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New Focus is published by: Go publications, The Cairn, Hill Top, Eggleston, Co. Durham, DL12 0AU
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New Focus is published bi-monthly for the third week in each even month.

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— Cover —

Pussy Willow
The Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.
Isaiah 61:11b courtesy GalleryWall.co.uk

When the Lord Jesus Christ entered upon His mediatorial work, He willingly undertook to accomplish ten explicit instructions from His Father—the Lord calls them commandments in John 10:18, 12:49, 14:31. Together they comprise the business His Father sent Him to do (Luke 2:49).

Should Jesus fail to accomplish any of these tasks the whole plan of salvation would fail, and all of God’s chosen people would be lost. Here then, are the terms of the covenant of grace. Here, laid upon the shoulders of the God-man, are the Father’s demands of the Son for the eternal happiness of His elect.

1. The God-man must become personally responsible for the wellbeing and safekeeping of the chosen ones. The Father’s chosen people were individually and collectively given to the Lord to be cared for and preserved. They were entrusted into the hand of Christ with the express instruction that not one should be lost (John 6:39; John 10:28).

2. Because the elect, together with all mankind, would fall in Adam, the God-man must “bring Jacob again to him” (Isaiah 49:5) by redeeming them from sin and their fallen state. He must recover them from sin and restore them who “like sheep, have gone astray”.

3. Furthermore, He must deliver them from the curse and condemnation of the law, justly becoming the propitiation for their sin, be they Jew or Gentile (Romans 3:25; 1 John 2:2; 1 John 4:10). Hence, our Lord says, “Other sheep I have” to take care of, and to lay down my life for, besides those among the Jews, “which are not of this fold”, them also I must bring in as my flock and set before my Father.

4. He must, in order to accomplish this, take a human body and soul, to offer as a sacrifice. This body must be the same flesh and blood as the chosen people, for He should be “made like unto his brethren” (Hebrews 2:17) that He might stand for them as Substitute and Surety. Hence, “by this will” of the Father, “we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Hebrews 10:5-10).

5. He must obey the law on behalf of His people (Galatians 4:4, 5). This was necessary both to honour and magnify the law as the righteous will of God and to fulfil it as the Surety of His people. This fulfilment is essential to their justification; for “by the obedience of One, many are made righteous” (Romans 5:19).

6. The God-man must, nevertheless, suffer death, the penalty of the law, for death must be endured, either by the sinner himself, the transgressor of the law, or by a suitable Substitute. Thus Christ, in obedience to His Father’s command, was made perfect, through suffering (Hebrews 2:10).

7. He must sanctify His covenant people by offering up His body. Death, the wages of sin, must be endured; nevertheless, the offering up of Christ’s body as a perfect sacrifice will secure every blessing for the elect and all glory for their Substitute. Then Christ and His spiritual seed, “the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand” (Isaiah 53:10-12).

8. He must alone for the sins of the chosen ones and put an end to sin. This, says Daniel, is the great purpose of the incarnation, “To finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, and to make reconciliation for iniquity” (Daniel 9:24a). By the God-man’s bloodshed, sufferings, and death, atonement is been made for the elect. This is a source of eternal joy for His people, (Hebrews 9:26; Romans 5:10, 11).

9. He must “bring in everlasting righteousness” for the justification of the elect (Daniel 9:24b). No less than perfect holiness will serve the needs of God’s people (Psalm 119:142) and everlasting righteousness can only be supplied by the God-man alone (Ephesians 4:24). Then finally, 10. The God-man must preserve His people in time and bring them into His kingdom in eternity, He must “feed the flock of slaughter”. This the Father demands and the Son willingly obeys (Zechariah 11:4, 7). Evenmore the Son can say, “I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do” (John 17:4).
I suppose this truth is the most difficult thing any believer has to learn. This is our creed but not our experience! We will never be effectually used for God’s true glory until it becomes our experience.

The Lord must go back to the seashore and raise up some fishermen – we’ve all become masters and doctors, wise men in theology and great counsellors. I disqualify myself for God’s use when I become qualified. My fine talents and lofty credentials become hindrances rather than helps. I thought to prepare myself for great things, only to learn that it was the rough voice in the wilderness He planned to use, not the polished preacher; it was the weak, impulsive shepherd with the sling He planned to use, not the mighty warrior with his armour of wit and arsenal of facts, doctrines, and learning. It may not be too late for some, but most are too proud to become expendable. If we don’t pour contempt on ourselves, God will.

Henry Mahan
Every event in our Lord’s earthly life, every word He spoke, every act He performed ought to be regarded by us as matters of immense importance and deep interest. In all that He said, in all that He did, in all that He refused to do our Saviour is both our Example and our Teacher, showing us both what we are to believe and how we are to live in this world for the glory of God.

On Saturday, the sabbath day, the Lord Jesus crammed as much into the day as possible for the glory of God and the good of men. He taught in the synagogue at Capernaum, cast out devils, and healed Peter’s mother-in-law and many in the city who were sick. In this passage, after an exhausting sabbath day, we see our Saviour rising early for prayer on Sunday morning. Mark records the events of that day for our learning. May God the Holy Spirit be our Teacher as we seek to learn from the things which transpired on that Sunday that Mark describes in these five verses.

And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed. And Simon and they that were with him followed after him. And when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for thee. And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth. And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils.

Mark 1:35-39

Diligence In Prayer
First, I want us to take notice of and learn from our Saviour’s diligence in prayer. “And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed” (v. 35).

Remember, Mark is telling us about the incarnate God. This is not a weak, sinful, fallen, and needy man. This man is God. Yet, as a man, He placed great importance upon the matter of prayer, especially private prayer. Throughout the days of His humiliation, we find our Master engaged in prayer. We do not often see Him engaging in public prayer. He seems to have avoided, as much as possible, any public show or display of devotion; but private prayer, private worship was another matter. Most do just the opposite. Most people make a great show of devotion publicly, but greatly neglect private prayer, private worship, and private communion with God.
Our Saviour seems never to have begun anything, He seems never to have made a decision, without prayer. When He was baptized, Luke tells us He was “praying” (Luke 3:21). When He was transfigured upon the mount, we read that, “as he prayed, the fashion of his face was altered” (Luke 9:29). Before choosing His apostles, our Saviour “continued all night in prayer” (Luke 6:12). When all men spoke well of Him, and wanted to make Him a king, Matthew tells us, “He went up into a mountain apart to pray” (Matthew 14:23). When He was assaulted by Satan in Gethsemane, our Lord Jesus said to His disciples, “Sit ye here, while I shall pray” (Mark 14:32).

Our Saviour prayed always and did not faint. Though He was sinless, He prayed as sinner never prayed. He diligently sought to maintain communion with God His Father as a man, giving us an example. His eternal godhead did not cause Him to live independent of God’s ordained means of ministering to men. Here is the God to whom we pray, as a man, showing us the necessity of prayer. The Son of God, as a man, never considered Himself strong enough, wise enough, or spiritual enough to live in this world without private prayer and public worship.

“In the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared” (Hebrews 5:7). “We ought to see in all this”, wrote J.C. Ryle, “the immense importance of private devotion.” If the Son of God felt it important to pray, how much more important it is for us to pray. If He who is holy, sinless, and always pleasing to God spent much time in private prayer, how much more important it is for us to do so. Our Saviour never neglected the worship of God, neither the public worship of God nor private worship. Let us follow Him.

What does this tell us about men and women who do not pray, who wilfully neglect the worship of God? There are multitudes who, while professing to be believers, exercise no diligence at all in the matter of worship. Their profession is a delusion. Prayerless men and women are not the servants of this praying Saviour. Prayerless souls are Christless souls. The Spirit of adoption always causes adopted children to call upon their Father in prayer.

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16). Let all who know, trust, and worship the Lord Jesus Christ always be watchful over their souls in this matter. Prayer is the pulse of spiritual life. With believers, this is not a duty. Yet, it must be dutifully maintained. Prayer is not an act of life, but a way of life. Those who do not pray are yet without life before God. Do we pray? The disciples knew Saul of Tarsus had experienced grace when they were told, “Behold, he prayeth.”

We are urged by God the Holy Spirit to diligently maintain the use of every means of grace. Our engagement in prayer and worship is not the cause of grace. Without doubt, many who carefully keep up the exercise of both private and public prayer are lost. Their religion is all form and formalism. But anyone who altogether despises and neglects worship and prayer is altogether without life and grace before God (Hebrews 10:24-26).

**Christ’s Sovereignty**

Second, Mark sets before us an example of our Saviour’s sovereignty.

“And Simon and they that were with him followed after him. And when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for thee. And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth” (vv. 36-38).

We are all far too much inclined to judge the blessings of God by the outward response of men to what we are doing. This is nowhere more common and nowhere more foolish than in the matter of preaching. Our Lord’s disciples were very excited because He was so popularly received in their hometown. They thought this was a sure evidence that He would give a repeat performance; but they were mistaken. Instead, our Lord gave a clear, unmistakable display of His total sovereignty in the exercise of His mercy, grace, and saving power. Though there were many in Capernaum who sought Him, He turned from them.

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The fact is there are many who seek the Lord today who never find Him, who never obtain mercy from Him, many who seek Him from whom He hides Himself. Without question, all who seek the Lord spiritually, all who truly seek Him in faith, all who seek Him because they need Him and want Him shall find Him (Jeremiah 29:12-14). Yet, Mark here tells us of a great multitude who sought the Lord Jesus from whom He withdrew and hid Himself. Why?

They sought Him in the wrong way and for the wrong reason. These people of Capernaum sought Him physically, not spiritually. They sought Him with their words and deeds, but not with their hearts. And they sought Him for the wrong reasons. They sought nothing from Him but carnal things. They did not seek Him. They sought what He could do for them! Many seek the Lord Jesus Christ, but not by faith. Like the Jews described by Paul, they seek Him upon the merit and in the strength of the flesh (Romans 9:30-33; 10:1-4).

Not only did those at Capernaum seek the Lord Jesus carnally, they sought Him too late. The Saviour passed through Capernaum the day before. He would not go back now. They did not seek Him when He was to be found. It is written, “Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near” (Isaiah 55:6). Our Lord Jesus refused to go back to Capernaum, the larger, more populated city, and carry His grace to the smaller towns and villages surrounding it, because He has mercy on whom He will have mercy.

We need to learn this. No one dictates to God Almighty. He does what He will. He is gracious to whom He will be gracious. The sooner we learn this, the better! God always displays His sovereignty in every aspect of grace. He chose to save fallen men, but not fallen angels. He chose some men, and passed by others. He redeemed some, but not all. He sends the gospel to some, and hides it from others. He calls some who hear the gospel, and leaves others in darkness, death, and condemnation (Matthew 11:20-30).

**Christ, The Preacher**

Third, Mark directs our attention to our Master’s chosen occupation. “And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth. And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils” (vv. 38, 39).

When the Son of God came into this world, He chose to be a gospel preacher. He came here to be a preacher of the gospel. He came to fulfill the scriptures by coming as a prophet, the prophet greater than Moses, who had been foretold by Moses himself (Deuteronomy 13:15).

What a high, high honour the Son of God put upon the office and work of the gospel preacher. He might have chosen to come as a ceremonial priest, like Aaron. He could have worn a crown like David. But He chose to be a preacher. The Son of God left the glory which He had with the Father before the worlds were made to do the work of an evangelist, to be a street preacher. He came down here not only to establish peace, but to preach it, not only to bring in righteousness, but to preach it, not only to obtain eternal redemption by the shedding of His blood, but to preach it! Jesus Christ came preaching the gospel, proclaiming deliverance to the captive, the recovering of sight to the blind, and peace to them that were far off (Isaiah 61:1-3).

I stress this fact with very good reason. In our day men and women everywhere have decided that preaching is out-of-date. It is no longer accepted in intellectual circles for a man to stand in a pulpit and preach the gospel to men. Many have given up preaching because it is not popular. They have become spiritual counsellors. Rather than preaching to sinners, they engage in dialogue. Instead of preaching, we have cantatas, plays, ceremonies, celebrations, and candlelight services!

What utter nonsense! The Son of God came here as a preacher. The church of Christ was originally gathered by preaching. Throughout history her health, strength, and prosperity have been promoted and maintained by preaching. It is by the preaching of the gospel that sinners...
are saved, saints are edified, and the kingdom of God is built up.

Take care that you never despise or lightly esteem this great, God honoured, God ordained service. “Despise not prophesyings” (1 Thessalonians 5:20). The preacher may be very learned or very plain, very deep or very simple, very polished or very rough, but if he is the messenger of God to your soul, treat him as the angel of God, and teach your children to do the same.

Lay These Truths To Heart
May God the Holy Spirit graciously enable us to remember the things set before us in this passage of scripture and apply effectually them to our hearts. Nothing is more important than the worship of our God. We “ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Luke 18:1), “praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (Ephesians 6:18). “Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy” (Luke 21:36).

Our God is sovereign in the operations of grace. Let us seek His will and bow to His will. He has mercy on whom He will. And, as He is sovereign in all His works of grace, He is effectual. He will save His people from their sins.

And the means by which He has chosen to do so is the preaching of the gospel. Gospel preaching is the one thing that is called “the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth ... For therein is the righteousness of God revealed” (Romans 1:16, 17). It is God’s ordained instrument of spiritual blessing and benefit to the souls of men.

“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).

“And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. And be at peace among yourselves” (1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13).

“Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation ... Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you” (Hebrews 13:7, 17).

Mark speaks of “the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” in direct connection with the preaching of John the Baptist (Mark 1:1-4), because God makes known the good news of redemption and grace, salvation and eternal life in Christ by sending preachers to proclaim it in the power of the Holy Spirit. Yet, the means itself is of no benefit to our souls without the power and grace of God the Holy Spirit. It is only by the Spirit of God that the preached Word of God can make us wise unto salvation through the faith that is in Jesus Christ. To use the words of Robert Hawker, “May the Holy Three, which bear record in heaven, grant to us such sweet testimonies in our hearts and consciences of the truth as it is in Jesus, that we may enjoy that life eternal, to know the Lord Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, to be the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.”

The gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, which began before the worlds were made, has its beginning in the hearts of chosen sinners as it “is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Timothy 1:10). “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God ... For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Corinthians 1:18, 21), “to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God” (Ephesians 3:10).
Having written on a number of men and women of God in the past to whom I was introduced by Thomas Fuller, it is high time I wrote about the church historian and preacher himself. Any man who preserved a consistently godly witness throughout years of civil and religious warfare and was respected by all sides for his Christian courage, moderation and tolerance is certainly worth knowing. Many Christians will be familiar with Fuller through his profound and pithy sayings even if they have never studied his works such as *The Church-History of Britain* (1655); *The History of the Worthies of England* (1662); *The Cause and Cure of a Wounded Conscience* (1647) and *Good Thoughts in Worse Times* (1647).

**Fuller’s early background and education**

Thomas Fuller was the eldest son of Thomas Fuller Sen. who was rector of St Peter’s, Aldwincle, a village in Northamptonshire. Our subject’s father had been educated under Dr William Whitaker, the author of the *Lambeth Articles*. Thomas’ mother was Judith Davenant, sister of John Davenant who was called ‘The Jewel of the Reformed Churches’ and represented Britain at the Synod of Dort. Thomas’ instruction in righteousness began with his baptism on 19 June, 1608. His uncle John, was one of his godfathers, who promised to take over Thomas’ spiritual and practical education should his father not live long enough to supervise his child into adulthood. The child’s second godfather was Dr. Townson who was married to Margaret, Judith’s and John’s sister. Townson preceded Davenant as Bishop of Salisbury but on his death, a year after becoming bishop, he left a widow and at least thirteen children uncared for. John Davenant kindly gave his widowed sister most of his revenues for the continued upkeep of her family. King James advised Davenant not to marry as he had enough mouths to feed.

For his elementary education, Thomas was sent to a village school run by a brutal, dull-witted teacher named Smith, a curate of Robert Brown’s at Achurch. Smith strove to drill Fuller in Lilly’s Latin by repeated beatings. In spite of this, Thomas learnt to enjoy study

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**Some of Fuller’s witty, wise and godly comments:**

“An ounce of cheerfulness is worth a pound of sadness to serve God with.”

“If thou art a master, be sometimes blind; if a servant, sometimes deaf.”

“If we are bound to forgive an enemy, we are not bound to trust him.”

“He that falls into sin is a man: that grieves at it, is a saint; that boasteth of it, is a devil.”

“He that is busy is tempted by but one devil; he that is idle, by a legion.”
through the loving guidance and personal attention of his father who used Foxe’s Book of Martyrs as a reader. In his Good Thoughts for Bad Times, Fuller refers to Daniel 3:27 and his childhood reading of Foxe, confessing, ‘I thought that the martyr at the stake seemed like the three children in the fiery furnace’. He had imagined the martyrs passed through the flames without suffering and only as an adult did he realise how much and how deeply they had suffered for the Gospel’s sake. The anonymous author of Fuller’s first biography claimed that young Thomas was admirably learned before ever anyone taught him, so it is no surprise that Thomas matriculated at Queen’s College, Cambridge in 1621 when just turned thirteen. He gained his B. A. aged sixteen and M. A. aged twenty. The family had long connections with Queen’s, Davenant having previously been President there before becoming Bishop of Salisbury and Thomas’ cousin Edward tutored him at the college.

**Starting life as a gospel minister and author**

After Queen’s, Fuller commenced further studies at Sidney Sussex College for two years but stopped because of a deeply felt call to the ministry, becoming a curate at St Benet’s, Cambridge in 1630. The year after, he published his first work David’s Heinous sin. At St Benet’s, there was a parishioner called Tobias Hobson who was carrier to John Milton and hired out horses. Hobson’s customers always demanded his best horses, soon wearing them out whilst his lesser horses were left idle, Hobson then stipulated that the horse he placed nearest the stable door was the only one for hire. In this way Hobson made sure that a different horse always stood awaiting its turn near the stable door and the phrase ‘I will have to take Hobson’s choice’ was born. When Hobson died in 1630, aged 86, one of Fuller’s first tasks as a curate was to take the burial service.

In 1631 Fuller was made a prebendary of Salisbury Cathedral, but after his father’s death in 1632, he became vicar of Broadwinsor, Bristol, with a fitting stipend so that he could now pay his own way. After completing his B.D. in 1635, he felt he was now in a position to afford a wife and start a family. Edward Davenant, Fuller’s cousin and former tutor was now vicar of Gillingham, a church he pastored for fifty-three years. It was at his cousin’s that Fuller met Mrs Davenant’s sister, Eleanor Grove, whose father had been Bishop John Davenant’s executor. The two married in 1639. Probably because of the loss of war-time records or the suppression of such because Eleanor’s family contained a number of Royalist heroes,² the marriage was unknown to historians until 1918. Then, in a letter to Notes and Queries, a descendent of Fuller’s revealed forgotten details of his ancestor’s life.

In 1639, Fuller published his first major historical work The Historie of the Holy Warre which was a multi-volumed history of England’s involvement in the Crusades, a period which had seldom been researched in British scholarship. Fuller was very critical of the papacy for causing these wars and gave solid reasons for Rome’s failure in attempting to ‘Christianise’ the Mohammedans by their own methods. Criticising the plundering papist troops, Fuller commented ‘No doubt the Christians’ army had been greater if it had been less, for the belly was too big for the head.’ Concerning the jealous quarrels of the papist princes during that period, Fuller says, ‘The best way to keep great princes together is to keep them asunder’. Condemning Britain for her own support of the papacy in the wars, Fuller wrote, ‘England, the pope’s packhorse in that age, which seldom rested in the stable when there was any work to be done.’ Now well known for his moderation and irenic spirit, Thomas became a member of Convocation in 1640 but Presbyterian intolerance was growing in Parliament and he was fined an equivalent of ten years’ salary for signing the Church of England canons. Happily, at least for Fuller in this case, the times were so turbulent that
Parliament never came round to collecting the fine. However, when the rebel forces took Cambridge and the surrounding districts, it became clear that one of their aims was to outlaw the church of the English Reformation and replace it by one which linked politics, discipline, order and external structures more closely to religion. It was a church in which the public magistrate became more important than the pastor.

Episcopalians treated as punishable heretics in Cromwell’s ‘model’ England

At the start of this lengthy period of political, social and religious unrest, Fuller, an Episcopalian and a loyal subject of Charles I, was forced to leave his congregation and his wife died in childbirth. The son was called John after Bishop Davenant who also died in 1640. It was a sad year for Fuller who took everything as from God. Fuller’s magnanimity is illustrated here by the fact that when at the Restoration, Fuller’s living was offered back to him, he felt sorry for the usurper and allowed him to continue in his ministry. In 1641, Fuller published his *The Holy and Profane State* in five volumes. Here he has a chapter on The Good Wife, which is surely a tribute to Eleanor.

After living as a wandering preacher for some time, he served as a lecturer at a Savoy church on twenty pounds a year but was soon asked to become pastor. Though he was almost the only Royalist minister in the city and frowned on by Parliament, whenever Fuller preached, it was said that he had two congregations; one inside and one standing outside of the filled church, striving to hear his message through the opened windows. William Addison says that Fuller was so popular in spite of the party-mindedness of the times that he was offered crowns of laurels. Fuller, he adds, rejected the laurels and kept his honest soul and the Lord was obviously with him in all he did. Fuller refused to preach, as he said himself, like those who used their lungs in the pulpit instead of their brains and the sounding of words rather than the soundness of matter. He was able to keep his simple, Christian humility even when asked to preach in Westminster Abbey.

Driven from the pulpit again

The Presbyterians spread the rumour that so great were the masses that gathered to hear Fuller preach that he must be up to mischief and plotting against Parliament. Sadly, though keeping to his motto ‘Good thoughts in worse times’, Fuller was finally forced out of office again and all his research papers and personal goods, including his library were confiscated by the rebel authorities and his salary stopped. The common Protestant people in England had, on the whole, not bowed before rebel propaganda but now they were told the war was between Protestants and Roman Catholics and their beloved Church had turned traitor and gone over to Rome. I still meet Presbyterian stalwarts today who, in spite of their education and intelligence, still believe this propaganda which has no basis in history. Now the common people flocked to the Republican side and London became a rebel stronghold. Fuller thought that diplomacy was failing and arbitrary power triumphing so, with five friends, he bravely appeared before the House of Lords asking for permission to petition the King for terms of peace. The Lords granted the request and the Westminster Petition was drawn up. Fuller and his friends were given two coaches, drawn by several pairs of horses and attended by a mounted escort of eight or more men and sent off to Oxford, the King’s headquarters. However, the House of Lords had already lost their authority and parliamentary soldiers stopped the delegation at Uxbridge and the House of Commons ordered the petitioners...
back to London on 5 January, 1643; mission unaccomplished. Nevertheless, the petition somehow reached the King who published it on 18 January with a positive reply. Full of joy, Fuller climbed into the pulpit of Westminster Abbey and preached on the words ‘My Lord, the King is come again in peace unto his own house.’

Parliament was, however, not in the mood for peace and told Fuller that he must stand before his Savoy congregation and denounce the ‘papists’, which included for them reformers such as Hall, Morton, Usher, Bedell and Featley, and speak out for Parliament and against the King. Fuller, of course could not wound his own conscience in this manner so he told his congregation in his final Sermon on Reformation that England had enough home-bred wares to maintain her but enough home-bred wars to destroy her without ever a foreign nation being a threat to her. While others fight for peace, he urged his hearers to pray for peace. He ended by saying, ‘Let us wish both King and Parliament so well as to wish neither of them best – even a happy accommodation’.

There was no hope now of his being allowed to preach anywhere in the new system of politicised churches, but as preach he must, Fuller moved to Oxford and offered his services to the King. First, however, he published his Sermon on Reformation.

Life in the Royalists’ retreat

Charles welcomed Fuller at first, engaging him as a chaplain to himself, Princess Henrietta and Sir Ralf Hopton’s troops. However, Fuller preached peace and accommodation to the King as he did to everyone, but Charles was now as little interested in compromise and tolerance as Parliament. On the one hand, Fuller was now accused of doubting the King’s victory and being a friend of the Revolution. On the other, John Saltmarsh called Fuller’s Sermon on Reformation, ‘a popish compliance’ and accused him of being Rome’s ally. However, Hopton was a moderate, like Fuller, and the only Royalist General to be highly respected by both sides of the conflict, so he and Fuller became the best of friends. Though unsuccessful as the King’s advisor, Fuller had the great compensation of being able to use the Bodleian Library during his sermon preparations. When Hopton finally surrendered to Cromwell’s superior forces in 1645 at Exeter, he was treated well by the enemy. Fuller was asked to conduct negotiations which he did to the praise of both sides. He managed to obtain the one important

Religion likes to explain the deadness of unregenerate religious professors by calling them “worldly Christians”. This word from our Lord would seem to render such a term inappropriate. Was He only speaking to “spiritual Christians” when He said this? He made no such designation. If the word of Christ seems to render our religious phraseology inappropriate, surely it is because it is inappropriate.

I know that some believers are less gifted than others. Some enjoy the peace that we have in Christ more and are able, by God’s grace, to experience and express the things of God in varying degrees. But no believer is of this world. Righteous Lot may vex his soul for a time, but the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations (2 Peter 2:8, 9). It is not our place to judge whether a man is a Lot or a Judas, nor do I consider myself able to recognize a Lot in Sodom, or a Judas among the twelve. Both were discovered in time and revealed by God, but religious proselytizers are just blatantly dishonest to suggest that a man or woman can love this world and have no interest in Christ and have an unscriptural category created for them so that they can be included in the kingdom of God. There is no such category. If you love this world and it loves you, know that God has revealed that a friend of this world is an enemy of God (James 4:4), and if you would now seem so to be, I pray that soon, by God’s grace, you might be persuaded of better things (Hebrews 6:9).

Chris Cunningham

If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

John 15:19

“Not Of The World”

“I know that some believers are less gifted than others. Some enjoy the peace that we have in Christ more and are able, by God’s grace, to experience and express the things of God in varying degrees. But no believer is of this world. Righteous Lot may vex his soul for a time, but the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations (2 Peter 2:8, 9). It is not our place to judge whether a man is a Lot or a Judas, nor do I consider myself able to recognize a Lot in Sodom, or a Judas among the twelve. Both were discovered in time and revealed by God, but religious proselytizers are just blatantly dishonest to suggest that a man or woman can love this world and have no interest in Christ and have an unscriptural category created for them so that they can be included in the kingdom of God. There is no such category. If you love this world and it loves you, know that God has revealed that a friend of this world is an enemy of God (James 4:4), and if you would now seem so to be, I pray that soon, by God’s grace, you might be persuaded of better things (Hebrews 6:9).”

Chris Cunningham
concession for his troops and himself that they should be exempted from signing the Solemn League and Covenant, a burden no honest man should have ever been made to bear under an alleged 'Christian' government. No wonder Milton called the Presbyterian regime 'Worse than Trent'! Shortly before this event, Fuller published his *Good Thoughts for Bad Times* at Exeter.

**Free but shackled**

Fuller, protected by powerful Republican friends, was able to continue preaching but without a living. He was often harassed and once thrown in prison but remained true to his calling, ever trusting in the grace of God. Now, because of his popular preaching, public appearances and writings, but mostly for his toleration, criticism came from Romanists, Anglicans, Presbyterians and Baptists alike. However, his fiercest antagonists were Robert South and Peter Heylyn who ought to have been on Fuller’s side. South lampooned Fuller’s ministry and Heylyn, who became Fuller’s chief opponent as he had also been John Davenant’s, poured sarcasm on witty Fuller. Heylyn was writing a rival study on the Reformation to Fuller’s and it is common knowledge that two historians rarely agree. Fuller wrote his *The Appeal of Injured Innocence* in 1659 as a defence against Heylyn’s constant accusations and criticisms, especially concerning his *Church-History of Britain* (1655). This book displays much academic research, yet it often reads like an entertaining novel. It was the personal comments of Fuller which angered Heylyn. However, without these asides, we would be even more ignorant of Britain’s church history than we sadly still are. The more I read the original works of this period, the more I am convinced of the myth-like nature of the pseudo-history handed down to us. For instance, nearly all comments on the Hampton Court Conference, whether positive or negative, true or false, use Fuller’s factual findings to build on. There is scarcely another account. Yet, historical facts are sadly the breeding ground of fiction. Fuller himself almost despaired of finding reliable sources, complaining, once the Romanists had got rid of all Protestant-like aspects of their histories and Protestants ignored all Romanist writers, history became a very slender thing. This also applies to Anglican, Presbyterian, Congregationalist and Baptist ‘histories’, too. They promote denominational propaganda rather than the truth. It is perhaps safer to combine them all and believe the lot, censored only by common sense, than believe either the one or the other on their own. Fuller, however, befriended all branches of society whether peasants, parsons, peers or politicians and was allowed to research the libraries of both Cavaliers and Cromwellians. He harvested truth wherever he found it growing and on whatever soil. He looked down on no man and particularly admired the negroes whom he called ‘The image of God cut in ebony’.

One of Fuller’s major sources was the private library of Sir Robert Cotton, which Fuller called in his *Worthies of England* ‘our English Vatican Library for MSS’ and which became the nucleus of the British Museum Library, now British Library. Unlike many of his hot-tempered contemporaries, Fuller never appeared aggressive in his criticisms or fanatic in his personal views. He was always, as one commentator notes, a model of courtesy, dignity and good feeling, whether defending his own works, doctrines and practice or those of others. Perhaps this is why most of his major critics, including South and Heylyn, were eventually reconciled to him. Meanwhile, Fuller continued to write not only historical works but also devotional literature such as *The Cause and Cure of a Wounded Conscience* (1647). After this date, Fuller found pulpits, especially in London opening to him and several leading Cromwellians began to support him, a fact which caused critical comments to be heard in Parliament and his preaching was again stopped.

**Dejection and new hope after Charles’ murder**

Fuller was now a good way through writing his *Worthies of England* when the King was executed on 30 January, 1649. Fuller called it ‘the midnight of misery’ and is reported as saying, ‘What shall I write of the worthies of...’
England, when this horrid act will bring such an infamy upon the whole nation, as will ever cloud and darken all its former and suppress its future rising glories?" Whilst suffering from deep sorrow because of the new regime's tyranny and persecution of the saints, Fuller was offered the living of Waltham Abbey by James Hay, Earl of Essex. Back in the pulpit, Fuller's spirits revived and, though he had thought he would never write again, he was soon composing his *A Pisgah Sight of Palestine* and his *History of Waltham Abbey*. It was in Waltham Abbey that men of God such as Thomas Cranmer and John Foxe had planned their part in the Reformation and Fuller was delighted to find not only Foxe's family still living there but also that of John Hall, the Dortian delegate who was still alive and active, though cast out of his church and his goods plundered.

In 1652, Fuller married Mary Roper, Sir Thomas Roper's daughter to whom was born their son James a year later. The child died aged one and a half years. A second child, Anne, born in 1653 also died in infancy. A third child, Thomas, lived, and was six years old when his father died in 1661. As trials and persecutions had followed on the trail of his first marriage, so they threatened to follow him at Waltham Abbey after his second. In defiance of the Presbyterian, Cromwell set up an inter-denominational board of 'Tryers' in 1654. Episcopalians, however, were banned from participation. The 'Tryers' were to judge the suitability of ministers. Fuller was soon put under scrutiny and called to meet the board. In the opening pleasantries before getting down to business, it was remarked that Fuller never forgot anything. Fuller took up the cue and asked his judges if they would like a specimen. The entire board put down their pens, pushed their papers aside, ready to hear a good yarn. Fuller first asked the board to remember something. One of his ministerial friends had been found 'unsuitable' by the board and thrown into prison. Fuller reminded those responsible that the pastor had a large family to keep and no income. He then added, 'If you please to release him out of prison and restore him to his living, I will never forget the kindness while I live.' The suspicious attitude of the Board soon changed, they laughed and soon they were eating out of Fuller's hand. He was certified as 'suitable' and could keep his congregation. However, when Fuller published his *The Infant's Advocate* concerning a believer's responsibility to place his children under covenant promises, he caused the wrath of several Baptist officers such as Colonel Packer who clamoured for his removal. Fuller told them, 'Suppose there be one hundred paces betwixt me and you in point of affection, I will go ninety-nine of them on condition you will stir the one odd pace, to give them an amicable meeting'. On the whole, Fuller got on well with the local Baptists as he believed that they still kept to Christ's ordinances, though they postponed Baptism, whereas some new sects were abandoning baptism and the Lord's Supper altogether on grounds that they were carnal and not spiritual. Some Baptists, such as Henry Jessey, worked closely with Anglicans and Independents, particularly in relieving the poor and helping persecuted Jews.

**Fuller's Nunc Dimittis**

When in May 1660 Charles II was restored to the throne, Fuller was almost beside himself for joy and composed an ode of forty-two verses, not his best, for the occasion. He immediately received back his prebendary at Salisbury, was awarded a D.D. by Cambridge and made Chaplain in Extraordinary to the court but received no bishopric as many had hoped. Strangely enough, though not yet 53, Fuller began to talk of his Nunc Dimittis. He visited Salisbury where an epidemic was raging and promptly caught the fever and was confined to bed. Having promised, however, to preach at a marriage, he left his bed against doctors' orders for the pulpit. During his sermon, he felt himself fading but said that he had come to preach the Word and preach it he must though it be the last thing he did. He collapsed after preaching and died in what can only be called calm and cheerful agony a few days later. He was buried on 17 August, 1661 in Cranford with his goods plundered.

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1 Some authorities speak of 15 children.
2 Eleanor's brother, Hugh, was beheaded by Cromwell.
3 2 Samuel 19:30.
4 'Accommodation' was a fashionable word at the time, used in Parliamentary committees to deal with questions of English and Scottish union besides church union. These departments were set up under Charles I and revived by Cromwell during debates on a possible Protestant unity, especially between Presbyterians and Independents.

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If any reader would like to donate old Christian books to New Focus we can arrange for boxes to be collected free of charge. All proceeds will be applied to the work of New Focus Magazine.

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Amidst the wealth of Bible stores
And gems the eye of faith explores,
None with such joy and comfort fills
As Jesus’ covenant ‘shall’s’ and ‘will’s’.

Delightful words! The King’s decrees!
Which rule all heaven and earth and seas;
All things in time till time shall end
Upon His ‘shall’s’ and ‘will’s’ depend.

Why are not feeble saints destroyed?
Why are not promises made void
And sin my utter ruin proved?
His ‘shall’s’ and ‘will’s’ remain unmoved.

The weak become both strong and bold
While on these words faith keeps her hold,
Mountains must melt and waves be still
Obeying Jesus’ ‘shall’s’ and ‘will’s.’

These potent words subdued my heart
And made the love of sin depart.
Christ said “My purpose I’ll fulfil,
You shall submit and reign I will.”

These words a sovereign power convey’d
Confirmed each promise He had made
My ‘ifs’ and ‘buts’ I laid aside
And now in ‘shall’s’ and ‘will’s’ confide.
“When the Holy Ghost applies the blood of atonement to the conscience, and enables the soul, by faith, to appropriate the righteousness of Christ as his own, then the perfections of Deity wear no terror, because the law is fulfilled, and has no curse. Justice is satisfied, and has sheathed his sword; reconciliation is effected for the Church by the blood of the cross, which faith accepts with joy; so that the soul is brought into perfect agreement with God upon the plan of salvation, and realizes sweet communion with Him, through Jesus Christ, as the God of peace, and the believer is brought into holy intimacy with all the Persons and perfections of Deity.”

“The union between Christ and His Church is the grand first cause of all the life and fruitfulness of true believers, by which their full justification, sanctification, and glorification, are produced and secured; they are partakers of His holiness.”

“Christ’s ministers are not priests, but stewards of the mysteries of God, and faithful dispensers of the word of life, spending their lives to exalt Christ, and proclaiming a full salvation in His name; gathering in the elect of God, and feeding the hungry of His family with the pure wheat—with Christ, the living bread.”

“God’s people especially differ from the world in their life; for their life is hid with Christ in God. Their life is a life of faith in the Son of God. It is supernatural; yea, it is a life of holy intimacy with God. It is a life that is fed from the throne of God. It is a life that is destined to spend an eternity with God. Now the world, with all its religion, knows nothing of this; it is a perfect stranger to it. Thus God’s people are wholly distinct from the world, whether professor or profane. Theirs is a blessed life—elevated, dignified, superior to earth, intimate with heaven, ministered to by angels, trained up for glory, and shortly to be translated there.”

“The best repentance which is known on earth is that which flows from Calvary—from atoning blood—from pardoning love in the contrite soul, sweetly satisfied that his sins are cast behind Jehovah’s back. He feels incapable of pouring out, in sufficient profusion, his expressions of gratitude and love for pardoning love, applied by power Divine. He waits; he looks, and weeps at the feet of Jesus. This is the effect of genuine repentance in the soul, sorrow for sin, and a seeking of Divine forgiveness of the Lord.”

“I remember a good man, in my former congregation in the country, some thirty-five years ago, at one of our prayer-meetings, was praying earnestly for an increase of faith. An old Christian addressed him, on leaving the chapel, ‘My good brother, do you know what you have been pleading for?’ He said, ‘For many things.’ ‘Do you know that you have been praying for an increase of trials?’ ‘Oh, no!’ he replied; ‘every body knows that I am a tried man; I need not pray for more trials.’ ‘Then know, that God never gives one grain of faith that He does not mean to try.’ I was very much struck with the remark of the good old man, for it is the way the Lord increases the faith of His people generally.”

Every opportunity to hear good preaching and share good fellowship ought to be seized by the servants of the Lord—especially in days when many struggle to find regular Sovereign Grace ministry and believers are so often thinly spread around the country.

We would therefore encourage as many friends as possible to meet with us in March at Providence Baptist Church in Lower Gornal, near Dudley, for our New Focus Conference. Members and friends at Providence Baptist where Brother Normal Wheeler is pastor have graciously opened their splendid building and offered hospitality to us. We gratefully accept this kindness as a mark of love and fellowship within the Body of Christ.

In recent years these gatherings have been an encouragement to those who have made the effort to gather together. Friendships have been forged and fellowship established amongst brothers and sisters from all over the country who otherwise might never have had opportunity to meet. It is good for those who fear the Lord to speak often one to another and the Lord has promised not only to remember our gathering but to nourish our souls in the Gospel and minister to our needs by His Word.

It is hoped that meeting in the West Midlands this year will enable some new contacts to be made and open the way to yet more opportunity for the gospel of free and sovereign grace to be heard. Pastor Don Fortner from Danville, USA, and Dr George Ella of Mulheim, Germany, have been faithful preachers for us in the past and a source of rich blessing.

We are pleased to welcome them back again, this year. In addition, we hope to have ministry from Mr Peter Meney of Egglesburn Baptist Church in Teesdale and Mr Matthew Wheeler of Providence Baptist Church, Lower Gornal.

The conference will begin in at 4.00 pm on Friday 18th March when Mr Meney will preach. Then following an opportunity for some refreshments and fellowship, Pastor Fortner will preach at 7.00 pm. We shall gather on Saturday 19th at 2.00 pm and again at 7.00 pm. Refreshments will be provided courtesy of Providence Baptist Church and a bookstall will be available courtesy of Jeremy and Lorna Roe from Ossett Christian Bookshop. Do plan to make use of this excellent opportunity to purchase good reading material. If you are seeking a particular title please call Jeremy on 01924 260502 and he will bring it with him to the conference. Pastor Fortner will preach on the Lord’s Day morning.

For those travelling into the area there are good roads for access and plenty of local hotels for accommodation. A number of us plan to stay at The Premier Inn, Dudley Road, Kingswinford, Dudley, West Midlands, DY6 8WT, Tel: 0871 527 8314. They presently have a website offer of pay full rate on one night and get the second night for £29.00. There are lots of other hotels at varying prices locally.

As usual there is no cost for the conference itself and food and drinks are provided by our hosts, however, an offering will be taken to help defray costs and towards the work of New Focus Magazine.

See advert on back page for more details and contact points.

Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.

Malachi 3:16
Recently, I came across a long essay in six parts entitled, “A Rebuttal to George M. Ella’s *John Gill and Justification from Eternity*” on a website named Word of His Grace. The writer, Peter Ditzel, had obtained a part-copy of an armchair talk I gave to my host and friends on justification in Minnesota some years ago. The author claims that in rebutting me, he is also rebutting Peter Meney’s New Focus article ‘Ten Arguments for Justification from Eternity’.

I commenced my talk by referring to Romans 4:5 on God’s justification of the ungodly, thus opening a discussion on the timing of justification. Ditzel claims that before rebutting my Scriptural application, he must explain what time and eternity mean ‘philosophically’. Ditzel’s ‘philosophy’ is that eternity is neither past nor future time but timeless. This tells us what eternity is not, but what it is. The author then claims I ought to speak about ‘justification IN eternity’ and not FROM eternity. My topic, however, was God’s actions FROM eternity IN time. Ditzel has difficulty with this concept. He cannot envisage God’s omnipresence bridging time and eternity in his ‘philosophy’. Ditzel’s problem is not merely how God acts in eternity but how His actions impinge on time from eternity. How can a timeless God act in time?

What then is ‘time’ in Ditzel’s ‘philosophy’? He claims that time is simply creation. This is insufficient. There are three different creations chronologically in Scripture: the perfect Edenic creation; the fallen creation, and the New Creation for eternity. Time, in its decaying duration from human birth to death is only present in the fallen world and it is in this fallen world that God justifies us from eternity. After affirming that eternity is timeless, Ditzel argues throughout that God determines His future actions in the past. He cannot imagine God determining in eternity and acting simultaneously from there in time. Ditzel fetters God’s eternal, omnipotent and omnipresent action by temporal events. God is always limping behind time. Ditzel’s timing is always inconsequent. For instance, he claims that when God says let there be light, there is light. He then disagrees that this applies to justification also. In justification, time must wait until God catches up with it. Peter Meney and I say that time does not rule the Eternal God but the Eternal God rules time.

Ditzel now, at last, quotes Scripture, Ephesians 1:4 on being chosen in Christ from eternity. This he interprets ‘logically’, arguing that God elects us from sin in eternity but cannot justify us from sin from eternity. However, is it not just as ‘logical’ for God to elect directly from eternity as it is for Him to justify from eternity and are not the components of justification such as election, adoption, atonement, forgiveness of sins and salvation logically inseparable? What Christian lives by Ditzel’s arbitrary logic rather than God’s Word and Works? What point is there in discussing saving doctrine as a mass of unconnected illogical entities?

Ditzel promises a deeper Scriptural examination but gets side-tracked in history. Of the stalwarts I list who believe God justifies from eternity, he picks out one, Benjamin Keach, claiming he rejected the doctrine, as if this proves all the others wrong. Whether Keach accepted this doctrine or not does not affect Scriptural truths but Ditzel’s portrayal of a word duel between an Antinomian and Keach in his *The Travels of True Godliness* as a parallel to Ditzel and myself is unhelpful. Which of us is the Antinomian and which is Keach? True, the Antinomian in my copy of Godliness’s adventures, would not pray for the pardon of sin, did not teach conversion...
but merely trusted in effectual calling and sanctification and leaned on justification from eternity as a warrant for his Antinomianism which confuses justification FROM eternity with justification IN eternity, just like Ditzel. So what has this to do with Peter Meney and George Ella? Furthermore, basing Keach’s doctrine of justification on one book only which is not an in-depth study of the subject is blind-alley scholarship. There are several excellent works on justification by Keach which attack Ditzel’s eternity-time mix-up. There are those who feel they can easily ‘prove’ that Calvin was an Arminian or an Antinomian or a Hyper-Calvinist or an Amyraldian or a Calvinist from isolated quotes. Some even call John Gill an Arminian. The newsletter Outside the Camp claims hypocoristically that I am an Hyper-Calvinist and a friend of Arminianism. Some call me a Hyper-Calvinist, others an Anti-Calvinist. Here, Ditzel fails to distinguish between Keach’s teaching on ‘virtual justification’ and ‘actual justification’. In The Child’s Delight, Keach teaches that we were justified when we were placed in Christ as our Head and Representative which becomes personal in time. This is Gill’s actus immanens and actus transiens. Keach distinguished, as Gill, between our justified standing in Christ and its outworking in the faith and life of the believer. Though Gill simplified Keach’s complicated doctrine of justification, the two are far nearer each other than they are to Ditzel. So, too, in Betwixt Two Extremes, Keach defends a believer in justification from eternity from the false charge of Antinomianism and himself against the false charge of Arminianism. Indeed, here Keach clearly teaches that one is justified first and faith is then given as the hand which receives and apprehends it. He then refutes Ditzel’s doctrine of justification. See also Keach’s A Postscript Containing a Few Reflections upon Some Passages in Mr Clark’s New Book entitled Scriptural Justification.

Ditzel accuses me of confusing Jean Alphonse Turretin (usually called Alphonse) 1671-1737 with his father Francis Turretin 1623-1685. I am very familiar with three generations of that family. When I spoke of Alphonse, I meant Alphonse. Francis did follow Melanchthon rather than Luther, Bullinger and Calvin on Justification but he stood firmer against Amyraldianism than his son. I see Alphonse as being more in error on justification than his father. Furthermore, Ditzel says I do not prove that the Reformers believed in Justification from Eternity but I was speaking briefly to New Focus readers who were familiar with my evidence. However, in refuting my remarks concerning our first generation Reformers, Ditzel quotes second and third generation ‘Puritans’ and Baptists’ only, not all of whom followed the Reformers. So, too, the fact that the Holy Spirit actualises Justification in time, as in Ditzel’s Westminster Confession quote, in no way contradicts the fact that such a justification is a direct act from eternity. The Father sends the Spirit from Heaven to accomplish the Triune Will on earth. However, it is well-known that the Westminster Assembly members held to different views of justification as the minutes show, hence the compromise. Next Ditzel quotes Galatians 3:8; Colossians 1:21, 22; Titus 3:4-7, Romans 3:21, 22, 26, 28; Romans 5:1, 6; Galatians 2:16 and Philippians 3:9 to prove that there is no such thing as justification from eternity, even though he has to alter the A.V.. These verses are used by Peter Meney and myself to illustrate how God justifies the ungodly. All teach that justification and faith are direct heavenly gifts of God.

Next, Ditzel returns to his analogy of faulty logic. He sees an example in Gill’s statement:

as God’s will to elect, is the election of his people, so his will to justify them, is the justification of them; as it is an immanent act in God, it is an act of his grace towards them, is wholly without them, entirely resides in the divine mind, and lies in his estimating, accounting, and constituting them righteous, through the righteousness of his Son; and, as such, did not first commence in time, but from eternity.

Using the analogy of marriage where a man wills to marry a woman but his willing is not the marriage itself, Ditzel feels that he has revealed the weakness in Gill’s argument. However, he is judging God by man’s standards. When God willed that Christ should have a Bride, His will was the binding of the Bride to Christ. When God willed to place our names in the book of the elect, our names were put in. The earthly bride may say, ‘let us postpone the wedding until Auntie Jessica comes from Australia’, but unlike Auntie Jessica, God is always there.

Now Ditzel deals evasively with the verse I started with and says, ‘Do these men (Gill, Meney and Ella) really believe that “God justifieth the ungodly” means God justified us in eternity before we, or even Adam, sinned and
became ungodly? To justify the ungodly, God must work in time, taking an elect sinner, giving him faith, and justifying him. One may most certainly still be ungodly before he exercises his God-given faith, but he cannot be called ungodly after being justified. ‘To this we retort that we do not belong to those who believe that God decreed man to sin and thus authored it, so the Fall is a farce. We are Sub-lapsarians who believe that God’s plan of salvation is enacted from eternity when there is a need for it in time. Here Ditzel with his way-off logic is saying that justifying the ungodly means first giving the sinner faith, then waiting until the sinner exercises that faith godilly in actively believing, then God justifies the sinner on his testimony of godly faith. Why cannot Ditzel believe that justification and coming to faith are one divine fiat of God direct from eternity and exercised on God’s enemies according to Scripture?

Now Ditzel claims Gill is illogical in teaching that our being eternally elected in Christ means that we are eternally accepted and justified in Him. It is like saying, he complains, ‘If I have dogs in my house, it is because I have given them to my son. I have given dogs to my son. Therefore I must have dogs in the house.’ The Bible teaches, however, that when God elects me to salvation, He elects me to all its blessings, too. Whatever God gives us, it is so that we can partake of all God’s blessings in His Heavenly Mansion. There is no coming and going of blessings (dogs) in God’s House. Furthermore, Ditzel cannot envisage being placed in union with Christ from eternity. Election means put under the benefits of Christ’s saving work – all of them.

Ditzel again attacks me for being illogical because I have ‘cooked up a justification by decree’. The cooking is not mine but the Lord’s. His decree is our justification. God has given us more abundant fare than that which satisfies Ditzel’s meagre logical diet. Now, however, Ditzel really becomes confused and complains that he does not know where to start in correcting me. He tries by criticising my belief in the two natures of man. Being in condemned Adam which means physical death and being in Christ in whom we find eternal life. He cannot envisage my being in Adam physically, though in Christ spiritually. He is so confused by this time that he fills a lengthy paragraph, giving an imaginary mixed-up account of what I mean. He appears to believe that Old Man is non-existent and we are purely New Men in Christ. Why then does Ditzel, and we all, have such a struggle with the flesh? Now again Ditzel quotes scriptural condemnations and blessings in Christ which I believe in and experience, but which Ditzel seems to think I reject. Is it because he thinks I am an Antinomian because I believe in justification from eternity?

In his final complaint, Ditzel accuses me of misrepresenting John Murray by quoting his words, ‘Justification is not the eternal decree of God with respect to us.’ I take this to mean that Murray does not believe that justification is a decree of God from eternity. Ditzel, again telling his readers what I am supposed to mean instead of taking me at my word, says, ‘Ella interprets this to mean that Murray is saying that God in eternity has nothing to do with our justification.’ This cannot possibly be deduced from my words or thoughts. Ditzel now claims that my logic is like his saying ‘that loving a woman is not actually marrying her; and then someone (me) came along and misrepresented me (Murray?) as saying that loving a woman has nothing to do with marrying her.’ Of course, I would never ‘come along’ and say anything of the sort! What polemic advantage does Ditzel hope to gain by judging scripture and a brother’s behaviour by his most illogical attempts to gain a ‘logical’ point? Then follows further long and weird speculations about my criticism of Murray’s list of what he says justification is not but not what it is. To crown his series of misrepresentations, Ditzel writes, ‘I do not know why Dr. Ella implies that justification by faith alone (as opposed to justification from eternity) is incompatible with the imputation of real righteousness in Christ. Why cannot one believe in justification by faith alone while also believing in the imputation of real righteousness in Christ? Our righteousness or justification is real because it is His righteousness, and we are in Him.’ Here Ditzel again takes me for an Antinomian. I have never, ever, written words that departed from my firm conviction that justification by faith is through the merits of Christ’s righteousness imputed to me. I believe in true imputation of my sins to Christ and Christ’s righteousness to me. Besides, this is not the issue but the timing of justification and the mode and means. I say, God in His abundant mercies and everlasting grace placed me in Christ from eternity. Of course, Christ came from Heaven in the fulness of time when eternity impinged on time to secure our salvation. All God’s blessings come from God who dwells in eternity, After all, where else could they come from?
NUMBER SEVEN.

When God His wondrous six days' work had closed
He on the seventh from His toil reposed.
Now rendered holy by His sovereign word,
Each seventh day is sacred to the Lord,
Type of that future and eternal rest,
With which all true believers shall be blest.

Seven days before the avenging waters fell,
To righteous Noah, who had obeyed Him still,
The Lord appeared, and thus unto him spake,
Fowls of the air by sevens see you take;
By sevens too, let all clean beasts be found,
To keep their race alive when all besides are drown'd;
Noah and his charge shut in, no more delay,
Soon all created things were swept away,
The ark alone triumphant stemmed the flood,
Till in the seventh month on Ararat it stood,
And the glad prophet saw with joyful eyes,
Forth from the window flew a gentle dove,
Soon as the hills the waters rose above,
The clouds dispersing, and the winds arise;
And the ark alone triumphant stemmed the flood,
Noah and his charge shut in, no more delay,
Soon all created things were swept away,
The ark alone triumphant stemmed the flood,
Till in the seventh month on Ararat it stood,
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Forth from the window flew a gentle dove,
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The clouds dispersing, and the winds arise;
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Noah and his charge shut in, no more delay,
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Soon all created things were swept away,
The ark alone triumph
The bold and wicked Athaliah slain, Joash at seven years old began to reign.
When stricken Job by his three friends was found, Job 2:11-13
Seven days and nights they sat upon the ground, Weeping they sat, and silently looked on, Mourning his children, health, and treasures gone; And when their counsel had the Lord displeased, And He by sacrifice must be appeased, Job 42:7-9
Seven rams they offer to atone their sin, Seven bullocks, too, God’s favour back to win.

When his proud heart against the Lord rebelled, Seven years was Babylon’s great king compelled,
To herd with beasts, till humbled, lo! he sings
The praise and glory of the King of kings.
When He who keenly felt for others’ woes, Saw thousands hungering, His compassion rose, Matt. 15:32-38
Seven loaves He took, and multiplied them so, That He on each could food enough bestow;
And when the poor the fragments had obtained, Seven baskets full they for their portion gained.

Seven times shall I forgive? when Peter asked, Matt. 18: 21, 22
Mark how the Saviour man’s forbearance tasked, Yes, seven times, nor rest on that alone,
Seventy times seven be forgiveness shown.

To make Jerusalem’s infant Church complete, Acts 6:2-6
Seven deacons o’er it to appoint was meet.
Seven sons of Sceva with pretended zeal, Acts 19:13-16
A man possessed with devils tried to heal.

To John in Patmos, when the Lord appeared, And bade him write the things he saw and heard, Mid seven candlesticks he seemed to stand, Rev. 1:12-16
While seven stars were glittering in His hand, To seven Churches messages He sent Rev. 1:11
To turn from sin, and faithfully repent.
Seven seals enclosed the mystic book, which none
Seven times He was to be lifted up, Rev. 5:1
Was worthy to unloose, but God’s own Son, Th’Apostle gazed, while one by one they’re broken, And words of great and solemn import spoken.
A Lamb that had been slain, did next appear, Rev. 5:5
Who seemed seven horns and seven eyes to bear.
Then seven angels seven trumpets held. Rev. 8:2
On which they each seven loud charges pealed;
A dragon there was seen, with heads just seven, Rev. 12:3
And seven crowns, a wondrous sight in heaven;
Then seven vials with seven plagues were filled, Rev. 15:1
And men by Christ’s command, in wrath were killed. Rev. 16:3

Bible Numbers …

Marianne A. Parrott whose Bible Numbers we have employed in recent issues authored several books for children during the mid-nineteenth century. Amongst those still available are The Son and the Ward; Or, Selfishness Corrected; Little Redcap; Charley Layton: or, The Timely Escape; Rough Rhymes For Country Girls; Rough Rhymes for Farmers’ Boys; Harry’s Mistakes, and Where They Led Him; Tales of Village School-Boys; and May Chumleigh, and Her Friend Conscience.

Miss Parrott was anxious for the souls of her young readers and wished above all to direct them to a knowledge of the Word of God. Writing in the preface of her Bible Numbers she says, “The object of this little book is twofold: in the first place, it is intended by its numerous references to serve as a hand-book for teachers, suggestive of a great variety of scriptural subjects on which to catechise their pupils; while a hope is entertained, secondly, that the simple rhymes in which they are conveyed may be found useful in fixing them upon the memories of the pupils themselves. It goes forth to the public with a single desire to do good to the rising generation, in the only way in which permanent good can be effected, that of promoting amongst them the study and love of God’s Holy Word.”

The author had no pretensions about the quality of her verse and confesses, “The rhymes may be sometimes harsh, and the length of the numbers has often led to the adoption of an inharmonious metre”. Nevertheless, her aim was not to produce a collection of graceful verses but a faithful presentation of the Holy Scriptures. She continues, “the writer would have been sorry, in any one instance, to have sacrificed to the well turning couplet, that strict adherence to the Bible, which forms, in her estimation, the only excellence of the work.”

It is a pleasure to reflect that Miss Parrott’s simple setting forth of scripture speaks still, even after a hundred and fifty years. She published with a prayer which stands the test of time, “May the Divine blessing rest upon it, and upon any who may be led by its simple truths to seek for an increase of that knowledge which alone maketh wise unto salvation.” To that we say, “Amen.”
Because the LORD hath loved his people, he hath made thee king over them.

2 Chronicles 2:11

The Kingship Of Jesus Christ

John 17:24  Christ said to His Father, ‘Thou lovest me before the foundation of the world’. At that mysterious date, not of time, but of everlasting love, God ‘chose us in Him’.

Ephesians 1:4  Before the world began, God, that cannot lie, gave the promise of eternal life to Him for us, and made with Him for us, ‘a covenant ordered in all things and sure’. The leading provisions of that covenant were, a Lamb for our atonement, and a King for our government – a dying and a living Saviour. This God the Father did for us, and His own divine interest is strongly indicated in the typical words, ‘God will provide Himself a Lamb’, and ‘I have provided me a King’. So the source of the Kingship of Christ is God Himself, in the eternal counsels of His love. It is one of the grand ‘thoughts of God’.

Psalm 139:17  Having provided, He appointed and annointed His King: ‘Yet have I set (margin: annointed) my King upon my holy hill Zion.’ What a marvellous meeting-place is thus found in the Kingship of Jesus for God’s heart and ours! He says in His majestic sovereignty, ‘I have set my King’; and we say in lowly and loving loyalty, ‘Thou art my King.’

Psalm 2:6  ‘Yet have I set (margin: annointed) my King upon my holy hill Zion.’ What a marvellous meeting-place is thus found in the Kingship of Jesus for God’s heart and ours! He says in His majestic sovereignty, ‘I have set my King’; and we say in lowly and loving loyalty, ‘Thou art my King.’

Psalm 44:4  God has appointed His King ‘to be ruler over Israel and over Judah’.Thus He gives His children a great bond of union, For ‘one King shall be King to them all’, and He shall ‘gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad.’ Satan scatters, but Jesus gathers.’ Shall we then let the enemy have his way, and induce us to keep apart and aloof from those over whom our beloved King reigns also? Let us try this day to recollect this, and make it practical in all our contact with His other subjects.

Jeremiah 31:3  ‘Yet have I set (margin: annointed) my King upon my holy hill Zion.’ What a marvellous meeting-place is thus found in the Kingship of Jesus for God’s heart and ours! He says in His majestic sovereignty, ‘I have set my King’; and we say in lowly and loving loyalty, ‘Thou art my King.’

John 11:52  Why has God made Jesus King? Who would have guessed the right answer? ‘Because the Lord loved His people.’ So the very thought of the Kingship of Christ sprang from the everlasting love of God to His people. Bring that wonderful statement down to personal reality,—‘His people’, that is, you and me. God made Jesus King over you, because He loved you, and that with nothing less than the love wherewith He loved Him. Which is the more wonderful — the love that devised such a gift, or the gift that was devised by such love! Oh, to realize the glorious value of it! May we, who by His grace know something of God’s gift of His Son as our Saviour, learn day by day more of the magnificent preciousness of His gift of His Anointed One as our King!
It has been often supposed and suggested that the Reformers themselves were all at variance on the most important doctrines of the gospel; and that Luther and Calvin differed greatly in the fundamental articles of their creed: whereas, except in the matter of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist, all the eminent men among the Reformers of that day, concurred in the same fundamental truths:

1. Of God’s eternal purpose and predestination of an elect people, and those comparatively few ordained to eternal life.
2. That man had lost all ability to do good, and freedom of will to choose it; and was in his nature (as fallen) only inclined to evil.
3. That nothing ever did or can alter this propensity of the human heart, but the Holy Ghost, by His own immediate agency upon the souls of men.
4. That a sinner is and can be justified by faith only; and this not of himself, being unable to comprehend or receive the things that be of the Spirit of God, and therefore that faith itself must be the gift of God.
5. That merit in the creature there is none, nor ever can be, from first to last a sinner must be saved by grace.
6. That the vicarious atonement by the one oblation of Christ upon the cross, is effectual, not for the many called, but for the few chosen.

These things are what the Reformers uniformly held; and nothing in the institutes of Calvin speaks a stronger language than the answer of Luther to Erasmus entitled “De Servo Arbitrio”. I shall produce a paragraph from it, demonstrative of one faith universally confessed, in all the Protestant churches. It is among our deepest miseries, and a proof of our sad declension, that we of latter times have departed from the faith once delivered to the saints.

Erasmus had attacked Luther on the doctrines of predestination and grace, and according to the present cant of objectors, he (Erasmus) urged, what can be more useless than to publish this paradox to the world, namely, That whatever we do, is done not by virtue of our free-will, but in a way of necessity, etc. Erasmus, who never left the church of Rome, complained, “What a wide gap does the publication of this tenet open among men for the commission of all ungodliness? Who will dare to believe himself a favourite of heaven? Who will fight against his own corrupt inclinations? Therefore, where is either the need or the utility of spreading these notions, from whence so many evils seem to follow?”

Erasmus of Rotterdam never left the Church of Rome though he consistently criticized many of its beliefs. In relation to clerical abuses he remained committed to reforming the Church from within. Throughout his life he held to Catholic doctrines such as free will. He died in Basel in 1536 and was buried in the formerly Catholic cathedral there, which has recently been converted to a Reformed church.
occasion? for there is no person now living in the world, who is a more avowed enemy to the doctrines of men than myself. But, if you believe the doctrines in debate between us, to be, as indeed they are, the doctrines of God, you must have bid adieu to all sense of shame, and decency, thus to oppose them? I will not ask whither is the modesty of Erasmus fled? but which is much more important, Where, alas! are your fear and reverence of the Deity? when you roundly declare, that this branch of truth which He has revealed from heaven, is at best useless, and unnecessary to be known! What? Shall the glorious Creator be taught by you His creature, what is fit to be preached, and what to be suppressed? Is the adorable God so very defective in wisdom and prudence, as not to know till you instruct Him, what would be useful and what pernicious? Or could not He whose understanding is infinite, foresee, previous to this revelation of His doctrine, what would be the consequences of His revealing it, till those consequences were pointed out by you? You cannot, you dare not say this.

Luther continues, “If then it was the divine pleasure, to make known these things in His word, and to bid His messengers publish them abroad, and to leave the consequences of their so doing to the wisdom, and providence, of Him in whose name they speak, and whose message they declare, who art thou, O Erasmus? that thou should reply against God, and say to the Almighty what doest thou? St Paul, discoursing of God declareth peremptorily, “whom He will He hardeneth”. And again, “God willing to shew His wrath, etc.” And the apostle did not write this to have it stifled, among a few persons, and buried in a corner, but wrote it to the Christians at Rome, which was in effect, bringing this doctrine upon the stage of the whole world; stamping an universal primatur upon it, and publishing it to believers at large, through the earth: What can sound harsher, in the uncircumcised ears of carnal men than those words of Christ? “Many are called and few are chosen.” Now these, and similar assertions of Christ and His apostles, are the very positions which you, O Erasmus, brand as useless and hurtful. You object, if these things are so, Who will amend his life? I answer, without the Holy Ghost, no man can mend his life to purpose. Reformation is but varnished hypocrisy, unless it proceed from grace. The elect and truly pious, are amended by the Spirit of God; and those of mankind who are not amended by Him, will perish. You ask moreover, Who will dare to believe himself a favourite of heaven? I answer, it is not in a man’s own power to believe himself such, upon just grounds, till he is enabled from above. But the elect of God shall be so enabled: they shall be enabled to believe themselves to be what they are, as to the rest who are not endued with faith, they shall perish, raging and blaspheming as you do now.

“But say you, these doctrines open a door to ungodliness. I answer, whatever door they may open to the impious and profane, yet they open a door to the elect, and holy; and shew them the way to heaven, and the path of access to God. Yet you would have us abstain from the mention of these doctrines, and leave our people in the dark as to their election of God. The consequence of which would be, that every man would bolster himself up with a delusive hope of a share in salvation, which is supposed to be open to all, and thus genuine humility, and the practical fear of God, would be kicked out of doors.

“This would be a pretty way indeed, of stopping up the gap Erasmus complains of; instead of closing up the door of licentiousness, as is falsely pretended, it would be, in fact,
opening a gulf to the nethermost hell. Still you urge where is either the necessity or utility of preaching predestination? God Himself teaches it, and commands us to preach it: and that is answer enough. We are not to arraign Deity, and bring the motives of His will to human scrutiny, but simply revere both Him and it. He who alone is all-wise, and just, can in reality (however things appear to us) do wrong to no man, neither can He do anything unwisely or rashly. And this consideration will suffice to silence all the objections of truly religious persons. However, let us for argument sake, go a step further. I will venture to assign over and above, two very important reasons why this doctrine should be publicly taught.

"1. For the humiliation of our pride, and the manifestation of divine grace. God hath surely promised His favours to the truly humble. By the truly humble I mean, those who are endued with repentance, and despair of saving themselves; for a man can never be said to be truly penitent and humble, till he is made to know that his salvation is suspended in any measure whatever, on his own strength, machinations, endeavours, free-will, or works: but entirely depends on the free pleasure, purpose, determination, and efficacy of another, even God alone.

"While a man is persuaded that he has it in his own power to contribute any thing, be it ever so little, to his own salvation, he remains in carnal confidence; he is not a self-despairer, and therefore he is not duly humbled before God; so far from it, that he hopes some favourable juncture or opportunity will offer, when he may be able to lend a helping hand to the business of his salvation. On the contrary, whoever is truly convinced, that the whole work depends solely and absolutely on the will of God, who alone is the author andfinisher of salvation, such a person, despairs of self-assistance; he renounces his own will, and his own strength, he waits and prays for the operation of God, nor waits and prays in vain: for the elect's sake therefore, these doctrines are to be preached, that the chosen of God, being humbled by His truth, self-emptied, and sunk into nothing, as it were in His presence, may be saved in Christ, with eternal glory. This then is one inducement to the publication of the doctrine, that the penitent may be made acquainted with the promise of grace, and plead it in prayer to God, and receive it as their own.

"2. The nature of the Christian faith requires it. Faith has to do with things not seen: and this is one of the highest degrees of faith, stedfastly to believe that God is infinitely merciful, though He saves (comparatively) few, and condemns so many; and that He is strictly just, though of His own will He makes such numbers of mankind necessarily liable to damnation. Now these are some of the unseen things, whereof faith is the evidence; whereas, was it in my power to comprehend them, or clearly make out, how God is both inviolably just and infinitely merciful, notwithstanding the display of wrath and seeming inequality in His dispensations respecting the reprobate, faith would have little to do. But now since these matters cannot be adequately comprehended by us, in the present state of imperfection, there is room for the exercise of faith. The truths, therefore, respecting predestination in all its branches, should be taught and published; they, no less than the other mysteries of Christian doctrine, being proper objects of faith, on the part of God's people."—LUTHER.

Your readers will readily perceive, from the above quotations, (How awful is the consideration?) that under the present blaze of apparent religious light, such a general departure from those glorious scripture truths should take place almost universally among professed Protestants! Does it not look like a prelude to a speedy return again to Popery?

What Does That Mean?

Connect these untranslated words and phrases from the Bible with their respective meaning:

1. Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin a. Save now!
2. Talitha cumi b. The Lord is coming!
3. Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani c. Place of the skull
4. Maranatha d. Spoil speeds, prey hastes
5. Golgotha e. Little girl, I say to you arise
6. Hosanna f. Numbered, weighed, divided
7. Maher-shalal-hash-baz g. My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me
8. Anathema h. First and last, (a name of Christ)
9. Rabboni (or Rabbi) i. Accursed
10. Alpha, Omega j. My Master
CO. DURHAM (TEESDALE)
BARNARD CASTLE. Egglesburn Baptist Church, Eggleston, off B6282.
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Email: pastor@egglesburn.org.uk Visitors welcome

CHANNEL ISLES
GUERNSEY. Bethesda Strict Baptist Church, Mont Marche, Forest, Guernsey. All welcome.
Sun. 11.00am, 6.00pm. Wed. 7.30pm (please check)
Pastor: Graham Miller. Tel: 01481 248016

DEVON
HONITON. Sovereign Grace Church, Awliscombe Village Hall, Awliscombe (Near Honiton on A373).
Sun 10:45am. Ian Potts, Tel. 01404 548703
Email: ianpotts@graceandtruthonline.com
Web: www.graceandtruthonline.com

DENBIGHSHIRE
LLANGOLLEN. Glanrafon Evangelical Church, Princess Street, Llangollen.
Sun. 11.00am & 6.00pm. Wed. 7.30pm.
Pastor: James Cornford, Tel: 01978 860642.
Web: www.glanrafonevangelicalchurch.org.uk

DORSET
DORCHESTER. Grace Baptist Church, YMCA, Sawmill Lane, Weymouth Road, Dorchester (by Sports Ground nr Tesco’s).
Sun. 11.00am.
Pastor Frederick Serjeant, Tel: 01300 341670.
Email: pastor@gracebaptistchurch.org.uk
Web: www.gracebaptistchurch.org.uk

WEYMOUTH. Independent Evangelical Church, W.I. Hall, Gallwey Road, Wyke Regis, Weymouth.
Sun. 11.00am & 6.30pm. Sec. John Mann, Tel: 01305 774523

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Adult Bible Class & Childrens’ Sunday School Sun 10:00am.
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Email: pastor@knebworthgracefellowship.org.uk
Web: www.knebworthgracefellowship.org.uk

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PERTHSHIRE
CRIEFF. Sovereign Grace Fellowship, Sun. 11.00 am
For venue contact: Pastor Ken Cotty, Tel: 01764 650557

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BRADFORD. Zoar Particular Baptist Chapel, Allerton Road / Squire Lane. BD8 0AZ.
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NEW FOCUS FEBRUARY / MARCH 2011
The Bible in a Year

Read the whole Bible once a year, the Psalms & New Testament twice. Based on an arrangement by Robert Murray M’Cheyne. The centre column shows the day of the month. M’Cheyne suggests the columns to the left may be read by the family and those to the right in private.

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New Focus 2011
We plan to continue our practice of recent years and hold a preaching conference in March, 2011. This year we have been invited to share fellowship with Pastor Norman Wheeler and the Lord’s people at Providence Baptist Church, Dudley. We are delighted to welcome back our brother Don Fortner from Danville, Kentucky, USA, and brother George Ella from Mulheim, Germany. In recent years the ministry of both men has proved a great encouragement and blessing.

There is good parking beside the chapel for those travelling by car. The chapel building is close by Roberts Primary School.

We warmly invite visitors to any of the services and trust it will be an opportunity to meet new friends and old. It would assist our catering arrangements greatly if you could call Peter Meney on 01833 650797 or email, peter@go-newfocus.co.uk if you are planning to attend. A local contact is Matthew Wheeler who may be reached on 07866 631414.

Indicative Schedule

Friday 18th March 2011
4.00 Welcome and tea/coffee.
Preaching: Peter Meney
5.30 Buffet & opportunity to chat
7.00 Evening service – Don Fortner

Saturday 19th March 2011
2.00 Welcome
God’s Covenant 1: George Ella
God’s Covenant 2: George Ella
Preaching: Matthew Wheeler
5.30 Dinner
7.15 Evening service: Don Fortner

Sunday 20th March 2011
10.30 Morning Worship : Don Fortner
Light lunch and departure

Providence Baptist Church
Robert Street
Lower Gornal
Dudley
West Midlands
DY3 2AZ