Where Are You?

It is exactly 300 years since God graciously saved a young man's soul and revealed Christ in him. It happened following a sermon preached from Genesis 3:9 by the lad's pastor at his family's church. The words, "And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?" struck home with power and conviction and in the weeks that followed that question lay heavy on the young man's heart. It was as though Christ spoke personally to him, "Where are you? Where are you?" And he did not have an answer.

The youth was John Gill. He was twelve years old and soon after this event the Lord gave him grace to see his own sinfulness and the necessity of Christ's blood to wash him clean. He saw that without a substitute to take his place, a deliverer to set him free, and a mighty captain to lead him forth he was lost for time and eternity. He received the gift of faith to trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, and in the words of another child, an answer was given for his question: "Here am I ... Speak Lord for thy servant heareth."

John was only young but through the preaching of his pastor, William Wallis, the Lord saved him and set him upon the road of pastor-teacher to the elect of every nation. One preacher, one sermon, one verse, in the glorious purpose of the Triune God is all it takes to save a sinner and do a great work. This should be every preacher's hope in preaching, and every hearer's desire in hearing.

The Satisfaction of Christ

Usually when we speak of the satisfaction of Christ it is with reference to the offering of blood made by our Saviour to satisfy the demands of the Holiness of God and the indebtedness of the elect to the broken law of God. What our Redeemer and Representative has done as substitute for His people may be called "the satisfaction of Christ".

But as well as the satisfaction made or given by the Lord Jesus Christ there is also spoken of in Scripture a satisfaction received or enjoyed by the Lord. In Isaiah 53:11 we are told that God's righteous servant, our Saviour, is Himself satisfied with His people. As a wife satisfies her husband, Christ is satisfied with His bride. He looks upon her, beholds her beauty and enjoys her in all her perfection and purity; justified and holy in Him. He seeks no other, desires no other and needs no other. He has His bride and He is satisfied.

Sacrificial love

Loves gives. The Father gave His only begotten Son because He loved lost sinners (John 3:16). Christ gave His life's blood for the redeeming of the church because He loved us (Ephesians 5:25). The Holy Spirit out of love gives love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance to all who are Christ's (Romans 15:30; Galatians 5:22, 23). And those who are loved give in turn. Freely ye have received, freely give. We give our lives to the Lord, freely and willingly, in submission to His Word. And we give our resources to the Lord's work for the extension of His kingdom. Giving liberally and sacrificially means we give till it hurts. If it does not cost, it does not count (Luke 21:4). But do not give from a sense of obligation. Such "generosity" the Lord can do without. Give out of gratitude or do not give at all.
Christ, the Good Shepherd, knows His sheep as the gift of His Father. He laid down His life for them. He seeks and finds them. They hear and know His voice. He gives them eternal life, and they follow Him.

"I shall not want" for —

Rest, for “He maketh me to lie down.”

Refreshment, for “He leadeth me beside the still waters.”

Preservation, for “He restoreth my soul.”

Guidance, for “He leadeth me.”

Peace, for “I will fear no evil.”

Companionship, for, “Thou art with me.”

Comfort, for “Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.”

Sustenance, for “Thou preparst a table before me.”

Joy, for “Thou anointest my head with oil.”

Anything, for “my cup runneth over.”

Happiness, for “goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.”

Glory, for “I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.”

R. Cornall
There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Romans 8:1

No Condemnation

No condemnation? Here we are, unable to do even the good, that, because of the new birth, we desire to do. The new nature desiring to refrain from sin, not wanting to dishonour our Lord, and yet so wicked that we cannot help but commit the vilest evil with our hearts, hands and haughty lips. Reduced to self-proclaimed wretchedness and forced to cry for deliverance from a pit of helpless despair of self ... and yet, ... no condemnation? There can only be one explanation for this. Grace.

We are the woman, caught in the very act of adultery, and clearly sentenced to Hell by the law, and yet, the One whose law we transgressed says, "I do not condemn thee, go ... " How is this accomplished? We have the answer here: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 7:24, 25). Delivered through Jesus Christ our Lord. How does He deliver us? By taking our condemnation upon Himself. Barabbas went free because the Lord Jesus Christ took the cross that he would have hung upon. He could tell the woman taken in adultery, "neither do I condemn thee," because He had obtained eternal redemption for her, as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. We, too, go free, uncondemned, because Christ took our place under the wrath of God, for our sin, and gave us His place in the favour and blessing of God. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (2 Corinthians 5:21).

No condemnation to them

Having declared that through Christ Jesus the wretched are delivered, Paul adds that there is no condemnation to them. Who are these people of whom he speaks, this certain, specific "them" who are not condemned. "Them", which are in Christ Jesus. To be in Christ Jesus is to be represented by Him. As all died "in" Adam,
in Christ, all are made alive (1 Corinthians 15:22), that is, all whom He represented. Adam represented all of mankind, and “in him” all of mankind sinned and died spiritually. Christ represents His sheep, His people, His spiritual Israel, and every one of them shall be freed from sin, made righteous because He bore their sin and imputed His righteousness to them, indeed, He Himself became their Righteousness and now these two glorious words are mine! NO CONDEMNATION!

Note that our verses do not say “there is no condemnation to them which walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Our walk does not earn us freedom from condemnation. It says, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, and then these ones are further described as walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Our non-condemnation is a result of what He did, not what we have done. What we have done is what brought condemnation to begin with, and we can do nothing to change or help that. Even our “righteousnesses” are filthy rags in God’s sight (Isaiah 64:6). Our walk after the Spirit is a result of salvation, not a cause of it.

Two natures in every believer
In chapter 7 we have two natures identified which are in every believer. One is called “sin that dwelleth in me”, the other is described as wanting to do good, and as not having done the evil that the other does (7:20). One is said to serve the law of God, and the other, the law of sin. Here they are called flesh and spirit. Those who walk after the Spirit are not sinless, because they are still flesh also. But neither does sin have dominion over them, because, by God’s grace and the work of Christ for and in them, they are spirit. Our flesh is still just as wicked as ever it was and always shall be. It never improves. Those who deny the existence of the new nature are forced to attribute worship, love for God, faith and all other graces to an improved flesh, an influenced flesh, but this is just an example of one error leading to another.

We are still flesh, and with that flesh we still serve the law of sin (7:25), and we always will, but thank God, we walk after the Spirit. We do love God, though, because of the flesh, we do not yet love Him as He is worthy to be loved. We worship God, yet, the flesh hinders us in it. We believe while being forced to cry, “Help thou mine unbelief”. We acknowledge our sin, by His grace, but we also praise Him who hath made us free insomuch that we do believe on Him, and “He that believeth on him is not condemned ...” (John 3:18). No condemnation. Hallelujah!

M ark it well, Christ himself is not so completely righteous, but we are as righteous as he was. Nor are we so completely sinful, but he became (being made sin) as completely sinful as we.

Nay more, the righteousness that Christ hath with the Father, we are the same, for we are ‘made the righteousness of God’. And that very sinfulness that we were, Christ is made before God. So that here is a direct change. Christ takes our persons and condition, and stands in our stead. We take his person and condition, and stand in his stead.

What the Lord beheld Christ to be, that he beholds his members to be. What he beholds them to be in themselves, that he beheld Christ himself to be. So that if you would speak of a sinner, supposing him to be a member of Christ, you must not speak of what he manifests, but of what Christ was. If you would speak of one completely righteous, you must speak and know that Christ himself is not more righteous than he is.

And that that person is not more sinful than Christ was when he took his sins on him. So that if you will reckon well, beloved, you must always reckon yourself in another’s person, and that other in yours. And until the Lord find out transgressions of Christ's own acting, he will never find one to charge upon you.

Tobias Crisp
In Matthew chapter 13 our Lord Jesus Christ taught the gospel to his disciples by eight parables, eight distinct and striking illustrations of divine truth drawn from the book of nature. He calls these parables "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" (v. 11). When we study the parables, several things need to be kept in mind.

"Hear Ye Therefore The Parable"
We do not build our doctrine upon parables. Parables illustrate doctrine. They do not establish doctrine. Our doctrine must be built upon the plain statements of holy scripture, contextually interpreted. Parables are earthly stories illustrating heavenly truths. They are earthly pictures of spiritual things. When the Lord Jesus preached the gospel, he gave people pictures and illustrations of his doctrine to fix it in their minds. Yet, he never gave a picture or illustration that was debasing to the gospel, or one that lowered the message of the gospel to make it more palatable to men.

It is not necessary for everything in the parable to mean something, or even be compatible with the doctrine of the gospel. Like the types of the Old Testament, the parables of the New Testament were never intended to be perfect illustrations of gospel truth. They are just illustrations, and nothing more than illustrations. Yet, they are beautiful, instructive illustrations. Each parable is designed to illustrate and enforce only one thing. If we try to make the parables teach many things, we misuse them. Just as a preacher today uses a story only to illustrate one thing, so our Lord used his parables to illustrate, enforce, and drive home one particular thing, not two, or three, or twenty.

The one thing taught in the parable of the sower (vv. 1-23) is the necessity of hearing the Word of the gospel with a believing heart. The message of this parable is a fact that is verified continually before our eyes. Wherever men and women gather to hear the Word of God preached and expounded, the sayings of our Lord in this parable are manifestly found to be true. It describes what goes on, as a general rule, in all congregations where the gospel is preached. Let me show you five things in this regard that are clearly established in these twenty-three verses of holy scripture.

Christ The Preacher
Before looking at the parable itself, it will be profitable to take notice of the ministry of our Saviour as the Servant of the Lord, as it is set before us by God the Holy Spirit in the opening verses of this chapter.

"The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow" (vv. 1-3).
Our Saviour was relentless in preaching the gospel. This was “the same day” in which he had preached the message contained in chapter twelve. He took no rest, though he was as weary as any other man would be after such labour. What a rebuke this should be to all who are called of God to this great work, but choose to pamper themselves, rather than be utterly consumed with the work of the ministry. All who are called and sent of God into the field of harvest should devote themselves completely to their work. I do not mean that pastors and gospel preachers should never rest. Our Saviour did, and so must we. But faithful men give themselves wholly to the work of the gospel (1 Timothy 4:15). Our Master said, “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (John 9:4). Let all who are called of him to preach the gospel follow his example.

Observe, too, the place where he preached. He was not now in the temple or synagogue, but the seaside. Robert Hawker wrote, “All places are sanctified when the Holy Ghost makes them so”. And “great multitudes were gathered” to hear him. How anxiously they gathered to hear the Lord Jesus preach the gospel, “For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (Matthew 7:29). Let every man who stands to speak to eternity bound sinners seek that authority that only God the Holy Spirit can give to deliver God’s message to the hearts of those who hear him.

The Sower
“Behold a sower went forth to sow” (v. 3). Gospel preachers are like sowers. The preacher is a man who casts the bread upon the waters and waits for it to return only after many days (Ecclesiastes 11:1). He “goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed”, and “shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him” (Psalm 126:6).

Like the farmer, the preacher has to sow good seed if he wants to see fruit. The seed sown must be the pure Word of God, the gospel of God’s free and sovereign grace in Christ. The man who does not preach the gospel does not preach the Word of God, though he may do nothing but recite scripture. To preach the Word of God is to preach Jesus Christ and him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2). “We preach Christ crucified”, not the traditions of the church, not a confession of faith, not the doctrines of men, and not the philosophy of the age, but “Christ crucified”.

Like the farmer who diligently sows his seed, the preacher must be diligent in the work of the gospel. He must spare no pains. He must use every means he has. He must seize every opportunity God gives, and earnestly labour in God’s vineyard for the furtherance of the gospel. “Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters” (Isaiah 32:20). He must “be instant in season and out of season” (2 Timothy 4:2). He cannot be deterred by difficulties and discouragements. “He that observeth the wind shall not sow” (Ecclesiastes 11:4).

My wife and I raise a large garden every year. We are fully aware that we cannot cause the seed to germinate, and grow, and bear fruit. But if we do not plough the field, sow the seed, water it, and keep the garden weeded, we are not so foolish as to expect an ingathering of vegetables at the time of harvest. So it is with the preaching of the gospel. Success does not depend upon the preacher’s labour and diligence; but success will not be attained without it. The preacher can no more give life to men than the farmer can cause the seed to germinate, and grow, and bear fruit. That is God’s business and God’s prerogative. But he can plough the ground, sow the seed, water it with prayer, and wait for God to give the increase as he sees fit, knowing all the while that “it is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing” (John 6:63).
The Seed

“And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear” (vv. 4-9)

Luke tells us, “The seed is the Word of God” (Luke 8:11). The Word of God is the Seed of life (1 Peter 1:23-25; James 1:16; 10:17; Ephesians 1:13). I will not attempt to explain what I do not understand. But I know this. As sperm invading the egg brings forth life, so the Word of God invading the heart of a dead sinner, by the power of God the Holy Spirit, brings forth Life. As the egg cannot be impregnated without sperm, so, too, a sinner cannot be born again without the Word of God. Why? Because God has so ordained it.

God's Prerogative

Salvation is the sovereign prerogative of God alone. If language has any meaning at all, verses 10-17 cannot possibly be read without concluding that there is such a thing as sovereign, distinguishing grace. God gives life, and faith, and understanding to his elect, and faith implanted by the Lord can never be taken away. Satan does not and cannot take away what is sown by sovereign grace in the heart. That grace implanted by the Lord can never be taken away. Satan causes graceless hearers to forget what they heard. In them Isaiah's striking prophecy (Isaiah 6:9-10), which is quoted no less than six times in the New Testament (Matthew 13: 14-15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:40; Acts 28:26-27; Romans 11:8), is fulfilled. “And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.” (v. 17).

When people refuse to walk in the light God gives them, the light that is in them becomes darkness. “Take heed therefore how ye hear” (Luke 8:18).

The seeing eye, the hearing ear, and the believing heart are gifts of God. “For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them” (v. 17). Compare Romans 9:16; Ephesians 1:19; 2:8; Colossians 2:12.

Fruitless Hearers

Most people who hear the gospel preached receive no saving benefit from it. According to the passage before us, the vast majority, three out of four people, who hear the gospel preached do not profit by it. Our Lord is not talking about those who hear some false gospel, but those who hear the gospel of God’s free and sovereign grace in Christ. The vast majority of those who hear the true gospel receive no spiritual, everlasting benefit from it.

Some are described as wayside hearers. “Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side” (vv. 18-19). Careless, thoughtless, and unconcerned, the gospel has no more effect on their hearts than a breeze upon rock. As fast as the Word falls on their ears, the devil plucks it away. They go out just like they came in, unaffected. Christ crucified means nothing to them (Lamentations 1:12).

When the Lord Jesus speaks of the devil, under the figure of the fowls of the air, catching away that which was sown in the heart, he is talking about the ministry of the word, and not the grace of God and the gracious operations of God the Holy Spirit, which are always effectual and irresistible. Satan does not and cannot take away what is sown by sovereign grace in the heart. That grace implanted by the Lord can never be taken away. Satan causes graceless hearers to forget what they heard. In them Isaiah’s striking prophecy (Isaiah 6:9-10), which is quoted no less than six times in the New Testament (Matthew 13: 14-15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:40; Acts 28:26-27; Romans 11:8), is fulfilled. “And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.”

Others are called stony ground hearers (vv. 20-21). These people hear the sermon with pleasure. They are quickly excited. The message brings forth a plentiful crop of warm feelings and good resolutions. But the stony ground hearer’s religion is religion without depth. As soon as the cold blasts of opposition or the hot sun of temptation and persecution come, their religion withers away. Many love to hear a gifted preacher preach good sermons, who have no interest at all in which is preached. The mere love of good sermons and...
good preaching is not a sign of grace (Ezekiel 33:32).

The sun rising upon the stony ground hearer is not Christ, the Sun of righteousness, who rises "with healing in his wings", but the scorching, drying sun of opposition and persecution (Song of Solomon 1:6). The stony ground hearer was never rooted in Christ. The seed did not fall into the ground, but upon stony ground. Because they were never rooted in Christ and Christ was never in them, in time their interest and curiosity falls away and they disappear.

Then our Lord speaks of thorny ground hearers (v. 22). These people appear to be more hopeful than the others. They hang around much longer. They seem to really love the gospel. It appears that they really want to honour God and do his will. But other things constantly claim their affections. They know the truth. They hope one day to be decided and devoted followers of Christ; but they love the world! How many thorny ground hearers sit in the pews of our churches! They never make up their minds to "seek first the kingdom of God". They have real struggles trying to have both Christ and the world, not willing to give up either. But, in time, the care of the world and the deceitfulness of riches destroys them.

The Fruitful Hearer
Wherever the Word of God produces life, it brings forth fruit. "But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty" (v. 23). Because every human heart by nature is evil, we know that the "good ground", into which the seed is cast, is a heart renewed and made good by God's sovereign, saving grace.

God's method and order of grace is set before us in this parable, just as it is throughout the scriptures. First, he causes the chosen, redeemed sinner to hear the gospel. Then, by the hearing of the gospel, the sinner is born again by the incorruptible seed, the Word of God. And being born again, the believing sinner brings forth fruit unto God. We do not all bear fruit to the same degree. But all believers bear fruit; and the fruit they bear is the same (Galatians 5:22-23; John 15:16). All is of the same quality, though not in the same quantity. A single drop of morning dew on a blade of grass is as truly water as the ocean. And fruits are fruits, be they small or great. It is all of Christ, and from Christ, and to Christ.

Grace in the heart produces heart fruit: repentance and faith, love, joy, peace. God the Holy Spirit causes the believing sinner to bring forth the lip fruit of prayer, confession, and praise. And Christ formed in the chosen sinner, being made partaker of "the divine nature", causes the believing sinner to bring forth the life fruit of love and consecration to Christ. "Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have" (Luke 8:18).
Until we are sensible of our being miserable and helpless in ourselves, we shall not be persuaded of the necessity of a sole trust in another for help and succour. 'They that be whole need not the physician, but they that are sick.' This conviction is becoming 'dead to the law,' and it is effected by a work of the law upon the heart, in the hand of the blessed Spirit. 'I through the law, am dead to the law.' The mind of a sinner is impressed with a wounding sense of his guilt. His sins 'are set in order before him.' And he clearly discerns that he stands righteously condemned by the holy law of God, for his numerous violations of it. Upon which he acknowledges that it would be just with God to punish him, in particular, with everlasting destruction from his presence, and from the glory of his power. In this work upon him he is convinced of 'the plague of his heart,' as well as of the transgressions of his life. In that divine light which is communicated to the soul, he discovers the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the exceeding sinfulness of his heart, and the spirituality, purity, and extent of the law; whereupon, he concludes, that it is absolutely impossible that one so vile as he is, should ever be able to recommend himself to, or interest himself in, the approbation of God his righteous judge. Thus he sees his lost and miserable and helpless condition in himself, and dies to all hope of life by his own righteousness and works. When the Holy Spirit hath in this manner convinced a man of his deplorable state by nature; and his 'heart is overwhelmed,' he leads him 'to the rock that is higher than he.' He makes a gracious discovery of Christ to the soul, in his blood, righteousness, and in the fulness of his grace. And, then the language of a poor trembling sinner is: My sins are many, great, and dreadfully aggravated; but the blood of Christ hath a sufficiency of merit in it, to atone for them all. In myself I have no righteousness, nor can have, whereby I may be justified in the sight of God; but the righteousness of Christ is every way sufficient to justify me before God, and to give me a right to life, who am worthy of death. My heart is impure, and 'without holiness I shall never see the Lord.' That treasure of grace which is in Christ, it is sufficient to make me holy, and 'meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.' Besides, in the light of this grace, a person discerns in some measure, how God is glorified; the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and all the divine perfections, goodness, grace, mercy, wisdom, holiness, justice, truth and faithfulness, in this way of salvation; and herein he rejoices, even though himself should not be a sharer in it. The holy resolution of the soul upon this view of things is to renounce all other ways of relief which may be proposed to its consideration, and to cleave to Christ alone as the only proper object of his hope; this it is to flee to him for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us. And this is that faith which is of the operation of God, and is peculiar to the objects of a divine choice to eternal salvation, for which reason, it is called 'the faith of God's elect.'

John Brine
Full Assurance!

Without “the godly consideration” of our election in Christ, it seems hardly possible to maintain that divine plerophory, or full assurance, of faith, and hope, and understanding to the end, which is held forth as the privilege of the children of God. For how can any rejoice truly in an uncertain event? And how can any event be certain, unless it be ordered and planned, according to those divine counsels and that covenant, which foresee and foreordain all circumstances, beyond defeat or disappointment? It is the certitude of faith concerning a most certain salvation, which leads the heart to combat well with difficulties and enemies, and which sooner or later crowns it with joy unspeakable and full of glory. They, therefore, who doubt of their election, may possibly be within the bond of the covenant, but most evidently cannot enjoy it, while they continue in doubting. And this doubting, and the want of comfort which follows it, are certainly not to be ranked among the privileges of believers: nor have they any tendency to strengthen hand or heart in the services and glory of God.

It is a striking passage in the song of blessed Hannah; My heart rejoiceth in the Lord; mine horn is exalted in the LORD; my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation. Her joy in the Lord enabled her to triumph over her enemies. Confidence and rejoicing in Christ do not lead men to sin, but to conquest over it. It is doubt which brings darkness, and darkness deadness, and deadness subjection to sin, and this subjection ruin. If Jehoshaphat had doubted of the promise, he had never rejoiced over his enemies; but he believed and sang praises even before the victory, from the certainty of that event: and his faith was crowned with an inconceivable success (2 Chronicles 20). The faithfulness and omnipotence of JEHOVAH were engaged in his behalf! and against him, who can resist or prevail?

Taken from: The Church of God

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Robert Hawker relates a tale of a farmer who buying a little book from a poor woman proceeds read the contents to his children. The book is an explanation of Bible verses that initially appear difficult or obscure.

ANOTHER — “The poor is hated even of his own neighbour; but the rich hath many friends” (Proverbs 14:20).

I can easily conceive, (said the father to his children as he read this proverb) I can easily conceive, that the rich hath many friends; for his riches will if generously used, beget them. But I do not so plainly discover the cause, why poverty should call forth hatred! But what saith our author?

He that is poor in spirit, (saith the author) will be persecuted for righteousness sake. His very profession, as a follower of Christ, must subject him to this; and as the Redeemer himself declared, and more or less all his disciples have found, that “if any man will come after him, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow him.”

But though envied and reproached by his neighbour, for his poverty of spirit, yet being “rich in faith,” and an “heir of the kingdom,” he hath “many friends”.

All the persons of the Godhead are his friends. God the Father is his friend; for so Solomon observes in another proverb; “he that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the King shall be his friend” (Proverbs 22:4).

God the Son is his friend; for he saith himself to his disciples, “I have called you friends” (John 15:15). And hence the church, on this authority, saith of him, “this is my beloved, and this is my friend” (Canticles 5:16). And this is he, that is elsewhere spoken of, as “one born for adversity, and a friend that sticketh closer than a brother” (Proverbs 18:24). My soul! I charge it upon thee, concerning this dear “friend of sinners,” that thou remember Solomon’s words, when he saith, “thine own friend and thy father’s friend forget not” (Proverbs 27:10). But take up the resolution of Moses, and say as he did; “he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation: my father’s God, and I will exalt him” (Exodus 15:2).

God the Holy Ghost is the friend also of the rich in faith; for it is he who sympathizes with them in all their trials and afflictions, and becomes their Almighty Comforter through time unto all eternity.

The innumerable company of angels are the friends of the rich in faith; and so are the spirits of just men made perfect. The general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and the whole of the church militant here upon earth, are all friends to the rich in faith. So that it may be truly said, and without the danger of going beyond the mark, that however they that will live godly in Christ Jesus, suffer
persecution, and are the poor which are hated of their neighbours; yet are they highly esteemed and have many friends.

The farmer and his children were well pleased with this bible nut also thus opened to their view, and the father proceeded to

ANOTHER — “For it is a people of no understanding; therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them; and he that formed them will shew them no favour” (Isaiah 27:11).

The father paused. — After some little meditation he said, this is a very awful passage. I know not what to think of it. But what saith our author?

Who are the persons meant in this scripture, as “a people of no understanding?” It cannot be such as are weak in intellect; for this they had not the power to help. It is not idiots neither, and such as are born without reason; for, for these things they surely are not responsible. Neither can we suppose, by the expression of “having no understanding”, the sacred writer intended to refer to the state of little children, whose tender capacities are not competent to know things. Who are they, then?

I apprehend (says the author) that if we construe this sentence by another, and which in all difficult passages seems to be the most infallible method, for scripture is the best interpreter of scripture, the sense of it will be easily described. In the book of Job, chapter 28 and 28th verse, we thus read. “And unto man, he said, behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.” Hence, therefore, Job explains what Isaiah declared. And the people of no understanding are those in whose heart the fear of God is not, and consequently who have not the understanding to depart from evil. And it is to such characters the awful sentence of this scripture belongs.

ANOTHER — “But there is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared” (Psalm 130:4).

This is a very extraordinary argument, (said the father) and just the reverse of what we naturally should suppose would be the case. I cannot see the grounds upon which it proceeds. That there is forgiveness, or propitiation with God, by virtue of the Redeemer’s righteousness and death, becomes, no doubt, the highest and best of all possible reasons for a poor sinner to “hope in divine mercy.” But how can this be said to be the motive for fear? But let us hear what saith our author.

The fear here spoken of (says the author) is that sweet child-like fear, which because it loves it fears to give offence. It is as if the soul said, ‘I have found forgiveness from my God and Father, and shall I dare again to offend? I was once an alien and far off from God, and “an enemy to him by wicked works;” whereas, “now I am brought nigh by the blood of Christ.” There is forgiveness with thee, and therefore I fear to offend thee.’ How different is this, religious affectionate fear of God’s adopted children, from the despairing fear and terror of the ungodly. The faithful fear, because there is mercy with God. Devils fear and tremble, because they know that there is no mercy with God for them.

The farmer was pleased with the distinction, and confessed its justice; and desired his children not to lose sight of it, in their view of the divine favour.

ANOTHER — “Behold the stone I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes” (Zechariah 3:9).

That is a difficult nut to crack, I fancy, father, said one of his children, (who by this time began to see somewhat into the sense implied in the title of Bible Nuts) can you break it? — The father said, I am at a loss how to do it, I confess. I know that the Lord Jesus Christ is more than once said in scripture to be a tried corner stone laid in Zion. The prophet Isaiah had it in command from God the Holy Ghost to declare, that God the Father would lay him as a sure foundation (Isaiah 28:16). And that no possible mistake
might arise to whom it referred, the apostle Peter had it in commission to reveal, that it was Christ (1 Peter 2:6, 7). But who those seven eyes are, which are said to be upon him, I know not. Let us however hear the opinion of our author.

I am led to conclude (saith the author) that the seven eyes spoken of by the prophet, to be fixed upon the person of the Lord Jesus, are as follows:

1st God the Father. For it is said, that “in him he is well pleased”. And therefore, may we not suppose, the eyes of God the Father are fixed on him with ineffable delight? The glories of his person, the greatness of his undertaking in redemption-work for his people, his spotless righteousness, his immaculate death, his triumphant resurrection, his return to glory, and the perpetual operation of his unchangeable priesthood; must not the eyes of God the Father be everlastingly placed on him who is the brightness of his own glory, and the express image of his person?

2nd The eyes of God the Holy Ghost, with equal rapture and complacency, must eternally behold him, who is unremittingly employed in taking of his fulness to shew unto his people,

3rd Angels perpetually are looking on him who is the almighty object of their adoration and their praise. It is their office to wait his high commands, when sent forth by him to minister unto them who shall be heirs of salvation.

4th Old testament saints, before his incarnation, “who saw his day afar off, rejoiced, and were glad;” and new testament believers, since his tabernacling in flesh, whose eyes like them are equally fixed on the Lord Jesus, “for pardon, mercy, and peace unto eternal life.”

5th All creation of rational and intelligent beings, who are looking for his second coming in the clouds to judgment: for “behold, every eye shall see him; and they also that pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.”

6th Devils also and condemned spirits must see him too, when “he shall speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.” And lastly,

7th Those unhappy, wretched, and utterly undone souls, who in this day of grace cannot be prevailed upon that he should reign over them, must, in the day of his vengeance, behold him in his anger, “when he shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and have not obeyed the gospel of Jesus.”

Oh! my soul, seek grace from the Holy Spirit to behold him now in his beauty, who is the only hope of thy salvation, that thou mayest for ever gaze on the loveliness of his person, and admire and adore him to all eternity. Dearest and ever blessed Jesus, may it be my lot to have my longing eyes fixed eternally on thee. May I so look as to be enlightened, and so gaze as to be transformed; “and from beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, may I be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”.

The children were particularly struck and pleased with this Bible Nut, and eagerly desired more. The father proceeded to read

ANOTHER — “And he spake also a parable unto them. No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old: if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new, agreeth not with the old” (Luke 5:36).

This cannot be taken in the exact words as they stand in our bibles, (said the father) for poor John, our neighbour, you know, hath many a new piece of cloth put upon his old clothes. Oh, yes! (said the farmer’s little boy) and don’t you remember, father, the beggar at the door yesterday, what patches his coat had?

Let us hear once more our author, said the father. These words, our dear Redeemer tells us, (saith the author) are in a parable. Hence, therefore, the meaning must be somewhat moral or spiritual. And this verse is truly so. The old garment here spoken of, I should
suppose, is the old unrenewed nature of man. And this cannot be patched up, or piecened, for it would make but the rent worse, in tempting the wearer to fancy himself something when he was nothing. And to take the robe of Jesus to mend up the tattered rags of our supposed righteousness, would be presumptuous indeed. His robe was without seam. A beautiful emblem of the complete righteousness of his person. And it must be the whole covering of the Redeemer which the sinner wears complete, if ever he hopes to see the face of God in glory.

Dearest Lord! do thou clothe me with thy robe of righteousness, and cover me with the garment of thy salvation; then shall I greatly rejoice in the Lord, and my soul be joyful in my God.

Go on, dear father, (said one of his children) open some more. There are no more, said the father. The author only adds, that if from the sample he hath here given, the purchasers should find pleasure, they may, through the divine teachings, be enabled to open a great variety of Bible Nuts for themselves, with which the sacred word abounds, and from hence be continually gathering subject matter for the improvement of the mind, in that wisdom "which maketh wise unto salvation." And if parents and masters of families, and whosoever hath the government and care of children, would but devote an half hour of an evening amidst their little household to an employment of this nature, they would not only find a reward in the pleasure of the service, but would be taking the most effectual means under God's grace to promote the spiritual and eternal welfare of the rising generation, in providing an antidote against the poison of infidelity, which is more and more mingling itself among the fashionable system of education in the present day.

It need not be added, that in so doing they will be subserving the interests of true religion, bringing glory to God, advancing the real happiness of man, and giving cause to a generation to bless their memory, when they are gathered to their fathers and have seen corruption.

Well (said the father) I thank the author for his recommendation. And my, dear children, we will from this time devote some portion of every evening for this purpose. And I doubt not but a gracious God will mercifully condescend "to give us a right understanding in all things," while we make it a subject of prayer unto him, to "open our eyes that we may see the wondrous things of his law."

Charlotte Elliott 1833
The Westminster Assembly
In 1643 Durie became a permanent member of the Westminster Assembly, working for international church and political union. He was told to keep a base on the Continent to this end, so he accepted a call as chaplain to the English traders in Rotterdam. Durie immediately gained Cromwell’s and Parliament’s full backing and that of the leading Puritans, but he was also supported by men of science and letters such as Robert Boyle and John Milton. Indeed, Durie, Hartlib and their close supporter Cathrine Viscountess Ranelagh, Boyle’s sister, formed the heart of Milton’s famous Petty France group of educational reformers. Because of his great reputation, Durie was given St Peter’s, the Cathedral Church at Westminster, to pastor and told ‘to reform that place.’ Durie promptly prepared a catechism of Christian doctrine and drilled ministers and congregation in the doctrines of the Reformation. Westminster School moved him to produce further bestsellers on education and reform; works such as The Reformed School being used by teacher training colleges until modern times. In 1645, Durie, now aged forty-seven, married Mrs Dorothy Brown, Lady Ranelagh’s aunt and the widow of Viscount Moore of Drogheda’s son. Mrs Moore brought two sons into the marriage and had a son and a daughter by Durie. In 1646, Durie was given the task of tutoring the King’s children, James, Elizabeth and Henry. Though Durie was widely employed fostering relationships between the Assembly and the Continental churches, he was also given the responsibility of collecting and cataloguing all the Westminster Assembly’s records. Durie fulfilled this task with meticulous care and his ensuing works on librarianship are still claimed to be sound, practical and revolutionary. His handbook, The Reformed Library-Keeper (1650), became the first standard work on librarianship. Indeed, librarians, especially in the USA, claim that modern library ideals have not yet reached John Durie’s standards.

During the years 1645-49 Durie co-worked on the Westminster Confession and the Westminster Catechism. Whilst at Westminster, he published many works in English, French, German and Dutch, including expositions of Revelation, a rarity at the time. One of Durie’s best known works is his Israel’s Call to march out of Babylon unto Jerusalem (1646) based on Isaiah 52:11 preached before the House of Commons on 26 November, 1645. Durie felt that the Puritan tendency toavour their preaching with party politics was not being faithful to the gospel and so denounced this mixing of pulpit with Parliament in his A Case of Conscience concerning Ministers meddling with State Matters in or out of their Sermons (1649). His French works, with their emphasis on experimental religion became best-sellers amongst Continental Christian leaders such as Philipp Jacob Spener. On the political side, Durie wrote a number of pamphlets and books defending the Rump Parliament and the Cromwellian Commonwealth. His ‘common sense’ attitude to Parliament was that any government is more use to God than no government and ought to be obeyed. He felt that Cromwell’s system worked, so nobody had grounds for complaint.
A multi-party Assembly

Durie, a non-party man, offended several Assembly members through withstanding hypocrisy and unrighteousness no matter where he saw it, believing that faith and tolerance went hand in hand. He found the Commonwealth government's charges against Charles false and illegal so prepared a defence of the King, believing he could demonstrate his innocence before a just court. This reaped strong criticism from the Assembly's Regicides. It was Durie's policy not to let his conscience be guided by the ever-changing party-thinking that proved the Commonwealth's downfall. Durie was criticised for his anti-Socinian stand but also because of his connections with Hugo Grotius, suspected of Socinianism though Durie was thoroughly Trinitarian in his theology. His connections with Grotius were in academic pursuits and hypocrisy and unrighteousness no matter where hand in hand. He found the Commonwealth he saw it, believing that faith and tolerance went of Socinianism though Durie was thoroughly education not doctrine.

Difficulties abroad. Charles I wrote a book during his imprisonment shortly before his suffering but commonly entitled Royal Sighs. The book was an immediate bestseller and went into 36 editions in 1649 alone and many more in succeeding years. It had a wide acceptance amongst all Christians, including the Puritans, expressing a deep Christian faith and witness, including fervent prayers for his executioners. The book was an immediate bestseller and went into 36 editions in 1649 alone and many more in succeeding years. It had a wide acceptance amongst all Christians, including the Puritans, so Parliament commissioned John Milton to destroy its popularity by arguing that the faith of our Reformers which was so devotedly expressed in Charles' book, was merely a faith in idols. Milton thus wrote his Eikonoklastes or The Ikon-Breaker (1652). Those who read the Royal Sighs were ranked with the 'malignants' and 'drunkards', Cromwell's jargon for those Christians who adhered to the Anglican Confessions and Articles which Cromwell and his Parliament had outlawed in 1643. Church historian W. H. Hutton says, Milton's answer was 'little more than a piece of vulgar railing, and proved utterly ineffectual to stay the horror and pity which the Eikon had evoked.'

Scholars are almost unanimous in concluding that Charles' dying testimony helped to draw the curtains on Cromwell's Commonwealth and prepared Britain for the restitution of the monarchy and the Church of England. Be this as it may, Parliament now commanded Durie to translate the offensive work into French. Milton was Secretary of Foreign Tongues and ought to have performed the task himself. So why did Durie support Milton in his most objectionable task, knowing that this would bring him disfavour throughout Europe and jeopardise his entire mission of peace and unity? There are five reasons. First, Durie believed to a point of naivety that the powers that be (here Parliament) were ordained by God and Parliament used this opportunity to test Durie's loyalty. Secondly, Milton was one of Durie's closest friends. Thirdly, Milton had suffered greatly under the fierce intolerance of the Scottish Presbyterians, so Durie wanted to show that not all Scotsmen were against Milton. Fourthly, Milton was fed up with Presbyterianism, finding the movement worse than Trent. Durie had also rejected Presbyterianism's intolerant system and was open to those who showed independent views. Lastly, it appears that Durie was naively trying to protect himself from charges of being a traitor to the Commonwealth cause.

It is often forgotten by modern defenders of the Great Rebellion that the Assembly members were not allowed freedom of speech. Yet they represented all aspects of the Christian community whether Arminian, Amyraldian, Reformed, Cartwrightian, Erastian, Anarchist, Aristotelian, Platonist, Ramist, Socialist, Liberal, Conservative, opportunist, careerist or turncoat. Also, secular, political and military pressure played a very influential part in ruling the Assembly. Over the years, the Assembly radically altered its policies, passing from anti-Anglicanism to pro-Presbyterianism and then from anti-Presbyterianism to pro-Independency and then from anti-Independency to an unholy chaos. This author's opinion of Cromwell's 'Christian' Commonwealth is that it was the first major attempt in Britain's history to find a religio-political one-party government supported by a legal system and upheld by the sword. It floundered because it could not recognise that Christ's saving love is big enough to include a Charles Stuart, a John Milton, a John Durie and an Oliver Cromwell - warts and all.

Now Durie strove to unite the many factions of the Assembly in his Accommodation Committee work. The praise which came from political, ecclesiastical and educational bodies was of the highest order. He was closely attached to Independents Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye and Samuel Hartlib, disliked by many Presbyterians,
with whom Durie composed several exegetical works. It was rumoured that Durie was an Independent himself but he denied being of any party. In 1650, Presbyterian politician William Prynne, who detested Independency, wrote a tract against Durie called The Time-serving Proteus and Ambidexter Divine, uncased to the World, complaining that Durie was always changing his opinions. Prynne, who suffered terribly under Charles I, could give as much as he took in matters of intolerance. As all his views were extreme, he had difficulty in being accepted by any party. Nevertheless, Prynne must have been the most surprised and disappointed man in England to find that the rebel regime he had so heartily supported turned against him in December, 1648 and banished him from Parliament. Durie replied to Prynne with several tracts, including The Unchanged, Constant and Single-hearted Peace-Maker drawn into the World (1550), recapitulating on his work for peace over the previous decades. If Durie erred at all in his books, it was the sin of repetition rather than of a changing mind.

More work on Christian education
Durie began to reap criticism from the would-be upper classes who spread the rumour that he was going to close down the universities so that he could use their staffs to instruct the lower classes. This produced a number of books from Durie's pen such as his Seasonable Discourse demonstrating how educational reform was to the advantage of the entire society.

In 1647 Durie founded a pan-European Think Tank (Office of Address and Correspondence) as a special Commonwealth Commission to pool all the reforms that were being made in religion, education, science and statesmanship so that "the glory of God and the happiness of the nation may be highly advanced." Durie, like Bacon, Comenius and Hartlib believed that knowledge was one and the Aristotelian idea of dissecting knowledge into subjects which were viewed as absolutes in themselves, whether in the pulpit or classroom was completely contrary to all natural, God-given, methods of learning. Durie introduced 'Pansophism' or 'Universal Learning', with project learning, team-teaching and integrated learning systems. Durie's ideas are light years ahead of the programmed learning methods of the nineteen-sixties based on Skinnerism and Atheistic-Behaviourist theories, sadly still used in schools, pastoral and youth work, seeing no difference between people made in God's image and Pavlov's dogs. In the seventeenth century, the old Roman Catholic Aristotelianism was rejected by Roman Catholic educators but the English Puritans were returning to it, believing that knowledge must be dissected to be understood. Thus they produced monstrous philosophical doctrines and antitheses like dividing the work of God on man from the work of God in man which led them to invent all kinds of new doctrines concerning justification, imputation, sanctification, election and predestination which still handicap modern Reformed thinking. No wonder the Old Faithfuls of the Reformation such as Foxe, Whitgift, Davenant, Ussher, Abbot, Featley and Hall protested that this was Rome with another name. Milton protested that Presbyterians were 'priests writ large'. Durie complained strongly about Oxford's and Cambridge's monopoly on learning and wished to see free colleges set up all over Britain and Europe. He also campaigned for professorships in Practical Theology so that students could first learn the basics of the Christian faith before cut the Scriptures up before they had seen it all put beautifully together by a loving and caring Hand. In 1650, Durie was put in charge of Charles' library, manuscripts and medals at St. James Palace which stopped the breaking up of the library in the way many other great libraries had been plundered by Cromwell's soldiers and 'Malignant Hunters'.

Durie's great value to Cromwell

Modern scholarship has produced a Cromwell void of the natural simplicity and devotional piety and the eagerness to learn which is so very evident in Cromwell's foreign correspondence. This is what drew him to Durie who was so able to teach. So, too, Cromwell, like Durie, was very keen on reading the signs of the times through everyday observance and Scripture but sadly, Cromwell developed a superstitious interest in 'omens'. It was now that Durie showed his value to Cromwell. The Continental royalty were mainly related to the Stuarts and had been strongly supported by Charles I's foreign policy. The Palatine rulers, for instance, were horrified to hear of the murder of a beloved father and kinsman and accused Cromwell of destroying Protestant unity. Thus Durie's work was brought to nothing in many areas. When in 1649, Reformed Charles I Ludwig, named after his English uncle, ascended the Palatine throne,
he was displeased with Durie's immediate visit, ranking him with the 'King killers'. The Great Elector of Brandenburg turned his back on Durie, too. Bergius accused Durie of rejecting the Reformation to join a band of murderers. Durie slowly won back much of this support through year-long diplomacy. Frankfurt, the imperial city who had sheltered the Marian exiles, welcomed Durie in 1655 as did the city-state of Bremen. The Netherlands still welcomed Durie enthusiastically. The General Church Conference at Aarau celebrated Durie in 1654 as the 'famous ambassador of the Protector' and Zürich again donated a large sum in support of Durie's work. British historians tell us that Cromwell's greatest work was his foreign policy. However, this side of Cromwell appears to have been researched the least. When an honest, objective, comprehensive study is eventually made of Cromwell's European influence, John Durie will be found to have played the major role in making the Commonwealth acceptable to Europe.

The most disappointed man in Europe
Meanwhile, in Sweden, Durie's old friend from his Würzburg visits, Johannes Matthiae, now Bishop of Strängnäs, was working from 1644 on with the Bohemian Brethren for a union of Lutheran and Reformed based on Durie's plans. The Swedish Church now called itself 'evangelical' rather than 'Lutheran' and in Christina's 1644 Konungaförsäkran (Royal Declaration) Lutheran influence was greatly reduced. The 1638 ban on Durie was now lifted and overtures were made to him as 'Cromwell's agent' to continue negotiations. Matthiae declared "Nobody would be more welcome than Durie in Sweden". Professor Ravius of Uppsala said talks with England were useless if Durie were not present. Sweden's great financier Louis de Geer said, "I am full of hopes, that the Lord, by Mr Durys solicitations, and his other depths of wisdom and goodness, will beat us off from shallow and narrow factions to unite in charity and purity." Thus Cromwell asked Durie to prepare a visit to Sweden for a team of theologians, diplomats and politicians. He believed that European political and ecclesiastical union was now certain and Sweden and England would play an apocalyptical role against the papal Anti-Christ. To be absolutely sure, Cromwell consulted his court astrologer and friend William Lilly who assured him that the stars predicted a positive outcome. The year 1654 was given as being Scripturally favourable for re-opening transactions with Sweden but Cromwell was out of touch with Swedish developments and their high view of Durie. Not doubting Sweden's interest but doubtful about Germany, Cromwell made the blunder of his life. In 1656, he sent his best man Durie to gain assurance from the Continent and his old critic Bulstrode Whitelocke to clinch the deal with Sweden. The result was a farce. Matthiae and Uppsala refused to see Whitelocke who had no connections with the Unionists whatsoever and viewed his negotiations as secular and military. Christina, who had led the Durie negotiations, hopelessly dejected, abdicated and Karl Gustav was crowned the same day whilst Whitelocke was still in Sweden. The new King, in great financial debt to the Unionists, promised Whitelocke, for form's sake, to keep up the negotiations. Lilly said Karl Gustav was a stella nova who teamed up with a royal Cromwell would usher in a New World. Instead, in 1658, Cromwell died and Richard was a national and international flop. Durie was the most disappointed man in Europe. At the Restitution, Durie found Charles II a Unionist in principle. However, Scotland used and abused Charles and Parliament hardly gave him a chance. The King was scarcely able to keep Britain together, never mind Europe. Though aging fast, Durie accepted a call to Hessen in 1661 where the Tolerantia ecclesiastica had been signed at Kassel by several leading theologians and universities and King Frederick William had once again given the right hand of fellowship to Reformed believers. Further such edicts were signed throughout the country. Many Lutherans, however, still called Durie a new Thomas Munzer and a Regicide whereas High Calvinists criticised his tolerance. A most dejected Durie wrote to the Swedish Parliament shortly before his death: "I have done what I could to advance the union of saints. Henceforth I shall solicit the help of no one because I have asked them all. Neither do I see any Patron in Germany, whom God would point out to me as fit for the work." He died at Kassel on 28th September, 1680 aged 85. Sweden still remembers his work gladly and in Germany the Lutheran and Reformed churches obtained full union in a number of states and a joint national synod. Sadly, the Reformed Church of England and the Scottish Presbyterian churches are further from Reformed unity than ever and disappearing rapidly into disintegration. As yet, in Britain, Durie's fifty years of hard work were in vain.
Ever to the Saviour cling,
Trust in him and none beside:
Never let an earthly thing
Hide from thee the Crucified.

Ever cast on him thy care,
He invites thee so to do;
Never let thy soul despair,
He will surely help thee through.

Ever live as in the view
Of the day of glory, near;
Never be to Christ untrue,
Thou shalt soon his glory share.
expectation, my rock, my salvation, my glory, and so on. There are seven my's in two verses, and there can never be too many. The faith which makes personal appropriation of divine blessings is the faith we all need.

8. Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.

Ye to whom his love is revealed, reveal yourselves to him. Turn the vessel of your soul upside down in his presence, and let your inmost thoughts, desires, sorrows and sins be poured out like water. To keep our griefs to ourselves is to hoard up wretchedness. Give your woe free course before the Lord, and its end is near.

9. Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.

Men, whether great or small, are still but men, and men are dust. To trust in the many is folly, to rely upon the eminent few is madness; to depend upon the Lord alone is the only sanity.

10. Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.

Here is a difficult precept, for worldly wealth is a slimy thing, and is too apt to cling to the heart. Perhaps this is the reason why so many of the saints are in poverty, because the Lord would spare them from being tempted by increasing riches. God only must be our rest, and not the treasures of time. Wealth is but wind if we make it our confidence.

11. God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God.

Not to men nor to their possessions may we look for power; that is the prerogative of God alone. Those are wise who look for help alone to him.

12. Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.

He gives us strength equal to our day. Power is all his own, but he will render as much to us as our work requires. Let us seek it at his hands, and at his hands only.

WILLIAM COWPER'S VIEW OF POPERY

(As it appeared in his "Expostulation" 1782)

Hast thou admitted with a blind fond trust,
The lie that burned thy fathers' bones to dust;
That first adjudged them heretics, then sent
Their souls to heaven, and cursed them as they went:
The lie that Scripture strips of its disguise,
And execrates above all other lies;
The lie that claps a lock on mercy's plan,
And gives the key to yon infirm old man,
Who, once ensconced in Apostolic chair,
Is deified, and sits omniscient there;
The lie that knows no kindred, owns no friend,
But him that makes its progress his chief end;
That having spilt much blood, makes that a boast,
And canonizes him that sheds the most?

Away with charity that soothes a lie,
And thrusts the truth with scorn and anger by!
Shame on the candour, and the gracious smile,
Bestowed on them that light the martyr's pile;
While insolent disdain, in frowns expressed,
Attends the tenets that endured that test!
Grant them the rights of men, and, while they cease
To vex the peace of others, grant them peace;
But trusting bigots, whose false zeal has made
Treachery their duty, thou art self-betrayed.

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Original artwork and photography to brighten your home or give as a special gift. Beautiful pictures and paintings from the photographer used extensively in the production of New Focus magazine.
We were delighted to welcome New Focus readers and friends to Teesdale for our third successive NF Conference. Ken Cotty, George Ella and Don Fortner again brought the Word of God to us over a weekend of services in April. The congregation, among them visitors from the Highlands and Islands, the Midlands, Ulster and Liverpool, were blessed to hear excellent preaching and enjoy warm fellowship.

Pastor Fortner preached to us on Friday evening from Galatians chapter 1, emphasising the ease with which “another gospel” of freewill, works religion can infiltrate the church and its deadly effect. The service was held at Egglesburn Baptist Church and was followed with refreshments and the opportunity to chat to friends old and new.

Saturday’s event took place at Mickleton Village Hall and once again the facilities lent themselves to an excellent afternoon of meetings with meals and coffee included. George Ella brought two papers on the life and writings of John Brine with particular reference to his contemporaries and modern critics. This will be summarised in the next issue of NF. Pastor Ken Cotty from Crieff preached from Luke 9:30, 31 on Assurance: Heaven on Earth drawing lessons from Our Lord’s transfiguration on the mount.

In the evening Pastor Fortner preached from Ephesians 1:4-6, reminding us that the great elective purpose of God is to secure the salvation of His people made holy and blameless through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Pastor Fortner preached the final sermon of the weekend’s meetings at Egglesburn on the Lord’s day morning from 1 Corinthians 15:1-10. Following this service those gathered shared a fellowship lunch together before departing.

Pastor Fortner continued his journey to preach at other venues throughout the UK and was driven by Mr Syd Buggins and Mr Jim
Gough. Sadly, following a heart operation at the end of April, Jim passed away on 2 May. He will be greatly missed.

In a tribute to Jim, shown here on the left with his wife, Don Fortner said, "Though my time with him was very limited, I never spent an hour in the company of Jim Gough that was not edifying and profitable to my soul. What higher compliment could one man give to another? Our mutual friend, Bro. Syd Buggins, wrote to me, saying...

His whole conversation, especially during the last few years, was all of Christ. He could not pray or preach, but it was full of his Saviour. May we be able to say truly, 'the LORD gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.' ... but O the loss!

Jim and Eileen opened their home, their hearts and their lives to two strangers from America two years ago. They followed us all over England, insatiably absorbing every word preached. When we arrived in Egglesburn this year, we were delightfully surprised to learn that they had (along with Syd and Joan Buggins) rented a van to drive us from meeting to meeting, making it possible for the six of us to spend many hours together discussing the things of God.

One of the last things we spoke of was the fact that so few who preach, preach Christ. Jim was a soft spoken man who hated conflict and went out of his way to avoid confrontation; but his heart was heavy as he spoke. Yet, he spoke with animated excitement as he encouraged me in the blessed work of the gospel. The very last thing he said to me, as we parted company one week ago was, 'Bro. Don, be sure to thank your beloved congregation at home for sending you to preach Christ to us.' — Bless God, soon, we shall meet to part no more!"
It has been thought that under the Old Testament dispensation, which had a shadow of good things to come, there were persons, as well as things, who typified our glorious Redeemer in his person, office, and grace. Among these, I have thought, Noah might be ranked and considered as a type of him.

Firstly, in his name, rest, or comfort: Christ is the rest of his people and their comfort. To him the convinced Gentiles seek, and to them his rest is glorious. He gives rest to the weary and heavy laden sinner. He takes away slavish fear from the mind, and says to his people fear not: "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine." By the application of his blood, which cleanseth from all sin, he disburdens the conscience of guilt, and purgeth it from dead works, to serve the living God; and makes it at once, both pure and peaceable: so that it feels no condemnation. He causeth his people to rest in his free, eternal, immutable love; in his covenant, which stands as firm as his throne; in his everlasting righteousness which cannot be abolished; in his great atonement; in his full redemption; in his finished work; in his fulness of grace and truth; in his absolute promises; and in his wisdom, faithfulness, power, and all-sufficiency. This rest is enjoyed in believing: "we who have believed do enter into rest" Hebrews 4:3.

Secondly, Noah had a covenant made with him, and in this he may be viewed as a type of our Lord, with whom the covenant of grace was made by Jehovah the Father; whose language on this subject is too plain to be mistaken, and too positive to be denied: "I have made a covenant with my chosen; I have sworn unto David my servant; thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations." This is not to be understood of David, the son of Jesse; but of him who is the root and offspring of David, whose goings forth were of old, from everlasting; and who in his official character, was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. To him, as the head of the church, the promises were made; and with him the covenant of promise was established before the giving of the law; before the promise was made to Abraham; yea, before the almighty Creator stretched out the north over the empty place, and hung the earth upon nothing. This is fully demonstrated by apostolic language "according to the hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began;" "according to his purpose and grace, given us in Christ Jesus before the world began;" "who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus;" "to the intent, that unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the
manifold wisdom of God, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." These declarations all imply a covenant of an eternal date, made with Christ; because whatever the church has in him, whatever she receives from him, and whatever he has done and does for her, is in consequence of, his being given by the Father for a covenant of the people Isaiah 42:6, 7; 49:8, 9.

Thirdly, that Noah was a preacher of righteousness, and in that character a type of our great prophet and teacher. As a preacher of righteousness Christ was the subject of prophecy. David represents him as addressing the divine Father thus: "I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest" Psalm 40:9. He preached the kingdom of God, which is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. The gospel which he taught is the ministration of his righteousness: for therein his own righteousness is revealed, from faith to faith; and it was his own that he preached; of which he taught, the perfection. When he came into the world he said unto God, the Father, "Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me; I delight to do thy will, O my God, thy law is within my heart" Psalm 40:7, 8. One part of the Father's will was, that he should obey that law, which was in his heart: that he should obey it both in heart and life with the greatest exactness. To fulfill the law in every point, was a part of the blessed Saviour's work; a glorious and important part of what the Father, in eternity, gave him to do; and, in the fulness of time, commissioned him to perform. Upon this work his heart was inviolably fixed, before time began. As then his delights were with the sons of men, so his determination was to fulfill all righteousness for them, in those habitable parts of the earth in which he rejoiced. Oh wonderful design of love!

Fourthly, Noah was a saviour: he "built an ark to the saving of his house." And Christ is the saviour of his house, the church. His name is called Jesus, because he saves his people from their sins; from all their sins, he saves them freely, completely, eternally: sovereign and everlasting love in the breast of God the Father appointed him to be the Saviour; and the same love in his own breast induced him to undertake the high important office. On him the Father charged our guilt, original and actual; and he bore it in his body on the tree; where he suffered the just for the unjust, that he might bring them unto God; and offered himself a sacrifice of a sweet savour unto divine law and justice, to expiate completely all our crimes. And by once offering himself he has put away sin, finished transgression, and perfected for ever all them that are sanctified. We have in his blood redemption, pardon, peace, and health. His obedience justifies from all things. In him we are perfect law-fulfillers. His blood cleanseth us from all sin, and in him we stand immutably complete in righteousness, innocence, holiness, and beauty. Here the Father views us with infinite delight, and rests in his love; and here the whole church of the first-born, are eternally secure from the awful curse of the holy law, from the tremendous frown of stern vindictive justice, and from all the burning bolts of omnipotent vengeance. Amidst the fiery deluge which will soon desolate the universe they must all stand secure and undismayed; for being "saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation", they shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.

ROMANS : THE GOSPEL OF GOD

Ian Potts has provided us with an excellent new commentary on the gospel of God as it is revealed in Paul's epistle to the Romans. The book is not a verse by verse exposition of the text but touches upon the major themes in the epistle, drawing out Paul's clear purpose of honouring the Lord Jesus Christ and establishing the sovereign nature and purpose of the gospel. Those familiar with Ian's other books will know his style of writing is clear, precise and easy to read. Throughout, the Lord Jesus is "evidently set forth" and readers will be blessed to encounter sovereign grace and the power of faith repeatedly referred to as central themes in the message. Yet, this message is not theoretical but practical and full of application. The reader is confronted constantly by the challenge to personally address the implications of the gospel of God in all its living, glorious power.

The book covers all sixteen chapters of Romans and is divided into seven sections supplying a nice structure and memorable overview for the book.
CHURCHES

CO. DURHAM (TEESDALE)
BARNARD CASTLE. Eggleburn Baptist Church, Eggleston, off B6282. Sun. 10.30am. Fri. 7.30pm.
Preacher: Peter L. Meney, Tel: 01833 650797.
Email: pastor@eggleburn.org.uk Visitors welcome

CUMBRIA (LAKE DISTRICT)
KENDAL. Bethel Strict Baptist Chapel, Chapel Lane, Kirkland (just off main street at south end of town).
Sun. 10.30am. Thu. 7.00pm. Pastor: Kevin M. Price
Visitors ring to confirm times. Tel: 01539 821596.
Email: bethelsbcaplekkendal@hotmail.com

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 Comford, Tel: 01978 860642
Web: www.glanrafonevangelicalchurch.org.uk

DORSET
BOURNEMOUTH. Sovereign Grace Fellowship, 31, Hill View Road, Ensbury Park, Bournemouth.
Sun. 10.30am. Thu. lunch and Bible Study 12 noon.
Rev. Paul Cartidge, Tel: 01202 259860

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, Gallway Road, Wyke Regis, Weymouth.
Sun. 11.00am, 6.30pm. Sec. John Mann, Tel: 01305 774523

HERTFORDSHIRE
KNEBWORTH. Grace Fellowship, Knebworth Primary School, Swangleys Lane, SG3 6AA. Sun 10:30am.
Preacher: Allan Jellett, Tel: 01707 376675
Email: pastor@knebworthgracefellowship.org.uk
Web: www.knebworthgracefellowship.org.uk

LINCOLNSHIRE
SLEAFORD. Ebenezer Reformed Baptist Church, Sun. 10.30am & 5.00pm. Wed. 7.30pm.
For venue, contact: Pastor Peter Cotton, Tel: 01526 861923
or visit: www.reformed-baptist.co.uk

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or Dennis Burns on 0794 0456273
or E-mail us at mephibosethchurch@yahoo.co.uk

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

NEW FOCUS JUNE / JULY 2009
# 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JULY</th>
<th>AUGUST</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joshua 3</td>
<td>Judges 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ps 125-128</td>
<td>Acts 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jeremiah 28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Isaiah 1</td>
<td>Mark 14</td>
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To whom or what can we compare the Lord Jesus Christ? There is no one on earth like our Saviour. There is none in heaven itself like Him. Who has glory like the Lord Jesus has? The sun in all its brightness and splendour does not shine as does our Saviour. There is nothing on this earth by which He may be adequately compared and nothing can take His place in the believers’ hearts.

Yet, everything speaks to us of Him. We need water to live, He is the Water of Life. We need bread to satisfy our hunger, our Lord is our True Bread by which we live. We need shelter from the storms we encounter in this life, He is the Rock in whom we hide. We need warmth and light when it is cold and dark, He is our Sun of Righteousness.

When our souls are sick and cast down, He is our physician and always supplies just the medicine we need to restore us again. When we get lonely and feel as if we have no one who knows or understands us, He who knows all things, is a Friend who sticks closer than a brother.

With all the joys we have in this life, there is nothing compared to the joy we have in believing Our Lord Jesus, trusting Him with our souls for everything we need in time and in eternity.

Of all the world’s wonderful sights, the mountains, valleys, rivers, great cities, all the monuments made to honour men, everything; to us who believe, the sight by faith of the Lord Jesus Christ is the most blessed vision we ever have had. One day, very soon, we shall see Him as He is and we shall be like Him. What a day that will be!