

THE
GOSPEL MAGAZINE

AND

PROTESTANT BEACON.

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

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

"JESUS CHRIST THE SAME YESTERDAY, AND TO-DAY, AND FOR EVER." 'WHOM TO
KNOW IS LIFE ETERNAL."

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P R E F A C E.

ANOTHER year of editorial testimony closes in upon us. Of time it has been well said, it is the ship that never anchors. Golden hours demand golden service. Alas, as we review the dying year, how much of failure has marked our labours in the cause of God's precious truth! Editorial responsibilities are among the weightiest considerations occupying our minds, and at times they become almost overwhelming.

It is, however, our earnest, prayerful, persistent aim to feed the redeemed flock of Christ with the pure pasture of Scripture truth, to comfort the poor of the flock, and to guide them in their Zionward way, as the Spirit of Grace may be pleased to enable us. And we have cause to thank our God that He has not suffered His truth to fail, notwithstanding the unworthiness of the instrument condescendingly employed by Him for its dissemination. Many precious assurances were received from readers of our pages during the year that the power and unction of the Holy Ghost accompanied the perusal of their Gospel contents. To the Lord of the Harvest the praise of all gracious results is due, and we adoringly acknowledge the claim. Those assurances encourage in us the conviction that although the redeemed "flock of slaughter" be "scattered," it is yet an undivided flock. Unity in the love of the precious doctrines of God's free grace marks the household of faith all the world over. The internal work of the one Spirit in all grace-called sinners is, in essence, the same, although time, distance, and circumstances may sunder God's favoured ones from one another. A bone of the mystical Body of Christ cannot be broken. There is no schism in that Body; no possible separation of bone from His bone. "We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones," and to seek to maintain a realization of this blessed truth among the Lord's redeemed ones is a ministry which it becomes us all to discharge.

This is the object for which the GOSPEL MAGAZINE exists, and for which it was established one hundred and thirty-seven years ago. That object has been singularly owned and honoured by Him Whose "eyes are upon the truth." From time to time He has raised up faithful men to conduct its publication, including Augustus Toplady, Mason, Middleton, Doudney, and Cowell, and contributors like Romaine and Berridge. The Covenant of Grace, "ordered in all things, and sure," will prove sweet to the spiritual taste of God's elect, beloved people till time shall be no more, and sweeter still when they enter on the bliss of being for ever with their adorable Lord! Those who have once tasted the satisfying realities of a Covenant salvation lose all relish for

the free-will theories of modern "Evangelicalism," which have their origin in the ignorant pride of the human heart. Nor do such gracious characters care for the literature which nourishes Arminian error in its endless phases and under its thousand names. Tried in the balances of the sanctuary, the literature popularly called "Christian" is found to be doctrinally and experimentally "wanting"; it lacks the salt of the Covenant; it is at best but "leavened" bread. The "debtor to mercy alone" can sing only of mercy. His election he attributes to mercy—tender mercy; his redemption he traces to its original fount—mercy; his regeneration and call are, to him, acts of marvellous mercy; his growth in a knowledge of salvation is due to Divine mercy; and all his hopes for time and eternity are built on free and sovereign mercy. Those peculiar doctrines of the Gospel which most deeply humble the heart, and exalt Christ there, are to such very marrow and fatness. They are the "savory meat" which their souls esteem most highly. To them He is unspeakably precious Whose effectual redemption of their guilty persons is the token of His everlasting love, the crowning proof of the Covenant relation He bears to them.

Dear readers, fellow-believers in our risen and glorified Lord Jesus, let the ministry of God's distinctive truth in the pages of the venerable GOSPEL MAGAZINE have a frequent place in your petitions at the King's footstool. Pray that the Editor and all who contribute to its pages may ever be filled with the Spirit of Christ, and be kept faithful to their sacred trust as stewards of the mysteries of God and witnesses for Him in this day of rebuke and blasphemy. Pray that the fear of man may never mar the message of salvation by unmerited grace proclaimed month by month. Pray that the Protestant character and tone of the GOSPEL MAGAZINE may continue to be uncompromising and Scriptural, and that the cause which the holy martyrs at the Reformation, and since, died to maintain may (in a martyr spirit) be courageously and victoriously maintained by our means in these days of apostasy from "the old paths." Never, since the Reformation, was there greater need than to-day for testimony against idolatry and Papal superstition. Spiritual wickedness "in high places" is working with deadly effect on the people of England. The enemy has come in like a flood, and only the Spirit of the Lord can effectually lift up a standard against him. But, blessed be our God, He can, and we humbly believe that He will. His truth must prevail. His counsel shall stand. Final victory is with His little flock. "The lame take the prey."

DECEMBER 1ST, 1902.

THE EDITOR.