

SEPTEMBER–OCTOBER 2017

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The Gospel Magazine

Peace that endures • Zurich under Zwingli • Nicholas Ridley

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1766–2017

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

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

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

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

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

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

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THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE

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

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EDITORIAL

WHEN Martin Luther prepared his challenge to the matter of justification by faith apart from works, he was setting himself against the single most important error of the Church in his day. The doctrine of salvation—how a sinner may be right with God—must be understood and taught correctly. Correctness in this, as in all matters of divine truth, is not a question of intellectual satisfaction, nor of philosophical exactness. Rather, it is a matter of believing what God has revealed in his Word, and teaching only that. The problem with the medieval view was that, although it satisfied the accepted philosophy of the time, it did not accurately convey the truth as it is taught in Scripture. Rules concerning confession penance, transubstantiation and the mass, priests and purgatory, may have been contained in a logically coherent system. That system was not contained in the Bible. Rome’s doctrine, therefore, could not be considered a safe guide, and Martin Luther knew this. When we consider that the matter in question concerned the most fundamental question of all, how a sinner may be right with God, we must see that no issue was more significant, or more in need of correction, than this. The

Protestant Reformation came about, under God, as a consequence of the challenge Luther raised.

Few, if any, who read this magazine would doubt that the same issue is key today. The doctrine of justification by faith alone through grace alone in Christ alone is honoured with the lip, but is often not worked out in practical Christian living. Preachers do not know how to apply this doctrine to the lives of Christian men and women. Believers fail to see the way in which this truth is meant to affect every aspect of our living, and effect the glorious benefits of assurance, of love to Christ, of love for the Word, and of Christian fellowship (to name but a few). We honour the doctrine, but must be very careful that we do not honour it as the brazen serpent came to be honoured (2 Kings 18:4). This doctrine is not a relic for us to bring out from time to time, but is truth for all times, to be explored, illustrated and lived.

Looking at the state of the Christian faith today, where would we place the focus of our attention, were we to be preparing a challenge like Luther’s? Let me offer a few suggestions. These are not in any particular order, and doubtless the list could be expanded.

1. The attitude to Scripture. It is hardly a revelation to say that, by and large, the church today has a very low view of Scripture. There is not authority in the Word of God, according to many, except it happens to agree with the opinions of those reading it. The notion that God has spoken in his Word, that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, or that we are required to receive and believe every word of it, is alien to many.

To make matters worse, we have a situation today which may be likened to that which existed in the Middle Ages. The Western Church used a Latin Bible, the Eastern Church a Greek. Despite their common origin, the Latin version had developed into a tradition which was quite independent of the Greek and Hebrew original. It was not the authentic Word of God. Today, that same situation applies between the Received Text and its English translation (the Authorised Version), and the critical text and its translations (almost every modern version). We now have a situation where those who profess a common faith are in fact looking to two significantly different Bibles for the basis of their faith. It does not take a long conversation for differences to emerge. We need to make the case for the Received Text more strongly, and support the work of an organisation like the Trinitarian Bible Society more fully.

2. Ecumenism. All Christians are brothers in Christ. All who are saved by grace share in the common faith. We are all dead in Christ, and are all alive in him, being raised to newness of life. It is no wonder, therefore, that Christians ought to delight to express the common bond of fellowship in real and mutually encouraging ways. But what happens when the desire for unity trumps the need to have that unity on the one common foundation of our being in Christ? What happens when outward expressions of Christianity replace the inner work of the Holy Spirit as the evidence of faith?

We all know the efforts which have been made to bring the various denominations

under one umbrella, an umbrella held in the hand of the Bishop of Rome. The differences which exist, at least in the Reformed Confessions, between Roman Catholics and Protestants, are largely ignored. Protestants are quick to apologise for the past, and to act as if our forefathers were ignorant or vindictive fools. They were neither; they had lived with the reality of Roman Catholic doctrine and practice, and they had seen the glorious liberty of the gospel. How we need to see the gospel as clearly in our day, that our nation might be delivered from the scourge of ecumenism.

3. Antinomianism. The world offers an easy understanding of morality, and sets before us the means, and the motive, to enjoy the pleasures of the flesh. Christians often find it hard to resist, not least because the doctrine of justification by faith is not well understood. A right view of Christ would be a great help to us, but we tend to have a weak, unfocused view of our Saviour, because we usually struggle to lift our eyes, and our hearts, above the pleasures of this world.

Antinomianism is granted a further handhold on us if we have a false view of our Father in heaven. If our thought is, 'Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed', then we are in serious error. If we believe we must obey his laws out of fear, then we have not known him. If we then believe we are delivered from the need for obedience because Christ has kept the law for us, then we really have not known him. But if we believe that the law is good, and that it intends to bring blessings on us; and if we believe that we can keep it because Christ has kept it for us, then we will look on God as a loving heavenly Father. Then we will delight to serve the Lord in all holiness and righteousness. And so we will avoid the lawlessness which marks so much of the professing Church.

Where will we make our stand? How will we honour Christ and his gospel?¶

A GRACIOUS PROVISION

A sermon by THE EDITOR

Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it' (Psalm 65:9)

THE sixty-fifth psalm is a psalm of praise, in which is contained a prediction, that the Gentiles will be called to the true faith, v.2. Yet the major part is taken up with giving thanks to the Lord for his tender mercies toward his people, in providing all things needful for life, and in such an abundance as to exceed all the hopes or expectations of any.

There are three things in this verse—the ongoing care and provision of a loving heavenly Father for his people: 'Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it'—the faithfulness of God in replenishing his provision: 'thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water'—the providence of God who, in his wisdom, caused the land to be fit to bear the people—'thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided.'

We explain these as follows:

i. The ongoing care and provision of a loving heavenly Father for his people. The expression, 'Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it', may be taken either of two ways. It may mean that, after a period of drought, the Lord looks on the land in mercy and visits with a refreshing rain, and the famine mentioned in 2 Samuel 21:1 is suggested by some as a possible occasion for the composition of this psalm. Alternatively, the Hebrew grammar is capable of being understood to say, 'Thou visitest the earth in watering it', making the falling of rain the fulfilment of this praiseworthy act. These are ongoing actions, in that the Lord is continually visiting the earth because he is continually sending the rain down upon it.

ii. The faithfulness of God in replenishing his provision. 'Thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water.' The river of

God is identified by some as being the brook Shiloah which flowed through Jerusalem. It was, apparently, rain fed, and if it was full of water it bore testimony to the faithfulness of the Lord in sending rain. Moses told the people, 'For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs: But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven: A land which the LORD thy God careth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year' (Deuteronomy 10:10–12). The dependance of the land, and so of the people, on the regular rainfall, was a test of faith. Egypt looked to the annual flooding of the Nile to make their fields fertile; Israel depended on the falling of rain. The sight of the river of God full of water was proof that the Lord had provided yet again.

iii. The providence of God who, in his wisdom, caused the land to be fit to bear the people. Why should the land be watered with rain from heaven? So that it can support the population by bringing forth an abundance of corn. The land of Canaan was prepared specially to support the people of God. It was given to them as an inheritance, one most suited to their needs. Every aspect of life was supported by the wonderful provision of the Lord, because not only was the land watered with the rain of heaven, but the soil was fertile, and the population well governed under the laws of the Lord. Therefore when the people lived as God willed, they found that all their

needs were provided for. Of these needs, none were more provided for than their spiritual needs, for the land also contained the city of Jerusalem, in which was to be found the temple of God, the place where he chose to set his great name. Thus in all things, the land is fit to bear the people, having been specially prepared by God.

From which we can say that if we call to mind the ongoing blessings and provisions of the Lord our God for us, we will see that he has prepared a place for us, to bear us up.

We will therefore begin by calling to mind some of the ongoing blessings and provisions of the Lord our God, before saying something about the place he has prepared for us.

I. The ongoing blessings and provisions of the Lord our God

In this anniversary year it is impossible to avoid calling to mind the great blessing of the Protestant Reformation. Certain provision were made for us in that great movement of the Spirit of God.

1. The provision of the true gospel

It may be argued that the gospel had been provided before. Certainly the New Testament Church had it, preached it and believed it. Indeed, but over the ensuing centuries that gospel had become obscured and darkened by error, superstition and ignorance. Whereas the Scriptures teach that a sinner is justified by faith apart from works, the Church in the Middle Ages had come to believe that a person becomes just by works. There was no denial of the place of faith, only of the effect of faith. An infant was regenerated in the waters of baptism, by virtue of the sacramental power of the rite. That state of regeneration was maintained by regular attendance at the other sacraments, particularly confession and penance, and the mass. By the late Middle Ages the practice of offering indulgences had led to a situation where people truly believed they could sin freely if they had obtained a plenary indulgence. They

believed that a piece of paper, given in exchange for money, was capable of delivering them from the punishments due to their sins both in this life and in the state of purgatory. Martin Luther saw this at first hand, when he found the people drunk and refusing to come to the service, saying that they had these indulgences, and so could do as they pleased for as long as the indulgence lasted. This was license to sin, and Luther rightly condemned it in the strongest possible terms.

The doctrine of justification by faith is a glorious, liberating truth. It sets the troubled conscience free. It lifts the burden of guilt, and drives away the hounds of hell who otherwise snap and snarl at the sinner, reminding him that he has fallen short of the glory of God. The Church could do nothing to help. It required people to give alms, to repeat the Lord's Prayer mindlessly, or to blaspheme in praying to the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, as if she has power to help any. Some beat themselves, or starved themselves, or made themselves ill by overwork or by refusing proper warmth or clothing. They sought to drive the flesh into submission, never understanding that the actions of the flesh are only the outworkings of the thoughts of the heart. This is why our Lord Jesus said, 'That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man' (Mark 7:20).

Only those who are brought to see that our salvation rests on Christ and his finished work are delivered from the terrors of sin and the grave. Only those who are brought to see that we are justified in the sight of God for the sake of his dear Son are freed from the burden of trying to save themselves by their deeds. Only those who are given to know that God imputes the righteousness of Christ to all who believe in him are brought into the peace of God which passes all understanding. The doctrine of justification by faith alone through grace alone in Christ alone is truly the highest doctrine, and its recovery at the Protestant Reformation must be a cause of continual thanksgiving.

And if it is a matter of continual thanksgiving, let us not fail to live out the doctrine. If we are justified in the sight of God, then the power of sin over us has been broken. We are sons of God, and we have liberty to serve him. Let us use our liberty as it is given, not flirting with sin, but pursuing after righteousness. Let us bear testimony to the power of justification by faith, in showing forth our regenerate nature, and in speaking of the Lord Jesus and his grace to all we meet.

2. The provision of the true Word of God

One of the preparatory acts for the Protestant Reformation was the recovery of the authentic text of the Bible. The Church in the Middle Ages was not without a Bible, but it was without the authentic Bible. In the early years after the passing of the apostles the Western Church adopted a Latin translation of the Bible. The translation was either inaccurate, or deliberately altered to fit certain understandings of some doctrines in the West. Theodore Beza gave a manuscript to Cambridge University, called Codex D. It is an incomplete dual-language manuscript of the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles and 3 John. The two languages are Greek and Latin. Significantly, the Latin is not a translation of the Greek, but clearly reflects a different tradition.

The Church made the situation worse over the centuries by adding a crust of unwritten traditions to the reading of the Latin Bible. These unwritten traditions meant that the opinion of former generations as to how the Bible ought to be understood were of greater authority than the Bible itself. Furthermore, philosophy had made it only acceptable to understand the Bible by analogy and allegory, and not in the plain meaning. In the Parable of the Good Samaritan, for instance, the two pence are the sacraments of confession and penance, the donkey is the Church which bears people, and so on. The literal meaning is completely ignored in favour of fancies.

Two hundred and fifty years before the Reformation the knights of the Fourth Crusade sacked Constantinople, and precipitated the decline of the state. This led to the migration of Easter scholars to the West, bringing with them their Greek manuscripts, and their learning. Those manuscripts were of all sorts of books, including the Bible. As they began to teach Western students, the knowledge of the Greek language began to flourish, and the study of Greek philosophy led to the Renaissance. The study of the Greek New Testament led to the Reformation. When in 1516 Erasmus published the first edition of his Greek New Testament (which was really a new translation of the Latin New Testament, to which he added the Greek to show the accuracy of his Latin) Martin Luther and Thomas Cranmer were two who bought copies. For both men the study of the Greek text opened their eyes to truths hitherto unsuspected. Both men worked, in different ways and at different paces, for the reformation of the Church.

Not only was the Bible now studied in its original languages, Hebrew, Arabic and Aramaic also becoming subjects for students, but it was translated into the common languages. William Tyndale in England, and Martin Luther in Germany, are but two of those who gave themselves to the work of providing the Word of God for all to read. Following the martyrdom of William Tyndale, God answered his dying prayer, and caused Henry VIII to command the provision of an English Bible in every parish church in England. This did more to spread the true gospel than almost anything else.

Interestingly, during the reign of Edward VI, Thomas Cranmer wrote to Philipp Melancthon, Ulrich Zwingli and John Calvin, inviting them to England (or to send representatives) to attend a conference. The King would sponsor the conference, providing a palace to house the delegates. The purpose would be to draw up a Reformed confession of faith, where every doctrine would

be grounded on Scripture. It would not be enough, said Cranmer in his letter, to give references; the very words of the Bible must be expounded to show exactly how each doctrine is understood. In the providence of God the conference never went ahead: Calvin was too ill, Zwingli cut off by war, and Melancthon never replied (or perhaps his reply was never received). Shortly thereafter Edward died, and Cranmer was imprisoned. Had the conference gone ahead, who knows who much good might have been done. What we do see, however, is the centrality of the Word of God, in the very understanding of words and phrases, to the formation of Reformation doctrine. This could never have come about, had it not been for the rediscovery of the true text of Holy Scripture.

3. *The overthrowing of papal power*

We may not immediately think of this as being a primary blessing of the Protestant Reformation, but it was. Prior to the Reformation the Pope interfered in the affairs of every nation that acknowledged his spiritual supremacy. It had not always been the case. When Theodore of Tarsus was sent to be Archbishop of Canterbury in ad 668, he was meant to uphold the papal will in England. History records that he developed a method of dealing with papal instructions: he just ignored letters which required him to do something he did not agree with!

Later Archbishops, especially following the Norman Conquest, were far more ready to implement papal policy. William the Conqueror was a loyal subject of the Pope, but his heirs and successors began to resist interference, with greater or lesser success. The murder of Thomas Beckett was part of this struggle, as was the disastrous reign of King John. It was not until Renaissance thinking began to permeate the darkness of medieval thought that a Prince had the strength to so withstand the Pope as to cast off his authority. That Prince was Henry VIII. His reformation may not have been a spiritual revival,

but it paved the way for the godly reign of Edward VI. Henry freed the English crown, Church and nation from foreign interference, and thus opened the door to independent reform. In many respects England was more blessed than any other European nation, Scotland excepted, thanks both to its form of monarchy, and to its island form.

The overthrow of papal power was not limited to political interference, but extended far further than that. The ministers of the Church were no longer priests, who dressed in sacerdotal vestments to offer Christ afresh on the altar. They were gospel preachers, who cared for the spiritual well-being of their congregations through the application of the Word of God, and who showed that care in visiting people to instruct them further. The focus of services became the reading of the Bible, prayer, and preaching. The congregations went from being spectators to being participants. Being a Christian became defined by being born again, and not by being a follower of a form of religion.

Not only was the power of the Pope overthrown, but he was shown in his true colours. Rather than being Christ's Vicar on earth, through whom grace was mediated to all, the Pope was displayed as the antichrist he is, who 'as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God' (2 Thessalonians 2:4). The Roman Church gave evidence of this by the cruel and bloody way it sought to silence true gospel preaching, and to overturn faith in Jesus Christ. It accused all who believed the truth of heresy, and made itself the standard of orthodoxy. At the Council of Trent it confirmed its wicked status by cursing all who held to justification by faith, or who believed that we can have assurance of our salvation, and a list of other doctrines. Sadly, in recent decades, Protestant Churches have come crawling back to the Pope, and have apologised for the Reformation, and for the division it caused. 'Can two walk together, except they be agreed?' asked the prophet Amos. It seems that many heirs of the Protestant

Reformation are really sons of Rome, because they agree with those who oppose the gospel of Christ.

And yet, those who hold the Reformation principles know full well the difference between true authority and false. Christ is the Head of the Church, and we stand on the foundation of God's Word. This is a blessing we owe to the Reformation.

II. *The place our heavenly Father has prepared for us*

As we recount just a few of the blessings that are ours because of the Protestant Reformation, we are bound to ask, to what purpose are these blessings. It is not enough to think that God was correcting a small error in the direction the Church was taking. Rather, he was restoring his inheritance. He was providing for the spiritual needs of his people.

All of these blessings tend to one end, namely the salvation of sinners. This is why the authentic gospel and the true Scriptures were recovered, and why the opposing power was overthrown.

The salvation of sinners is an ongoing need. There has never, and will never, be a time in the duration of this earth when this need is not always present. Even at the height of the greatest revival this is the pressing need: indeed, the coming of revival is proof that this need has not gone away.

But from what are sinners to be saved? Not from incorrect doctrines or practices, as though the more perfect ordering of the Church were the sum total of Reformation goals. Not from the power of a foreign and false authority, as if civil liberty was the aim of Christian preaching. Not from the handicap of a less-than-perfect Bible, by which we are not able to know as much as we should. Rather, from the wrath of God, and from hell. This is the fate of all mankind, as being our inheritance from our father Adam.

The Lord has provided a place for us in which to come to the knowledge of the truth.

It is called the Church. The Church is the Body of Christ, his Bride, for whom he gave his life. It consists of the redeemed, though in the outward expression of the Church, the good is ever mingled with the bad, for not all are who they say they are. It is also part of the work of the Church to provide a place where seekers may come and be taught the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. The Church must remain true to its purpose, and not divert into the schemes and actions of which the world approves. The Church is commanded to preach the gospel to every creature, going out into all the world. The Church is to be the city set on a hill, which cannot be hidden. The Church is to be a light set on a candlestick, giving light to the whole house. The members of the Church are to be salt, purifying and preserving the society in which we live—not that they will be saved because of us, but that the benefits of gospel faith, being made evident in us, will act as witnesses to all of the power and love of Christ.

And yet we look beyond this life, to the fulfilment of all in the life to come. God provided rain, and fertile soil, to his people Israel, not because he would have them grow fat and lazy, not to make them richer than their neighbours, but to teach them that he has prepared something far better for all who love him, who are called according to his purposes. The glory of heaven is a wonderful glory, and its hope a wonderful hope. Those who worked so tirelessly to promote and maintain the Protestant Reformation were prepared to seal their witness with their blood. This was not because they were mindless fanatics, but because they knew that their reward awaited them, in the lovely presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were more than content to suffer the loss of all things, including their lives, for Christ's sake. We owe them a great debt. We owe a greater debt to our Father in heaven, who poured out the abundance of his blessings on the Church in the days of the Reformation, and who has preserved us to this day. Let us give thanks.¶

THE FREE OFFER OF THE GOSPEL

By THE EDITOR

BUT remember to whom this gospel was first preached; not to Adam as a private person, sinner though he was, but to Adam as the federal head, and thus to all his progeny. Since Adam's sin has killed every man, woman and child who has been and ever shall be born on this earth, it follows that God's remedy, the gospel, is to be preached to as many are under the curse, namely to all mankind. This is, after all, the plain meaning of the great commission, to preach to all nations, Matthew 28:19, and to every creature, Mark 16:15. None are to be excluded, 'for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God', and 'the soul that sinneth, it shall died.'

This indiscriminate preaching of the gospel is at the heart of the Parable of the Sower. 'A sower went forth to sow' (Matthew 13:3). The job of the sower is to broadcast the seed across the field. Not all the soil is good, and some is positively unhealthy for the seed. No blame attaches to the sower for the actions of the birds who eat up the seed, or for the failure of the seed to take root in the shallow soil, or for the fact that some of the seed fell among thorns.

The gospel is the means appointed in the saving of sinners. The work is Christ's alone, who gave himself for our sins. The means by which Christ's finished work, and the tender mercy of God in so loving the world that he gave his only begotten Son, are to be declared is in the preaching of the gospel. We have no need to prove that none are saved apart from faith, but as the blessed Apostle Paul declared, 'For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of

whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God' (Romans 10:12-17). Our heavenly Father has appointed preaching as the means by which the world is to be told the good news, or gospel, of our Lord Jesus Christ. That telling is not a bare recounting of the facts, but is an exhortation such as that described in Acts 2:40 of Peter on the day of Pentecost. We read that he 'did testify and exhort.' This was an urgent pleading, an appeal to urge his hearers to save themselves from the untoward generation.

When writing to the Corinthians, Paul said of the gospel, 'unto us which are saved it is the power of God' (1 Cor 1:18). Writing to the Romans, he said, 'For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek' (Romans 1:18f). There is a power in the gospel which works within those who hear it. In whom does it work? In two classes of hearers, those who receive it without faith, and those who receive it in faith. The first sort have an attraction to the gospel, perhaps in the intellect or in the emotions, and they consider that they have benefited from it. In truth, they have not, for there is no root of faith in them. The second sort are those who receive the word of truth in faith, and who lay hold on the Christ who is set before them in the gospel. These repent of their sins, and confess Jesus to be the Christ. The first sort may give the appearance, for a while, of being saved,

but in time their true state will be revealed. The second sort may be troubled by the first sort, especially when they fall away. Of course, many who hear the gospel have no response, expect to scoff or to express hatred. It is the gospel that reveals the difference. Two people, outwardly similar in temperament, education and status in life, are revealed to be very different when one hates the gospel and the other loves it. This difference is exposed by gospel preaching. Again, of those who receive the gospel with apparently equal love, one sort is differentiated from the other by the gospel. One is drawn to the benefits contained in the gospel, or to the evident love of Christ, or to the knowledge of sin, yet not in a way that is the effect of saving faith. The other is drawn to Christ, and falls before him as he is held forth in the gospel. In time, the speech and actions of the one will mark them off from the other. This will become most apparent when the gospel is preached. Those who love the benefits will delight to hear of them, but less to hear of Christ. Those who rejoice in the evident love of Christ for sinners will be glad to hear of forgiveness, but not so much of love in return. They are those who follow Christ for the bread, and not for the word. Those who are glad of the knowledge of sin will delight to hear sin condemned, especially in others, but will not delight to hear of sanctification of life, with the renewing of the mind; the forsaking of outward and gross sins is not the same as being a new creature in Christ Jesus, and thinking and acting as such.

The power of the gospel does not belong to the preacher, but to the God who calls men to preach, and who equips them for the task. When J.C. Ryle was a clergyman in Suffolk he took to printing his sermons on a little press he bought for the purpose, and delivering copies to the households in the parish. He knew those who had come to church, and those who had not, and he made sure the Word went out to everyone who was under his spiritual care. That care included the willing and the unwilling.

To what purpose is the gospel to be preached indiscriminately? At the very least, that all may be without excuse. If the revelation of God in creation leaves all without excuse, Romans 1:20, how much more will the plain preaching of the gospel. Only the elect will believe savingly, but the elect must hear the gospel in order to believe, for 'faith cometh by hearing'. Christ is not harmed by having false followers; he knew the true nature of Judas Iscariot from the beginning, and yet he included him in almost all things, including going out to preach and to heal, Luke 9:1-6. God is the judge, not us, and we are not to decide who is and who is not worthy to hear the gospel. Were we worthy when first we heard it? The Scripture tells us we were dead in trespasses and sins. How came we to live? By the power of the gospel, the word of life that was preached to us. 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!' (Isaiah 52:7, comp. Romans 10:15). 'Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine' (2 Timothy 4:2).

The gospel is indeed folly to them that perish (1 Corinthians 1:18). The cross is a stumblingblock to some, foolishness to others. This is no reason to deny them the gospel; fallen human nature cannot see the glory of the gospel except by grace. But grace does not operate aside from the means of grace, and among the means provided is the preaching of the gospel. We do not control the means of grace, as if it were our business to declare who can and cannot hear. We are not to look for evidences in others before we preach to them, for we cannot discern true evidences from false. We are called to preach, and so we must. Let us declare the whole counsel of God, that sinners may be called to repentance, whether they will, or whether they will forbear.¶

PEACE THAT ENDURES

By CARINE MACKENZIE

If you switch on the television news programmes, there will nearly always be a story about a war situation, a bombing, or an act of violence against someone. Perhaps the trouble spot is far away in Syria or Afghanistan and sometimes closer to home. Politicians talk about striving for peace but true peace does not come from the politicians or any man or woman here.

Families and communities are torn apart by jealousy and arguments—even disagreeing so strongly that one refuses to speak to a brother or sister or neighbour. Counsellors or mediators may try to bring about reconciliation but not always with success.

Even in the school playground you may come up against bullying and fighting and hurtful words.

Where can we find true peace?

By nature we are all sinners which means we are at enmity with God. Our sin leads to unrest in our hearts, a guilty conscience and trouble with family and friends—the very opposite of peace. It is vital that we have peace with God, but how is that possible?

God himself is the author of peace (1 Corinthians 14:33). He sent his Son the Lord Jesus to our world. When he was born the angels praised God saying ‘Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men’ (Luke 2:14).

Only through the Lord Jesus can we have peace with God. ‘Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ’ (Romans 5:1). Jesus dealt with sin at the cross. His death meant that his people, who trust in him, receive pardon for all their sins and are accepted as righteous in God’s sight.

This peace is described as perfect. ‘Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee’ (Isaiah 26:3). We may be facing difficult decisions, or illness or financial worries but if our trust is in the Lord, we can experience real peace in our heart.

We are very prone to worry about things and feel anxious and uneasy. God tells us to cast all our care on him because he cares for us (1 Peter 5:7). If we pray about everything with thanksgiving, God has promised to give us his peace ‘which passeth all understanding’ (Philippians 4:7). Our hearts and minds will be at ease through Jesus Christ.

Jesus comforted his disciples in the upper room with the promise of his own peace (John 14:27), which is far above anything the world can give. This comfort is for us too.

As we live the Christian life we have to be ready to face opposition from the evil one. God has provided spiritual armour which we have to put on to be able to stand against the wiles of the devil (Ephesians 5:11). Have ‘your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace’ (Ephesians 5:15). This gospel peace will help us as we walk through life, in times of joy or sorrow, and even as we walk through the valley of the shadow of death (Psalm 23:4).

God wants us to demonstrate peace in our daily living. Our sinful nature may react badly when others annoy us or disagree with us, but Jesus said in the sermon on the mount, ‘Blessed are peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.’ God is looking for fruit in our lives, evidence that we are trusting in him and that the Holy Spirit is dwelling in our heart. Part of that fruit of the Spirit is peace.

Those who experience this peace will have a real love of God’s word (Psalm 119:165), and will spend time meditating on it and considering what Jesus Christ has done on the cross, suffering in our place so that we might have joy and peace in believing.

BIBLE SEARCH

Find the missing words from the texts. The initials of the correct answers will spell out the subject of the story.

1. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of _____ between us. (Ephesians 2:14)
2. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the _____ of that man is peace. (Psalm 37:37)
3. And the work of _____ shall be peace. (Isaiah 32:17)
4. But the _____ of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. (Galatians 5:22–23)
5. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of _____. (Proverbs 1:33)
6. And his name shall be called Wonderful, _____, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)
7. Speak every man _____ to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace your gates. (Zechariah 8:16)
8. I know whom I have believed and am _____ that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day. (2 Timothy 1:12)
9. When a man’s ways please the Lord, he make the even his _____ to be at peace with him. (Proverbs 16:7)
10. Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may _____ in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. (Romans 15:13)
11. God hath _____ us to peace. (1 Corinthians 7:15)
12. Thus saith the Lord, Behold I will _____ peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream. (Isaiah 66:12)

STUDIES IN EZEKIEL

P KING (Hailsham)

Chapter 47:13–48

THE DAWNING OF A NEW ERA!

THE visions are drawing to a close, yet the greatest of them all is recorded in this chapter. The boundaries of the land are divided between the twelve tribes of Israel, just as they were in the original inheritance of Canaan, but this time the division is equal and Joseph has two portions. The old tribal order was by population and Joseph had no inheritance, but now equality is paramount. The boundaries of this land are those that Israel should have ruled over, not what actually happened, and the Gentiles are now included (v.22). The completely new order is the universal Church of Christ where all are equal, and Jew and Gentile are together. The apportionment of the land is also significant with Oan the furthest north away from the temple, perhaps because this tribe was heathen from the days of the judges, and Judah with Benjamin, the most loyal of the tribes, closest to the Temple. This is a confirmation of 1 Corinthians where the gifts are given according to the devotion on earth! The city, the temple, the prince and the priesthood are in a compact brotherhood, having a common interest.

A number of factors indicate the nature of the city as something far superior to any other place. Its circumference is between 20 and 30 miles, far larger than the old Jerusalem, and it bears the name 'The Lord is there'. This is the fulfilment of our Lord's wonderful prayer in John 17 when he asks that he and

his people may be one, even as the Godhead is One.

Ezekiel, using the language of his day, describes the new order in terms of the legal system with the Temple at the centre. Later, John sees new Jerusalem with the eyes of Roman civilisation where there is no temple but the Lamb is all the glory. Amid the horrors and heartbreak of the captivity, Ezekiel was sent by God to encourage the captives by painting vivid scenes of perfection against the backdrop of an uncertain future. Here the heart is taught never to despair—not even in the darkest times. Christians need to be reminded of their inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled that does not fade away, but is reserved in heaven for those who are called according to God's purpose.

Lessons for today

- Earthly things can be used as patterns for heavenly revelation.
- In the darkest experiences we are cheered by bright visions of the future.
- The supreme glory of heaven is a sight of the unveiled presence of Jehovah.
- From the Chebar River, where there was only despair, we have travelled to the majesty and promise of heaven itself. Let us rejoice and be glad in our God.

The Lamb is all the glory in Emmanuel's land. Amen.

The righteous man makes godliness his gain. The wicked man makes gain his godliness.

Ralph Venning

CHRIST AND BELIAL

PART VI

BY THE REV P LOS

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

CHRIST

We shall now introduce you to another King and His Kingdom. It is lovelier than the first one we saw. The name is for the subjects as an ointment poured forth and means 'Anointed'. It is of him, that the Father said: 'I have anointed my King over Zion from eternity.' Thus before the mountains were born, he was already anointed to be King and the same God testifies of his subjects: 'Yea I have loved them with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn them.'

The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth his handiwork, but the day unto the day and the night unto the uttereth abundant speech of the great wonder of such a King and of such a Kingdom. That King is the Stone cut out without hands, whereof Nebuchadnezzar dreamed, and shall brake the Kingdom of Belial into pieces like the chaff of the threshing floor.

The revelation of this King started in Paradise, briefly after the fall, when the Lord God promised that the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent.

This promise was constantly repeated, and although still veiled, the children of the Kingdom in the old day could rejoice themselves therein, knowing that the Lord never faileth in fulfilling his promises.

When we look unto Noah, then we find again the coming of that King and the circumstances of his subjects pictured clearly. There it was that the preacher of righteousness, commanded by the Lord, had to build the ark. How clearly do we see the King and his kingdom pictured herein shadows. Behold, the windows of heaven and the abysses of the earth were opened and covered everything that had life, but Noah and his, floated safely on the swelling waves. Thus the King floateth safely with all his, in spite of Belial and all his children. It is written that when all, who the Lord wanted in, had gone into the ark, that the Lord shut it behind Noah. Noah could not and was not permitted to do it himself, so that he would not let by human or actually foolish kindness children of Belial in the ark.

TO BE CONTINUED

The greatest unworthiness is no objection, with Christ, to a most welcome reception of those, who come unto him on a conviction of the necessity of an interest in him. Nothing is required to a participation of his benefits, but a sense of our need of them, and a will to receive them as he communicates them, *viz.* freely, 'without money and without price.'

John Brine

EVANGELICAL RELIGION

J. C. RYLE

III. It only remains for me to say a few words on the last question I propose to consider:—*‘What is it that makes much religion appear to us not Evangelical?’*

This is no doubt a delicate point, but a very serious and important one. I repeat here what I have remarked before. We do not say that men who are not professedly Evangelical ignore and disbelieve the leading doctrines of the Evangelical creed. We say nothing of the kind. But we do say confidently that there are many ways in which the faith of Christ may be marred and spoiled, without being positively denied. And here, we venture to think, is the very reason that so much religion called Christian is not truly Evangelical. The gospel, in fact, is a most curiously and delicately compounded medicine, and a medicine that is very easily spoiled.

You may spoil the gospel by *substitution*. You have only to withdraw from the eyes of the sinner the grand object which the Bible proposes to faith—Jesus Christ, and substitute another object in His place—the Church, the Ministry, the Confessional, Baptism, or the Lord’s Supper—and the mischief is done. Substitute anything for Christ, and the gospel is totally spoiled! Do this, either directly or indirectly, and your religion ceases to be Evangelical.

You may spoil the gospel by *addition*. You have only to add to Christ, the grand object of faith, some other objects as equally worthy of honour, and the mischief is done. Add anything to Christ, and the gospel ceases to be a pure gospel! Do this, either directly or indirectly, and your religion ceases to be Evangelical.

You may spoil the gospel by *interposition*. You have only to push something between Christ and the eye of the soul, to draw away the sinner’s attention from the Saviour, and

the mischief is done. Interpose anything between man and Christ, and man will neglect Christ for the thing interposed! Do this, either directly or indirectly, and your religion ceases to be Evangelical.

You may spoil the gospel by *disproportion*. You have only to attach an exaggerated importance to the secondary things of Christianity, and a diminished importance to the first things, and the mischief is done. Once alter the proportion of the parts of truth, and truth soon becomes downright error! Do this, either directly or indirectly, and your religion ceases to be Evangelical.

Lastly, but not least, you may completely spoil the gospel by *confused and contradictory directions*. Complicated and obscure statements about faith, baptism, Church privileges, and the benefits of the Lord’s Supper, all jumbled together, and thrown down without order before hearers, make the gospel no gospel at all! Confused and disorderly statements of Christianity are almost as bad as no statement at all! Religion of this sort is not Evangelical.

I know not whether I succeed in making my meaning clear. I am very anxious to do so. Myriads of our fellow countrymen are utterly unable to see any difference between one thing and another in religion, and are hence continually led astray. Thousands can see no distinct difference between sermons and sermons, and preachers and preachers, and have only a vague idea that ‘sometimes all is not right.’ I will endeavour, then, to illustrate my subject by two familiar illustrations.

A doctor’s prescription of a medicine often contains five or six different ingredients. There is so much of one drug and so much of another; a little of this, and a good deal of that. Now, what a man of common sense can fail to see is that the whole value of the prescription depends on a faithful and honest

use of it? Take away one ingredient, and substitute another; leave out one ingredient altogether; add a little to the quantity of one drug; take away a little from the quantity of another. Do this, I say, to the prescription, my good friend, and it is a thousand chances to one that you spoil it altogether. The thing that was meant for your health, you have converted into downright poison.

Apply this little simple parable to the gospel. Regard it as a medicine sent down from heaven, for the curing of man’s spiritual disease, by a Physician of infinite skill and power; a medicine of singular efficacy, which man, with all his wisdom could never have devised. Tell me now, as one of common sense, does it not stand to reason that this medicine should be used without the slightest alteration, and precisely in the manner and proportion that the great Physician intended? Tell me whether you have the least right to expect good from it, if you have tampered with it in the smallest degree? You know what the answer to these questions must be: your conscience will give the reply. Spoil the proportions of your doctor’s prescription, and you will spoil its usefulness, even though you may call it medicine. Spoil the proportions of Christ’s gospel, and you spoil its efficacy. You may call it religion if you like; but you must not call it Evangelical. The several doctrines may be there, but they are useless if you have not observed the *proportions*.

The brazen serpent supplies another valuable illustration of my meaning. The whole efficacy of that miraculous remedy, we must remember, depended on using it precisely in the way that God directed.—It was *the serpent* of brass, and nothing else, that brought health to him that looked at it. The man who thought it wise to look at the brazen altar, or at the pole on which the serpent hung, would have died of his wounds.—It was the serpent *looked at*, and only looked at, that cured the poor bitten Israelite. The man who fancied it would be better to touch the serpent, or to offer a sacrifice to it, would have gained no

benefit.—It was the serpent looked at by each sufferer *with his own eyes*, and not with the eyes of another, that healed. The man who bade another look for him, would have found a vicarious look useless.—Looking, looking, only looking, was the prescription.—The sufferer, and only the sufferer, must look for himself with his own eyes.—The serpent, the brazen serpent, and nothing but the serpent, was the object for the eye.

Let us apply that marvellous and most deeply typical history to the gospel. We have no warrant for expecting the slightest benefit for our souls from Christ’s salvation, unless we use it precisely in the way that Christ appointed. If we add anything to it, take anything away from it, try to improve the terms, depart in the slightest degree from the path which the Bible marks out for us, we have no right whatever to look for any good being done. God’s plan of salvation cannot possibly be mended or improved. He who tries to amend or improve it will find that he spoils it altogether.

In one word, I wind up this last part of my subject by saying that for a religion to be really ‘Evangelical’ and really good, must be the gospel, the whole gospel, and nothing but the gospel, as Christ prescribed it and expounded it to the Apostles;—the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth;—the terms, the whole terms, and nothing but the terms;—in all their fullness, all their freeness, all their simplicity, all their present appeal. Here, I am sorry to say, a vast quantity of so-called religion in the present day appears to me to break down. It does not come up to the standard I have just given. Things are added to it, or things are taken away, or things are put in their wrong places, or things are set forth in their wrong proportions. And hence, painful as it is, I cannot avoid the conclusion that much of the religion of our own times does not deserve to be called Evangelical. I do not charge all clergymen who are not ‘Evangelical’ with not being ‘Christians’. I do not say that the religion they teach is not

Christianity. I trust I am not so uncharitable as to say anything of this kind. But I do say that, for the reasons already assigned, they appear to me to teach that which is not Christ's whole truth. In a word, they do not give full weight, full measure, and the prescription of the Gospel accurately made up. The parts are there, but not the proportions.

I cannot bring my paper to a conclusion without offering some practical suggestions about the present duties of the Evangelical body. We have been considering what the Evangelical faith is, and is not. A few pages devoted to our immediate duties in the present position of the Church can hardly be thought misapplied.

The times no doubt are very critical, full of danger to our beloved Church, full of danger to the nation. Never has there been such an unblushing avowal of Popish opinions among Churchmen, and such shameless additions to the faith as defined in our Articles. The grand question is, whether our Protestantism will die or live? Now, I believe much depends on the attitude and line of conduct taken up by the Evangelical body. If they know the times, and do their duty, there is hope for the Church. If they are timid, supine, compromising, vacillating, and indolent, there is no hope at all.

(1) I suggest, for one thing, that we ought to exercise a special jealousy over *our own personal religion*. Let us take heed that it is thoroughly and entirely Evangelical. The times we live in are desperately unfavourable to a sharply-cut, decided, distinct, doctrinal Christianity. A fog of vague liberalism over-spreads the ecclesiastical horizon. A settled determination to think everybody is right, and nobody is wrong, everything is true, and nothing is false, meets us at every turn. The world is possessed with a devil of false charity about religion. Men try to persuade us, like Gallio, that the alleged differences between creeds and schools of thought are only about 'words and names', and that it is 'all the same thing.'

In times like these, let us be on our guard, and take heed to our souls.—'Watch ye: stand fast in the faith. Quit you like men: be strong' (1 Corinthians 16:13). Let us steadfastly resolve to stand fast in the old paths, the good way of our Protestant Reformers. Narrow, old-fashioned, obsolete, as some may be pleased to call that way, they will never show us a better. The nearer we draw to the great realities of death, judgment, and eternity, the more excellent will that way appear. When I go down the valley of the shadow of death, and my feet touch the cold waters, I want something better than vague, high-sounding words, or the painted playthings and gilded trifles of man-made ceremonials. Give me no stone altars and would-be confessors. Give me no surpliced priests or pretended sacrifice in my bedroom. Put no man or form between me and Christ. Give me a real staff for my hand such as David had, and real meat and drink for my soul such as aged Paul felt within him, and with feeling cried, 'I am not ashamed.' (2 Timothy 1:12) I must know distinctly whom I believe, what I believe, and why I believe, and in what way I believe. Nothing, nothing will answer these questions satisfactorily but thorough, downright, Evangelical faith. Let us make sure that this religion is our own.

(2) I suggest, secondly, that ministers who call themselves 'Evangelical' ought to be specially *careful that they do not compromise their principles*, and damage their testimony, by vain attempts to conciliate the world.

This is a great danger in these days. It is a sunken rock on which, I fear, many are striking, and doing themselves immense harm. The plausible pretext of making our services more attractive, and cutting the ground from under the feet of the Ritualists, too often induces Evangelical ministers to do things which they had far better let alone. New church decorations, new church music, and a semi-histrionic mode of going through church worship, are things which I suggest that we must watch most narrowly, and keep at arm's length. They are points on which we

must take heed that we do not let in the Pope and the devil.

Tampering with these things, we may be sure, does no real good. It may seem to please the world, and have a 'show of wisdom', but it never converts the world, and make the world believe. We had far better leave it alone. Some Evangelical clergymen, I suspect, have begun flirting and trifling with these things with the best intentions, and have ended by losing their own characters, disgusting their true believing hearers, making themselves miserable, and going out of the world under a cloud.

Oh no! we cannot be too jealous in these days about the slightest departure from the 'faith once delivered to the saints', and from the worship handed down to us by the Reformers. We cannot be too careful to add nothing to, and take nothing away from, the simplicity of the gospel, and to do nothing in our worship which seems to cast the slightest reflection on Evangelical principles.—'A little leaven leaveth the whole lump.'—'Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees' (Galatians 5:9; Matthew 16:6).

Let us mark the testimony of Scripture on this subject. The Epistle to the Galatians is the inspired handbook for these times. Mark how in that Epistle Paul declares, 'Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.'—Mark how he repeats it: 'As we said before, so we say again, 'If any man preach any other gospel than that ye have received, let him be accursed.'—Mark how he tells us that 'when he came to Antioch he withstood Peter to the face, because he was to be blamed.'—Mark how he says to the Galatians, 'Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.' And then comes the solemn and weighty remark which ought to ring in the ears of many: 'I am afraid of you' (Galatians 5:9, 2:11, 4:10–11).

Let us carefully observe how little good they do who attempt to mix up Evangelical

preaching and ritual ceremonial. Little did I say?—they do no good at all! The world is never won by trimming, and compromising, by facing both ways, and trying to please all. The cross of Christ is never made more acceptable by sawing off its corners, or by polishing, varnishing, and adorning it. Processions, and banners, and flowers, and crosses, and an excessive quantity of music, and elaborate services, and beautiful vestments, may please children and weak-minded people. But they never helped forward heart-conversion and heart-sanctification, and they never will. Scores of English clergymen, I strongly suspect, have found out too late that Paul's words are deeply true when he says, 'It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein' (Hebrews 13:9).

I grant freely that we have need of much patience in these times. No doubt it is very provoking to be twitted with the nakedness, poverty, and meagreness (so called) of Evangelical worship. It is very annoying to see our younger members slipping away to churches where there are processions, banners, flowers, incense, and a thoroughly histrionic and gorgeous ceremonial. It is vexing to hear them say that 'they feel so much better after these services.' But none of these things must move us. 'He that believeth shall not make haste' (Isaiah 28:16). The end will never justify illicit means. Let us never leave the high ground of principle under any false pressure, from whatever side it may come. Let us hold on our way, and be jealously sensitive of any departure from simplicity. Popularity obtained by pandering to the senses or the sentiment of our hearers is not worth anything. Worshippers who are not content with the Bible, the cross of Christ, simple prayers and simple praise, are worshippers of little value. It is useless to try to please them, because their spiritual taste is diseased.

Let us remember, not least, the enormous injury we may do to souls if we once allow

ourselves to depart in the least degree from the simplicity of the gospel, either in our doctrine or in our worship. Who can estimate the shipwrecks that might occur in a single night, and the lives that might be lost, if a light-house keeper dared to alter but a *little* the colour of his light? Who can estimate the deaths that might take place in a town if the chemist took on himself to depart but a *little* from the doctor's prescriptions? Who can estimate the wholesale misery that might be caused in a war, by maps a *little* wrong, and charts a *little* incorrect?—Who can estimate these things?—Then perhaps you may have some idea of the spiritual harm that ministers may do by departing in the slightest degree from the Scriptural proportions of the gospel, or by trying to catch the world by dressing the simple old Evangelical faith in new clothes.

(3) I suggest, finally, that *we must not allow the Evangelical faith to be thrust out of the Church of England without a struggle.*

It is a faith that is worth a struggle; for it can point to works which no other school in the Church of England has ever equalled. In this matter, we fear no comparison, if honestly and fairly made. We confess with sorrow that we have done but little compared with what we ought to have done; and yet we say boldly that, both abroad and at home, no Churchmen have done so much good to souls as those who are called Evangelical. What Sierra Leone can the extreme Ritualists place before us as the result of their system? What Tinnevely bears testimony to the truth of their school? What manufacturing towns have they rescued from semi-heathenism? What mining districts have they Christianised? What teeming populations of poor in our large cities can they point to, as evangelised by their agencies? We boldly challenge a reply. Let them come forward and name them. In the day when the Evangelical faith is cast out of the Church of England, the usefulness of the Church will be ended and gone. Nothing gives the Church of England

such power and influence as genuine, well-worked, well-administered Evangelical faith.

But it is a religion that can only be preserved amongst us just now by a great effort, and a mighty struggle. For our nation's sake, for our children's sake, for the world's sake, for the honour and glory of our God, let us gird up the loins of our minds, and resolve that the struggle shall be made.

It is a struggle; we can honestly call the world to witness, which is not one of our seeking. The controversy is thrust upon us, whether we like it or not. We are driven to a painful dilemma. We must either sit by in silence, like sneaks and cowards, and let the Church of England be unprotestantised and re-united with Rome;—or else we must basely desert the dear old Church and let traitors work their will;—or else we must look the danger manfully in the face, and *fight!*—Our fight, of course, is to be carried on with the same Word that Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley fought with, and not with worldly weapons. But as they did, so must we do: we must stand up and fight. Yes! even if a secession of our antagonists is the consequence, we must not shrink from fighting. Let everyone go to the place that suits him best. Let Papists join the Pope, and Romanists retire to Rome.¹ But if I. I trust that no one will misunderstand me here. If anyone supposes that I want to narrow the pale of the Church of England, and to make it the Church of one particular party, he is totally mistaken. I am quite aware that my Church is eminently liberal, truly comprehensive, and tolerant of wide differences of opinion. But I deny that the Church ever meant its members to be downright Papists.

The Church has always found room in its ranks for men of very different schools of thought. There has been room for Ridley, and room for Hooper, room for Jewell, and room for Hooker, room for Whitgift, and room for Tillotson, room for Usher, and room for Jeremy Taylor, room for Davenant, and room for Andrews, room for Waterland, and room for Beveridge, room for Chillingworth, and room for Bull—room for Whitby, and room for Scott, room for Toplady, and room for Fletcher. Where is the Churchman who would like any one of these men to have been shut out of the Church of England? If there is such an one, I do not agree with him.

we want our Church to continue Protestant and Evangelical, we must not be afraid to fight. There are times when there is a mine of deep meaning in our Lord's words,—‘He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one’ (Luke 22:36). To such times we have come.

Does anyone ask me what is to be done? I answer that the path of duty, to my mind, is clear, plain, and unmistakable. Union and organization of all Protestant and Evangelical Churchmen,—untiring exposure of the Popish dealings of our antagonists, by the pulpit, the platform, and the press,—lawsuits whenever there is a reasonable hope of success,—appeals to Parliament for declarative

But if anyone wants me to believe that our Church ever meant to allow its clergy to teach the Romish doctrine of the Real Presence, the sacrifice of the Mass, and the practice of auricular confession, without let or hindrance, I tell him plainly that I cannot believe it. My common sense revolts against it. I would as soon believe that black is white, or that two and two make five.

Between the old High Churchman and the Ritualists I draw a broad line of distinction. With all his faults and mistakes, in my judgment, the old High Churchman is a true Churchman, and is thoroughly and heartily opposed to Popery. The Ritualists, on the other hand, sully the very name of Protestant; and, if words mean anything, are so like Roman Catholics that a plain man can see no difference between them and those of Rome.

statutes, and the reform of our Ecclesiastical courts,—bold, decided, prompt action, the moment any necessity requires,—these are the weapons of our warfare. They are weapons which, from one end of the country to the other, we ought to wield, boldly, untiringly, unflinchingly, be the sacrifice and cost what it may. But I say, ‘No surrender! No desertion! No compromise! No disgraceful peace!’

Let us, then, resolve to ‘contend earnestly for the faith.’ By preaching and by praying, by pulpit and by platform, by pen and by tongue, by printing and by speaking, let us labour to maintain the Evangelical faith within the Church of England, and resist the enemies which we see around us.—We are not weak if we stand together and act together. The middle classes and the poor are yet sound at heart. They do not love Popery. God himself has not forsaken us, and truth is on our side.—But be the issue of the conflict what it may, let us nail our colours to the mast; and, if need be, go down with our colours flying. Let us only settle it deeply in our minds that, without Protestant and Evangelical principles, a Church is as useless as a well without water. In one word, when the Church of England becomes Popish once more, it will be a Church not worth preserving.¶

Study that grand gospel truth of a soul's justification before God; acquaint thyself with this in all its causes; the moving cause, the free mercy of God, being justified freely by his grace; the meritorious, which is the blood of Christ; and the instrumental, faith, with all the sweet privileges that flow from it. An effectual door once opened to let the soul into this truth, would not only spoil the pope's market (as Gardiner said) but the devil's also. When Satan comes to disquiet the Christian's peace (for want of a right understanding here) he is soon worsted by his enemy: as the silly hare, which might escape the dogs in some covert or burrow that is at hand, but taking to her heels, is, by the print of her own feet, and scent which she leaves behind, followed; till at last (weary and spent) she falls into the mouth of them. In all that a Christian doth, there is a print of sinful infirmity, and a scent by which Satan is enabled to trace and pursue him over hedge and ditch, this grace and that duty, till the soul, not able to stand before the accusation of Satan, is ready to fall down in despair at his feet: whereas here is a hiding place, whither the enemy durst not come, the clefts of the rock, the hole of the stairs, which this truth leads to.

John Owen

SIGNIFICANT EMPHASIS OF THE REFORMATION IN ZURICH UNDER ZWINGLI

BY WT FOLEY

Huldrych Zwingli (1484–1531) was a Swiss Reformer. He is not as famous as Martin Luther (1483–1546) or indeed John Calvin (1509–1564). Nevertheless, he did play his part in the break with Roman Catholicism. For this and many other things he should receive consideration in examining the Protestant Reformation. He was educated at universities at Basel and Vienna. He was ordained and served as a Catholic Priest in Glarus. Between 1516 and 1518 Zwingli commenced questioning the doctrines and practices of Romanism.

This study will indicate the significant emphasis of the Zurich Reformation under Zwingli. Then we will discuss each of these aspects. However, it should be noted at the outset that we will not examine the background in Switzerland in respect to the particular circumstances that prevailed politically or religiously with reference to the cantons, nor will we look at Zwingli's life in depth from his birth on 1st January 1484 to his arrival in Zurich. The focus will be on Zwingli in Zurich.

Huldrych Zwingli, was called to Zurich as a preacher in 1519. During his ministry he only preached sermons which were based on the Bible. However, on his arrival, McGrath (*Reformation Thought*, p.42) writes, 'Exploiting his position, Zwingli initiated a programme of reform based on broadly humanistic principles, especially the vision of the corporate renewal of the church and society on the basis of scripture and the fathers.'

However, it is suspected that he read Luther's writings in 1519 and he moved

theologically towards his position in terms of 'salvation through Christ by faith', but the Swiss people would insist that he discovered this on his own. Irrespective, from this background, the Reformation began in Zurich in 1520 and it has certain emphasis which make it significant. These are as follows:

1. The Reformation in Zurich is more evidently an attempt to reform the Church in doctrine, worship, ethics according to the Word of God. In other words it is biblical in emphasis.

2. Also the Reformation in Zurich is from the outset closely allied to and under the control of the state. It came under the Council of Zurich.

3. Zwingli's doctrine of the Eucharist is distinctive from that of the Roman Catholic Church in terms of transubstantiation and Luther's in respect to consubstantiation.

4. The composition of the Zurich Reformation is radical and produced even more radical groups. Moreover, the Zurich Reformation is one of the origins of radical groups.

5. In retrospect today we can discern in the Zurich Reformation the origin of perhaps one of the greatest movements which was significant in England; namely, the Puritans.

6. Finally, the Zurich Reformation had a strong emphasis on Education, especially for the Christian ministry. The Baptist movement inherits some characteristics of this Reformation.

The Role of Scripture

With reference to the first point: the Bible; in

1520 the Council of Zurich issued a Mandate that all priests in Zurich were to preach on the Gospels and the Epistles. The Bible was to be the root of all preaching and thus began the importance of the supremacy of preaching. Clearly this annoyed the Roman Church. Moreover, Reardon (*Religious Thought in the Reformation*, 1981, p.94) writes, 'Zwingli's preaching was warmly endorsed by the city council, which as early as 1520 ordered that all preachers should keep to the New Testament and prove their doctrine from the Bible.'

Zwingli was passionate in his conviction that scripture was to be the 'sole standard of truth in religion' and that people could read the Schriftprinzip for themselves and make up their own mind. This obviously had major ramifications for the Roman Church as it believed it was responsible for the interpretation of scripture and that tradition was equal to scripture. He appealed to scripture to defend the eating of sausages in Lent; the city council gave him support on this point. In 1521 when, as the newly instituted member of the minster chapter, he gained a seat on the city council. This strengthened his position.

Scripture was recognised as the council's platform, 'and its requirements, as interpreted by sound opinion, were to be enforced by public authority' (Reardon, Ibid, p.94). The doctrines of the Roman Church such as the practice of compulsory fasting, clerical celibacy, indulgences and the cult of the saints were subject to the fiery furnace of scripture, but were found to have no biblical warrant.

After he married a widow, Anna Reinhart, in 1522, for which he found warrant from Scripture, he wrote *Concerning Choice and Freedom of Food*, *Archeteles* and another writing: *Von Klarheit und Gewissheit des Wortes Gottes* or *Of the Clarity and Certainty of the Word of God*.

Zwingli believed that the Bible is the sole authority in spiritual matters. He believed the full canon of Old and New Testament in toto and without question; it was plain to

him that the scripture is directly inspired by the Holy Spirit, though he does not, according to Reardon, 'propound any theory of inspiration' (Ibid, p.97). Without doubt we can see Zwingli's position concerning the Gospel in Theses 1 and 2.

In his first thesis Zwingli wrote, 'All who say that the Gospel is invalid without the confirmation of the Church err and slander God.'

In his second thesis he wrote, 'The sum and substance of the Gospel is that our Lord Jesus Christ, the true Son of God, has made known to us the will of His heavenly Father and has with His sinlessness released us from death and reconciled us to God.'

For his time this was radical because it undermined the position of the Roman Church.

The Role of the State

On the second point: the 'state' played a major role in the Reformation in Zurich. Time and time again we can see evidence of this. The term 'magisterial Reformation' comes to light because of the close link between the Zurich city magistrates and the Reformation. At Zurich we see theology and politics merge to the point that one does not operate without the other; there is both a dependence and interdependence between them. For example, McGrath (Ibid, p.127) writes, 'For Zwingli, "state" and "church" are virtually equivalent: a Christian city is nothing other than a Christian church. The sacraments (baptism and the eucharist, not the other five identified by the medieval period) thus signified not merely loyalty to the church, but also loyalty to the city community of Zurich. To refuse to allow one's child to be baptised, therefore, was an act of disloyalty to the Zurich city community.' This had implications for the Anabaptist who regarded infant baptism as unwarranted. Interestingly, Zwingli was doubtful about infant baptism.

Zwingli himself favoured an aristocratic form of government. For him Zurich was a theocracy. For example, preacher and ruler;

minister and magistrate; church and state were the same. There are obvious parallels between the theories of government between Luther and Zwingli, but these need not concern us here. (See McGrath, *Ibid*, pp.147–150.)

In the First Zurich Disputation on 19th January 1523 we see the city council composed of two hundred members using its authority to interpret scripture. McGrath's comment here is interesting; he writes, 'While Zwingli clearly understood the council to be under the Word of God, the city council appears to have manoeuvred itself into a position by which it was really over the Word of God.'

At this council we see Zwingli's sixty-seven *Schussreden*, or 'key theses' presented; the theses are radical in Reformation theology. The articles centre on Christ as saviour, mediator, guide and leader; of Christ as the Head of the Church; of the importance of discovering the will of God through the scriptures; the idea that in faith rest our salvation. They attack the laws of the Roman Church on food, chastity, relics, etc.; set forth the importance of secular powers, providing they are Christian having to protect the Church.

The Eucharist Controversy

With reference to the third significant emphasis, the Eucharist debate, Thesis 18 reflects Zwingli's position. He wrote, 'Christ, having sacrificed Himself once for all, is for all eternity a perpetual and acceptable offering for the sins of all believers, from which it follows the mass is not a sacrifice, but is a commemoration of the sacrifice and assurance of salvation which Christ has given us.'

This thesis contains a crucial word, i.e. commemoration which in Latin is *commemoratio* and in Greek *Anamnesis*, meaning 'again to remember'. We are to think through again the work of Christ on the cross; we need to be Christocentric and make present the benefits of that event that have come to us by faith.

Another important word is 'assurance' which relates to our eternal security in Christ.

Zwingli's teaching on the Eucharist was different from the Roman Church; they taught that the Lord's Supper was a sacrifice, and to offer a sacrifice a priest is required. Essentially the Catholic Church taught that when the priest pronounces the sacramental words, the bread and wine are miraculously changed into the actual physical body and blood of Christ. As indicated already, this is known as the doctrine of transubstantiation, meaning a change in substance.

On the other hand, according to Kuiper (*The Church in History*, p.243), 'Although Luther denied that the bread is changed into the body of Christ, he nevertheless taught that Christ's body is present in the Lord's Supper because, said he, since Christ's ascension, His body, like His Godhead, is present everywhere.' This doctrine is known as consubstantiation. Reardon (*Ibid*, p.107) conducts an interesting discussion on the aspect, believing that this term is misleading. Calvin too had his own view of the Lord's Supper, which involved more of the Holy Spirit being present at the Lord's Table.

Luther took the words 'This is my body' literally. He taught that the body of Christ is actually present in the bread and wine and everywhere present. However, Zwingli taught that the body of Christ is now only in heaven, and that the words, 'This is my body' mean: 'This signifies "my" body,' Kuiper comments (*Ibid*, p.249), 'According to Zwingli the bread and the wine are only symbols of the body and blood of Christ, and the Supper is only a memorial ceremony.'

In 1525 Zwingli wrote his *Commentary on True and False Religion* or *Commentarius de vera et falsa religione*, which was a book for France, where he emphasises, inter alia, the importance of the Eucharist as a commemoration. The Zurich council's decision limited the celebration of the Lord's Supper to four times per year.

In 1525, Zwingli celebrated the first

Lord's Supper; the congregation sat in the nave of the Church; he preached and read the Scriptures, then he came down from the pulpit and stood behind a table 'covered with a white cloth and with unleavened bread on wooden platters and wine in wooden beakers (and) passed (them) around to the communicants' (Reardon, *Ibid*, p.95). He prayed in the vernacular and read from 1 Corinthians, 11; this is similar to the way Baptists today celebrate the Lord's Supper.

The extraordinary factor to note is that the Protestant Philip of Hesse, who was concerned about the political situation that was developing, brought Luther and Zwingli together in the castle hall of Marburg, in 1529, in an effort to resolve their differences. The aspect to note is that they agreed on fourteen articles at this meeting, but on the fifteenth article, which had six points, they could only agree on five. The one point which remained was a stumbling block: this was the Eucharist. For Luther Christ was really present at the Eucharist, but for Zwingli he was present in the heart of believers.

An united evangelical front was prevented and this resulted by 1530 in Charles the fifth re-asserting his authority over the German Reformation, aided to a large extent by the differences on this one point between Luther and Zwingli.

The Radical Groups

The fourth significant emphasis of the Zurich Reformation was the role of the radical groups. This was evidenced at the Second Zurich Disputation in October, 1523, when two items were up for discussion; namely, the mass and images. The Radicals wanted things to move faster than the Zurich Council and Zwingli; they felt that things were moving too slow. They protested against images and said we should worship God through Christ by the Holy Spirit. They believed that the mass was contrary to scriptures; they believed too that it was a simple meal shared by disciples of Christ Zwingli and the Council

agreed, but questioned the method—the radicals wanted to forcibly remove all the images and the idols from the churches. The Council and Zwingli displayed hesitation and decided to do nothing for the moment in respect of the mass, etc. This made the radicals furious and caused division between them and Zwingli.

There was a Third Disputation in January 1524. Again, the mass and idols were discussed and after analysis it was promised that they would be removed on the basis that they were not scriptural. In the aftermath pictures, etc. were removed by the three clergymen, two officers of the law and one master craftsman from each guild and, with the building foreman, who went from church to church for a fortnight and removed candles, pictures, paintings and frescoes; the holy relics were buried. The walls were whitewashed and the church interior was re-orientated with pulpit, pews and bible provided.

The Anabaptist represent the wing of the Reformation which go beyond what Luther and Zwingli envisaged. Indeed in 1526 a decree was issued about Baptism. People who practised it were to be put to death by drowning and the first such drowning occurred in June 1527. Menno Simons and Balthasar were 're-baptizers' and were key thinkers who headed up the radical element.

Other radical groups, such as the Spirituals and Anti-trinitarians, with their splinter groups were to originate from the Zurich Radicals, but for brevity these will not concern us here, except to say that Reardon (*Ibid*, pp.210–236) devotes a whole chapter to an analysis of the Radical Reformation.

The Puritans

Regarding the fifth point which we have indicated: The Puritans. Along the lines of the Zurich Reformation there was an extraordinary group of Christians who came on the scene in England, these were known as Puritans. It is supposed that Calvin was their inspiration, but if that be the case, then it is

also believed that Zwingli's writings influenced him.

The Puritans were members of the Church of England; they wanted to see a pastor installed in every parish who was able to preach the Word of God; they wanted to see the abolition of priestly dress; of kneeling at the Lord's Supper. They believed that kneeling at the Lord's Supper was tantamount to adoration of the host as the physical presence of Christ as taught in the doctrine of transubstantiation; they rejected marriage as a sacrament. The sign of the cross at baptism was superstition. They wished to witness the Church purified of Catholicism. Before long they became radical in their demands and wished to see the Presbyterian form of church government replace episcopalianism.

Their outstanding leader was Thomas Cartwright (1535–1603), the father of English Presbyterianism, who was a theological professor at Cambridge University, but under the influence and activity of John Whitgift (1530–1604), the Archbishop of Canterbury, he lost his professorship and subsequently he led a wandering and persecuted life.

Another outstanding Puritan was William Perkins (1558–1584) who preached the Word of God at Great St. Andrew's Church, in Cambridge. and his influence remains with us to this day in his writings together with his strong emphasis on God's free grace. Perkins influenced a generation of students, such as well known servants of God as Richard Sibbes (1577–1635); John Cotton (1585–1652); John Preston (1587–1628); William Ames (1576–1633) and Thomas Goodwin (1600–1680), to name a few. The puritans caused God's people to 'walk in the old paths'.

Two colleges of Cambridge University were founded by the Puritans: Sidney Sussex in 1596 and Emmanuel in 1584. Emmanuel College produced so many preachers that the street in front is known as Preacher's Street.

Separatists or Congregationalists or Independents were Puritans and Calvinists

in doctrine. For virtually forty years they were persecuted and oppressed. However, in 1640 in the 'Long Parliament' they found themselves in the majority.

Charles I lost his head on January 30th, 1649 after the Battle of Naseby. Cromwell's soldiers, according to Kuiper (Ibid, p.313) were 'fervent, God-fearing, psalm-singing Puritans. At the Westminster Assembly the Directory of Worship and the famous Westminster Confession were composed. From 1649 to 1653 England was a Republic, but in 1658 Cromwell died, and the Restoration of 1660 brought suffering to the Puritans and Dissenters.

The Role of Education

On the sixth point we see Zwingli placing a considerable significance on the role of education. According to Reardon (ibid, p.95), 'Zwingli himself attached high importance to an educated ministry, founding in 1525, with the aid of Jud and Myconius, a seminary for the training of pastors.'

Bromiley (Ed. of Zwingli and Bullinger, p.96) writes, 'Zwingli's pronounced stress upon the need for education and the fact that he had very definite ideas concerning it are hardly surprising when we remember that he had himself come to a knowledge of evangelical truth partly by way of the Renaissance learning.'

Zwingli was keen, therefore, that people should be educated in the scriptures. During the same year on 25th June Bible readings or 'prophesyings' came to prominence. The first part was attended by students; they met twice a week at 8 o'clock in the morning at Zurich and worked on the Old Testament, then a student read in Latin, another would verbally translate into Hebrew. The text was given an exegesis; followed by discussion and translation into German. Questions were asked by those present. Then Zwingli summed up and the minister got up on the pulpit and there was 'prophesyings'. At this time it is probable that Zwingli's students were working on the

translation of the prophets.

The Council of Zurich turned to the question of morality and, in 1530, there was a mandate issued which sought to reform and educate the life of the city. Already in 1525 adultery brought a severe penalty. They outlawed swearing and gambling, etc. Church attendance was compulsory; a further mandate was issued in 1531 that all services must start at the same time. This was to prevent people making excuses, etc.

Zwingli wrote a short essay in Latin, in 1523, entitled, *Of the Upbringing and Education of Youth in Good Manners and Christian Discipline*. This work was written ostensibly as a personal gift for his future step-son, Gerold Meyer von Knonau, who had just returned from a visit to the baths at Baden. The focus of the essay is on all aspects of training, but especially there is significant emphasis on Christian and evangelical truth.

Conclusion

Finally, in this paper we have indicated and discussed six aspects which constitute the significant emphasis of the Reformation under Zwingli. Combined these features show us,

in the light of those times, what occupied the Christian church in its progress towards discovering true biblical Christianity.

Today we can reflect and surmise that the Reformation would probably not have been a remarkable achievement were it not for the Zurich Council and Zwingli's energy and thoroughness.

Five hundred years on since the Protestant Reformation we are witnessing a Protestant doctrinal deterioration. Pluralism and post-modernism have infiltrated the Church. False prophets and false teachers abound. Governments are legalising abominations. There are no absolutes. Everyone does that which is right in their own eyes.

Yet, as in ages past, God has still got a remnant according to the election of grace. We need revival and by that is meant a pouring out of the Holy Ghost, not a whipped up crusade of compromise and decisionism. The lowest common denominator in doctrine is now acceptable in ecumenical churches. May God have mercy on us as we witness the low level of spiritually and false religion being accepted as being equal to true Christianity.

Go and ransack thy heart, Christian, from one end to the other; find out thy wants, acquaint thyself with all thy weaknesses, and set them before the Almighty, as the widow her empty vessel before the prophet; hadst thou more than thou canst bring, thou mayest have them all filled. God hath strength enough to give, but he hath no strength to deny; here the Almighty himself (with reverence be it spoken) is weak; even a child, the weakest in grace in his family, that can but say, Father, is able to overcome him; and therefore let not the weakness of thy faith discourage thee. No greater motive to the bowels of mercy to stir up almighty power to relieve thee, than thy weakness, when pleaded in the sense of it. The pale face and thin cheeks (I hope) move more with us than the canting language of a stout sturdy beggar. Thus that soul that comes laden in the sense of his weak faith, love, patience, the very weakness of them carries an argument along with them for succour.

William Gurnall

Every gentleman kills the game as often as he thinks fit, or at least as often as he can come at it; yet he and we are more at the disposal of God than the creatures are at the disposal of any man.

NICHOLAS RIDLEY

EDWARD MALCOLM (Reading)

Ridley's writings

Foxe lists 21 titles, ranging from brief letters to full treatises, as coming from Ridley's pen and preserved for us to this day. Third in the list is a 'Brief declaration of the Lord's Supper', written while he was imprisoned in Oxford. Knowing he would soon die he determined to set out the doctrine by which he lived, and for which he was willing to suffer.

The work begins, after a brief prayerful introduction, with a survey of the New Testament literature on the Lord's Supper. Ridley shows that their form of words was so similar that it was clearly something they were used to repeating very often. He writes, 'Thus the Evangelists and St Paul have rehearsed the words and work of Christ, whereby he did institute and ordain this holy sacrament of his body and blood, to be a perpetual remembrance until his coming again of himself (I say), that is, of his body given for us, and of his blood shed for the remission of sins' (*Ridley*, p.8, P.S. Ed). All bar the Anabaptists (who denied any good or bad could be had from the Lord's Supper) agree in these things. The concern is those matters in which there is disagreement; is there any transubstantiation of the bread and wine?—is Christ present bodily?—ought the bread and wine to be worshipped?—is Christ offered afresh in the Lord's Supper?—do the wicked receive Christ in eating and drinking? (*Ridley*, p.11, P.S. Ed)

For Ridley the whole issue revolved around one point—does the communicant eat the actual body of Christ, or not? If he does, then all those questions are to be answered 'yes'; if not, then 'no'. Scripture, he argued, teaches that we eat bread and drink wine as the material substance of the Supper, and that we receive the body and blood of Christ as the spiritual substance by faith. He

uses several scriptural arguments to demonstrate this.

As to the power of the priest to transubstantiate the bread and the wine, Ridley points out that neither Peter nor Paul were popish priests, but were apostles. A comparison of the Ordinal in the Prayer Book with the service for the ordaining of priests in the Roman church shows the essential difference. Whereas the new priest is commanded 'take thou the authority to sacrifice for the quick and the dead', the Prayer Book says, 'Take thou Authority to preach the Word of God, and to minister the holy Sacraments in the Congregation, where thou shalt be lawfully appointed thereunto.' The Roman priest is given the instruments of sacrifice—chalice and patten—whereas the presbyter is given the instrument of preaching—a Bible.

Ridley used many quotations from the Church Fathers, to show that his doctrine was not new, unlike that of the Pope. The Church, he declared, had fallen into error, but God was now showing men the truth from his Word. Obedience to that Word would be the best help for the Church.

In all this Ridley was motivated by far more than a mere form of service. To him, and to his fellow Reformers, the doctrine of the mass cut at the very heart of the gospel. If the priest has power to sacrifice Christ afresh, so that the bread and wine are changed into his body and blood, and if grace is received by the mere act of eating and drinking, what need was there for Christ to die, and to what purpose did he command the gospel to be preached? Guided by Scripture, the Church would see the truth of its mission when it understood the true nature of the Lord's Supper.

In this Ridley was also working toward the reformation of the Church of England.

He and Cranmer were the architects of the Communion service as we have it, and it is an accurate statement both of their doctrine, and—more importantly—of the gospel doctrine.

This concern for gospel doctrine is to be found in the second of Ridley's writings, 'A piteous lamentation of the miserable state of the Church of England in the time of the late revolt from the gospel.' This is, of course, a comparison of the Church of England under Edward VI with that which Mary was busy restoring, under the misdirection of the Pope.

Alas, what misery is thy church brought unto, O Lord, at this day! Whereas of late the word of the Lord was truly preached, was read and heard in every town, in every church, in every village; yea, and almost every honest man's house; alas! now it is exiled and banished out of the whole realm. Of late, who was not glad to be taken for a lover of God's word, for a reader, for a ready hearer, and for a learner of the same? And now, alas, who dare bear any open countenance towards it, but such as are content in Christ's cause, and for his word's sake, to stand to the danger and loss of all that they have? (*Ridley*, p.49, P.S. Ed.).

This is theme he takes up, an enumeration of former blessings, followed by a list of the errors that have swept away those blessings. The cause of the error is the return of papal power and influence in the realm. Those who would remain faithful to Christ and his gospel must take up the example of Paul and his fellow apostles, and be ready to stand in jeopardy every day. Not only has the Pope returned error, but his servants deal unfaithfully with those who uphold the truth, so that justice is denied.

Ridley's aim is to establish his readers in the truth, and to encourage them to stand firm in it, no matter what the cost. It will not do to compromise the truth now in the hope of standing for it later. Many are the examples of Scripture of God's servants who were brought almost to ruin before they were

delivered, as Joseph a slave and then a prisoner, before becoming the ruler of Egypt under Pharaoh; of Daniel who was cast into the lions' den before he was saved, and so on. Not all were saved, as Stephen, and Ridley adds the examples of early martyrs to show that constancy unto death is not a new calling for Christ's people. 'To die in Christ's cause is a high honour, to the which no man certainly shall or can aspire, but to whom God vouchsafeth that dignity; for no man is allowed to presume to take unto himself any office of honour, but he which is thereunto called of God' (p.77). Let none consider persecutions and trials to be evidence that God does not love them, as the wicked teach. Rather, let all men know that this has been the lot of Christ's people in every age. It is therefore the duty of all who love the Lord to stand firm under the present affliction.

A man who felt moved to exhort others to stand fast in the face of persecution, and to maintain the doctrines and practices lately restored to the Church, must have been confident that the Church and doctrine to which he exhorted people was wholesome and sound. Being one of the most able men of his generation, we ought not to be surprised to discover that Ridley, with Cranmer, was the chief architect of the Reformed Church of England. Something of this may be seen in the third treatise, 'Concerning images, that they are not to be set up nor worshipped in churches.' This particular piece was addressed to King Edward VI, and went out from Ridley, 'in the name, as it seemeth of the whole clergy.'

God's law and commandment against the setting up and worshipping of images is clear in Scripture. God did not forbid such worship because it always hurts, but because it tends to hurt. Just as God commanded not to worship images, so he commanded not to marry outside the covenant people—yet Moses and Boaz, to name but two, married foreign wives, and came to no harm by it, though the general command to marry within the

covenant people stands. It is the same with images; that some have used them without coming to spiritual harm is no argument to justify what God has condemned. That he has condemned them, Ridley shows from many passages in Old and New Testaments.

Concerning their benefit he writes, 'Images in the Church either serve to edify or to destroy. If they edify, then is there a kind of edification which the Scriptures neither teach nor command, but always disallow; if they destroy, they are not to be used; for in the Church of God all things ought to be done to edify' (p.86).

Those who are most in danger from images are uneducated people—uneducated, that is, in the doctrines of grace. 'The use of images is, to the learned and confirmed in knowledge, neither necessary nor profitable. To the superstitious, it is a confirmation in error. To the simple and weak, an occasion to fall, and very offensive and wounding to their consciences; and therefore very dangerous' (*ibid*).

The measure of the danger of images may be gauged by the measure of the remedy. Since the only sound way of dealing with the dangers of images is by sound gospel preaching, it follows that the danger must be very great. Preaching is God's provision for his Church, and the means appointed for the instructing of the ungodly in the ways of truth. Since there is no greater means provided, it follows that to use such a means to answer idols, proves that idols are the same as unbelief.

Images are 'whores', since those who worshipped them in Israel were called fornicators and adulterers. As it is the duty of the magistrate to drive out prostitution from among the people, so it is his duty to drive out idolatry.

The supposed benefit of images, as means to stir up the minds of the observers, is answered in God's gracious provision of prayer, from which most are distracted by having something to gaze upon. So small is the benefit, if any, and so great is the danger, that their utter removal is to be enacted.

All of this may be demonstrated from an examination of the practice of the early church. Ridley shows from the writings of various Church Fathers that only heretics and pagans lamented the lack of images in churches. As time went on, some did begin to introduce images, but others, such as Epiphanius, broke them up. Since his iconoclasm extended to images painted on cloth hanging on a door, what, asks Ridley, would he say about the crucifixes that adorn so many of the churches of his day, hanging over the Lord's Table?

The final part of the treatise shows the decisions of the various ecumenical councils concerning images, which were not in favour of them. Their existence is a direct effect of papal corruptions. The whole ends with a plea to the King to allow no images to be set up, but rather that all be cast down.

Again, we need to understand what motivated Ridley to write in this way. It was not that he desired a particular form of Church order, and so used Scripture and history to justify it, but he submitted to the rule of God's word, and judged all things by it. Since God's word is decidedly against the setting up and adoring of images, and since God's word is to be our rule in all things, it follows that any departure from that word engenders error. Error leads to danger, and danger to damnation. For the sake of Christ's people, the Church must do nothing that is contrary to the word of God, or injurious to the spiritual well-being of her members.

When we see the way in which Nicholas Ridley used the word of God in his doctrinal writings, we might well be moved to lament the fact that none of his sermons were preserved. That he did preach is evident from Foxe. '[H]e so travelled and occupied himself by preaching and teaching the true and wholesome doctrine of Christ, that never good child was more singularly loved of his dear parents, than he of his flock and diocese. Every holiday and Sunday he lightly preached in some one place or other, except

he were otherwise letted by weighty affairs and business, to whose sermons the people resorted, swarming about him like bees, and coveting the sweet flowers and wholesome juice of the fruitful doctrine, which he did not only preach, but shewed the same by his life ...' (*Ridley*, p.vi, P.S. Ed).

His earnest desire to have preaching in his diocese is demonstrated in a letter he wrote to Sir John Cheke, in the reign of Edward VI. In it he speaks glowingly of three preachers who had consented to remain in his diocese and declare the gospel to the people. Two of them were John Bradford, who would be one of the first to be martyred under Mary, an Edmund Grindal, who would later become Archbishop of Canterbury in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. Grindal would be on the Amnesty, but would spend the years of Mary's reign in Strasbourg, attempting to reconcile competing wishes amongst the exiles. The purpose of Ridley's letter was to gain support for his plan to offer Grindal a prebend's stall that had fallen vacant at St Paul's cathedral. His motivation was to see Grindal given an income, so that he would be free to preach.

The content of such preaching is alluded to in the next letter, 'to his well-beloved, the preachers within the diocese of London.' In it he laments the sins of those times, which is a reference to the greed and pride which characterised too many of those who were meant to serve the King as Protectors and advisors. He writes, 'I exhort and require you ... that as you are called to be setters forth of God's word, and to express the same in your lives, so now in your exhortations and sermons, most wholesomely and earnestly, tell unto men their sins, with God's punishments lately poured upon us for the same, now before our eyes; according to that word, "Tell unto my people their wickedness." And especially

beat down and destroy, with all your power and ability, that greedy and devouring serpent of covetousness, which now so universally reigns' (*Ridley*, p.335, P.S. Ed).

Ridley was not unmoved by the plight of others who were suffering for the faith under Queen Mary. He wrote a general letter to all who were suffering in prison for the gospel's sake. He alludes to their great strength, as arising from their being 'grounded upon a strong rock' (p.342), which is 'so stedfast a faith and love of our Lord Jesus Christ.' The whole letter is, in places, a knitting together of apt scriptural quotations and allusions, to produce a most comforting and solid exhortation to faith in Christ in the face of weighty trials.

In a letter to John Bradford, whom Mary's ministers had unwisely imprisoned with many lesser Protestants, Ridley speaks of the twin pillars of Rome's power—her corruption of the Lord's Supper, and the usurpation of authority by the Pope. The reason why Mary's ministers were unwise was that Bradford used his time in prison to school his fellow sufferers in gospel truth, and he did so most effectually. That Ridley was writing such things to him shows that he was himself being helped by others outside the walls of his prison, even if from within the walls of their own. The communication between prisoners shows how closely their situations were watched by Protestants who were yet free. The information was circulated among them, and all possible help was given. In another letter Ridley gives thanks for the opportunity to peruse the writings of John Hooper and John Bradford to himself, Latimer and Cranmer in the Bocardo prison at Oxford. Again, it might seem strange that the authorities permitted the free circulation of what they regarded as heretical writings, but we must see the providential provision of the sovereign Lord God in all this.

TO BE CONCLUDED

STUDIES IN II PETER

EDWARD MALCOLM (Reading)

2.10b–13a—False teachers revealed, part 3

We have begun to see the warning Peter issues against the false teachers. These men are dangerous. They come as those who profess orthodoxy, but in fact have rejected the lawful authority of Jesus Christ, v.1. Such is their cunning that many are deceived into following them, v.2. This will result in Christianity being widely condemned, while the false teachers make money their goal. Their end is known, since the Lord has already shown how he deals with those who refuse his lawful authority, vv.4–10a. Now Peter begins to reveal something of the character of the false teachers, before showing what punishment will befall them.

The despising of government is all one with their rejection of Christ's Lordship. Remember that in v.1 Peter uses the word 'despot', translated as 'Lord' in our version. Originally a benign ruler, the term now has negative connotations for us, which can mislead our understanding of Peter's point, that Jesus Christ is the lawful ruler to whom all must bow. Thus the false teachers are rebels, as he goes on to show.

Being full of pride they have no respect for lawful authority in the nation. Part of the apostolic doctrine, both in Peter and Paul, and in the teaching of our Lord, concerns the respect due to those whom the Lord has raised to high office in the land. To despise authority is to despise the authority of God. There is no doubt that doctrine affects all aspects of life. Those who submit to all that the Scripture teaches are recognizable as such by their attitudes to things human as well as divine. Those whose doctrine is false are likewise recognizable, but in ways which bring dishonour on them. In contrast, Peter

draws attention to the angels. Jude speaks of the archangel Michael who 'durst not bring against [Satan] a railing accusation, but said, the Lord rebuke thee' (Jude 9). If the angels know how to address dignitaries, will not the Lord judge those who, being less than the angels, do not?

In describing them as 'brute beasts' Peter shows that they have been created for this purpose. They are naturally born, not spiritually. They are like the wild animals who exist to hunt and be hunted. God has made them like this for a purpose, and this casts some light on Paul's words in I Corinthians 11:19, 'There must also be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you', by which we understand that it is only when professing Christians are given a choice in matters of doctrine and practice that their true state is revealed; do they hold to the truth, or to that which is false? As to their teachers, will they maintain the gospel, or be persuaded to teach some new and false thing? Error is hard, but it grants us the opportunity to show where we stand in the Lord.

2.13b–14—False teachers revealed, part 4

One of the clearest commands given to Israel was that every blood sacrifice was to be of a creature 'without spot or blemish'. Only that which is perfect is acceptable to God. The effect of having these false teachers among them is that the whole assembly is tainted. Luther draws a contrast here between the false perception of these teachers who view themselves as the jewels who adorn the feast, and their real status as spots and blemishes. Rather than improving, they ruin. Such is the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

Like the husband or wife with a wandering eye these are always looking out for further opportunities to sin. Their eyes are adulterous, there being no covenant with themselves to remain pure for the Lord their profess to serve. Like adulterers, they seek to beguile their prey, pretending to be what they are not, or not to be what they are. Thus all must heed the warning, for fear of being deceived by these peddlers of lies and error.

The source of this adulterous practice is the pursuit of the lusts of the heart. Their corruption is from within, it being that which cometh out of a man which defileth, not what he eats. The curse under which they lie is that which is on all whose hearts are not regenerated by the grace and Spirit of God.

2.15–17—False teachers revealed, part 5

False teachers have a good example to follow, Balaam the son of Bosor. He was prepared to do whatever it took to gain the riches and honours Balak promised him. He spoke in the name of the Lord; he spoke truly in the name of the Lord. But he would not obey the voice of the Lord as he was commanded. In the end he succeeded in bringing great trouble on Israel by changing the tactic from one of cursing to one of corrupting. It was by his advice that Israel was ensnared by the Moabite

women to engage in idolatry and fornication, Numbers 25, for which many perished, and for which in Numbers 31 Moses commanded the deaths of the Moabite women taken in battle. Balaam was without excuse, since he had already received the clearest indication of the Lord's power and will, in that he had been spoken to by his ass! Yet for all the goodness of the Lord in patiently teaching Balaam the truth, the man was rotten at heart, and so stands as a type of all false teachers.

The extent of that inner rottenness is described in two metaphors, the first of wells, the second of clouds. The wells, or springs, are the sources of water. If a spring is dry it is of no benefit. These false teachers are dry springs. No good thing can be found in them. They send forth no living water. They are arid and barren.

The metaphor of the clouds varies little. In a desert climate the appearance of clouds will be taken as a sign of coming rain. However, not all clouds, no matter how dark and threatening, send down rain. Some are merely show without content. So it is with the false teachers. We must learn to discern between those who have the outward form of orthodoxy but inwardly are dry, and those who may appear less impressive, but through whom the good things of the Lord are given.

TO BE CONTINUED

Take this for your comfort, the least measure of grace is enough to bring you to heaven. This is not spoken to make you idle, but only to comfort a perplexed conscience. Many, because their grace is weak, think they have no grace. 'I have set before thee (saith Christ to the church of Philadelphia) an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.' It is true, our comfort lies much in the comparative degree, but our salvation in the positive degree: strong grace hath strong comfort; much faith will bring thee with much comfort to heaven; but a little faith will bring thee safely to heaven.

Christopher Love

BOOK REVIEW

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

Steps Towards Heaven

J C Ryle

Banner of Truth, 169 pp £5.50 paperback ISBN 978-1-84871-696-4

This recommended five chapter volume is drawn from a publication entitled *Old Paths*. The author J C Ryle was a Church of England evangelical minister whose written works included *Holiness* and *Practical Religion*.

Our Sins the first chapter leaves no reader in any doubt that 'If we say we have no sins, we deceive ourselves...' Sins place all men in a perilous state before a Holy God. And where to turn? *The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin*. 1 John 1:7

Few Saved is the truth addressed in the second chapter. Ryle proclaims that 'There is only one standard of truth...the Holy Scripture'. To him, all true ministers of the gospel want to see souls saved. They are to declare all the counsel of God – justification by faith, regeneration by the Spirit, and holiness of life. As for the few saved by free grace evidences ensue – the sense of sin, the love of Christ, the desire after holiness and delight in the Word.

A chapter on *Conversion* follows next. *Repent ye, therefore, and be converted*. Acts 3:19. The converted man attends to diligent use of all means of grace, attending to 'prayer, the Bible, and the Sabbath'. *He quickeneth whom he will*.

Justification occupies the fourth chapter. *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*. Romans 5:1. Ryle states, 'Christ, in one word, has lived for the true Christian.' 'The life and death of the Lord Jesus explain all'. *He is our peace*.

The final chapter addresses *The Holy Spirit*. Ryle determines that readers should know of God the Holy Ghost - His office, his work, his indwelling, his fellowship, and his power. *If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*. Romans 8:9.

JPW

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FRISTON, SUFFOLK: Baptist Church, Mill Road IP17 1PH (4 miles from Aldeburgh, 3 miles from Snape Maltings). Lord's Day services: 10.45 am and 2 pm. Bible Study Tuesdays 7.30 pm. AV and *Gospel Hymns*. Reformed Evangelical worship. Pastor: Michael Harley. www.fristonbaptistsuffolk.org.uk. Tel 01728 602657.

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