Let me introduce you to a friend of mine. I have known Him for many years, though He has known me far longer. We met, it seemed by chance, though I have since discovered He personally arranged our first encounter. I had heard good things about Him but afterwards learned the half had not been told. He far exceeds the fame that I heard.

He is from a very illustrious family, though you would not guess from His humble manner and gracious conduct. In the beginning I assumed I was meeting Him as an equal but through the years He has grown increasingly wonderful to me and I have come to depend upon Him for so very much. When I have wavered and doubted and stumbled, He has been solid, reliable and faithful. When I fell He picked me up. In trials He comforts, in loss consoled. In my darkest experiences He lightens my way. My friend has constantly surprised me with His wisdom, timing and insight. It often seems as though He knows me better than I know myself.

My friend sticks close by me, even when to my shame I forget and ignore Him. That happens more often than I care to admit. He does not easily take offence, though I have given Him much cause. His patience is extraordinary, His rebukes gentle and courteous. At all times He inspires confidence, shows great care and deals with me with what seems like limitless love and infinite tenderness.

At first I imagined our relationship was spontaneous, impulsive, fortuitous. But He told me He had always loved me, always desired to win me, always sought intimate union with me. In His efforts to bring us together He dealt with every hindrance and overcame every barrier. Indeed, before I knew Him, He went to great lengths, significant expense and made great personal sacrifice to unite us, such was His determination that nothing should stand in the way of our being together.

Since getting to know Him He has opened my eyes to things that were hidden. Shameful things about myself most others would find repulsive, but which He has promised to fix. Glorious things about Himself which give me hope He can and will. Do you know? He has paid all my debts, supplied all my needs, made me heir to all His immense inheritance. Right now He is building a magnificent new home for us where we shall live together. This is my friend whom I love and trust. I can recommend no better. Did I mention His name?
"My dear friends, let me take this last opportunity of exhorting you to trust in nothing here; but to give yourselves entirely to the service of GOD. Well am I authorised to warn you not to trust in princes, nor in any child of man, for there is no help in them. GOD only remaineth stedfast. What He promiseth He will undoubtedly perform. As to myself, on His gracious promise I rest. Having endeavoured to be His faithful servant, I fear not being deserted by Him. Where I am, says the gracious Promiser, there shall my servant be. May the GOD of heaven preserve you! This is probably the last letter I shall be enabled to write. I have reason to believe I shall be called upon tomorrow to answer with my life."

*Written from prison to friends in Bohemia by John Huss on the eve of his martyrdom at the stake on 6th July, 1415.*
I Shall Be Satisfied

I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.  

(Psalm 17:15)

Heaven is a place of satisfaction; complete, perfect, eternal satisfaction. All the purpose of Almighty God will be fully satisfied in heaven. When all things are finished, when everything that must be has been, when the present heavens and earth have passed away and God has made all things new, when the wicked have been cast into hell for ever and the saints of God have all been transformed into the image of His dear Son, when all things have been completely subdued to Christ, “Then cometh the end”, when Christ shall deliver up the whole company of the redeemed unto God our Father, and God will be “all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:24-28). All God’s elect will be saved forever. God’s glory will be revealed in all things to all creatures. And our Lord Jesus Christ, who alone is worthy, will have all pre-eminence for all eternity.

Christ Satisfied

In heaven the Lord Jesus Christ, God’s dear Son, shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied (Isaiah 53:10, 11). The Lord Jesus Christ was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. When He was made sin, He suffered all the horrible, ignominious wrath of Almighty God as the sinner’s Substitute, so that God might be just and the Justifier of all who believe. The agony and death of Christ is called by the prophet Isaiah, “the travail of his soul”. Our Saviour’s travail was unto death, that He might give us eternal life. Isaiah assures us that His death was not in vain. “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied”! Christ did not shed His blood for nothing. The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ shall never be discovered a miscarriage. In heaven’s final glory all the intentions, purposes, and designs of Christ in His death will be satisfied. Every desire of His holy heart, which compelled Him to lay down His life for us will be fully satisfied. Every soul He loved with an everlasting love will be with Him in His glory. Every sinner for whom He suffered, bled, and died under the wrath of God shall be thoroughly purged of all sin. Every person He undertook to save will stand before Him in perfect righteousness. The whole company of God’s elect, for whom He became a Surety in the covenant of grace, will be presented by Him to His Father, “holy, unblameable, and unreproveable” in His sight.
Believers Satisfied
And there, in our happy, eternal home, in our Father’s house, every desire of the believer’s heart shall be fully satisfied (Psalm 17:15). Nothing is a surer sign of God’s wrath and of a man’s reprobation than for God to give him satisfaction in this world and with this world. I pity the “men of the world, which have their portion in this life”, whom God has filled and satisfied with the treasures of the earth (Psalm 17:14), in whose heart “he hath set the world” so that they cannot find Him (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

For the renewed soul there is no possibility of satisfaction in this world. We need to be content with God’s daily providence, knowing that our Father is wise and good and that what He does is best. But we find no satisfaction here. That which our hearts crave cannot be satisfied until we get to heaven. But there, in heaven with Christ, we shall be satisfied.

This is what David said. “As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.” I take David’s words to imply that there are two stages of satisfaction for God’s saints in heaven: That satisfaction that is found in heaven between death and the resurrection when we shall behold our Saviour’s face in righteousness, and that satisfaction that shall be found in heaven after the resurrection of the body when we shall awake in the likeness of our Redeemer.

Believers, as soon as they leave this world, find satisfaction for their souls in heaven. I keep stressing this because it needs stressing. In our day many who appear to be otherwise orthodox in their doctrine, have begun to teach the Adventists’ doctrine of soul sleep. I shall not now discuss all the ramifications of that evil doctrine. But it is a doctrine that robs God’s people of comfort in the hour of death and with regard to their departed loved ones. It is a doctrine that inspires undue attachment to this world. More importantly, it is contrary to the Word of God.

There is nothing in all the world so delightful to the hearts of believing sinners as sitting with Christ at His table, to be brought into His banqueting house, smell the sweet spikenard of His grace, and have Him display the banner of His love over them (Song of Solomon 2:4-6). There is nothing so glorious and satisfying in all the world as real worship! But imagine what it will be like in that world of glory to be in communion with God our Saviour forever! What satisfaction! What delight! What glory!

2. In that glory-world we call heaven, all who now long to be like Christ shall be satisfied, for we shall be perfectly conformed to our Redeemer

Today we see Him by faith. And beholding Him by faith we “are changed into the same image from glory to glory” by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Corinthians 3:18). But in heaven we shall see Christ clearly as He is. We shall have
a full and perfect view of Him. And when we see Him as He is we shall be like Him (1 John 3:2).

It was the object of God in predestination, that we should be conformed to the image of His Son (Romans 8:29). In heaven, that which God predestinated before the worlds were made shall be brought to pass. We shall be like Christ perfectly. Every power and faculty of our souls shall be a perfect reflection of our all-glorious Saviour. Every faculty of the glorified soul shall be swallowed up in Christ. In our understanding, we will have a clear and unclouded view of Him. The thoughts of our minds will be always toward Him. Our wills will be entirely submissive to and conformed to His will. The affection of our hearts will be set upon Christ and things above. Our memories will be fully stored with heavenly, spiritual things. We will have memories not of sorrow and pain, but of mercy and grace. John Gill wrote, “There will be nothing irregular and disagreeable in the soul, in its motions, thoughts, and actions.”

3. Our souls will find satisfaction in heavenly conversation

Heaven will be a place of much talk and conversation. There we shall carry on conversation both with the angels of God and with “the spirits of just men made perfect”. How we will communicate in that state, I do not know. What the language of heaven is, I cannot tell. But we will communicate with one another freely, spiritually, and profitably about the things of God.

4. Our souls will be satisfied with perfect knowledge in heaven

“For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known” (1 Corinthians 13:12). As soon as we drop this robe of flesh, everything that hinders us in spiritual knowledge shall be gone. Then we shall have perfect knowledge of God in all His attributes and works, of the Son of God in all His offices, works and grace, of the Spirit of God in all His being and gracious operations, of the angels of God in all their secret missions of mercy for us, of the providence of God in all its intricate details, and of one another. I do not doubt that we shall learn forever. Yet, even while learning, our knowledge will be crystal clear and pure. It will not be contaminated by sin and unbelief!

5. We shall be satisfied with perfect holiness

“As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness.”

In that blessed state our souls shall be entirely free from sin. The guilt of sin is now removed from us by the blood of Christ. But when we stand before God’s throne we will be completely free from the pollution of sin, the dread of sinning again, the body of sin, the being of sin, and all the consequences of sin. In heaven, hard as it is to conceive now, there will not even be any more sorrow for sin, “for God shall wipe away all tears” from our eyes!

That happy day cannot come soon enough, when we shall no longer groan and struggle with sin. In heaven, as soon as we leave this world, we shall be perfectly holy, unblamable, and unreprovable, without spot or blemish. We shall have no sinful thoughts, no impure desires, no evil inclinations, no wicked will. This holiness and freedom from sin will not in any measure be the result of our own free will or good works. We have none. It will be the result of God’s work and His grace alone.

6. And in heaven, we shall be satisfied with perfect, eternal peace (Psalm 37:37)

Peace! Sweet peace! Nothing is more desirable and satisfying than peace. Perfect peace is given to all who trust Christ now. But what shall that peace be which we shall have when we enter into the joy of the Lord? (See Isaiah 57:1, 2; Matthew 25:21).

Immediately after death, God’s saints enter into heaven to forever behold His face in righteousness and find perfect satisfaction in the presence of God, in conformity to Christ, in heavenly conversation, in perfect knowledge, in perfect holiness, and in perfect peace. Yet, there is another, even higher stage of heavenly glory.

Celestial Satisfaction

In the resurrection our bodies as well as our souls shall find perfect satisfaction in heavenly glory. David referred to the resurrection of the body when he said, “I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness.” We often speak of the salvation of the soul. But the Bible never does. The Bible speaks of the salvation of people, the salvation of both the body and the soul. And the salvation of God’s elect will not be complete until Christ has redeemed our bodies from the grave at the resurrection (Romans 8:23; 1 Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 1:14; 4:30; 1 Corinthians 15:41-58).

At the resurrection there will be a glory put upon the bodies of God’s saints, as well as that put upon their souls. The purpose of God will not
be satisfied, the soul travail of Christ will not be satisfied, and the hearts’ desire of God’s saints will not be satisfied until all the bodies of God’s elect are saved and gathered into glory.

This body must be sown in the earth in corruption. It is a vile body, corrupted by sin. It shall be brought into the corruption of death and laid in corruption in the dust of the earth, where it must rot and decay. But this very same body must be raised up to glory in incorruption, where it will no more be corrupted by sin, disease, or death. “This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” Then shall death be swallowed up in victory!

This body must be sown in the earth in dishonour. If there is anything noble, appealing, and pleasing about it, it will quickly fade away. Soon this body will become fit only for the company of worms beneath the cold, dark sod of the earth. But it shall be raised in glory. Yes, this body shall come forth from the grave in the perfection of beauty and comeliness, fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ. And it shall shine like the sun in heaven.

This body of flesh must be sown in the earth in weakness. Soon it will lose all strength and vigour. In the end it shall be carried by pall-bearers to the grave. But it shall be raised in power. It shall be raised in strength and fitness, able to move quickly from place to place, even from earth to heaven in an instant, able to attend the service of God and the Lamb forever, without weakness and weariness. In the resurrection, we will never again have to complain that “the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:41).

This body must be sown in the earth a natural body. By reason of sin, it is an animal-like body, supported by animal food. It must die as animals do (Ecclesiastes 3:19, 20). But it shall be raised a spiritual body, subsisting like the angels of God forever, never to die again. Then our bodies will no longer be encumbrances to our souls as they are now. Then our bodies will assist us in spiritual services. They will be fitted for spiritual employments and suited to spiritual worship. In our resurrection bodies we shall be satisfied.

When our bodies are raised from the earth and united with our souls, in the perfection of our whole being we shall be brought into a heavenly state of everlasting glory. I know that I cannot adequately describe the glorious satisfaction that awaits us. But it is so blessed that I must try to give some sense of it.

Clear Vision
In heaven’s glory we shall see the living God (Job 19:25-27). Now we walk by faith. Then we will walk by sight. Now we see God by faith, through His Word. Then we shall behold His face in righteousness. We shall see Him face to face, as He is (2 Corinthians 5:7; Psalm 17:15; 1 Corinthians 13:12; 1 John 3:2).

I do not mean that we will see God physically, in the essence of His Being, and comprehend Him. That is not possible, because God is the infinite, incomprehensible Spirit. But I do mean that we shall have a clear, unclouded apprehension of God’s perfections and glory as we behold the full revelation of God in Christ, the God-man. We will see all the fulness of the Godhead bodily in Christ (Colossians 2:9). As we behold Christ, we will perfectly apprehend God the Father in all that He is and has done, God the Son in all that He is and has done, and God the Holy Spirit in all that He is and has done. “In my flesh shall I see God!” — “Then shall I be satisfied”!

In heaven’s glory we will see all the holy angels. We will see the angels in their shining forms, ranks, and orders, those thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers made by Christ to be ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those whom He chose to be heirs of salvation. We will see those sons of God, those morning-stars that sang together and
shouted for joy when God laid the foundations of the earth. We will see those bright spirits who sang at Christ's incarnation, attended Him in His ascension, and shall return with Him when He comes to judge the world in righteousness.

All God's saints will see and know one another in this glorious world of bliss. Just before he died, someone asked Martin Luther, "Sir, will we know one another in the other world?" Luther answered, "As Adam knew Eve to be bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh by the revelation of God, though he had never seen her before, so shall the saints of God know one another in heaven." As the apostles knew Moses and Elijah on the mount with Christ, though they had never seen them, or even a picture or description of them before, so shall we know the saints of God in heaven. In heaven we shall know parents, wives, husbands, children, and friends far more perfectly than ever we knew them on the earth.

There will be no strangers in heaven. If there were a stranger in the heavenly company, freedom and joy would be greatly hindered. Who is free around a stranger? In heaven's glory when the bodies of God's saints are raised up to glory we shall see and know one another and all God's saints. We shall all see the Bride, the Lamb's wife, in all the beauty which God has given her. We shall see and know every believer. And we shall love and esteem them all perfectly.

**Glorious Liberty**

Here is another aspect of heaven satisfaction. In heaven's glory we shall possess everything that is good and be free from everything that is evil (Revelation 22:4, 5). Total deliverance from sin, freedom from Satan's temptations, deliverance from troublesome, oppressive, wicked men, freedom from all afflictions, total freedom from distress and that which causes distress, shall be ours forever. Surely, this is what Paul had in mind, when he wrote of us being "delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God" (Romans 8:21). There will be no more fightings without or fears within, no more doubts, misgivings, and no more unbelief! Everlasting joy shall be our portion. Sorrow and sighing shall flee away!

**Heavenly Enjoyments**

Once more, the saints of God shall find satisfaction in their resurrection glory in their everlasting employments. Then all our conversations will be holy conversations. We will live in the perpetual worship and praise of our God. And we will enjoy the everlasting perfection of love. This heavenly glory is the gift of God's pure, free grace in Christ. If we look for such great and glorious things in the world to come, it ought to affect the way we live upon the earth now (2 Peter 3:11; Colossians 3:1-4). Such a hope of glory ought to inspire in us the utmost consecration to our Lord Jesus Christ.
Lord, when thy Spir’t descends to show,
The badness of our hearts,
Astonish’d at th’ amazing view,
The soul with horror starts.

The dungeon, op’ning foul as hell,
Its loathsome stench emits;
And brooding in each secret cell,
Some hideous monster sits.

Swarms of ill thoughts their bane diffuse,
Proud, envious, false, unclean;
And ev’ry ransack’d corner shows,
Some unsuspected sin.

Our stagg’ring faith gives way to doubt;
Our courage yields to fear.
Shock’d at the sight, we straight cry out,
“Can ever God dwell here?”

But He that shows, can purge the filth,
Of each polluted soul;
Restore the putrid parts to health,
And purify the whole.

None less than God’s Almighty Son
Can move such loads of sin:
The water from His side must run,
To wash this dungeon clean.

For shouldst Thou stay till Thou canst meet,
Reception worthy Thee;
With sinners Thou wouldst never sit ...  
At least (I’m sure) with me.

O come thou much expected guest,
Lord Jesus, quickly come!
Enter the chamber of my breast:
Thyself prepare the room.

When, when will that blest time arrive,
When Thou wilt kindly deign,
With me to sit, to lodge, to live,
And never part again?

Psalm 51:7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
In the Old and New Testament language, by the church of God is uniformly meant, the whole body of the faithful, of which Christ is the Head. The apostle to the Hebrews defines the meaning of the church, when he calls it "the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven" (Hebrews 12:23). And the apostle John no less defines it, when he speaks of the names written in the Lamb's book of life (Revelation 21:27). Yea, our Lord Himself fixeth the meaning, when bidding His disciples to rejoice not at the devils being subject to them, in His name, but because their names were written in heaven (Luke 10:20).

By the church therefore, is meant, the whole body of Christ both in heaven and earth, the elect of God in Christ, given by the Father to the Son, redeemed by the Son, and sanctified by God the Holy Ghost, and called. And, although we sometimes meet with the expression of churches in the word of God, such as when it is said, the churches had rest throughout all Judea (Acts 9:31), and again, all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks (Romans 16:4), yet, the whole multitude of the people, of what kindred or nation soever, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free, from the beginning of the world to the consummation of all things, form but one and the same body, of which Christ is the glorious Head. Such is the church.

And it is blessed to see in the word of God how plainly and evidently this church, made up of Christ's members, and gathered out of the world's wide wilderness, is distinguished so as to prove whose she is, and to whom she belongs.

The Lord Jesus Himself describes her union with Himself under the similitude of branches in a vine (John 15:1, etc.), and shows, as plain as words can make it, that the vine and the branches are not more closely knit together, and forming one, than is Christ and His church. Yea, the figure doth not come up to the reality; for a branch may be, and sometimes is, separated from the vine, but not so can this take place between Christ and His church, for He saith, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19). And His servant, the apostle Paul, describes the intimate connection of Christ with His church, under the similitude of the marriage state (Ephesians 5:25-32). "This is a great mystery, (saith the apostle) but I speak concerning Christ and the church." Nevertheless, even here again, this beautiful figure, tender and affectionate as it is, falls far short of the oneness and union between Christ and His church. For death puts an end to all the connections of man and wife upon earth. But in respect to Christ and His spouse, the church, the dying day of the believer is but the wedding day. It is but as an espousal, a betrothing before; but in that day the church is brought home by Her all-lovely and all-loving Husband, to the marriage supper of the lamb in heaven. (See those Scriptures, Hosea 2:19-20; Revelation 19:7-9).

The best service, I apprehend, which I can render to the reader, under this article of the church, will be (to do what I should otherwise...
have done under the former, when speaking of Christ, but conceiving it might as well be noticed under this) to bring into one view the several names which Christ and His church have, in common, in the word of God, which certainly form the highest evidence that can be desired, in proof of their union and oneness and interest in each other. Nothing, indeed, can be more lovely and delightful to the contemplation.

It will be proper to introduce this account, with first shewing some of the special and peculiar privileges the church possesseth, both in name and in interest, from her union and oneness with her Lord, and then follow this up with the view of those names and appellations Jesus and His church have in common together. The church is distinguished, by virtue of her interest in Christ, as:

- The body of Christ, Ephesians 1:23.
- Brethren of Christ, Romans 8:29; Hebrews 3:1.
- The bride, the Lamb's wife, Revelation 21:9.
- Children of the kingdom, Matthew 13:38.
- The church of God, 1 Corinthians 1:2.
- Companions, Psalm 45:14; Song Of Songs 1:7
- Complete in Christ, Colossians 2:10.
- Daughter of the King, Psalm 45:13.
- Comely in Christ's comeliness, Ezekiel 16:14.
- Election, Romans 9:11.
- Family of God, Ephesians 3:15.
- Fold of Christ, John 10:16.
- Friends of God, James 2:23.
- Habitation of God, Ephesians 2:22.
- Heritage of God, Jeremiah 12:7; Psalm 127:3; Joel 3:2.
- The Israel of God, Galatians 6:16.
- The lot of God's inheritance, Deuteronomy 32:9.
- Members of Christ, Ephesians 5:30.
- Peculiar people, 1 Peter 2:9.
- The portion of the Lord, Deuteronomy 32:9.
- The temple of God, 1 Corinthians 3:16.
- Vessels of mercy, Romans 9:23.
- The vineyard of the Lord, Isaiah 5:1, etc.

These, with many others of the like nature, are among the distinguishing, names by which the church of Christ is known in Scripture, by reason of her oneness and union with Him.

But this view of the intimate and everlasting connection between Christ and His church will be abundantly heightened, if we add to it what was proposed to shew the sameness between them, from being known under the same names, as descriptive of this union. A few examples in point will be enough. Christ condescends to be known by the name of Adam, as our first father: "As the first Adam was made a living soul, so the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit" (1 Corinthians 15:45). As Christ is called a Babe, so are they said to be babes in Christ (Luke 2:16; 1 Peter 2:2). As Christ is declared to be the dearly beloved of the Father (Jeremiah 12:7), so the church is said to be dearly beloved also, (1 Corinthians 10:14; Philippians 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:2). Is Christ the Elect, in whom JEHOVAH'S soul delighteth? So are they elect, according to the foreknowledge of God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ (Isaiah 42:1; 1 Peter 1:2).

Is Jesus the heir of all things? (Hebrews 1:2), so are they heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17). And when that Christ, by the spirit of prophecy, is called JEHOVAH our righteousness, the church as His wife, and entitled to every thing in Him, is also called by the same name, JEHOVAH our righteousness. (See, compared together, Jeremiah 23:6 with Jeremiah 33:16). Yea, in one remarkable instance, the church not only bears Christ's name, but Christ bears hers. He is called Jacob and Israel (Isaiah 41:8 and Isaiah 49:3).

Without enlarging this point further, for enough, I presume, hath been advanced in proof of the thing itself, nothing can be more plain, and nothing can be more highly satisfactory, than this oneness, from union and participation between Christ and His church. And I trust, the review will be always blessed to the believer's heart, and, under the Holy Ghost's teaching, be always leading out the affections to the full enjoyment of it, agreeably to the mind and will of God.

**Diary Item - New Focus Conference 2016**

God willing, our next New Focus Conference will take place on May 28th and 29th, 2016. Our venue will again be Datchworth Village Hall, Knebworth, Herts. SG3 6TL, and we thank the friends at Knebworth Grace Church for so willingly and hospitably accepting this task.
Ten Hard Questions
(for believers in freewill)

1. Quicken means to make alive. Is it true that the Son quickeneth whom he will (John 5:21) or does the Son only quicken those who will let Him?

Answer .........................................................

2. If all sinners possess sufficient natural will and power to come to the Lord Jesus Christ, why did Christ say, No man can come unto me except the Father which hath sent me draw him? (John 6:44).

Answer .........................................................

3. If a sinner exercises freewill and trusts in Christ who is the author of that sinner’s faith? (Hebrews 12:2).

Answer .........................................................

4. If Christ merely made salvation possible and the sinner by an act of freewill makes it sure, who deserves the more praise?

Answer .........................................................

5. Jesus said that every sinner is the servant of sin (John 8:34). Can a servant act freely before he is set free? (Luke 4:18).

Answer .........................................................

6. If we are saved by our freewill, is the only difference between the saved and the lost that the saved made a better choice? (Jeremiah 13:23).

Answer .........................................................

7. Does God work all things after the counsel of His own will (Ephesians 1:11), or does He work some things after the will of the sinner?

Answer .........................................................

8. If God’s will to save sinners is based upon the sinner’s will to be saved whose will has precedence? And what is It that is According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord? (Ephesians 3:11).

Answer .........................................................

9. Does Christ have to get the consent of the sinner before He can save him? Why does Daniel say, And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? (Daniel 4:35).

Answer .........................................................

10. If Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners yet salvation hinges on a sinner’s freewill, did Christ give His life not knowing if any sinner actually would be saved?

Answer .........................................................

Supplementary Question

Is not Christ under obligation to the Father to give eternal life to as many as the Father gave Him? (John 17:2). What happens if they decline?

Answer .........................................................
The rainbow is a Divine symbol of a gracious covenant. When God’s wrath was brought to the end of His patience, He destroyed all but Noah’s family. Afterward, the whole climate had changed and rain became a common feature. As you might imagine, rain was a portent of judgment to Noah and his family so God did something to assuage Noah’s fear. He arranged physical law to create a rainbow and told Noah that the rainbow was a sign of His promise not to destroy the world by water again. So, at every sign of judgment, the bow would appear and assure them that judgment was not coming.

It really irritated me when the homosexual community chose this Divine symbol as their symbol. But, as I was thinking about this today, it is almost as though the Lord spoke. I was getting aggravated and the Lord as much as said, “You’re missing the point. I arranged that. Who do you think put it in their minds to use that symbol? You look at them and you see a portent of judgment. You see a condensation of sinfulness which you feel I must answer in wrath. And you are made doubly angry for you think they are polluting my symbol. But think of it: I have arranged it so that every time they lift their symbol in defiance of Me, they are sending you My message that I am gracious and will not destroy everyone. Wrath may fall on them, but it will never reach you. I think that was a stroke of genius. Don’t you? I have turned these rebels into gospel preachers so that My people may see and remember that I am gracious. So when you see it, don’t get mad. It’s My message to you. I’ll deal with their rebellion at the proper time. In fact, I am going to save some of them. But all you need to know when they lift their rainbow high is that I put it there for you. Use it to remind you of all My covenant promises, for they are still sure. Their rebellion will never overwhelm my gracious purposes and promises for My people.”

Now, I don’t get mad when I see their rainbow. I laugh.

Family Flag
The ruling United Russia party recently unveiled a flag at a Day of Family festival. Official Andrei Lisovenko called the flag ‘a response to same sex marriage’. He described gay marriage as a ‘mockery’ of the family, adding: ‘We have to warn against gay-fever at home and support traditional values.’ The flag shows a man, woman and children above the words ‘a real family’.

Rainbow Rising
Christian Reader (if such thou art),
daily observations of the judgments,
mercies, and providences of God,
are very establishing to faith; for God hath
promised that His “hand shall be known
towards his servants, and his indignation
towards his enemies” (Isaiah 66:14). It is
likewise a sufficient proof of the authenticity of
scripture; because on the one hand we daily
see God’s judgments on the wicked brought
to light; and, on the other, His daily goodness
appears conspicuous on the righteous;
therefore we are commanded to behold both
“the goodness and severity of God” (Romans
11:22). I am fully persuaded that the whole
train of events were laid in the secret counsel
of God from all eternity, and were by the Holy
Ghost made known to God’s eminent servants;
and that the revolving wheel of time turns up its
prizes and blanks as fast as it rolls, and will
until the whole “mystery of God is finished, as
he hath declared to his servants the prophets”
(Revelation 10:7). Comparing visible facts with
God’s word, and tracing them up to God, their
first cause, is sweet employment for a spiritual
mind, and keeps it from wandering after vanity.
“He that will observe these things, even he
shall understand the lovingkindness of the
Lord” (Psalm 107:43). It is laid as a reproach
upon Israel that they soon forgat His works;
and those who consider not “the operation of
his hands, he will destroy them and not build
them up” (Psalm 28:5). A watchful eye on the
hand of God is a great enemy to unbelief; even
Thomas himself, though he gave the testimony
of ten men the lie, yet he credited what he saw;
yea, even the murderers of the Saviour, when
they saw the whole frame of nature convulsed,
said, “Truly, this was the Son of God”!

This introduction to Huntington’s *The Naked Bow Of God* sets out
the author’s justification for publishing a personal account of his
early ministry and what he perceived as divine judgments that befell
some of those who opposed him and his congregation. Sadly, today,
many continue to criticise Huntington and his experiences of God’s
grace and providence in the Lord Jesus Christ.
The whole article *The Naked Bow Of God* is too long to republish in
this magazine but in the hope this introduction will encourage some
to read it for themselves, the complete account has been posted
online and is available to read or download from the New Focus
website at www.go-newfocus.co.uk
David, upon a proper reflection of the hand of God appearing so visible on him, was brought to confess that goodness and mercy had followed him all his days; and good old Jacob, on his death-bad, owned that God had fed him all his life long, and redeemed him from all evil.

Trials and difficulties have a tendency to lead us into this heavenly art of watchfulness. In deep poverty, the kind providence of God appears; in persecutions, his judgments on the wicked shew themselves; and in foul distresses, his supporting, sin-subduing, and soul-comforting, grace is made manifest. Thus the poor widow, in her poverty, sees the spring of King Providence in her cruse of oil (2 Kings 4:7); David, in his soul’s deep distress, found God’s wonderful grace bringing him out of the pit, and establishing his feet on the Rock; and persecuted Israel, at the Red Sea, saw destruction ride in triumph.

A Christian is not in his right element if his eye is taken from the hand, or handiworks of God. If a person in distress has no eye to God, he has work enough to bear up under it; and that soul, who eyes Him not in prosperity, robs Him of His daily tribute of praise, and goes the readiest way to close the bountiful hand of his Maker, by burying His mercies in oblivion. Unwatchfulness, ingratitude, and covetousness, are enough to entail a curse upon all our temporal mercies; and he that boasts of his wisdom, prudence and industry, is said to sacrifice to his own net, and burn incense to his own drag (Habakkuk 1:16). This is not acting like a Christian, but like the king of Babylon, who walked in his palace, boasting of his majesty, honour, and buildings, till the thundering voice of God knocked him from his pinnacle, and levelled him with the brute creation, till seven years rolled over his head; and when he was brought to his senses, he owned that the Most High ruled.

I must confess I have too frequently, to God’s dishonour, and my own soul’s discomfort, been off my watchtower; but the few observation that I have made of His providence have loudly proclaimed His tender and parental care both for me and my family; and the judgments which I have seen a just God inflict on His enemies, have as loudly proclaimed His discriminating grace and terrible majesty; while my own weaknesses and imperfections have deeply instructed me in His long forbearance, mercy, faithfulness, and unchanging love in Christ Jesus.

The present subject is not a very pleasing one; but perhaps God may own it to the encouragement of His tried children, or to caution an enemy of Christ. I intend treating only of those judgments of God which I have known Him to inflict on persecutors, who have opposed the ministry that I have received, and who am the most unworthy instrument He ever made use of in His vineyard; but “by the grace of God I am what I am”.

If my reader be an opposer of the gospel, God may bless it as a caution: and if a Christian indeed, mercy may appear the sweeter. Let us sing then of mercy and judgment: but mercy stands first; therefore we must sing of mercy in the highest key.

I should not have sent this awful account of God’s judgments abroad into the world, if the word of God had forbidden it. But, when God raised up Pharaoh as a butt for His vengeance, it was that His sovereign name, in the administration of judgment and mercy, might be proclaimed throughout the earth. And indeed the Acts of the Apostles abound with accounts of God’s judgments. Nor should I have hinted at the names of the persons on whom these judgments fell, had not the scripture informed me of Pashur, Ananias, Sceva the Jew, Sapphira, Herod, Elymas the sorcerer, etc. all distinguished both by their actions and names. Therefore we ought to behold the works of God, in order that we may declare amongst the people His doings; and to say, with pious Job, “that which is with the Almighty will I not conceal”. God may bless this awful account to some poor soul, who is at war with his Maker; if so, I shall have my reward. May the Lord, of His infinite mercy, give us success in all the nets that we cast.
John Gill
Preserver of the Faith

Part Five:
Waiting For The Chariot

Toplady and Rippon on Gill
Augustus Toplady has left us with one of the earliest eye-witness accounts of Gill as a preacher. Of his mentor he wrote:

As a minister, his deportment in the pulpit was grave and solemn. His language plain and expressive: His method natural and easy: His reasoning strong and nervous: His addresses affectionate: His matter substantial, clear and consistent, well digested, and delivered with great fluency and accuracy, which failed not to command and fix the attention of his hearers. In prayer, he poured out his soul with great freedom and fervency, with much importunity, familiarity and liberty; and, like another Apollos, was mighty in the Scriptures, and had the tongue of the learned to speak a word in season.

Toplady goes on to discuss all the truths that Gill preached, concluding that:

He did not shun to declare the whole counsel of God, and kept back nothing that might be profitable to the people;
constantly affirming, that those who believe should be careful to maintain good works. His ministry, by the blessing of God, was very much owned, and greatly succeeded to the awakening, conversion, comfort, instruction, edification and establishment of many, who enjoyed the opportunity of attending upon it.¹

Gill was valued as a preacher because those under his ministry knew that he was a man who practised what he preached. His hearers trusted him with full and thankful hearts, knowing that his great aim was to lead his flock into green pastures and protect them from the snares and wolves of the world. Referring to the fact that all who knew him from his childhood on were deeply impressed by the sanctity of Gill’s life, Rippon says:

Those who had the honour and happiness of being admitted into the number of his friends can go still further in their testimony. They know, that his moral demeanour was more than blameless: it was, from first to last, consistently exemplary. And, indeed, an undeviating consistency, both in his views of evangelical truths, and in his obedience, as a servant of God, was one of those qualities, by which his cast of character was eminently marked. He was, in every respect, a burning and a shining light—Burning with love to God, to Truth, and to Souls—Shining, as “an ensample to believers, in word, in faith, in purity”; a pattern of good works, and a model of all holy conversation and godliness.²

Rippon points out that Gill was extremely skilled in judging the needs of his hearers and could often provide them with spiritual comfort and solve their doubts in a single sentence or so. When he preached many were converted, others were awakened from their lethargy, established in the faith or comforted and edified. Gill’s demeanour was always meek and humble, showing great sympathy with his hearers and those who came to him for assistance.

² From the short biography appended to Rippon’s Life and Writings of Dr. John Gill, pp. 138, 139.

GEORGE M. ELLA

Gill’s family
John and Elizabeth Gill were privileged to see their three children grow to profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Their daughter Mary was received into fellowship as a believer at Goat Yard in April 1744 but after her marriage to George Keith, Gill’s publisher and bookseller, she joined him as a member at St Albans where John Gill’s nephew of the same name was pastor. The Gills’ son John, who became a goldsmith, was converted relatively late and accepted into fellowship in March, 1751. He went through a rebellious period in 1755 when he was excluded from membership for a short time of discipline but soon showed great remorse and was accepted back into fellowship.

One of Gill’s most moving funeral sermons was that preached at the burial of his own daughter Elizabeth, who died on May 30th, 1738, aged 12 years. Gill explains how Matthew 7:7 “Ask and it shall be given you ... ” had helped his daughter to come to a knowledge of the truth. After being spoken to by this verse and after being praised as if she were a great saint by her school-mistress, Elizabeth received a deep conviction of her own sin and lost state followed by an experience of sealing and pardoning grace so that she could testify concerning Christ, “I love him; methinks, I could hug him in my arms.” On her death-bed Elizabeth assured her father that Christ had died for her and, shortly before she died, she said that she could see Christ waiting for her. Nevertheless one thought troubled her in her last hours. She thought of how she had never been baptised and joined the saints at the Lord’s Table. Her father assured her that she was safe in the Lord’s arms as salvation comes by faith through the grace of Christ and is thus not dependent on the ordinances, though they have their proper place for those who are able to submit themselves to them. After that Elizabeth spent some time talking in prayer to her ‘dear Lord’ before falling sweetly asleep in Jesus.³

A verse of Scripture which was constantly with Gill in his later years was Matthew 24:44, “Therefore be ye also ready, for in such hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.” Gill understood this to refer not only to Christ’s coming in judgement but also to His coming to take His chosen ones home at their death. The Gospel ministry to Gill was preparing a

³ Gill’s sermon was preached on June 4th and published in the same year. under the title A Sermon Occasioned by the Death of Elizabeth Gill who Departed this Life May 30th 738 having entered the 13th Year of her Age.
people for the Lord from the time of their coming under the Gospel to their being called home. He preached such sermons as The Quiet and Easy Passage of Christ's Purchased People Through Death to Glory to prepare his flock for their home-call. In this exposition of Exodus 15:16, Gill says of the saint's departure:

This their passage is attended with the utmost safety; there is no danger in it; no evil is to be feared from it: as all the people of Israel passed clean over Jordan, perfectly, completely; not one was lost or missing in the passage over it; so all Christ's purchased people pass safely through death to eternal glory; none ever were lost in it; nor will any be missing at the great day, when Christ makes up His jewels, and takes the account of them, to see that all are safe.

Mrs Gill's home-call
Elizabeth Gill crossed over Jordan in 1764 in her sixty-eighth year, seven years before her husband and after a very lengthy, painful illness. She had proved a faithful wife for forty-six years and Gill always counted her the greatest blessing God had given him. Her life had been a hard one and she had received much criticism from the female members of the congregation. For well over twenty years she had to suffer being bed-ridden for various periods each year with difficult pregnancies or hazardous miscarriages besides having to nurse her sickly infants. During her last days, Mrs Gill could often be heard in prayer, crying, "Let me go; oh let me go to my Father's house." Two verses of Scripture were ever precious to her at this time, "Them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him," and "Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you." No doubts or fears seemed to trouble her final days in any way and she continually testified to feeling the Lord's presence but confessed that she was too weak to describe her experiences in detail. Her last words were to utter "the covenant is sure," and, after a period of delirium Elizabeth suddenly thrust out her arms and cried "Lord! Lord!" and died.

Preparing for death
As old age took its toll of Gill's health, his flock realised that they might soon be without their beloved pastor. In February 1770 a group of members met with the deacons to discuss how Gill's memory could be best kept fresh amongst the church members after he had gone. The best idea that they came up with was to almost bully their elderly and infirm pastor to sit for a painting, with copies to be sold to assist church funds. Thus the famous and rather unflattering portrait ensued which each successor of Gill has placed in his vestry ever since.

Gill realising his home-call was near, began to write down his dying thoughts for his church members. He asked, "Wherein lies this readiness and preparation for death and eternity?" Thursting aside all ideas of a well-spent life or comfortable thoughts of one's own services for the Lord, Gill argues that any who argue in this way are unfit to die. What makes a man ready for death is, first, regeneration; second, sanctification; third, the righteousness of Christ imputed; fourth, being washed in the blood of Christ and fifth, spiritual knowledge of Christ and true faith in Him. We must know in whom we have believed and be persuaded that He is able to keep us until He calls us.

Gill then goes on to advise his readers to meditate much on death and its comforts and ask God why His chariot is so long in coming. But they must learn also to wait with their lamps burning, knowing that they do not wait in vain who wait on the Lord. Six things ought to console us. Death frees us from sin and sorrow. It is a going home to our Father's mansion where we belong. It is to be with Christ for ever. We shall be reunited with all our loved ones in Christ. God will gather in all the saints that ever lived. Last, but certainly not least, the death of the saints is precious in the eyes of the Lord and what is precious to God, should not deter us.

When the certain signs of death were upon him, his main thought was to be with Christ and to be raised, and fashioned like to His glorious body, putting off the corruptible and putting on the incorruption. At this very thought he can only say, "Thanks, therefore, to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Looking for a successor
These marks were on Gill for almost a year before God's chariot called but the dying pastor just could not make his loving flock grasp the seriousness of this fact for themselves. At the end of 1770, Gill, now seventy-three years of age, informed his church that they should look for someone to take over the pastorate, suggesting Benjamin Francis (1734-1799) as

his successor. This minister was the pastor of a growing church at Shortwood which dearly loved him but could not afford to keep him. It is said that Francis’ congregation was composed of the most materially destitute of believers who lived in a radius of 30 miles around the chapel. Though Francis was pastor of the church from 1758-1799, he only experienced one year in which church membership was not substantially increased and his chapel had to be enlarged three times to admit them all. Gill’s deacons, however, ignored his wish to have Francis take his place in the vain hope that their beloved pastor would regain strength.

The members also took no notice of this wish though Gill had hardly strength now to preach once a week and the younger members and hearers were becoming restless and demanding that the older members did something to better the pulpit situation. Non-members left off attending the chapel almost completely. When the brethren still refused to find a new pastor but began to speak of a possible co-pastor as though Gill was to be Paul, Gill made a final effort to make the responsible members of his flock see gospel sense and wrote on April 29, 1771, just months before his death:

Dear Brethren and Sisters,

When I consider my Advanced age, and the growing infirmities of it, which render me incapable of performing the Duties of my office, as they ought to be performed; and when I consider how many Members have been dropping off by Death one by one, and few or none coming in their stead, and others disposed to remove elsewhere, and more still cold and indifferent, together with a decrease of the audience; when, I say, I consider those things, I Judge it most eligible, with your leave to resign my office as Pastor of the Church and then you will be at full liberty to choose another, and when you come to such a Choice, may you be directed to choose one who is found in the faith, Studious and diligent in his work and exemplary in his life and Conversation; and may you have one to preach the Gospel to you as faithfully as I have done, according to the best of my lights and abilities; I can’t say, I wish he may serve you, as long as I have, for perhaps that may be but to his disadvantage and yours, but I wish he may serve you with greater success.

There my dear friends, are my best wishes for you, Who for the present am, but not long expected to be your Pastor, Elder and Overseer

John Gill

The ‘children’ refuse to give up their ‘father’

This letter caused great alarm amongst the members, the great bulk of whom could not imagine being separated from their beloved pastor. They just could not accept that the man who had carried them on his shoulders for so long was now too weak to go on. They told the deacons that they could not ‘entertain the least thought’ of Gill resigning and stressed that they wanted him to ‘continue being pastor of this church till the Lord shall remove him to the Kingdom of Glory above.’ The deacons were urged to write to their pastor:

... how can a Father give up his Children, or affectionate Children their Father? Dear Sir. We beseech you to think and look upon us as your Children, either begotten again unto the Gospel of Christ, through your Instrumentality, or built up in the faith of that Gospel; We desire to say and Testify, that in this Sense
you are our Father, and We beseech You not to cast us off, but bear us upon your Heart, and Spiritual Affections all your Days and Let us be recommended to God through your Prayers, with a Who knows? but the Lord may visit us again with the Light of his Countenance, and make us to break forth, on the Right hand and on the left, to the Glory of divine Grace, to the Comfort and Joy on your Soul, and the Refreshing and Rejoicing the hearts of many; This we trust is the fervent Prayer of every one of us.

Again Gill expressed the desire that Benjamin Francis should succeed him but his deacons and church members were determined not to give up their beloved pastor until the Lord called him. They thus took no action concerning Francis, though several of the younger members left the church in protest. The deacons did not tell Francis about Gill’s wish until two years after their pastor had first expressed it. By that time Gill was dead and Carter Lane was at last busy looking for a new shepherd.

Gill’s very last preaching wish was to expound the song of Zechariah, going on through Luke until he came to the Nunc Dimittis in Chapter Two. The old scholar-preacher did not get that far but ended his fifty-one years in the ministry by preaching on the text “To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet in the way of peace.” What better note could a true evangelist end on?

Depending wholly on God’s grace
During these months Gill was wracked with violent pains in his stomach and he lost his sense of taste, eating merely out of duty. Middleton records how, “He bore his visitation with great patience, composure, and resignation of mind to the divine will; without uttering the least complaint; without ever saying to God, What doest thou?” During such bodily discomfort, a fortnight or so before his death, Gill’s nephew of the same name, who was a pastor himself, asked his uncle how he was feeling. How many would have taken the opportunity to moan in self-pity. In answer, Gill preached a regular sermon to his dear-one, outlining his hope in the Lord, saying:

I depend wholly and alone upon the free, sovereign, eternal, unchangeable and everlasting love of God; the firm and everlasting covenant of grace, and my interest in the persons of the Trinity; for my whole salvation and not upon any righteousness of my own, nor any thing in me, or done by me under the influences of the holy Spirit; nor upon any services of mine, which I have been assisted to perform for the good of the church; but upon my interest in the persons of the Trinity, the person, blood and righteousness of Christ, the free grace of God, and the blessings of grace streaming to me through the blood and righteousness of Christ; as the ground of my hope. These are no new things with me; but what I have been long acquainted with; what I can live and die by. And this you, may tell to any of my friends. I apprehend I shall not be long here.

To other enquirers, Gill was more brief. When one visitor asked him of his well-being, shortly before he passed away, Gill merely replied, “I have nothing to make me uneasy.” and quoted a verse from Isaac Watts:

He rais’d me from the deeps of sin,
The gates of gaping hell;
And fixed my standing more secure
Than ’twas before I fell.

This again showed how steadfast to the last Gill was in stressing the need for a better covenant bringing with it a better hope and a better righteousness which he faithfully believed God had made with him. Thus when the time came for John Gill to depart and be with his Lord, he went without a sigh or a groan but with a look of inward joy and peace on his face and the words, “O my Father! my Father!” on his lips. Blessed are they that die in the Lord!

6 The Rev. John Gill was also a pastor for over 50 years, serving mostly in St Albans. When he died in March, 1809 aged 79, his funeral sermon was preached by John Sutcliff of Olney. Mary Gill, Dr Gill’s daughter, had been in membership with her cousin’s church since May, 1764.
Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace.

Isaiah 52:6, 7

BEAUTIFUL UPON THE MOUNTAINS

The Lord Jesus Christ promises that His people shall know His name. In the day our Saviour effectually gives us a new heart to hear the gospel through His ambassador, every child of God knows that it is Christ who speaks. As we behold Him for the first time we say by faith, “how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that brings good tidings, that publisheth peace!”

The Lord Jesus Christ's feet are beautiful upon Mt. Sinai for the law teaches us our need of One to satisfy its holy demands and Christ is that One.

The Lord Jesus Christ's feet are beautiful upon Mt. Moriah for there we see God providing Himself a lamb for a burnt offering.

The Lord Jesus Christ's feet are beautiful upon that “exceedingly high mountain” where the devil tempted Him with all the kingdoms of the world for there we behold Christ the Faithful One.

The Lord Jesus Christ feet are beautiful in that mountain where He preached the “sermon on the mount” for there we behold Christ our Prophet.

The Lord Jesus Christ's feet are beautiful upon Mt. Gerizim for there we see Christ our King in His power to convert His child as He converted the woman by the well.

The Lord Jesus Christ's feet are beautiful upon the Mt. of Olives for there we behold Christ our High Priest as He prayed, making intercession for His people.

The Lord Jesus Christ’s feet are beautiful upon the Mt. of Transfiguration for there we get a glimpse of Christ in His resurrection glory and are taught that He only is the one we should worship.

The Lord Jesus Christ's feet are beautiful upon Mt. Calvary for there He accomplished the redemption of His people by His suffering unto death.

The Lord Jesus Christ's feet are beautiful upon heavenly Mt. Zion for our risen Head rules all things in heaven and earth for His church, His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

Soon, His feet will be beautiful when He returns for His people. Then the bride will shout with joy, “The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.” (Song Of Solomon 2:8) Have you seen Christ? Have you heard His gospel? Oh, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace!”
The will is that faculty of the soul whereby we freely choose or refuse things. It is of the nature of the will to do freely whatsoever it wills. [But] it is unable, till it be changed by grace, to move itself towards God; and to will what is good, is of grace; our will being free in respect of sinful acts, but bound in respect of good works, till it be made free by Christ (Psalm 110:3; John 8:36; John 15:5; Philippians 2:13) (Cruden).

Elisha Coles wrote, “That doctrine therefore which teaches ‘that when grace is offered we may refuse it if we will, and if we will we may receive it’ is to be looked upon as contrary to the Scriptures.

“We all acknowledge dark sayings in Scripture and things ‘hard to be understood’, but the difficulty is not so much from the Word as from the natural unbelief, prejudice and darkness within, which are those crooked, wrinkled or discoloured mediums men commonly look through at spiritual things.

“The doctrine of general love will not stand with that of special election, yet the doctrine of special election will stand without that, and against it, for there is nothing more plain than that there is an election of men to salvation, as also the genuine import of election is, to choose one or more out of many, which necessarily implies the leaving or not choosing of some: and consequently the not willing of salvation to all universally. The will of God cannot be resisted successfully because with His willing the end, He also wills the means. ‘My counsel shall stand, I will do all my pleasure.’

“It shows what reason we have to discard forever that groundless and blind opinion, which lays the stress of salvation on a thing of naught, for what else is the will of a frail and mutable man? The grace of God is little beholden to that doctrine which would give the glory of it to a graceless thing—man.

“One God was the maker of all, but all were not made for the same use and end. As in a great house are many vessels, ‘some to honour and some to dishonour’ so in the Word we have some God raised up to be monuments of His power and justice, (Exodus 9:16; Jude 4; 1 Peter 2:8), called therefore ‘vessels of wrath’ (Romans 9:22); others are ‘vessels of mercy’ whom He formed for Himself (Isaiah 43:7,21), and are therefore said to be ‘afore prepared unto glory’ (Romans 9:23).

“The principle thing intended and merited by the death of Christ was the justification of sinners; and ‘that God might be just in justifying of them’ (Romans 3:23), and finally that they might have eternal life (John 17:2). If therefore He merited this for all then all must be justified and saved (Romans 5:8-10), and it cannot be justly denied to any, for it is their due, by virtue of price. For none can be condemned for whom Christ died (Romans 8:34). Therefore if Christ died for all then all must be justified and saved and it must be concluded that all are not justified, so consequently Christ did not give Himself for all.

“To say that Christ died for all without exception and yet admitting that only a few are saved would seem to tax God of injustice or else that the sufferings of Christ were not sufficient to
make a discharge due to them, or it insinuates a deficiency of power, or want of good will, to prosecute His design to perfection.

“That election is founded upon grace or the good pleasure of God’s will, is the only original cause and motive of election.”

Isaiah 46:10 “Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.”

Daniel 4:35 “And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?”

John 1:13 “Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

John 5:21 “The Son quickeneth whom he will.”

James 1:18 “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.”

Romans 9:17 “For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.” (Romans 9:22; Proverbs 21:1).

Exodus 9:16 “And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth” (Romans 9:22; Proverbs 21:1).

Exodus 7:3 “I will harden Pharaoh’s heart.”

Exodus 10:1 “And the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart.” (No less than ten times God says He will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and not until God hardens it do we read of Pharaoh hardening his own heart, Exodus 9:12; 10:20, 27; 11:10; 14:8, etc.).

Joshua 11:20 “For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts ... that he might destroy them utterly.”

1 Samuel 15:3 “Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling.”

John 3:3, 7, 8 “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again [from above], he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (We are just as helpless when it comes to our spiritual birth as we were at our natural birth, not only helpless as to its accomplishment, but more so, we violently oppose it, vv. 6, 8).

Romans 11:24 “Thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree.” (Is it possible for a thing to graft itself?)

Romans 16:13 “Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord.” (This election is personal).

Ephesians 2:1 “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” (God in His Word likens a sinner to one who is dead, and as a dead person, we are unable to do one thing to accomplish our salvation, not even to believe, except it be given us to do so. In John 11 we have in Lazarus a good type of a sinner dead in trespasses and sins; helpless, hopeless, unable to move toward God, until His quickening power awakens and enables the sinner to ‘come forth’.

Isaiah 40:13 “Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him?”

Isaiah 40:8 “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.”

Proverbs 19:21 “There are many devices in a man’s heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand” (Let us beware lest many devices are found in our heart, and we are found fighting against God and His Word as many are doing today, deceiving themselves and others. “Nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand”).

Luke 11:28. “But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.”
This year’s New Focus Conference was most excellently hosted and catered for at Datchworth Village Hall by Pastor Allan Jellett and his congregation from Knebworth. We were delighted to see a good number gathering to hear the gospel over three days in May.

The preaching took on an international flavour with representation from the USA, Australia and even Pakistan as well as the UK. Allan Jellett kicked off proceedings on Friday evening by reminding us of the privilege of public worship, Christian fellowship and gospel ministry and the importance of going to the house of the Lord.

Pastor Don Fortner preached powerfully on three occasions and took as his topics Christ our Surety, Christ our Substitute and Christ our Salvation. In each sermon he led us to view the wonderful accomplishments of the Lord Jesus and the blessings which flow to His church and people through our Saviour’s life and death.

Pastor Angus Fisher from Nowra in New South Wales preached movingly from Song of Solomon 8:5 on Christ coming from the wilderness, His people upon His shoulder.

Pastor Peter Meney’s subject was What Happened At The Cross. He showed how the various aspects of the Lord’s work at the cross are essential to properly understand the basis and way of salvation and how ignorance of these truths lead to all manner of error.

Pastor Harry Qazi brought a report from believers in Pakistan and news of Munir Masir a new convert recently baptised. We were reminded that the Lord’s people elsewhere often suffer much and have few of the benefits and blessings we too often take for granted.

We were pleased to have visitors from many different congregations all expressing a desire to fellowship together in the glorious gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

An extensive bookstall was provided by Christian Bookshop Ossett and once again we were encouraged to see the large number of young people present. In the grace of God we look forward to seeing His blessing upon this generation following.

So successful was the event that we are resolved, God willing, to do it all again next year, at the same place in May 2016. Details will be posted nearer the time.

Meanwhile, for those who could not make the conference but would like to hear the sermons, they are all available as audio files from Sermonaudio.com under the relevant preacher’s name.