been able to sit where they sit and do as they do, I have come to understand how very hard it is for them and my heart goes out to them. However, it is wonderful to be able to help them. So once a week I go over the lectures with them and try to explain the difficult words, though it seems that most words fall into this category. Not only do they have the difficulty of the English

words, but also of the different accents of the lecturers—Canadian, English, Australian and New Zealand. Even we missionaries go into gales of laughter over the different ways in which we pronounce the same words and phrases, so just imagine how perplexing it must be for them! Even today my New Zealand colleague pronounced ‘error’ like I pronounce ‘era’! One day she was talking to one of the students and she asked him if he understood her. ‘Yes,’ he replied, ‘But we do not always understand what comes out of you!’ This about sums up the problem.

As you remember to pray for the students, pray also for the doctors and sisters who so lovingly and patiently give of their time and energy to help these students. As I sit in the classroom listening to them lecturing I admire them tremendously. At times it must be so frustrating, for it takes a long time and much explaining and re-explaining before light dawns in some darkened and perplexed minds. Yet their patience and endurance holds on and has often been a challenge to me.

The Lord has given us a deep love and concern for these young Eritreans. We realise that the future of this land will largely be in their hands. What a privilege to be able to have a small share in the Lord’s plan of training them for this great task. As you in the homelands pray for us, for the students, for the people of this land, may He bind us closer together in the bond of His love and help us to realise that we are *co-workers* together with Him.

FOOTNOTE

These items are reprinted by kind permission of the following:

Regions Beyond Missionary Union, 99 Thurleigh Road, London, S.W.12 (West Irian—Costas Macris; India—Marion Saunders).

Middle East General Mission, 137 Upper Grosvenor Road, Tunbridge Wells (Eritrea—Marnie Rumsey).

The False and the True

H. M. CARSON

*A sermon preached in Hamilton Road
Baptist Church, Bangor.*

'If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

'But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.'—1 John 1 : 6, 7.

Here in this first chapter of John's epistle you have the picture language that you discover also in John's gospel—the language in which John himself so delights. It is the contrast between light and darkness, between God and Satan, between the kingdom of God's dear Son and the kingdom of darkness; between purity and impurity, righteousness and unrighteousness. John says, 'God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all'. The man of God is the man who walks in the light; the man of this world is the man who walks in spiritual darkness. But John says it is possible to claim to be walking in the light and yet in actual fact to be walking in the darkness. 'If we say that we have fellowship with God and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.' We may make a claim that we are God's people, we may claim to walk in the light, we may claim to have fellowship with God; but John says that if we make that claim, and in actual fact our lives do not tally with our profession, then we are just liars, we are not living according to the truth.

You notice he does not say, 'If *you* say that *you* have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, *you* lie'; he says, 'If *we* say that *we* have fellowship . . .' But John is an apostle; there is no doubt surely about his profession? John surely would reply, 'No matter who you are, you need to be absolutely certain that your profession tallies with the facts'. After all, John himself knew an apostle—his name was Judas. Judas professed to walk in the light. He professed to have fellowship with God's Son. He professed to be a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. But he was a sham, he was a hypocrite, and the event ultimately displayed him for what he really was. Remember how the apostle Paul writes, 'I keep under my body, I bring it into subjection, lest when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway'. The Bible never sug-

gests that there is any position within the church which exempts a man from testing himself. Whether it is a person who calls himself a church member or a church officer, or a Sunday School teacher, or a Bible Class leader, or whatever it may be; John says 'we', and he numbers himself with those to whom he speaks. 'If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we deceive ourselves, we lie, and we do not live according to the truth.'

One of the tragic possibilities that you find again and again in the New Testament is that a man may deceive himself. This is even worse than deceiving others. It is quite easy to deceive others, quite easy to keep up a pretence, but the greater tragedy is when a man reaches the point of deceiving himself. This, of course, is not an isolated word on this matter—it comes again and again right through the New Testament. Think of some of the parables of the Lord Jesus Christ. Think of the parable of the sower. The good seed of the word of God is preached and that word is sown in many different kinds of soil, it comes to many different kinds of hearts. There were some soils where there was no real harvest. There was the rocky ground with the shallow soil. The word seemed to be received—if you looked at it you would have seen the green shoots of the first wheat coming up—surely there is life there, surely this is the kind of result you would desire to see. But of course it was only a temporary thing and when the sun came up the whole thing withered away, there was no root there. There was the seed that fell among the thorns. Again there was growth, and at first sight there was nothing to distinguish that seed and that growth from the growth in the good soil, but again it did not last, it was choked.

The Lord told another parable, the parable of the wheat and the tares. The enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and as both began to grow the servants could detect in some cases the difference between wheat and tares, and they wanted to root up the tares. But the master says, 'No, for if you root up the tares you may root up some of the wheat as well, because in some cases it is very very hard to distinguish'. He says, 'There will come a day when they will be distinguished. There will come a day when there will be an infallible decision made, one without any possibility of error; the wheat and the tares shall be finally separated. The wheat will be gathered into the barn, the tares will be burnt with unquenchable fire at the end of the age'. 'But before the end of the age,' says Christ, 'there will be those who will be numbered as members of the kingdom, and they will be so like the members

of the kingdom that you will not even be able to discipline them because you will not know that they are not really the children of the kingdom.' But, Christ says, there will come a day when it shall be made plain.

He returns to this theme again and again in His parables. He speaks of that final day when men and women shall stand before Him, and He refers to those who in that day will speak about what they were, how they even preached in His Name, how they cast out demons in His Name, how they listened to Him as He talked in their streets; their whole profession is in terms of 'children of the kingdom'. But He says, 'In that day I will say to you, depart from Me, I never knew you'. There was never a time when the Lord numbered them as His disciples, although they thought they were, and had persuaded themselves that they were. He will say, 'I never knew you; there was never any point when I was deceived'. The Lord was never deceived about Judas. Right from the very beginning He knew that one of them would betray Him—the son of perdition, the one who had set his mind and his heart in the wrong direction, and yet the one who claimed to be a follower of the Messiah. Jesus says, 'There will be a final day, a day when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, a day when God shall make known men as they really are'.

There are examples and illustrations of this kind of thing in the New Testament. In the Acts of the Apostles—there was preaching, powerful preaching; there were very many people converted, they turned to the Saviour, they were baptised, they became members of the church, they broke bread with God's people; but even there, there were those who seemed outwardly to conform to the whole Christian pattern, but in actual fact they were not true believers. There was Simon in Samaria, and it seemed to be a clear-cut choice of Christ as far as he was concerned. He was one of those who turned their back on the world and set their face to follow Christ. He was accepted as one of the new believers; he was baptised, he was a church member. But he was not a real believer, he was a hypocrite. He had made a profession, admittedly, but there was no reality there. He was a member of the church outwardly, but he was not a member of the church of the first-born. The miracle had never taken place in his life, he had never been born again of the Holy Spirit. So he never really moved beyond the profession that his lips made, his heart was not changed. We read this evening in Hebrews 6 about the same kind of people, people who had been enlightened. No, they were not in pagan ignorance, they were not out in the

darkness beyond the confines of the church where the gospel was being preached. On the contrary, their minds had been opened, they had heard the gospel, and they had rejoiced to hear that gospel, and they claimed to believe that gospel. Yes, they were enlightened—they had even shared in the blessings that were being enjoyed within the church fellowship—the blessings of the Holy Spirit, the blessings of fellowship with God's people. They had enjoyed this, this had satisfied them, and yet quite clearly their hearts had never been changed, they had never been born again of the Holy Spirit. Outwardly believers, outwardly Christians, outwardly professed followers of Christ, but they were not really His.

This is why there are very firm reminders in the New Testament that you must make absolutely sure that you are a Christian. 'Prove yourselves,' says Paul, 'whether you are in the faith or not.' 'Be diligent,' says Peter, 'to make your calling and election sure.' Do not be satisfied with the profession that you have made, do not be satisfied merely that you claim to be a Christian, do not be satisfied that you meet in fellowship with God's people, do not be satisfied that you break bread with God's people at His table. Be diligent, be absolutely sure that you are a true child of God, because, says John, 'it is possible to profess to be in the light, and yet to be in the darkness. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, we are claiming to be in the light, because God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all'. With God there is only righteousness, there is only purity, there is only holiness; and if we claim to be His, we claim to be walking in the light. If in actual fact we are walking in the darkness, then we are simply fooling ourselves, we are not in fellowship with God at all, because to be in fellowship with God you must be walking in the light.

Now we need to be careful at this point. John is not saying that if you sin you may be sure that you are not a Christian, for that would mean that there would not be a Christian this side of glory, because there is not one Christian who does not sin. But he speaks here about 'walking in darkness', and when the Bible uses this picture and this metaphor of walking, it is speaking about the general pattern of our living. He is not speaking here about the occasional failure, about the sinful stumble. He is speaking rather about the normal pattern, the attitude of our hearts, the direction of our ambitions, the motives that lie normally behind our actions; it is this that he is talking about. He maintains that if in our hearts we are really in darkness, then no matter what profession we make,

no matter how loudly we claim to be Christ's disciples, we lie and we do not the truth. To be in fellowship with God means to walk in the light, and if in fact we are in darkness, well, we simply cannot be in fellowship with God.

Darkness speaks of that which is secret, that which is underhand—a thief operates normally in darkness. How often on a Monday morning you hear reports of various bank-robberies and break-ins that have taken place during the weekend when people have been away from offices and so on—it is when people are not there, it is at night that the thief operates. Darkness in the Bible speaks of that which is not seen, that which men cannot detect. But of course there is no darkness as far as God is concerned. Do you remember Psalm 139? The Psalmist is speaking about the all-seeing eye of God: 'Wherever I go,' he says, 'Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.' What a shattering realisation it has been to many a one to realise that in God's sight there is no darkness. God looks right into the darkness and He sees us as we really are. He sees us when we are alone. He sees us when other people do not see us. He knows what we are really like. He looks into our hearts. Do you remember Jeremiah, the prophet, speaking in God's Name, reminding the people that there are no secret places, there are no hiding-places? We can never get beyond God's gaze wherever we are. No matter into what corner we go, we are always open to Him. Walking in darkness? Thinking that no one knows what we are? Thinking that these sins are covered up? No one detects, no one knows the impurity? No one knows the unrighteousness? No one knows the underlying bitterness, the spite, the malice, the hatred? These things and many more I might mention, these things that lie below the surface, behind a pious exterior sometimes; the petty dishonesties, the untruthfulness, and all the rest of the things. But there is no darkness as far as hiding us from God. The Lord sees, the Lord knows.

Then, again, darkness speaks of that of which men are ashamed. You know the expression that 'so-and-so was so ashamed he could not look you in the face'. Men are ashamed when there are sins lying upon their conscience that they simply cannot bear to bring them to the light of day. They can cope with those sins in the darkness, they can cope with

those sins when no one else knows about them, but to feel that other people know about them, this is appalling. But in many cases other people do not know about them, other people are in total ignorance. But God knows about them, and there will be a day when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed. In that day, like a screen with the projector throwing the pictures upon it, the secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest, they shall be laid bare. God will make a public display of men for what they really are. Darkness—it speaks of secrets, shameful things, hidden uncleanness. David thought that no one knew about him and Bathsheba—he seemed to have settled the issue very carefully. Uriah was dead, the situation was completely under control. But of course the thing that David had done displeased the Lord. God had seen, God knew everything about David's lust, God knew everything about David's sin and his crime. No wonder that when God's prophet came to David he could point the finger and say, 'You are the man; **David, you who are so ready to become indignant about someone else, you who feel morally revolted because of the behaviour that I have been describing; David, cannot you see that you are in a far worse plight than this man of which I have been speaking? You are the man, David. You did this in the darkness. You thought nobody knew about it. But God knew everything about it, because there are no dark corners as far as God is concerned. God knows the heart**'.

Darkness—it is the place of ignorance, it is the place where men walk blindly, not knowing where they go, and that is the real trouble. Why is it that men dabble in filth and uncleanness? Why is it that men profess to be Christians and yet in secret very often they are very very different from what they profess to be? I would say because they do not really know the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour. They do not know the way. On a dark night, if you are out in the country far away from the street lamps, you can think you are on the right path and in actual fact you may be completely wrong. If you are driving a car in an unfamiliar part of the country, you may think that you are on the right road—someone has told you some landmark to look out for and you think you have got it, but in actual fact you may be on a road which is going as far as possible away from your destination. And the great tragedy of so many is that they think they are in the way, they believe they are on the path that leads to everlasting life; but in actual fact the darkness has come upon their thinking—darkness due to their own sinfulness, and as a result they are tragically mistaken, because the way which leadeth unto life is Jesus

Christ. And Jesus Christ is the pure One, the holy One, the perfectly righteous One. There is no sin there; there is no blemish there, no unrighteousness, no impurity. You cannot walk that way and walk in sin. The tragedy is that many walk in darkness thinking that they are on the way that leads to life, when in actual fact they are on a bypath that leads them ultimately to destruction.

John's desire, of course, is not that those to whom he writes should walk in darkness; he desires rather that they should walk in the light, and so he speaks of what it means. He says, 'If we walk in the light (in contrast to walking in darkness) as God is in the light, we have fellowship with Him, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin'. But it is a painful thing to walk in the light. It is like the small boy who has been told to sit quietly and wait because he is going out for some special occasion; but he slips outside for a short time and plays around with his friends and gets covered with mud—he does not look too bad in the street lamps, but when he comes into the vivid light of the house again, he suddenly discovers how filthy he is, and how completely unready he is for the special occasion. It is painful to come into the blazing light of God's holiness. How many people there are, good, church-going people, who have been humbled and broken and have wept before God as they have suddenly discovered what they really are. How easy to go on and on and imagine that all is well when in actual fact the grime of sin and uncleanness is upon our soul, the taint and the defilement is there, and the reason why we are so sure of ourselves is that we have never stood in this blinding light. Go to many so-called protestants and they will tell you that there is cleansing when you make a new effort, there is cleansing when you muster your determination to fight against the uncleanness in your life, there is cleansing when you attend carefully to your religious duties. No, there is not. There is only one place where there is cleansing and that is at Calvary. There is only one means of washing away impurity and that is the blood of Christ.

'If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with God, and the blood of God's Son cleanseth us from all sin.' This experience is a foretaste of glory. When you read the book of the Revelation the whole picture there is of a place of brilliant light. There is no artificial light required there, for the Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ, He is the light of the place. Everything is light and beauty and glory. And surely this experience that John is describing here is simply a prelude to that. To walk in the light *now* is to have the first

anticipation of that light which shall never fade, when those who have been washed in the blood of Christ shall join with a great company whose theme is the redeeming blood of the Saviour, and for all eternity they will be singing the praises of the One who shed His blood. It is when we have seen what we are that we begin to see the glory of Calvary and the wonder of this cleansing blood.

‘There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.’

The blood of Jesus Christ is no temporary expedient, nor does it deal simply with this failure or that. The glory is this—and I bring it to you tonight with a sense of exultation at such a message—‘the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanseth us from all sin’. And to His Name, the Name of such a Saviour, be praise and glory for ever and ever.

Lives of British Reformers

John Hooper

S. M. HOUGHTON

John Hooper, Hoper, or Houper (for men often spelt their names in a variety of ways in the time of the Tudors) was born, as far as we know, a little before the year 1500. He belonged to Somersetshire. His father was a Roman Catholic of considerable wealth, and as John was his only son it may be imagined that money would be spent freely upon his education. At the University of Oxford (Merton College in all probability), he studied diligently and gave proof of much ability, but it is clear that he knew little if anything of 'the grace of God that bringeth salvation'. He held and was held by Romish doctrine.

Some time after completing his course at Oxford Hooper became a monk, first in a Cistercian monastery at Cleeve, in his native county—the Cistercians formed the order of White Monks—and secondly at the Black Friars at Gloucester. Precisely how long Hooper continued in this manner of life it is impossible to say, but when King Henry VIII determined to 'dissolve' the monasteries between 1536 and 1539, and monks were turned adrift on the world, Hooper looked around for other employment. The historian John Strype, writing of the events of Henry's reign, says: 'About the year 1536 I meet with one John Howper, a black friar of Gloucester, whether our John Hoper or no I cannot affirm, who, with six monks more of the same house, desired licence . . . to change their habit' (dress).

Hooper shortly became a steward in a nobleman's household. His duties brought him to the King's court, and doubtless he engaged in the endless frivolities which made up the life of a Tudor courtier. He writes regretfully in one of his later letters of 'living too much of a court life in the palace of the king'.

The great change in Hooper's life came in the later years of Henry VIII's reign. So far as we can tell, it happened gradually rather than suddenly. The method employed by the Lord was to direct his attention to the writings of two Continental Reformers, both of Switzerland, Zwingli and Bullinger. It was due to this means that Hooper became a more advanced reformer—some would say a more 'extreme' one—

than men influenced primarily by Martin Luther. We certainly know that he showed every sign of an enlightened conscience on certain matters brought over from Romanism into Protestantism concerning which some of his contemporaries had no qualms. In basic doctrine, too, Hooper became thoroughly well grounded. 'The truth which they' (the Swiss reformers) 'taught', he says, 'I perceived seriously to affect the eternal salvation and happiness of my soul; so that I thought it worth my while, night and day, with earnest study and an almost superstitious diligence, to devote my entire attention to these writings'. Happily Hooper found very shortly that the writings of men, no matter how skilled their composition, are not at all to be compared in value with the Scriptures themselves, and to them the earnest student now gave the closest heed. Among other truths taught in the Word he learned that his own works availed nothing for salvation. 'I hope for eternal life', he said, 'obtained not by my merits, but by the blood of Christ'.

Hooper's great desire now was, as he told his friend Bullinger, 'to serve his godly brethren *in* Christ and the ungodly *for* Christ'. In a short time, therefore, he abandoned his former manner of life at court, and like Moses who left Pharaoh's court, he resolved rather, as an exile, to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. 'I have respect', he wrote, 'to the recompense of the the reward'. It was no easy matter to be a true Christian in the days of Henry VIII, when the Roman Catholic priests had great power. Hooper's first trial, as is often the case with those born of the Spirit (see Galatians 4: 29) came from his own kindred. His father was bitterly opposed to all Protestantism, and said Hooper, 'He is so opposed to me on account of Christ's religion, that should I refuse to act according to his wishes, I shall be sure to find him for the future not a father, but a cruel tyrant. Shortly, however, I mean to go down to my native place to bid farewell to the honours, pleasures, and friends of this world'. Then, too, trials came from the Catholic clergy, who were sorry to part company with such an accomplished man as Hooper. Stephen Gardiner*, Bishop of Winchester, a cruel persecutor of the saints, had long discussions

* Gardiner, together with Bishop Edmund Bonner of London, was chiefly responsible for the persecution of Protestants in Mary's reign. He was also the Bishop who on the 25th July, 1554, officiated at the marriage in Winchester Cathedral of Mary with Philip of Spain, honoured by his father Charles V with the titles of King of Naples and King of Jerusalem.

with him, to persuade him that he had been drinking in dangerous errors, for the Catholic Church taught that it was a great sin for anyone to trust to Christ's work alone for salvation. But Hooper's teacher had not been the Catholic Church but the Spirit of God, and Gardiner's false reasoning failed to influence him, so that finally the Bishop dismissed him, 'right well commending his learning and wit, but yet', as Foxe quaintly remarks, 'bearing in his breast a grudging stomach against Master Hooper still'.

Shortly after, Hooper was advised by friends to flee from the country to avoid imprisonment and death. Crossing over to France, he settled for a time in Paris, returning to England when he thought the danger had passed. But again 'he was compelled, under pretence of being captain of a ship going to Ireland, to take the seas; and so escaped he, although not without extreme peril of drowning, through France to the higher parts of Germany'. During his stay in Germany he married a lady of noble birth, Ann de Tserclas, who returned with him to England when Edward VI came to the throne. Ann, like her husband, had been brought up in a Roman Catholic family, settled near Antwerp, and such was the hatred against her when she forsook the Catholic religion, that when she wrote to her mother some time later, her brother who was requested by the mother to read the letter to her, immediately threw it into the fire unread.

Hooper and his wife did not return to England expecting a life of ease. 'I shall write you from time to time', he promised his friends in Switzerland, 'but the last news I shall not be able to write; for there, where I shall take most pains, there shall you hear of me to be burnt to ashes'. Thus, says one, did he prophesy that death wherewith he should glorify God. As soon as he arrived in London he began to teach the people, and often preached to them two, three, or even four times a day. Great numbers flocked to hear him, for, although he sharply reprov'd sin, he greatly encouraged the true people of God, though many thought that he was too severe in dealing with those who were convinced of sin, but England greatly needed fearless men, who, like Paul, did not shun to declare all the counsel of God. Men, under sin, do not want what one famous writer has termed 'rose-water surgery'. 'I thank God', wrote Hooper at the close of his life, 'for my part, I am not ashamed of His Gospel, neither afraid of the Pope, the devil, nor the gates of hell'.

By 1550 Hooper was well known to King Edward, who wished to make him Bishop of Gloucester. But there was one

great difficulty. Although the Church of England was gradually becoming Protestant in character, many things were practised that were not according to the Word of God. All bishops were required to submit to a ceremony called 'consecration', in which they were decked with gaudy robes, very different from the simplicity which is commanded in the New Testament. Hooper at first refused to wear such garments, but finally his objections were overborne and he consented reluctantly to don them. He then departed for Gloucester and commenced the work of reforming the clergy. He found to his sorrow that many of them were extremely ignorant of the Scriptures and spent their time in 'riotous eating and drinking, in playing unlawful games, dice, cards, and such like, and in hunting and hawking and such other vain pastimes'. All this Hooper tried to put down and to have the people taught the Truth which is according to godliness. Frequently did he visit the towns and villages around Gloucester preaching the word of God to many who now heard it for the first time. The poor, too, were often brought to his table, and after being examined as to their knowledge of the Lord's Prayer, the Articles of Faith and the Ten Commandments, their bodily needs were amply satisfied.

At this time Hooper's household was afflicted by a plague or 'sweating sickness', which swept over the country. It was not nearly so severe as the Black Death which had carried off at least half of the population of England two hundred years previously, but thousands of persons died. In London, 800 persons died of it within the first week. Seven householders, we are told, supped together one night, six of whom were dead before morning. Happily, Hooper was spared to continue his work.

It is interesting to know that our Reformer had two children—Rachel and Daniel. Daniel was only about two years old when his father died; Rachel was nearly ten. Hooper was glad to find that his little daughter had a very retentive memory, and very joyfully he told a friend that she retained with great ease all that was said to her, and had a very good understanding of Latin. This when she was only about four years old! More wonderful still, before she was much older her father wrote: 'Our little Rachel is making progress both in body and mind. She understands the English, German, French and Latin languages very tolerably, and specially the Latin'. Hooper means that Rachel was learning to speak these languages, for we cannot think that, so early in life, she had acquired much skill in writing them. When the little girl was

about six, her mother wrote thus to Bullinger, the great Reformer: "You must know that she is well acquainted with English, and that she has learned by heart within these three months the form of giving thanks, the ten commandments, the Lord's prayer, the Apostles' creed, together with the first and second psalms of David. And now, as she knows almost all her letters, she is instructed in the Catechism. I send you a small gold coin, in which the effigy of the King of England is very well expressed, as a return for the token you sent to Rachel, for which she thanks you in her childish prattle, and sends her best love'. Then again, in 1555, after Queen Mary had come to the throne, the little girl sent to Bullinger an English coin, on which, as her mother explained, were the effigies of 'Ahab and Jezebel' (Philip and Mary). We do not know what happened to little Rachel Hooper in later years, but we may hope that she and her brother alike followed in the footsteps of the flock, knowing the God of their father and mother to be the only true God of heaven and earth.

In 1553 came the sad circumstances of King Edward's death at the age of fifteen, after a reign of six years and five months. Edward's second regent, the Duke of Northumberland, hoped to contrive the succession of the Protestant Lady Jane Grey, his daughter-in-law, but after a mere nine days the attempt collapsed and Edward's half-sister Mary became queen. Hooper considered it right to support Mary's undoubted right to the succession, but his robust Protestantism meant that from the outset of the new reign he was a marked man. Shortly he was arrested and imprisoned. His friends had warned him to flee while yet there was time, but he bravely replied, 'Once I did flee and took me to my feet, but now I will live and die with my sheep'. His wife fled with Rachel to the Continent, not willingly, but her husband's bidding and the firm advice of friends 'drove' her, as she expressed it, from England and passing through Antwerp she journeyed to Frankfurt in the Rhineland. Daniel remained in England until his mother was able to send a trustworthy woman to carry him overseas. Separation from her husband was very painful to Ann Hooper. 'I often feel', she said, 'to be all but dead through grief. And I now require the aid of all godly persons, although I am never entirely forsaken of the Lord, who sometimes refreshes me with the anticipation of a better life'.

Meanwhile in London her husband was experiencing much suffering for Christ's sake. In the early days of his imprisonment he was allowed to leave his prison chamber and dine and sup in company with others, on condition that he did not speak

with any of his friends. Dinner and supper over, he at once returned to his comfortless abode. But after a time the warden and his wife, who vastly disliked godliness, invented lies about their prisoner, and received permission from Bishop Gardiner (now Lord Chancellor) to keep Hooper in solitary confinement. His sufferings now increased greatly. 'In the wards', he wrote, 'I have nothing appointed to me for my bed but a little pad of straw, a rotten covering, with a tick and a few feathers therein, the chamber being vile and stinking, until by God's means good people sent me bedding to lie in. On the one side of which prison is the sink and filth of all the house, and on the other side the town-ditch; so that the stench of the house hath infected me with sundry diseases. During which time I have been sick; and the doors, bars, hasps, and chains being all closed and made fast upon me, I have moaned, called, and cried for help. But the warden, when he hath known me many times ready to die, and when the poor men of the wards have called to help me, hath commanded the doors to be kept fast, and charged that none of his men should come at me, saying, "Let him alone; it were a good riddance of him". The said warden hath also imprisoned my man, William Downton, and stripped him out of his clothes to search for letters, and could find none, but only a little remembrance of good people's names, that gave me their alms to relieve me in prison; and, to undo them also, the warden delivered the same bill unto the said Stephen Gardiner, God's enemy and mine'.

Hooper's distress was still further increased when he received word that his enemies had diligently circulated a report that he had recanted and again confessed himself a Roman Catholic. But how different this from the actual case! 'Pray that we may have strength and patience rather to die ten times than to deny Him once', he wrote from prison. And again: 'I have taught [the] truth with my tongue and pen heretofore, and hereafter shortly will confirm the same by God's grace with my blood. Pray for me, gentle brethren, and have no mistrust'. And again, three weeks before his burning: 'Imprisonment is painful, but yet liberty upon evil conditions is more painful. The prisons stink, but yet not so much as sweet houses where as the fear and true honour of God lacketh. I must be alone and solitary; it is better so to be, and have God with me, than to be in company with the wicked. . . . I am a precious jewel now, and daintily kept, never so daintily: for neither mine own man, nor any of the servants of the house, may come at me, but my keeper alone, a simple rude man, God knoweth; but I am nothing careful thereof'.

When the Catholic authorities found that Hooper remained true to the Protestant faith and that he could not be moved from his steadfastness either by argument or imprisonment, they determined to have him sent to Gloucester to be put to death. Sad though the news was, Hooper was very glad to hear that he was to die in the city where he had so faithfully preached the Gospel of Christ. He hoped by God's grace to confirm there by his death the truth he had made known during his life. On Monday, February 4th, 1555, he left London at daybreak in charge of six of the Queen's Guards, and three days later arrived in Gloucester, where he was received by a crowd of people, weeping and lamenting him. For two or three days he was lodged in a private house to which came his friends and others who professed to wish him well. One of his visitors, Sir Anthony Kingston, urged him to consider that life was sweet and death was bitter, and that life hereafter might do good. 'I thank you', said Hooper, 'for your friendly counsel, although it be not so friendly as I could have wished it. True it is, that death is bitter, and life is sweet: but alas! consider that the death to come is more bitter and the life to come is more sweet. Therefore for the desire and love I have to the one, and the terror and fear of the other, I do not so much regard this death, nor esteem this life; but have settled myself through the strength of God's Holy Spirit, patiently to pass through the torments and extremities of the fire now prepared for me, rather than to deny the truth of His Word'. To another, a Roman Catholic, who called upon him and expressed sorrow for his troubles he said, 'Be sorry for thyself, man, and lament thine own wickedness; for I am well, thank God, and death to me for Christ's sake is welcome'.

The 9th February was the day fixed for the burning, and at the time appointed a band of armed men came to attend Hooper to the stake. 'This', said he, 'needs not, for if ye had willed me, I would have gone alone to the stake, and have troubled none of you all'. To the great multitude of people who had flocked from all parts to witness the sight he was forbidden to speak, but his cheerful bearing and smiling countenance bore testimony to the fact that he rejoiced to be counted worthy to suffer for the sake of One who had borne 'griefs and torments numberless' for him. At the stake he offered a most touching prayer, using words which may sound strangely strong to modern ears but which express in biblical fashion his abdication of all hope in himself and his works for salvation, and his faith in the righteousness and the mercy of an almighty Redeemer: 'Lord, I am hell, but Thou art

heaven: I am swill and a sink of sin, but Thou art a gracious God and a merciful Redeemer. Have mercy therefore upon me, most miserable and wretched offender, after Thy great mercy, and according to Thine inestimable goodness. Thou art ascended into heaven, receive me there to be partaker of Thy joys, where Thou sittest in equal glory with Thy Father. . . . O heavenly Father, forgive me my sins, as I forgive all the world. O sweet Son of God my Saviour, spread Thy wings over me. O God the Holy Ghost, comfort, strengthen and establish me; and as through Thy mighty power Thou hast brought me hither to die, so conduct me into everlasting bliss. O Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit; Thou hast redeemed me, O God of Truth'. With these and many similar words were the prayers of the gracious John Hooper ended. It is recorded that while he was at prayer, and as a further trial of his faith, a box, 'said to contain his pardon on condition of his recantation, was placed before him, but as soon as he saw it he cried, "If you love my soul, away with it; if you love my soul, away with it".' After this he was bound to the stake with a band of iron and after great sufferings during three-quarters of an hour (for the wood was green and the wind blew the fire away from him), he died saying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit'.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, certain workmen in Gloucester engaged in excavations in one of the city squares, discovered the butt-end of the stake at which Hooper suffered, and a simple monument was shortly afterwards erected on the spot.

In the second year of Elizabeth's reign, four years after the martyrdom, a book was published in which were given 'the words that Master John Hooper wrote on the wall with a coal in the New Inn in Gloucester, the night before he suffered'. The words consist of the two following verses:

'Content thyself with patience
With Christ to bear the cross of pain,
Who can or will recompense
A thousand-fold with joys again.
Let nothing cause thy heart to fail;
Launch out thy boat, hoist up thy sail,
Put from the shore;
And be thou sure thou shalt attain
Unto the port that shall remain
For evermore.

'Fear not death, pass not for bands,
Only in God put thy whole trust;

For He will require thy blood at their hands;
 And thou dost know that once die thou must:
 Only for that thy life if thou give,
 Death is no death, but amens for to live.
 Do not despair:
 Of no worldly tyrant see thou dread;
 Thy compass, which is God's Word, shall true lead,
 And the wind is fair.'

As an addendum to our account of Bishop Hooper we call attention to the accuracy with which John Foxe, the martyrologist, records the details of the martyr's last days, here narrated all too briefly. It became customary last century for certain historians who were not in love with Reformation principles to claim that Foxe was far from dependable as a chronicler, but in the last thirty years much has been done to revert to the older view that Foxe was both honest and accurate in depicting the Tudor scene. J. F. Mozley, in his *John Foxe and his book*, has done excellent work in this respect, and the case of Hooper supplies further illustration.

In *Gloucestershire Notes and Queries*, Vol. I (1881), it is recorded that in 1878 a certain John Bellows read a paper to the Cotteswold Club (Glos.) on matters 'relating to the burning of Bishop Hooper'. In it he states that Foxe's account of the closing scene is obviously derived from 'a Gloucester man who was probably an eye-witness of the execution'. He records also that 'he had examined the oldest book of accounts which now remains among the archives of Gloucester' and amid a mass of records referring to money transactions he had discovered entries relating to the cost of bringing the martyr from London to Gloucester and of the actual costs incurred during the morning and afternoon of the day that he was 'brente'. 'Here', says John Bellows, '323 years after the event, we find a dry business book of receipts and expenses supporting in the minutest details the account given by Foxe of the imprisonment and martyrdom of Bishop Hooper at Gloucester'.

In support of the claim that Foxe obtained his information from a native of Gloucester, Bellows makes the following points among others:

- (1) He calls Cirencester (where the martyr spent a night en route for Gloucester) by its local name, Ciceter;
- (2) 'He tells us in the Mercian dialect that Hooper arrived at Ciceter about *a leven* of the clock. This is precisely the form used by the country people about here now in speaking of numbers. If six cows are seen feeding in a

- field, and one asks a labourer standing by how many **there are**, he will not answer *six*, but "*about a six*";
- (3) The faggots brought for the burning are not termed bundles of straw, but by the local name of *reeds*, for 'wheat straw has always been called *reed* in this district';
 - (4) 'He incidentally mentions as accounting for the great crowd of seven thousand people who came to witness the burning, that it was *the market day* at Gloucester, and if we compare the date of Hooper's leaving London, which is stated to be on Monday, the 4th of February, with the day of the week on which this would make the ninth day of the month to fall (for he was burned on the ninth), we shall find it was on the market day; for Gloucester, like all the country towns of England, with some five exceptions, has its market day on the last day of the week.'

Probably other county records, if they were ransacked, would tell much the same story, namely, that 'John Foxe and his book' are worthy of our close attention, our keen interest and our intelligent trust.

The Martyr's Crest

Lines sent to a descendant of the martyred Bishop Hooper, with a seal, upon which was engraved the Bishop's Crest—a lamb in a burning thicket, and the motto, 'Per ignes ad coelum' ('Through the flames to heaven').

'Tis a lovelier crest than the bloodstain'd blade,
Or the hand stretch'd out to slay;
Than the oak-twin'd wreath, or the laurel braid,
Or the bird or beast of prey:

It was prov'd by deeds more lofty far
Than the shields of war and victory are!

'Twas nobly done—to fear not kings,
To dare their feeble ire;

To smile at all terrestrial stings,

The rack, the scourge, the fire;

Now to a damp cold dungeon driven,

Then, rapt in thought on things above,

Gazing upon a Saviour's love,

Pass through the flames to Heaven!

Say, aged warrior, when thy breath
Was struggling with the grasp of death,
When every tortur'd nerve was rending,

And death with life,

In bitter strife

And agony contending,

Wert thou not borne in soul away,

Far from the weak consuming clay?

And o'er thy calm unruffled soul

Did not celestial visions roll?

The martyr's stake is strewn with flowers,

And earthly and infernal powers

May try their little force in vain,

To plant a thorn or cause a pain!

'Tis true we are not call'd, like thee,

To dungeon cells and martyr's;

But yet the spirit is not dead

Through which the saints of Jesus bled;

For, though 'tis bound with many a chain,

It would resist to blood again.

And now perhaps a surer snare

For spirits, that might even dare

The stake, and all the terrors there—

The deep-laid sophism of the school,
The curling lip of ridicule,
And taunt of sceptics bear:—

Yet, rapt in thought on things above,
Gazing upon a Saviour's love

We still may firm endure;
Though smiles or frowns contend the way,
Despise—defy them all—and say,

'Your worst! my hold is sure!'

—*J. Edmeston.*

BRITISH EVANGELICAL COUNCIL

‘‘For Such a Time as This’’

1969 CONFERENCE—TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY,
28 & 29 OCTOBER, 1969

WESTMINSTER CHAPEL, BUCKINGHAM GATE,
LONDON, S.W.1

TUESDAY, 28th OCTOBER—10.30 a.m., Ministry of the Word (Rev. John Caiger). 11.30 a.m., Communicating the Gospel, (1) Some contemporary issues (Rev. Derek Prime, M.A.). 3 p.m., The B.E.C. Under Review (1): An open Session to provide opportunity for full discussion on differing aspects of B.E.C. policy and work. 6.30 p.m., Public Rally (Mr. Leith Samuel, B.A., Southampton).

WEDNESDAY, 29th OCTOBER—10.30 a.m., Ministry of the Word (Rev. John Caiger). 11.30 a.m., Communicating the Gospel, (2) Revival and Evangelism (Rev. Derek Swann, B.A., B.D.). 3 p.m., The B.E.C. Under Review (2): A further opportunity to discuss differing aspects of B.E.C. policy and work. 6.30 p.m., Closing Rally (Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, London).

The Conference, for which there is no booking fee, is open to all Evangelicals. It would greatly help its organisation if those intending to be present would notify the Conference Secretary, who will also deal with enquiries for hospitality (please arrange your own, if you possibly can) and meals.

Conference Secretary: Rev. T. C. Grayston, 40 Balliol Road, Welling, Kent. Tel: 01-304 2536.

Other information: British Evangelical Council, 12 Lancaster Road, St. Albans, Herts. Tel. St. Albans 55655.
