Our Excellent Saviour

Here are five tremendous statements from Hebrews chapter 1 that speak of the supreme majesty, infinite excellence and unique dignity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We would profit immensely from meditating upon these statements and letting them rest in our thoughts.

He is appointed heir of all things: As God, our Lord has a right to all things for He made all things. But as the man Christ Jesus our Saviour is appointed heir of all things. Everything in time and eternity, everything in heaven and hell, everything upon the earth, is committed into His hand and all combine together to honour and glorify Him. All the eternal purposes and promises of the Triune God resolve in Him. He is appointed heir of all things. Take that statement at face value and run with it just as far as you can, then pause and remember we are joint-heirs with Him.

He is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person: Our Lord Jesus is one with the Father in His essential glory. Yet that which is necessarily invisible in the Father, who is infinite, eternal and unchangeable Spirit, is manifested, viewable and evident in the Son. When we look at Jesus we see that in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. All the perfections of deity; eternity, immensity, omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, immutability, and self existence dwell in and are forever united with the human body of Jesus Christ. He is God and man in One person.

He upholds all things by the word of his power: This Jesus, the man who walked the earth, who ate food, drank and breathed the oxygen of the air, this Jesus sustains all that is created and does so by His mere Word. He planted and watered the tree that supplied the wood upon which He died. He formed the ore that produced the metal for the nails that held Him to the cross. He made the man who wielded the hammer. All things are bound together by power granted by Him. So, every elect child of God is upheld and all the world, its substance and systems, and all the stars and space of this universe continue to exist for the glory of His Name and the wellbeing of His church.

He by himself purged our sins: The One who made the worlds and upholds all things, “by himself” purged our sins. Here is a work that exceeds creation and transcends the physical realm. A task that may not be delegated, that only a Godman could perform. The purging of our sins was the responsibility of the man Christ Jesus and the price required was His life’s blood. He by himself purged our sins.

He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high: The Voice whose word created the world, the Godman whose power upholds all things, the Redeemer who purged our sins by Himself is the One now seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high. His work is done, the conqueror is returned victorious. Christ is seated on His throne. Soon, very soon, all who are His, having been raised up together, will be made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.
What Is Meant By Sovereign Grace?

Sovereign grace is God’s grace. And God’s grace is Sovereign grace. If it is not Sovereign grace, it is not saving grace.

Sovereign grace is the truth. Sovereign grace is the message that declares the electing love of the Father, the redeeming love of the Son, and the invincible love of the Holy Spirit.

Sovereign grace is the Gospel! Any message that does not declare the Sovereign grace of God in Christ Jesus is “another gospel”!

Sovereign grace is saving grace! Even those who are supposed to know something about salvation by grace have to remind themselves again and again that salvation is not by the works of the flesh, not at all, in any way!

Salvation is not by reformation; salvation does not come by decision; salvation does not come through church ordinances; salvation is not ours by church membership; salvation is in Christ the Lord.

That's where salvation is – not in man’s purpose, not in man’s plan – it is in a person. It is not in a proposition, it is not in walking an aisle, it is not in a church ordinance. It is in Christ!

It is not in a law; it is not in the deeds of the flesh; salvation is in Christ! A man does not have salvation until he comes by the power of God’s Spirit through faith to a living, personal, vital, intimate union with Christ as Lord.

A man is not a Christian until he has a vital union with Christ. A man is not a Christian until he is inseparably joined – personally joined to Jesus Christ.

A man is not a Christian until Christ becomes his life. Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Henry Mahan
God’s elect, contrary to popular opinion, are not to be found in every church. It may well be true that there are few in any gospel church. In the last day multitudes, vast multitudes of religious men and women, who are absolutely sure they are saved, will hear the Son of God say, “Depart from me”, and shall be forever consigned to the torments of the damned (Matthew 7:21-23). They believed the truth about Christ. They professed faith in Christ. They preached in the name of Christ. They performed many wonderful works in the name of Christ. They had perfect peace, confidence, and assurance that they were saved, born of God, heirs of heaven, and eternal glory. But they were lost, without God, without Christ, without hope. Any honest man who reads those three verses in Matthew 7 must be compelled to ask himself, “Lord, is it I?” As John Newton put it in one of his hymns …

‘Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought,
Do I love the Lord, or no,
Am I his or am I not?

It is a fact plainly revealed in holy scripture that the vast majority of those who profess
faith in Christ and think that all is well with their immortal souls are lost, in the broad road of destruction, which leads to eternal ruin. Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ says to you and me, “Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” Let us make neither more nor less of this solemn exhortation than our Lord means by it. And the best way to determine what He means is to look into the context.

A Striking Question

The Lord Jesus was making His way toward Jerusalem where He would lay down His life for His people. There He would make atonement for our sins by suffering all the horrid wrath of God in our room and stead unto death, satisfying the justice of God for us. As He went His way to Calvary, He taught the gospel. One day, as He walked in the streets teaching the multitudes around Him, obviously, someone thought of what the scriptures teach about divine election and concluded that since there were not many disciples following the Master, and God has only chosen some to be saved, there must be only a few who will be saved.

Satan commonly perverts precious, gospel doctrine into something hard in the minds of men, and takes that which ought to encourage sinners to trust Christ, and makes it a barrier before them. That seems to have been the case here. So one of those who walked with and heard the Lord Jesus raised this question: “Are there few that be saved?”

It is likely that this question was asked by a Jew, and that the two parables illustrating the smallness of the kingdom’s beginning suggested it to him. The Jews extended their exclusive spirit even to their ideas of a world to come, so that they believed none but their chosen race would behold its glories. The questioner wanted the Saviour to give His approval to this narrow Jewish spirit, or else to take a position which would subject Him to the charge of being unpatriotic.

Whatever the man’s motive was in asking this question, the Lord Jesus answered his question with a very needful admonition: “Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able” (v. 24). What does it matter whether God’s elect are few or many, if you are not one of them? The Master answered this man’s question directly, urging him to make sure that he is in the number, however large or small it might be. Satan does not care if you discuss and debate the things of God twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week as long as you go on to hell without Christ. Multitudes go to hell talking about religion.

People like to poke fun at those of us who believe and preach the blessed, gospel doctrine of divine election, saying, “You folks believe that there are only a select few who will be saved.” Well, yes, that is what we believe. Our Lord Jesus Christ said plainly, “Many are called, but few are chosen” (Matthew 22:14). Those are the words of God Himself. That settles the question.

I know that in the end God’s elect will be a multitude which no man can number, ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands. Who can tell how many elect infants God has mercifully taken to glory in His acts of judgment upon their ungodly parents? Yet, at any one time, God’s elect in this world are few, very few, when compared with the multitudes who perish. In the days of Noah only Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Lot was the only person in Sodom whom God had chosen. Of the vast multitude who left Egypt, only two, Joshua and Caleb, entered the land of promise. The rest perished in unbelief. There were 851 prophets at Carmel, only Elijah knew God. When Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem, he said, “I and some few men with me” came to do the work (Nehemiah 2:12). Isaiah said that when the judgment of God came upon the earth, there would be “few men left” (Isaiah
ARE THERE FEW THAT BE SAVED?

2:6). A great multitude was carried away into Babylon; but when they came to Jeremiah in repentance, they said, “we are left but a few of many” (Jeremiah 42:2).

Our Lord Jesus said concerning the way of faith and life, “Few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:14). And in His parables Christ made it plain that there are “few that be saved” (Luke 13:20-25). At the last time, in that age of the church depicted by Sardis there will be only “a few names” found among the faithful (Revelation 3:4).

This is the teaching of holy scripture: among the multitudes who wear the name of Christ, and profess to be His followers, there are only a few who are saved. The rest are perishing under the delusion of a false hope. Hear the word of the Lord, and be warned. Are you among the many who are perishing; or are you among the few who are chosen, the few who trust Christ alone for eternal salvation? With the apostle Peter, I solemnly admonish you to give diligence to make your calling and election sure. Has Christ been revealed in you? Do you know the Son of God? Do you truly trust Christ alone as your Saviour? Is Jesus Christ your Lord and Master? If you will be honest, you can know whether or not you are among the few whom God has chosen. You can know your election. Paul told the Thessalonians plainly that he knew they were God’s elect for five reasons (1 Thessalonians 1:4-10). These are certain identifying marks of God’s elect.

God’s elect hear and receive the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 1:5). Being taught of God, they are assured of divine truth. God’s elect follow Christ (1 Thessalonians 1:3, 6). Like Christ, those who are truly born of God, believe God, serve God with patience, hope, and love, and walk before Him in the joy of faith. Like their Master, the people of God persevere in the hour of trial. They follow Him. God’s elect are committed to Christ and to the gospel of His grace (1 Thessalonians 1:8). God’s elect repent of their sins and turn to God with a true heart (1 Thessalonians 1:9).

God’s elect live in this world as men and women of expectation and hope, “waiting for his son” (1 Thessalonians 1:10). If indeed you and I are among those who are elect of God, our hearts should be filled with gratitude, praise, and admiration for Him (Romans 11:33-36). The only difference between the many who perish and the few who are chosen is the difference which grace has made (1 Corinthians 4:7; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-14). As for me, I gladly ascribe the whole of my salvation to God, who loved me freely with an everlasting love and saved me by His grace. “By the grace of God I am what I am.” I am chosen by grace, redeemed by grace, called by grace, given faith to believe by grace, preserved by grace, and free grace alone shall bring me safely into heaven’s eternal glory (Jude 24, 25).

Oh! to grace, how great a debtor,
Daily I’m constrained to be.

A Sobering Exhortation
Then our Lord Jesus Christ gives us this very sobering exhortation: “Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able” (v. 24). The word “strive” means “to agonize, labour fervently, and fight” to enter in at the strait gate. The word “strait” means “narrow, constricted, contracted, or close”. Here the Lord is showing us our responsibility. Our concern must not be what others may do, or even what may happen to others. Our responsibility is to seek the Lord ourselves, whether anyone else does or not.

The unbelief and indecision of others will be no excuse in the last day. We must never follow the multitudes. If we go to heaven alone, we must resolve by the grace of God to do so. If we follow Christ alone, we must be resolved to let all others perish if they will, but we will not perish with them. Whether we have many with us, or few, our responsibility is plain “Strive to enter in.”

We must not go on in our unbelief, saying, “I can do nothing until God draws me.” It is my responsibility to draw near to God. “Strive to enter in.” God’s election and my own inability have nothing to do with my responsibility. I must “strive to enter in.” “The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force” (Matthew 11:12).

A Solemn Warning
Then our Lord sets before us a very plain and solemn warning (vv. 25-30). “When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are.” The long and short of that is this: There is a day coming when the forbearance of God shall come to an end. He declares, “My Spirit shall not always strive with man” (Genesis 6:5). You can make what you want of that. Men can argue and
debate for the rest of their lives about whether that is sound doctrine or rank Arminianism. I really have no interests in their wrangling. My concern is for your soul. And I know this, there is a day appointed by God when the door of mercy, which has been open to you for so long, shall be shut.

There comes a time when men and women cannot be saved, even while they live they are dead (Proverbs 1:22-31; Hosea 4:17). “He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy” (Proverbs 29:1). Our Lord is saying, Strive to enter in now while you may, while the door is open before you, for the door will not always be open (Jeremiah 7:13-16).

**A Day Of Reckoning**

Then our Lord assures us that there is a day of reckoning and righteous judgment coming.

“Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last” (Luke 13:26-30).

Many who think they are saved shall find themselves at last under the wrath of the Lamb (vv. 26-28). Their religious profession, their great experiences, their doctrinal knowledge, their mighty works will all be vanity.

All will see what is right when it is too late. Hell is a place where truth is known too late! But in that last day all believers shall receive the full reward of heaven and eternal glory (vv. 29, 30).

In this whole passage our Lord is making an allusion to the ancient marriage feasts, which were held at night. The house would be all lit up. And those who were admitted to the marriage feast would be in the light. Those who were excluded were in darkness outside, “outer darkness”. The guests entered by a narrow wicket gate, at which the porter stood to prevent any uninvited people from rushing into the feast. When all who had been invited were in the house, the door was shut. It would not be opened to those who were without, no matter how much they knocked (2 Corinthians 5:18-6:2).

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**In all my Lord’s appointed ways**

In all my Lord’s appointed ways
My journey I’ll pursue;
Hinder me not! ye much loved saints,
For I must go with you.

Through floods and flames, if Jesus lead,
I’ll follow where He goes;
Hinder me not! shall be my cry,
Though earth and hell oppose.

Through duty, and through trials too,
I’ll go at His command;
Hinder me not! for I am bound
To my Immanuel’s land.

And when my Saviour calls me home,
Still this my cry shall be,
Hinder me not! come, welcome death;
I’ll gladly go with Thee!

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John Ryland Jr. (1753-1825)
Particular Redemption

Redemption is our subject and what a subject! The intellect of an angel is not equal to the comprehension of it! How much less man’s! Yet when the Spirit of God has made poor man acquainted with the depth of his degradation, and pointed out to him the great Deliverer, though he cannot scale the heights or fathom the depths of redeeming love, though his intellect be weak, and the power of his imagination feeble, he feels that he ought to stand forth and say a word for his Lord, and tell the world what has been made plain to him by his God. Intellectual God needs not to proclaim His truths. Excellency of speech is discouraged by the great apostle. Ordinary intelligence, then, so that it is sanctified, need not shrink from touching upon this glorious theme.

The subject of redemption is, I believe, very imperfectly understood. The general impression of it I conceive to be erroneous. Is it not this? viz.: That it is universal in its design and results, i.e., that Christ died for every man born of Adam?

I do not suppose that I misrepresent the views of the vast majority of professing Christians when I describe the work of redemption thus: It is a plan of God’s to put to rights the fall of Adam: a way of escape for all from the consequences of sin: a bridge that spans the mighty gulf between earth and heaven, between man and God, — open to all the world.

But is this the truth as it is in Jesus? I think not. And I shall now attempt to prove that this view of redemption work is an ensnaring delusion. May the Spirit of God be with us in our effort!

1. I would inquire what is redemption, and what is its extent?
2. Prove my position by Scripture and argument.
3. Notice some objections.

1. What is redemption? What is its extent?
The word from which the term “redemption” is derived means to dismiss any one for a ransom paid. Hence redemption means deliverance, or liberation procured by the payment of a ransom. It is, in fact, expiation of sin upon payment of a price, or the re-purchase or recovery of that which was lost, or sold, or pledged to another. The words “redemption” and “redeem” I grant, are sometimes used in Scripture in a looser sense than that which they properly mean, e.g. Deuteronomy 7:8, 21:8; Psalm 106:10; Luke 21:28; but as God’s redemption of Israel from the hands of their enemies was manifestly a type of the great and effectual, and eternal redemption of a peculiar people, and as the redemption spoken of in Luke 21:28 is evidently in allusion to the realization of all the benefits secured by the work of Christ, this by no means weakens our position.

Redemption means deliverance procured by the payment of a ransom. Let me illustrate this for you. A person is seized by pirates or bandits, who put a price on his liberation. His friends get to know of his incarceration, and buy him off. Here is deliverance in consideration of a ransom. This would literally be redemption. The man is free. Or to take another figure: a gentleman is in need of a considerable sum of ready money, he mortgages his estate, and gets the sum he wants. When times mend he is enabled to pay back the money to the mortgagee, and thus redeems his estate. The estate is now free. This would literally be redemption. Now, man was taken captive by Satan, and held in cruel bondage by the devil, but God taking pity upon him, sent His Son to pay all demands that might be upon him, and thus was man redeemed. Or, man
had mortgaged his estate, had contracted an enormous debt with God, so great a debt that if he were to live and work to eternity he could never pay it; but Jesus Christ came, and satisfied all the demands of justice, and thus redeemed man. Man is now free. He is “bought with a price”, “redeemed with the precious blood of Christ”, and consequently IS FREE FROM ALL CHARGES OR DEMANDS.

Your common sense will tell you that redemption can be nothing short of this. If men mean anything short of this when speaking of the work of Christ upon the cross, let them employ some other term than “redemption”; but let them not mislead as by confounding part payment with whole payment, an effort to rescue with a thorough rescue, good intentions with great facts and glorious deeds.

Now comes the question, what is the extent of this redemption—this noble, wondrous and amazing work?

If we are to believe the majority of the preachers of the day, it is universal and unlimited; in other words, Christ redeemed every man, woman, and child born of Adam.

But if this be true, I ask, why is not every man free? Why is not every man saved? For surely, if neither God nor Satan have a lien or mortgage upon man, he must be free, he must be saved.

Here, perhaps, I shall be told that the meaning of Christ redeeming every man is, that He paid the mortgage which original sin entailed upon every man, but that, having done thus much, He leaves man to work out his own salvation. But I want to know, does such a redemption free a man from sin? Does such a redemption render man “a new creation”? Does such a redemption make a man a “clean thing”, and do away with the effects of the Fall? Come! let us have an intelligible answer!

If it does not, how can any man be saved? For if Adam in his innocence stood not, how can we, with our guilt and criminal inclinations stand? See you not the absurdity and untenableness of the universalists’ position?

But to come back: if Christ redeemed every man, why is not every man free? Why is not every man saved? The answer is obvious: every man is not redeemed. Redemption as you may perceive by the text and context, is limited to those who were “chosen of God before the foundation of the world”. Election and redemption are evidently of the same extent. None but those given by the Father to Christ from all eternity are redeemed. And now to the proof.

2. Proof by Scripture and Argument that Redemption is limited to God’s people.

Our text compared with the context proves this. Read Ephesians 1:7, and compare it with the 4th, 5th, and 6th verses. Those who had redemption through the blood of Christ were those whom God had chosen and predestinated, &c., before the foundation of the world. See Ephesians 5:25. It is the Church for which Christ died.

I have seen a very ingenious, and to my mind, a very pointed argument in favour of particular redemption, founded upon this passage and its context. It is this, viz.: Paul here is proposing the conjugal love of Christ for His Church as a pattern for the love of husband and wife. Paul would have all the love

Difficulties In The Bible?

Sinful man infers that the Bible, which reveals his own character and God’s character to him, is a dark, enigmatical, unintelligible book, and the reason why he finds such difficulties in the Bible is this – that the plain statements contained in that Word are in such flat contradiction to the natural opinions of the human mind that because man cannot reconcile the truth to the Bible with his own principles he thinks there are enormous difficulties in the Bible.

(McGhee)
of the husband lavished upon the wife, after the fashion of Christ lavishing all His love upon the Church. Is not the limitation of Christ’s love inferred? If Christ loved other than His own spouse, He would have been no pattern for an earthly husband.

I beg to call your attention to the following scriptures in further elucidation of the point, viz.: Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 1:18, 19 compared with the 2nd verse; John 10:15, 17; Titus 2:14. You will observe in these scriptures that Christ’s death is restricted to “the sheep”, “the Church”, “the people”. Now if Christ meant everybody, why employ these restrictive terms?

I know that universal terms are sometimes connected in the scriptures with the atonement: but if these are to be interpreted in their widest sense, why would the sacred writers have employed the restrictive at all?

The universal terms I allude to may be readily made to harmonize with the restrictive: but no man can make the restrictive harmonize with the unlimited. Now to our arguments:—

1. Analogy proves the particularity of redemption, the legal sacrifices were offered only for Israel: their sins alone were laid upon the head of the scape-goat. These were “patterns of things in the heavens”, and have their full fulfilment in the atonement offered for the true Israel.

The Israelites alone were the chosen people of God out of all the nations of the earth to serve Jehovah: and only some of them were saved: Why should it, then, be thought a strange thing that Christ should redeem only some out of every nation under heaven?

2. If all were redeemed, then the lost were redeemed; and then, it was a temporary redemption: but the redemption by Christ Jesus is eternal, Hebrews 9:12.

O think of the possibility of a redeemed soul being in hell! Could Christ be called the Saviour of such a one? Of one that is lost?

Surely not! Suppose a man falls overboard from a ship, and I plunge after him, lay hold of him and buoy him up, but I am not able to retain my grasp of him owing to the fury of the waves and the violence of his death-struggles, and he sinks to rise no more; could I be regarded as the saviour of that man? Surely not. I attempted to be his saviour. I did my best to be his deliverer, but savour I was not, or am not; for the man is lost!

Now I maintain that it is precisely so with Christ Jesus and the lost. He was never a Saviour to them. He never redeemed them: for if He had they would now be in heaven singing, “Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood,” &c., Revelation 4:9. Why don’t the damned in hell sing this? Because they were not redeemed. I say again, if men will insist upon different views, let them employ different terms to “Saviour” and “Redeemer”; for positively it is an outrage upon the propriety of language, it is a mockery of the understanding to call the Lord Jesus Christ my Saviour or my Redeemer, if He has not saved me with an everlasting salvation. But see Matthew 1:21.

3. Redemption is always described in scripture as something substantial and palpable. It is:

Redemption to God (Revelation 5:9).
Redemption from the earth (Revelation 14:3).
Redemption from among men (Revelation 14:4).
Redemption from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13).
Redemption from all iniquity (Titus 2:14; Psalm 130:8).
Redemption from our former vain conversation (1 Peter 1:18).

But universal redemption frees us from nothing, but leaves us where it found us, and only tantalizes us with a name.

The case of ineffectual redemption has been well illustrated thus:—Suppose a wealthy and philanthropic individual visits a prison. He approaches a dungeon in which a wretched captive lies bound with chains and fetters, and strongly secured within walls, and doors, and bars. He proclaims aloud to the captive that he has brought gold sufficient to purchase his ransom, on condition that the captive will liberate himself from his chains, burst open his prison doors, and come forth! “Alas!” exclains the wretched captive, “your kindness does not reach my case; unless your gold can effect my deliverance, it can be of no service to me!”

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Here, brethren, is the use and power of general redemption: a thing that offers, and mocks whilst it offers,—far, far too weak to meet the desperate case of a lost sinner! How different is the salvation of God! (See Zechariah 9:11; Isaiah 42:6, 7; Luke 4:18).

4. The concurrence of the sacred Persons of the Trinity proves our point. There can be no contrariety of design where there is unity of will, counsel, and mind. Jesus and the Father are one. The Spirit will not speak of Himself, but of what is the Father’s and the Son’s will. Now Jesus Christ came down to do His Father’s will, which will was, not that everybody should be saved, and nobody lost, but that none should be lost of those given to Christ (John 6:39).

How then could Christ lay down His life for any but those given Him? Had He done so, He would have gone beyond His commission! He would have done what He had not seen the Father do! Can we, dare we, have such conceptions of Christ Jesus? God forbid!

In the tenderness of His humanity, Christ wept over the impending misery of Jerusalem, the terrible consequences of sin, but He could not go-beyond the councils of eternity to avert those calamities. The language of His heart was, “NOT MY WILL, BUT THINE BE DONE!”

I commend this argument to the serious attention of you all. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit must, necessarily, all think and design alike. If there were any difference of intention amongst them, there would be an end to the unity in the Trinity. So, then, it follows that whom the Father chose, the Son redeemed; and whom the Son redeemed, the Holy Ghost undertook to regenerate. If it can be proved that the Father gave all men to Christ, it must follow that Christ redeemed all men; and if Christ redeemed all men, it must also follow that the Holy Ghost either has sanctified or will sanctify all men. But have all men been sanctified by the Holy Ghost? Nay! There are myriads who have never heard of the Holy Ghost, and myriads more who, having heard of Him, not only are uninfluenced by Him, but deny Him.

5. The vicarious nature of Christ’s death proves our point. Vicarious, you know, means substitutionary, i.e. one put in the place of another. We read in the Scriptures that “Christ died for us”, “Christ suffered for us”, “Christ suffered for sins, the just for the unjust”. 1 Peter 2:21, and 3:18; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:20, 21, &c....

Now, competent scholars will tell you that the word “for”, in the original, means instead of, in the place of. This is ordinarily the signification of the word. Hence it appears that Christ died in the stead of those for whom He died. He was smitten in their room, He was their substitute. “If”, says the learned and acute Witsius, “there is any point in our divinity accurately proved and solidly defended against the exceptions of the Socinians, by illustrious persons in the Church, it is certainly this, viz.: that Christ satisfied the vindictive justice of God, not only for our good, but in our room, by enduring those most dreadful sufferings both in soul and body which we had deserved, and from which He, by undergoing them, did so deliver us, that they could not, with the wrath and curse of God as the proper punishment of our sin, be inflicted on us.”

An eastern shepherd anoints his stock with oil to prevent insect infection
Hence I argue thus: If Christ \textit{vicariously} suffered for you and me, God can have no claim upon us, no charge to bring against us, no wrath to manifest towards us. It is an impossibility that the sword of Justice should smite both the Shepherd and the sheep, the Substitute and the substituted, the Surety and those for whom He was bound. God cannot exact double payment, and consequently we are free, “whiter than snow”, and may exultingly exclaim with the apostle in Romans 8:33, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth, it is Christ that died!” But are all in this case? Surely not: for Christ will say to many, “Depart from me”! &c. How then, I ask, could Christ’s redemption have been universal?

6. The argument of the apostle in the 5th of Romans clearly leads to the doctrine of particular redemption. There is there a contrast between the two Adams. As the first Adam by sin had ruined all those who are born of him, so the second Adam was to save all those that are born of Him. The apostle insists upon the union of the first Adam with all his seed, so that when he fell, they all fell in him, because of their federal union with him; and as he was a figure or type of Him that was to come, as he and his seed stood and fell together, so it was to be with the second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ and His seed, they were to stand or fall together. For as when the one federal head 	extit{offended}, the offence came upon all the men whom he represented; so when the second Adam 	extit{obeyed}, righteousness came upon all the men whom He represented (Romans 5:12, 19).

I know of few scriptures more abused than this. The general idea seems to be that the work of Christ here spoken of was co-extensive with the work of Adam, \textit{i.e.} that as Adam ruined all men by his disobedience, so Christ redeemed all men by His obedience. But how can these things be? If this were so, all men must be saved.

Let us reflect awhile. From the 12th to the 19th verse there is a comparison drawn by the apostle. The passage is full of antitheses. Those antitheses, or opposites, are Adam and Christ, sin and grace (or the offence and the free gift), and their consequences, viz., condemnation and justification, or death and eternal life.

Now if the work of Christ were co-extensive with the work of Adam, either of these two consequences is inevitable, viz.: either all men will be saved, or all men are put upon the same footing as Adam occupied before the fall. But we know that all men will not be saved. And we also know that we are not placed upon the same footing as Adam before the fall, for we bring sin along with us into the world.

There is, then, manifestly something wrong in the reasoning. What is it? The premises are false. Christ’s work was \textit{not} co-extensive with Adam’s.

The mistake lies in supposing the two Adams to have represented exactly the same family. This was not the case. Adam represented the \textit{entire} human family: Christ represented the family given Him from eternity by the Father. And the apostle’s drift is to show the triumphing power of Christ’s work, the superabounding of grace over sin to all interested in it; for though one sin of one man brought death and condemnation upon a whole world, many offences on the part of any man interested in Christ’s work cannot bring him into condemnation.

That there was some marvellously comprehensive and amazingly gracious revelation here made, is manifest from the anticipated abuse of it, which the apostle notices in the 1st and 15th verses of the 6th chapter. If the ordinary exposition of this scripture were the true one, viz., that the benefits of Christ’s obedience will only be applied to those who work out their own salvation by duties, I hold that this question had never been put. In fact, it would have no point. But supposing the case to be as I have stated, nothing was more likely than that some careless or carnal listener would have jumped to the conclusion that he might now sin as he had a mind. “Ah, but”, anticipates Paul, “shall we sin that grace may abound? God forbid! How shall we who are dead to (the dreadful consequences of) sin, live any longer therein?”

A very common, and apparently well founded objection is made to this view. It is this, viz.:—“This is to disparage Christ in making Him the representative of only a part of the human race, whilst Adam represented the whole.”

To this we answer—“By no means; for as it is more to be a surety for a vast sum for one man who has nothing, and never can have anything to pay his debts, than to be surety for a hundred men who have abundance of their own, so it was more for Christ to contract and undertake for one helpless, hopeless sinner, than for Adam to contract for a righteous world.”

Oh, dearly beloved in the Lord—redeemed family of God! Think of your glorious privileges! Your high destiny! Your unassailable security!
“Where sin abounded, grace hath much more abounded!” Grace is so ample, so deep, so comprehensive, so efficacious, so perfect, that it has over-topped the most aggravated aboundings of sin. It is as if the apostle had said, Sin is terrible in its height, and depth, and breadth. It stands up as a huge monster, rearing its head to heaven; but the grace of God is higher, deeper, and broader. The giant creature is flung into the sea of Christ’s blood, and is lost to sight for ever in the fathomless depths (Jeremiah 1:20; Psalm 103:12).

But enough. If Christ redeemed every man, then every man must be saved; but as every man will not be saved, it follows either that redemption means something else than what we hold it to mean, or that Christ did not redeem every one of Adam’s race. I am content to abide by what I have spoken. If any opponent can scripturally and logically refute what I have advanced, I trust that the Lord will enable me manfully and ingenuously to confess my error.

3 I would notice a few objections, and answer them.

Objection.—It would be unjust of God to redeem some, and not all.
Answer.—Romans 9:20 supplies a sufficient reply to this, and all other objections of the kind; but I would suggest this important reflection to objectors—God has provided no redemption for devils, and why should He be thought unjust for not providing redemption for some men? Are devils inferior creatures to men? I trow not. As long as it is believed that there is an everlasting place of torment for the devil and his angels, let no man who wishes to support a character for rationality object to the reprobation of some men.

Objection.—But if Christ has redeemed only some, why then would He give such general invitations to come unto Him?
Answer.—Every attentive reader of those invitations will perceive that they are not general, but particular. It is to the “weary”, the “heavy laden”, the “thirsty”, the “hungry”, the “willing”, they are addressed, and not to those who are unconscious of any want, or unwilling to be reformed.

Objection.—But what do you make of such expressions as “God so loved the world,” “Christ tasted death for every man”?
Answer.—The context explains its respective text. That Christ did not die for every man has been proved, so that the objected passages cannot mean what they appear to mean; and as for the word “world”, or “whole world”, and the terms “all” and “every”, the attentive reader of his Bible will at once see that they are often used in so vague and loose a way as to prevent any stable argument being built upon their employment. An acute writer, in answer to the first objected passage, asks, Did God love Pharaoh, or Moab, or Ammon, or Judas? or does God love the wicked, &c.? The meaning is, God so loved Gentiles as well as Jews, &c..
Our Lord Jesus Christ is the only Saviour of sinners and there is no way of salvation apart from receiving the benefits of Christ’s death by the grace and mercy of God. Christians enjoy these spiritual and eternal benefits through faith.

To be saved is to be “in Jesus Christ”; viewed and considered by God as united with Christ in all His sufferings and accomplishments. The church is the body of Christ. Individual believers are members together with their Saviour and Head, they are adopted into the family of God and heir to all God’s gracious goodness and the glory prepared for them in heaven. Thus Paul writes, “we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together (Romans 8:16, 17).

A Sure Promise
Hence we see that God’s people, in Christ, are glorified together with their Saviour. They are the body, He is the Head. The glorification of the church and ours as individual members of the church is as sure as Christ’s glory. It is as sure as God’s everlasting love which unites us to Christ, as sure as our eternal election, as sure as our calling and conversion in time, as sure as our justification by the righteousness of God, as sure as if that glorification had already taken place. “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified” (Romans 8:29, 30).

Knowing the truth of our certain glory in union with Christ helps us to understand Paul’s tremendous assurance to all God’s children in Romans 8:28, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose”. Paul says, “all things”; our disappointments, our weaknesses, our failures, even our sins under God’s providence and purpose, tend to our greater good and leads ultimately to our glorify.
All Our Blessings Come By Faith

Now there is one way only to be “in Jesus Christ” and that is by faith. Every protestant can give a hearty “Amen” to that! We do not earn our salvation and we cannot be saved by our works and deeds. Believers never produce righteousness by their works and deeds. Paul says, “by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight” (Romans 3:20) and reminds the Galatians that “neither circumcision availeth anything ... but faith” which is living and motivated by love to Christ (Galatians 5:6).

Recently, I received a letter from a correspondent advocating degrees of reward in heaven. He listed several verses he believed demonstrated that a believer’s works are taken into account by God in order to reward that individual with eternal glory commensurate with his efforts and good works. The letter writer is far from Rome but I believe this teaching to be thoroughly Romish in its conception and consequences. It takes the believer’s eyes from Christ and His perfect, representative work for His people, and directs them back upon their own weak, tainted and always imperfect works.

I want to show you from God’s Word how beautiful are the Lord’s promises of goodness and blessing to all His people and why a believer’s good works, having themselves been fore-ordained, are an evidence of spiritual life, and not an entitlement to spiritual reward.

To Give You An Inheritance

In Acts 20:32 the apostle Luke recounts the words of Paul as he conveys a farewell to the elders recently come from Ephesus. “And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified”.

Several things are noticeable here in the context of our study. First, Paul calls these men “brethren”. He is an apostle speaking to church elders yet he identifies with them as a brother amongst brothers. In Christ we are all brethren, we are all equal, including the sisters. We are not all the same. We have different gifts, different responsibilities, duties, and callings but we are all partakers of the common salvation and as saved sinners we all are what we are by God’s grace:

1 Corinthians 4:7 For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?

We cannot glory in our differences when we realise all we are is of grace. Rather we glory in Christ for He has given us all we have and is Himself our fulness. This is true in time and it is true in eternity. There are no degrees of glory in the present world amongst brethren, and for the same reason none in the world to come. We are brethren, and everything we have flows from God’s grace.

Committed To God’s Care

Second, Paul writes, “I commend you to God” that is, I commit you to His care. I leave you in His hands. Why? Because He alone can supply all our needs. Any good work which a believer is able to perform is possible only because Our Saviour equips and provides for our needs. We need daily grace in the teeth of temptation and trial as we pass through this world of sin. We need wisdom, we need direction in life, we need help with decisions, help with relationships, help in trials. We need strength from above knowing that He who has power to save also has power to keep.

Now think of this in the context of our glorious inheritance in heaven. Paul commended these men to God and to the Lord Jesus Christ because the apostle had learned from personal experience that God’s way was best. Three times Paul asked the Lord to remove from him what he perceived to be a thorn in his flesh, a hurdle to his effectiveness as an apostle. What that thorn was I do not know. It is not important. But, no doubt Paul believed that the removal of this thorn would assist his ministry, enhance his service, enlarge his usefulness.

Did Paul imagine for a moment that removing this thorn would contribute to His personal glory, and increase his reward in heaven? Was that what he sought? Of course not. Paul gloried in Christ, and if his weakness was conducive to Christ’s glory then Paul would glory in that which glorified His Saviour. “And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” And Paul replied. “Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Committed to Christ

Third, Paul commends these elders to “the word of his grace”, this evidently speaks of Christ, the eternal and living Word into whose hands the church has been eternally committed and commended in the covenant of grace. As the eternal Word Our Saviour stood and spoke for the elect, in the eternal council,
asking for and receiving every grace on their behalf. As the ever-living Head of the church He continues to stand and speak as advocate in heaven for the saints.

Only a divine person is able to take care, and take charge, of the saints. Only the blessed Son of God could accomplish all that is needed for the saints’ eternal wellbeing. The God-man is the provider of all our needs in time and every blessing in eternity, even to the extent of His own heavenly glory. “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19). Our great reward in heaven is not contingent on our works but is dispensed according to Christ’s goodness and grace, according to His riches!

Founded, Built And Complete In Christ
Fourth, Paul understands it is only God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit who can build up the church and each individual member in it. “Which is able to build you up”: in faith, in holiness and every grace. Christ is the master-builder and the foundation upon which the church is built. And being so built upon Christ the very gates of hell cannot prevail against it. The church is daily being built upon as souls are saved and added to it. It is built up when the gospel is preached to the edifying and nourishing of the saints. It is built up as a sinner’s knowledge deepens of grace and truth, as experience proves God’s faithfulness and our passage in this life confirms His goodness.

On Earth ...
All this is the portion of all the Lord’s people here upon earth. There is no role here for man’s works. No part to play for the individual that will make one member stand forth amongst his brethren as more eligible for glory, more deserving of honour, more worthy to reign than another. Christ is the author and finisher of our faith and any thought that we can add merit to His work in us is sheer nonsense.

But, that is not all. In addition to all this which is given to the Lord’s people in time, Paul adds, “and give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified”.

... And In Heaven
Our inheritance is the glory prepared for us in heaven. Note the word Paul uses. An inheritance is not a reward. An inheritance is based on who you are and not what you do. This inheritance belongs to the children of God as children, it is the birth-right of those who are born again. It is the inheritance of those who are adopted into God’s family. It is what believers possess as joint-heirs with Christ.

I know reward is sometimes used of glory in heaven, for example in Matthew 5:12 “Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven” but Colossians 3:24 tells us that this reward is the inheritance spoken of elsewhere. “Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.”

Remember, to be “in Christ” is to be so by grace. All the blessings of God are received by faith. “Not of works, lest any man should boast.” This is true in time and true in eternity. Heavenly glory is as much the free-grace gift of God as is our election, justification and conversion. It is not obtained by the works of law. It is our joint-heir inheritance with Christ because we are His and “in Him” (1 John 4:13).
We Inherit Upon Christ’s Death
This is the inheritance which falls, by right, to the heirs upon the death of the testator. Christ died, and upon His death the will is read and the eternal glory is distributed accordingly. We are called “To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:4). “And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away” (1 Peter 5:4).

There is no arguing over this will. No sons will say, “I did more than you, brother.” The reality is that no one deserves glory but Christ has secured it for His people upon the ground of His great work of salvation. “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will” (Ephesians 1:11).

Sanctified In Christ
It is all of God’s free grace to bestow this glory to whomsoever He will. Do we know who these blessed people are? Yes, indeed. They are “all them which are sanctified” by the will and work of the Triune God. All who are set apart in eternal election by God the Father, all whose sins are expiated by the blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, all to whom Christ is made sanctification, and all who are sanctified by the Holy Spirit, who is the seal and earnest or pledge, of our inheritance.

Shame upon those who claim we sanctify ourselves, beautify ourselves and glorify ourselves by our works of righteousness and holy living. Listen to the word of God! “For if the inheritance be of the law (good works), it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise” (Galatians 3:18).

The Bible teaching on this matter is clear. There are no degrees of reward in heaven based on the good-works righteousness of sinners here on earth. This notion is just a further denial of free grace by works-mongers and an opportunity for self-righteous men to blow their own trumpet. Rather, God has given us all the qualifications we need for His presence, He has given us “all spiritual blessing in heavenly places” Ephesians 1:4 upon the sole footing that we are “in Christ”. He has given us Christ Himself as Lord and Saviour. Consequently, all our service, mean, weak, sin-tainted as it is, is not God’s people storing up treasure in heaven, but His grateful people “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Colossians 1:12).

“I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps”
Revelation 14:2

1. Hark! Ten thousand harps and voices
Sound the note of praise above!
Jesus reigns and heav’n rejoices;
Jesus reigns the God of love;
Lo! He sits on yonder throne;
Jesus rules the world alone.

2. Well may angels bright and glorious
Sing the praises of the Lamb;
While on earth He prov’d victorious;
Now He bears a matchless Name:
Well may angels sing of Him,
Heaven supplies no richer theme.

3. Come, ye saints, unite your praises
With the angels round His throne;
Soon we hope our Lord will raise us
To the place where He is gone.
Meet it is that we should sing,
Glory, glory to our King.

4. Sing how Jesus came from heaven,
How He bore the cross below;
How all power to Him is given;
How He reigns in glory now:
’Tis a great and endless theme,
O ’tis sweet to sing of Him!

5. Jesus, hail! whose glory brightens
All above, and gives it worth.
Lord of life, Thy smile enlightens,
Cheers and charms Thy saints on earth:
When we think of love like Thine,
Lord, we own it love divine!

6. King of glory, reign for ever,
Thine an everlasting crown:
Nothing from Thy love shall sever
Those whom Thou hast made Thine own!
Happy objects of Thy grace,
Destin’d to behold Thy face.

7. Saviour, hasten Thine appearing!
Bring, O bring the glorious day,
When, the awful summons hearing,
Heaven and earth shall pass away:
Then with golden harps we’ll sing,
Glory, glory to our King.

Thomas Kelly
The New Babel Confusion.

Before Charles was placed in his coffin at Whitehall, it became clear that a number of the judges, now faced with punishment, had refused to sign the death warrant and others had been compelled to sign by force. Cromwell is said to have examined the head of the King at Whitehall to make sure it was totally severed and he was really dead, before saying, ‘If he had not been King, he would have lived longer’. The regicides now refused permission for Charles to be buried in Westminster Abbey and told Bishop Juxon that he could not give Charles a Church of England Prayer Book burial. The King was then interred on 9 February, 1648 (old style) at Windsor Castle.

An enormous pamphlet war now took place with Diggers, Ranters, Levellers, Fifth Monarchy men, Muggletonians, Adamites, Behmenists, Barrowites, Brownists, Familists and female pastors and soothsayers, each toning the English language down until it reached a bawdy babble. The language used in official reports in those days was so full of socio-politico-religio nuances that it is almost impossible to obtain its real meaning today. Even the evangelical language of Zion was now used as a lingua franca to express profane ideas. It is pointed out how serene, Biblical and devotional Cromwell’s language was, but Charles’ and Laud’s were even more heavenly. Yet the riff-raff and cut-throats of the age hardly spoke less piously. Even today, the most obscene and blasphemous oaths have usually a ‘religious’ origin and we still love to debase former decent words such as ‘gay’ and ‘fairy’ with sordid connotations. Under Cromwell, radicalism swept through Britain through such works as Rutherford’s Rex Lex and the negative use of text-critical scholarship at Oxford.

As an antidote, the people of England began to read Charles’ farewell testimony of faith Eikon Basilike with its worshipful and doctrinally sound language which went into thirty editions...
within the year. However, in spite of the official tolerance of the ‘New Babel Confusion’ as William Prynne called it, Parliament made every effort to suppress Charles’ work, condemning Charles’ piety as the idolatrous worship of the Church of England. John Durie protested before Parliament that England’s schools were creating an atheist state. John Wilkins, followed by both Royalists, Republicans, Anglicans, Separatists, Religious and Secular thinkers, including foreign scholars settled in England such as Oldenburg and Haak, all demanded that the profane English language should be abolished and a new clear and clean means of objective communication should be founded. John Cleveland showed how England was suffering from bankrupt politics due to a bankrupt language. Thomas Hobbes, too, demanded a uniform, morally-sound language based on tried linguistic, Biblical and social laws. People, it was argued by scholars, were simply unable to think correctly because of language barriers. When the Royal Society was formed in the sixteen sixties, the compilation of such a universal language was one of its first aims. In spite of all this decay, Cromwell and his followers spoke of each year after Charles’ execution as ‘The First (Second, etc.) Year of Freedom by God’s blessing restored’.

**Supreme ruler of the Commonwealth**

On 19 March, the House of Lords was abolished and Cromwell appointed as the first Chairman of the Council of State. There has been much debate concerning whether Cromwell saw himself as the new King or not. It is pointed out that Cromwell rejected the title, preferring those of ‘Chairman’, ‘Chief Magistrate’ or ‘Protector’. Cromwell, however, as extant speeches show, said that all these titles meant the same thing, namely that he was in charge. He thus explained that if Parliament chose to call him Supreme Magistrate, President, Chairman or King, he would accept either as amounting to the same rank. It is clear that Cromwell now saw himself as the supreme ruler of the English Empire whether he was called Emperor, King or Chief Legislator. Cromwell now had those generals executed who had opposed him such as Scotsman Hamilton and Englishman Arthur Capel but his power was not yet absolute and he and Ireton were thwarted by Parliament in their attempt to have Lord Goring and Sir John Owen also put to death. So, Cromwell now claimed for himself the freedom to call a Parliament only when he felt it could be useful for him and to appoint whomsoever he thought fit to be a member.

**The carnage at Drogheda**

Though the Royalists were defeated in England, opposition in Ireland was still relatively strong. There was an army of some 2,500 man under Arthur Aston which had not bowed before Cromwell. This force was led by Scottish, English and Irish officers. Cromwell decided to take over the largest army he had ever recruited to Ireland and stamp out all opposition military or civil. He explained, too, that he would thus be able to pay his troops with the spoil, and reward the nobility and army leaders who had served him faithfully. Modern Ultra-Protestants tend to view the siege of Drogheda as the triumph of Protestantism over the Papacy. Most of the leading Royalists were, however, English Protestants and many of the soldiers were Protestant troops fresh from fighting for Sweden in her war against the Roman Catholic Emperor. True, the Irish Confederates, the majority of whom were Roman Catholics, joined the English and Scots for their own defence but even when all exaggerated figures are considered from both sides, over half of those slaughtered on the Irish side in the ensuing conflicts were Protestants and Cromwell massacred far more civilians than he did soldiers. Sadly, one can rely on few modern historians whether Protestant or Roman Catholic to give an objective view of Cromwell’s personal role in the massacre of over 4,000 people. Perhaps the best balanced assessment of the role of England in Ireland during this time is to be found in Crawford Gribben’s down-to-earth book *The Irish Puritans*. This recent book has been strongly
criticised by the leading Reformed Press in England who believe that Roman Catholic Tom Reilly gives a pro-Cromwell picture. Indeed, when I quoted Reilly verbatim in the English Churchman to show that he was not sympathetic to Cromwell’s stand as suggested by our ‘Reformed’ friends, Erroll Hulse, editor of Reformation Today, Director of the Evangelical Press and co-worker of the Banner of Truth Magazine, claimed in the English Churchman that my quotes were ‘ridiculous’ and untrue. The evidence he gave was that he had a friend who knew a friend of Reilly’s who maintained that Reilly was sympathetic to Cromwell. He had obviously not read Reilly himself. So much for modern ‘Reformed scholarship’! Admittedly, wily Reilly does appear to flatter Cromwell and coat the Ultra-Cromwellians’ lips with sugar, but when he has them in his hand, hoping they will now read on, he tells them that the thousands slaughtered at Drogheda were those who had not taken part in any riots and that Cromwell ‘left in his wake a scene of unprecedented carnage’ and he placed himself ‘outside the parameters of regular warfare’. Reilly tells us also that ‘a demon lurked deep within his (Cromwell’s) psyche’ and there was no excuse for his ‘fiendish acts’. He concludes that Cromwell was a hypochondriac and depressive and allowed his personal psychosis to determine the will of God for him. Cromwell’s Parliament, Reilly claims, was guided by ‘superstitions, witchcraft and colourful ghost stories’. Yet, so-called Reformed men are now saying that Rome, through Reilly, is now on their side in their positive view of Cromwell. Reilly goes further in his condemnation of Cromwell than all Protestants and most Roman Catholics. One Reformed, evangelical, retired senior army officer claimed in the Christian press that I had wrongly accused Cromwell of shelling Drogheda though shells had not yet been invented. I had given Cromwell’s own account and, of course, the military art of shelling was at least 100 years older than Cromwell. This shows how badly informed modern evangelicals are of seventeenth century history. On the other hand, contemporary Puritans such as Adams, Love, Featley, Hall, Ward, Balcanqual, Manton and Chamrock all claimed that Cromwell gave the Protestant cause a bad name and Baxter called Cromwell ‘a vile and detestable creature’ and testified that ‘most of the ministers and good people of the land, did look upon the new Commonwealth as tyranny’. The Act of Settlement of 1652 robbed most of Ireland’s landowners of their property, though landless Irish nobility still had to raise money to raise a yearly tribute of horses and troops for Cromwell’s army.

The New Engagement

In order to consolidate his power, Cromwell had his New Engagement passed through his select Parliament. This demanded absolute allegiance to Cromwell ‘without King and House of Lords’. It was very similar to the former oath of Allegiance to the English King and the Church of England. The enraged lawyer and sacked MP, William Prynne, wrote pamphlet after pamphlet against the Engagement and the Presbyterians withdrew from much of the committee work of the Westminster Assembly, especially that which fostered Protestant union. They found their work on the Westminster Standards strongly criticised. Prynne, who had been imprisoned and had his ears and nose slit under Charles for treachery, though he claimed himself that he had deserved the death penalty, now found himself in prison again under Cromwell. Now, all the leading Puritans, mostly former Anglicans, Independents and Baptists found themselves
on the side of Cromwell. Biographer Robert S. Paul demonstrates how most of the so-called ‘traitors and detractors’ during Cromwell’s fight for power came from the ranks of the Scottish Presbyterians. Many non-Presbyterians now worked openly at the Assembly and at least four Baptists, including Henry Jessey, were chosen as Triers to supervise the calling and mentoring of candidates for the ministry. Realising that new winds were blowing, Independents and former Anglicans, including Baxter and several ex-bishops, formed new churches throughout 16 counties and Ireland on a Pan-Protestant basis after the pattern of John Durie. Though these churches bent over backwards to make Presbyterians feel at home, these efforts at church unity were branded by the Presbyterians, except Byfield and a few others, as ‘Episcopalian and malignant’.

Many positive Reforms now implemented or planned
Educational reforms, blocked by the Long Parliament, were now revived by such as Durie, Hartlib, Owen, Ussher, Gouge, Nye and Thomas Goodwin and state agencies for the education of both males and females were set up to reform and integrate religion and learning. Libraries were made centres and coordinators of the educational system. Plans for a University of London were laid, which would be multi-lingual and welcome Jews, Greek Orthodox and Eastern Europeans. 20,000 extra ministers were to be given university education and places were to be found for a further 80,000 secular academics, including military training. Tuition was not to be subject-orientated but the entire student, body, soul and spirit was to be educated pansophically believing that the knowledge of God, the source and outworking of all knowledge, is the beginning of wisdom. It was argued that if the rich gave up all but three meals a day, they could finance the education of all the new ministers needed. In all these reforms, Cromwell gave his full support, even granting pensions to those like Samuel Hartlib, John Pell and John Durie who pioneered them.

A further example of Janusism in Cromwell’s psyche
However, such pan-European projects were to be under English leadership as the Germans had requested in Charles’ days. Unlike Durie’s, Ussher’s, Gouge’s, Nye’s and Goodwin’s original plans, Cromwell coupled them with hegemonic demands on Europe which brought political, ecclesiastical and educational confusion to the Continent. For instance, whilst military and religious diplomatic relationships were being worked out between England and Sweden, Cromwell declared international waters to be British. He thus felt free to board and capture any Swedish ships striving to enter Swedish ports. Especially two large Swedish cargoes of gold from the New World were thus ‘confiscated’ and used as prize-money for the English navy. All Queen Christina’s demands for restitution were ignored. Cromwell merely told Christina that her ships had been taken according to English law and was a matter for the English only and outside interference would not be tolerated. Cromwell now told his diplomats to beware of Swedish ambassadors, because they used a special poison which could kill a reader when opening letters. This was probably to cover Cromwell’s own embarrassment caused by the Swedish Ambassador to England dying mysteriously in London and Parliament had to send Daniel Lisle, aided by Durie to Sweden in 1652 to pacify the Queen. Whitelocke, often in Cromwell’s black books, offered to show his trustworthiness by opening Cromwell’s letters for him. The Dutch, fed up with Cromwell’s buccaneering, declared war on England (1652-1654).

England humiliated by the Swedes
Cromwell sent Lord Commissioner Whitelocke to Sweden in 1653 to secure an alliance, though the Court, Chancellor Oxenstierna and Prof. Ravius at Uppsala had asked for Durie. However, Cromwell wanted Durie and John Pell to persuade also the Swiss, Germans and Dutch to enter into alliance negotiations with England. He felt that this would be more difficult than an alliance with Sweden which was as good as certain. Durie’s and Pell’s mission was crowned with success. On the other hand, Whitelocke was kept waiting three months before the Queen found time to give him audience. He was told that royal ambassadors had preference. Whitelocke protested that Cromwell was as good as any king, but Christina asked him if Cromwell had been inaugurated in any capacity as Head of State. Whitelocke
had to say that Cromwell had undergone no such investiture. The Swedes then challenged Whitelocke concerning England’s sea-crimes and Whitelocke began to fear for his life. At nights, angry Swedes gathered outside his bedroom door, crying, ‘Come out you English dog’. Christina proved the better diplomat and shortly before abdicating, forced Whitelocke to sign a pact allowing Swedes to fish in English waters and which contained a promise that all English piracy would stop and full compensation paid to Sweden. Whitelocke made a last attempt to gain something of the deal Cromwell had hoped he would get, but the Swedes placed him on a ship bound for Lübeck and bade him farewell. Bradshaw said that next time he and Durie would go and make a better job of it. Christiana was surprised that Whitelocke had behaved like an entertainment-loving Cavalier and not as an earnest Puritan. Whitelocke had assured Christina that the English Commonwealth Court loved dancing and music. The story is still told in Sweden how Whitelocke spent his time teaching the ladies-in-waiting the latest English dances. This seems believable as when Cromwell’s children married, there was music and dancing at Whitehall up to five o’clock in the morning. According to the State Papers, Charles had never more than 47 musicians and he published all costs applying to them. Cromwell employed up to 100 musicians but I have found no reference to what they cost their country in the normal channels for such disclosures. After the humiliities that Whitelocke suffered and through him Cromwell, the latter decided to be officially enthroned as Protector and Chief Magistrate of England, Ireland and Scotland. There was, however, opposition in the now tiny Parliament and Cromwell experienced one set-back after the other.

The Saints’ Parliament

In April 1653, Cromwell was fed up with his Parliament which he had shrunk from the 547 members of 1640 to the 50 of his choice in 1653. So he stormed Parliament backed by 400 musketeers and closed Parliamentary proceedings. In July, Cromwell established a new Parliament under military control which he called The Saints’ Parliament,\(^1\) commanding them to put forward educational and ecclesiastical reforms and prepare the way constitutionally for his enthronement. Cromwell chose his ‘saints’ from all walks of life and from the various denominations to represent the entire Commonwealth of England, Ireland and Scotland, but all the Irish and Scots seats were filled by English soldiers. The members could not agree on anything and all proposals of reform were rejected because a majority vote could not be gained. They did manage to ban pastors from conducting marriages and placed a number of church practices in the hands of the Justice of the Peace. Few turned up at the sittings and most members resigned within a few months. Those who would not were then forced out by Cromwell’s soldiers.

Cromwell and the Jews

In 1655, Cromwell pressed Parliament to resettle the Jews in England. Hitherto, Parliament had ruled that toleration should only be shown ‘to those who profess faith in God by Jesus Christ’. Treading warily, Cromwell first called a conference of evangelicals (a term which became fashionable at this time) including Simon Ashe, Edmund Calamy and Henry Jessey, at Whitehall. Durie was in Hesse, Germany at the time under Cromwell’s orders but published a guide for the conference explaining what the German position was and how there should be an international tolerance of the Jews. He stated that the lack of the knowledge of Hebrew in England was the result of much faulty Bible exegesis and much could be learnt from the Jews. The Whitehall vote for a return of the Jews to England was unanimous, though Jessey argued that the Jews should only be allowed to populate run-down areas only and pay double tax. Jessey, however, raised substantial sums of money to resettle the Jews in Jerusalem which he thought was more Biblical. Cromwell now placed this result before his new, hand-chosen Parliament, thinking he would have a home run, but Parliament absolutely refused to tolerate a Jewish presence in England. Cromwell thus ignored Parliament, giving Jews such as Mennaseh Ben Israel permission to settle in England, build a Synagogue and bury their dead in English soil. He explained to Parliament that he was making a controlled experiment.

Cromwell’s enthronement

By 1657, Cromwell was openly demanding that Parliament should enthrone him as Supreme Governor. He had long thought about the exact title he should assume and how the ceremony should proceed and finally decided that the term ‘Installation of his Highness’ would express sufficient dignity. He also insisted that the Protectorship should remain in his family for ever. Eye-witness accounts, therefore, such

\(^1\) Another name for the 140 members who rarely turned up was the ‘Barebone’s Parliament after a London merchant and Independent member of that name.
as Edward Prestwick’s, say that Cromwell was given a Royal enthronement. Indeed, to preserve Royal tradition, Cromwell insisted that the Stone of Scone and the Coronation Throne be used. This would also show, as the inscription on the stone says, that he was also King of Scotland. The stone and throne, however, stood in Westminster Abbey and Cromwell, of no particular church, wanted no church ceremony.

So the ‘Protector’ had the throne moved to Westminster Hall, the place of Charles' execution, as if to say, ‘The King is dead! Long live the Protector!’ At Westminster, according to contemporary records, ‘seats were built scaffold-wise, like a theatrum’ on both sides of the Hall to hold the Members of Parliament and an elevated platform was built at the south end for Cromwell’s throne. On June 26, 1657, Cromwell appeared ‘richly dressed’ in a ‘costly mantle of estate’ lined with ermine. He was girded with ‘a sword of great value’.

Now the Speaker, leading the ceremony, presented Cromwell with a purple robe of state, signifying justice and mercy. He was also given a Bible as the source of good government. Next, a sceptre was placed in his hands, and the Speaker, quoting Scripture and Homer told Cromwell that all kings and princes were sceptre-bearers. Then Cromwell was given a magnificent sword, whose Latin name, the Speaker said, was ‘I am the Lord Protector’s, to protect my people’. After taking the oath, Thomas Manton was ‘appointed’ to ‘make and deliver’ a prayer. The trumpets now sounded, and Cromwell was ‘proclaimed his Highness Oliver Cromwell, Protector of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the dominions and territories thereunto belonging’. The trumpets sounded again and the assembly shouted ‘Long live his Highness’ three times and then three times, ‘Huzza’.

After this brief enthronement, Cromwell led the entire procession of office-holders out of the Hall where he entered a state coach. John Durie immediately wrote from Westminster to his fellow-ambassador John Pell, still in Switzerland, informing him of the ‘new settlement’, he explained that the only difference between Cromwell’s new status and that of a king was that the title had been merely changed to Supreme Magistrate and that now Cromwell could ‘administer the laws of the state to all intents and purposes with as much authority and right as ever any king before him did.’ As for Scotland, in spite of Cromwell’s claims to rule her, she had already proclaimed Charles II King of Scotland on 6 February 1649.

Dear Sister in the Lord,— Camberwell, Sept. 1st, 1842.

In reply to your kind note, I can only say, that I am never so happy as when engaged in my Lord’s work. You may, therefore, announce my preaching at Hayes, both Tuesday and Wednesday evenings (D.V.) I never wish to leave home without the warrant which God gave to Jeremiah, “Thou shalt go to all that I send thee; and whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt speak” (Jer. 1: 7). Oh, my friend, we have no time to lose in the glorifying of Him, who thought not His life and His blood too much to give for us! And I know of nothing which makes me more ashamed, than the review of past days and years of neglect, and half-heartedness in His cause, since I have known His precious name. I anticipate my journey is of the Lord, because He has marked out something to do for Him every evening; and who can tell what may be in store for some precious souls in your neighbourhood? One thing we are sure of—viz., that all whom the Father hath given to Christ shall come to Him, whatever obstacles may oppose them. We are, therefore, encouraged to pray—yee, encouraged to believe, that “His word shall not return to Him void;” and who knows but He who made the dew to fill Gideon’s fleece intends to water your soul, and the souls of those dear to you, in that sweet retired spot? Then we shall each have cause to sing, “This is the Lord’s doing, and marvellous in our eyes.”

Yours in our glorious Christ,

J. Irons
We plan to hold our New Focus Conference in April, 2013, at Ossett, West Yorkshire. Members of Ebenezer Chapel Ossett have kindly offered to host our gathering which will be held at their church in Ossett town centre (shown above) and we warmly invite friends to gather for a weekend of preaching and fellowship.

Once again we hope to have Pastor Don Fortner from Danville, Kentucky, USA and brother George Ella from Mulheim, Germany as contributors to the conference. It is planned that Pastors Norman Roe, Allan Jellett, Ian Potts and Peter Meney from the UK will also take part.

In previous years these gatherings have been a great opportunity for believers in free grace to congregate from different parts of the country and meet like-minded friends. Part of the purpose of hosting the meetings in different venues is to make it more accessible for those who feel reluctant to make that initial journey, however, we hope that as well as new visitors, those who have benefitted from the preaching and fellowship in past years will join with us again.

Visitors travelling a distance probably need to consider obtaining accommodation for both Friday and Saturday nights. Ossett is close to the M1 between Dewsbury and Wakefield. There are plenty of hotels within a few miles of the church. Prices begin at around £40 for a double room per night. Breakfast is extra but worth having. In recent years a number of those attending have used Premier Inn and found them good value. Here are some options:

- Premier Inn Wakefield South - M1, Jct39
  Denby Dale Road, Calder Park, Wakefield WF4 3BB
  Tel: 0871 527 9118

- Premier Inn Wakefield City North
  Herriot Way, Wakefield WF1 2UJ
  Tel: 0871 527 9116

- Premier Inn Wakefield Central
  Denby Dale Road, Thorne Park, Wakefield WF2 8DY
  Tel: 0871 527 9114

- Holiday Inn Wakefield M1, Jct. 40
  Queens Drive, Ossett, Wakefield WF5
  Tel: 0871 423 4876

- BEST WESTERN Hotel St Pierre
  733 Barnsley Rd, Newmillerdam, Wakefield WF2 6QG
  Tel: 0345 025 4358

Do consider meeting with us and being a part of this coming year’s event. There is no charge for the conference and meals will be provided. A collection will be taken and there will be opportunity available for those who are able to help defray costs. One additional feature of this year’s event is that we shall have access to view and buy from Ossett Christian Bookshop’s complete selection of new & secondhand books.

--- NEW FOCUS CONFERENCE 2013 ---

Our friends at Ebenezer Chapel in Ossett, West Yorkshire have kindly agreed to host our 2013 New Focus Conference.

The dates are Fri. 19th to Sun. 21st April (d.v.).

Meetings begin at 7:00 pm on Friday, 1.00 pm and 7.00 pm on Saturday and 11.00 am on Sunday, at Ebenezer Chapel, 21 Queen Street, Ossett, W. Yorks., WF5 8AS.

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