That the purpose of God according to election might stand.

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Printable Edition
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readership as possible, New Focus will not be used as a medium for the promotion of conservative and evangelical Christianity.

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— Cover —

He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD.

Psalm 147:15-20

Autumn at the Matanuska Glacier, Alaska

Courtesy: Edward B Luteren

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee (Isaiah 60:1)

Rise and Shine!

What wonderful and beautiful assurances of success and victory are given throughout the Old Testament scriptures by God the Father to the Lord Jesus Christ in His covenant office of Mediator between God and men. How kind and gracious of God the Father to thus comfort and encourage His Son through His humiliation, His contradiction of sinners and ultimately through the darkest hours of our Saviour’s suffering on the cross.

As the Saviour hung upon the cross it is clear His mind dwelt upon Scripture prophecies and promises. His utterances in His suffering declare this. In a very real sense our Saviour in His death exhibited faith and confidence in His Father, committing Himself to the will of God, trusting Him to be faithful to His word.

In Psalm 89 it is Christ the Beloved Son (not David, son of Jesse) who is exalted and anointed, and upon whom God’s promise focuses (vv. 19, 20). Our Saviour was comforted to know that the people for whom His travails was endured were safely delivered upon the sure and certain promises of God the Father. “My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven” (vv. 29, 30).

In Isaiah 49 it is Christ, the Godman, who will be glorious in the sight of the Lord as He brings Jacob again to the Father and restores the preserved of Israel. It was the Lord Jesus Christ who was heard and helped, in the time of His acceptable sacrifice, and in the day of His salvation; He who was Himself preserved yet won His inheritance by laying down His life.

In Psalm 22:24 the cries of the afflicted are heard by His Father and answered (Hebrews 5:7). In the midst of His suffering He is comforted. And standing on this assurance the Saviour in turn can guarantee His redeemed, “The meek shall eat and be satisfied ... your heart shall live for ever.”

In Isaiah 42 the Great Comforter of our souls is Himself comforted by His Father, “I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles.” Do you see in the midst of our Mighty Saviour’s sorrow, in the depth of the pit of suffering, when all forsook Him and fled, and He hung alone in the midst of His enemies, His Father held His hand!

Yes, there came an hour, when even the Holy Father turned His back upon the sacrificed Lamb, exacted the price and slew the Son, “for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood”. But praise God, the cup of sorrow having been tasted for us must pass from the lips of the Saviour, and everlasting union be restored.

In Psalm 130 the faith of Christ is attested, “I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.” Having literally descended into the grave, the state of the dead, He arose and shone in the glory of the resurrection. He ascended into glory, having first descended into lower parts of the earth, being obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, when He was made sin and a curse for His people, and bore all the punishment due to their transgressions.

Our Saviour endured affliction to the point where the light of life was extinguished in His soul, but even in this He was comforted for He beheld the prize of all His soul-suffering as He hung upon the cross (Isaiah 53:12). The Mediator, having fulfilled all righteousness, having satisfied the wrath of God, having finished the work given Him to do, rises and shines in eternal glory.

Christ said in John 17:4, “I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.” To this His Father replies, “I shall arise upon thee, and my glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising (Isaiah 60:2, 3).
Though men say that Christ died to redeem the whole human race this verse clearly says Christ’s name is Jesus (Saviour) for He shall save His people (Isaiah 53:8). If Christ died to redeem everyone yet some die under the wrath of God anyway, what does the blood of Christ have to do with anyone’s salvation?

The truth is the blood Christ shed at Calvary was shed for as many as God gave Him and no more. The importance of the truth of particular redemption is to declare the success of Christ’s work. Christ made complete atonement to God for the sins of each one for whom He died. The issue is that Christ did not fail, but finished the work of putting away the sin of His people Himself (Isaiah 42:4). The issue is the righteousness of God—God is just and the justifier of all who believe, not we ourselves (Romans 3:26).

Yet by lies, sinners are made to think “their believing” makes Christ’s blood effectual. Not so! We do not make atonement by believing on Christ, but through faith we receive i.e. are given the atonement Christ has already made (Romans 5:11). Christ put away the sin of His people before He sat down in heaven, “when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Hebrews 1:3). The Spirit of God comes convincing each of His redeemed that it is Christ who has already put away our sin by His one offering, “For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us … And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more” (Hebrews 10:14, 15, 17).
What is heaven? Do God’s saints go to heaven immediately when they leave this world? What is the condition, or state, of the saints’ existence in heaven? Who shall enter into heaven’s glory? Upon what grounds do the saints enter into heaven?

These are questions I hope to answer though I realize at the outset that I can do no more than scratch the surface of this great subject. The glory that awaits God’s saints in heaven, the vastness of our inheritance with Christ is light years beyond the scope of our puny brains. I have no hope of exhausting this subject. In preparing this study, I have purposefully avoided all matters of vain curiosity and speculation. It is my purpose to set forth some of those things which are plainly taught in the Word of God about the glorious state of God’s saints in heaven.

Psalm 84 is described in the title as “A Marching Song”. In the eleventh verse, God’s pilgrims are inspired in their march through this world with these words of promise: “The Lord will give grace and glory.” The psalmist takes our minds away from ourselves and calls our attention to “The Lord”, Jehovah, our God and Saviour. We must not look to ourselves in any measure for either grace here or glory hereafter.

The Source of grace and glory is the Lord. The Security of grace and glory is God our Saviour. Christ alone is the Rock of our salvation. To Him alone we must look for grace and glory.

Give

“The Lord will give grace and glory.” The word “give” declares that neither grace nor glory can be earned, merited, or purchased by man in any way. This text, like all the Word of God, puts us upon the footing of grace. God cannot be obliged by man to bestow His grace; and He cannot be obliged by man to bestow glory. Both grace and glory are free gifts of God; and where He gives one He is sure to give the other.

Grace and glory are inseparable gifts. They are really the same thing. Grace is glory in the seed. Glory is grace in full bloom. Glory begins in grace. And grace is completed in glory. One has said, “Grace is glory begun, and glory is grace consummated. Grace is glory in the bud, and glory is grace in the fruits. Grace is the lowest degree of glory, and glory is the highest degree of grace.”

These are two great and marvellous gifts which God bestows upon fallen men in Christ, grace and glory. The first thing He gives is grace. The last thing He gives is glory.
Grace

“The Lord will give grace.” How we love that word “grace”. Grace is God’s riches at Christ’s expense. In the life, experience and hope of the believer everything is of grace, from the beginning to the end. Every believer gladly confesses, “By the grace of God I am what I am.”

Read this promise in the boldest letters imaginable and rejoice. — “The Lord will give grace!” The promise comes from God the Lord. The Lord God Almighty, the great Jehovah, the Triune God will most certainly, by His own irresistible power, according to His own sovereign will, give grace, freely and irreversibly.

To whom will the Lord give grace? We know that He will give grace. It is asserted plainly. Someone is going to get grace from God. But who?

The Lord will give grace to His own elect (Romans 9:15, 16). Grace belongs to God. It is His sovereign prerogative to give it to whom He will. And there are some among the fallen sons of men whom God has chosen to be the recipients of His grace (John 15:16; Matthew 11:25-27). Not one of those chosen in electing love, before the foundation of the world, to be a vessel of mercy shall fail to receive that grace before passing out of this world.

The Lord will give grace to every sinner redeemed by Christ’s precious blood. Every sinner redeemed and purchased by Christ is His and will obtain grace. Christ did not die in vain! All whom He redeemed by blood will have the grace of forgiveness (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14). All whom He purchased will have the grace of reconciliation (Colossians 1:20).

All for whom Christ was made a curse will have the grace of free justification (Romans 8:34; Galatians 3:13). All for whom Christ was made sin will have the grace of righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21). All for whom He died will have the grace of eternal life (John 10:8, 27).

The redemption which Christ accomplished is an effectual redemption, which infallibly secures grace for all His redeemed ones. Not one of those whom Christ has redeemed from among men will perish. Not one of His blood-bought sheep will be lost. Not one member of His body will be ruined. Not one part of His bride, the church, will be destroyed. Those whom Christ has redeemed will most assuredly obtain grace (Ephesians 5:25-27; John 10:16).1

1 God’s sovereign election and Christ’s effectual redemption inspire us to preach the gospel fervently to every creature, because we know that “the Lord will give grace” to His chosen, blood-bought people (Isaiah 53:9-11).

The Lord will give grace to every believing sinner. We do not know who God’s elect are, or who Christ has redeemed, except as they believe the gospel. Yet, we are assured by God that every believer is both elect and redeemed, because God promises grace to all who believe (Mark 16:16; John 1:12, 13; 3:14, 15, 36; Romans 10:9-13).

The long and short of the gospel is this: If you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, if you trust His precious blood alone for your salvation and eternal acceptance with God, He will give you grace. I know that a sinner cannot believe unless he has grace. But I also know that you cannot have grace unless you believe. And to every believing sinner it is promised, the Lord will give grace.

What is this grace which God promises to give? The psalmist does not say, “The Lord will give some grace,” “graces”, or “a grace”. He declares, “The Lord will give grace.” The implication is that wherever the Lord gives any grace, He gives all grace. He will give, regenerating grace (Ephesians 2:1-5), justifying grace (Romans 5:1-9), sanctifying grace (Hebrews 10:10-14), preserving grace (Philippians 1:6), instructing grace (John 16:13), directing grace (Proverbs 3:5, 6), comforting grace (John 16:7; Lamentations 3:24, 25), reviving grace (Isaiah 57:15) and sufficient grace (2 Corinthians 12:9).

God’s sovereign election and Christ’s effectual redemption inspire us to preach the gospel fervently to every creature, because we know that “the Lord will give grace” to His chosen, blood-bought people (Isaiah 53:9-11).
Read this promise as broadly as you will. It is to you, child of God, in every condition and circumstance of life, “The Lord will give grace.” He will give you grace to serve Him (2 Corinthians 12:9), to suffer for Him (Philippians 4:13), to endure temptations (1 Corinthians 10:13), and to die in Him (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

Who is it that will give grace? “The Lord will give grace!” Grace is the gift of God alone. You will not get grace from yourself, from the church, from some imaginary priest, at some imaginary altar, or from the law of God. If we would get grace we must get it from God alone. And the only way God gives grace is through Christ (John 1:16, 17). Look to Christ. Trust Christ. Believe Christ. Cling to Christ. As we do, “The Lord will give grace!”

Glory
The Lord will give glory, too. The promise reads, “The Lord will give grace and glory.” That little, connecting word “and” is more precious than gold. It is an indestructible rivet, forever uniting grace and glory.

There are many who seem determined to take the rivet out; but they cannot. The text does not say, “The Lord will give grace and perdition” or “grace and purgatory” but, “The Lord will give grace and glory.” The text does not promise glory without grace. You can no more have glory without grace than you can have grace without glory. The two are Divinely bound up. And what God has joined together let no man put asunder.

If we have grace, we shall have glory, too. God will not give one without the other. Grace, remember, is but the bud. Glory is the flower. Grace is the fountain. Glory is the river. Grace is the firstfruit. Glory is the full harvest. If we have grace, we shall never perish. We shall have glory. But those who do not have grace here shall never have glory hereafter. It is not possible for any to be glorified who have not first been justified. You cannot reign with Christ in glory if Christ does not reign in you by grace. Grace and glory are inseparable gifts of God. “The Lord will give grace and glory.”

What is the glory He shall give? I am fully aware that no earthly brain can comprehend it (1 Corinthians 2:9). But God has revealed something of the glory that awaits us, that our hearts may be drawn to it (1 Corinthians 2:10).

The glory we are to receive is the glory of heaven. Having said that, I have said more than I comprehend. Whatever heaven is, God will give. It is a place of indescribable beauty. It is a state of indescribable bliss. Whatever may be meant by the figurative language that describes it, all of heaven shall be ours forever. The Lord will give the perfection of glory without measure to all to whom He has given grace without measure. All who trust Christ shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the throne of Christ the Lamb in the kingdom of God.

The glory God will give is the glory of eternity. Eternity! Who can define it? No one on earth can fathom the meaning of the word “eternity”. We always confound eternity with time. We speak of the “endless ages of eternity”. But there are no ages in eternity. Eternity will never pause, decline, or draw near to a conclusion. We will never grow weary of eternity. And we will never grow weary in eternity. Eternity is unchanging, unending bliss.

Moreover, the glory God will give His saints is the glory of Christ; our Mediator, Surety, and Covenant Head (Romans 8:17; John 17:22). Whatever that glory is which Christ has as our Mediator, as the reward of His perfect obedience to the Father, we shall have when we see Him as He is in heaven. My heart pants to know, by actual experience the meaning of what I have just written. Oh, to know the glory that awaits us! Now we look through a glass darkly. But we long to see Him face to face, to have the clouds of darkness swept away, that we may know and enter into His glory! In the serene atmosphere.

2 The streets of pure gold, the gates of pearl, the walls of jasper, the crowns, the palms, the harps, the river of the water of life, the trees bearing fruit, the tree of life, all that these things describe all that heaven is the Lord God will give to His elect.
of heaven, we shall not only see the King in His beauty, but also possess His glory!

This glory will be the glory of total victory. We are more than conquerors through Christ our Lord (Romans 8:32-39). By the grace of God and the blood of the Lamb, we shall yet be victorious over the world, the flesh, and the devil (Romans 16:20). Death shall do us no harm, sin shall bring us no more grief, Satan shall tempt us no more, when the Lord gives us glory.

The glory which the Lord will give us is the glory of a perfect nature (Ephesians 5:25-27; Jude 24, 25). This was and is the purpose and goal of God in predestination, election, redemption, and regeneration. And God’s work will not fail to accomplish His purpose. In heaven we shall have a perfect nature; spotless, sinless, incorruptible, bodies without weakness, sickness, decay, or death, souls incapable of temptation, sin, care, or trouble, hearts free of unbelief, sorrow, and pain, in complete harmony with God’s will. Imagine that! In glory we shall possess perfect natures! Holiness, perfect holiness shall be ours!

The glory promised to every believing sinner is the glory of perfect rest (Hebrews 4:11). Heaven’s glory shall be a perpetual sabbath, an endless day of perfect peace, perfect happiness, perfect security. C. H. Spurgeon said, “It shall not be possible for a man to have a wish ungratified, nor a desire unfulfilled ... Every power shall find ample employment without weariness. And every passion shall have full indulgence, without so much as a fear of sin.” This is rest! This is glory! We shall want what our Saviour wants, do what our Saviour wills, love what our Saviour loves, and live for our Saviour’s glory perfectly.

This glory is a gift of God’s rich, free, abundant grace in Christ. “The Lord will give grace and glory.” There is not a soul in heaven that came there by his own merit. There is not a crown in heaven earned by the works of men. There is not a note of self-righteousness to mar the song of the redeemed. Glory is the gift of God.

When will the Lord give us this glory? Some will receive glory very soon. For some it will, perhaps, be a while yet. But of this we can be absolutely sure: “The Lord will give glory” as soon as our work here is done, no sooner and no later. And “the Lord will give glory” at the hour He has purposed from eternity, no sooner and no later. Let us ever comfort one another with these words, “The Lord will give grace and glory.” Our trials and troubles here are not worthy to be compared with the glory that awaits us (Romans 8:18).

Heavenly Pastures Of Love

Draw near O ye blessed, and help me to sing
The treasures for you laid in store;
When shortly you’ll meet your great Shepherd and King,
To weep in the desert no more.

O think with what rapturous shouts we shall rise
To join with the glorified choirs
When Jesus’ bright chariot appears in the skies
And death at His coming expires!

When “Come, O ye blessed” sounds sweet in our ears
By love everlasting express’d
What place will be found for our doubts and our fears
In sight of the mansions of rest

No more shall the wicked our comforts annoy
Nor conscience from guilt feel a wound;
No tree of temptation our peace to destroy
Shall in the bless’d region be found

No passions unholy our bosoms shall move,
To taint the fair mansions with strife;
Our Shepherd shall feed us on pastures of love,
An lead us to fountains of life.

Look up, ye dejected, that weep as ye go,
And mourn that no comfort ye prove;
Cast down your sad willows, and sing while below,
Of bliss that awaits you above.

Anticipate heav’n, ’twill sweeten those hours
When sorrows all round you appear;
Will strew all the road to Mount Zion with flow’rs,
And smooth the rough pathway of care.

Joseph Swain 1761-1796
Within the compass of these verses, we have the most striking description drawn, and by the pencil of the Holy Ghost Himself, of the vast difference between Mount Sinai, and Mount Zion; that is, the Law, and the Gospel; a Covenant of Works, and a Covenant of Grace. And it is such a description, as is enough under divine teaching, to arrest the heart, with the most sensible apprehension, of the awfulness of the one, and the blessedness of the other; in the soul's approaches unto God.

The first account is of Mount Sinai. And the very solemn and awful demonstrations, of the Lord's presence, in giving the Law; are described in characters so terrible, as even in the recital, makes the flesh to tremble. Moses himself was so overwhelmed, that he said, "I exceedingly fear and quake. And all Israel cried out, and said unto Moses, speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die" (Exodus 20:18, 19). Nothing can be more plain, than that the leading design of the Lord, in those manifestations, of thunderings, and lightnings, and the like, were to impress the Church of God, with an holy awe and reverence, in the consciousness of the divine presence. And also to shew them, the blackness, darkness, dread, and horror, which every soul must feel, through divine teaching, when brought under the conviction of having broken the Lord's precepts.

And, on the other hand, in the most blessed and gracious description, given of Mount Zion, the Church is taught the high privilege of the

For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Hebrews 12:18-24
Lord's redeemed ones, who now may come, and who indeed do come, to the assembly of the first-born; yea, to God Himself the Judge of all, when coming in the name of Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling. Here is implied, in being come, that there is an holy familiarity, and acquaintance, in this approach; a birth-right, by the new-birth; a redemption, an adopted-character, by Jesus' blood, and righteousness; and the Covenant faithfulness of God the Judge of all. So that this is the Gospel privilege of God's redeemed ones: their stated daily, hourly, minutely mercy; to which they are supposed to come boldly, and find mercy, and grace to help in all time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

One point I would beg however to remark, on this different description of those Mounts, in the dispensation of the Law and the Gospel. The Holy Ghost hath most graciously and blessedly taught the Church, in this divine scripture, from the different manifestations in which the Lord was pleased to make Himself known to Old Testament saints, and New Testament believers; how blessed an alteration is made, in the mode of worship, by the open revelation of Christ; but it must not be understood from thence, that the way of acceptance with God in Christ, differed in the Old Testament Church from the New. Both were one, and the same. The former, was a shadow of good things to come; but then, as now, the body was Christ. And blessed be God, our fathers, both under the Law, and before the Law, as well as their children under the Gospel, in every ministration, and in every service, had an eye to the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Their services, and all the vessels of the sanctuary, yea, the Book of the Law, and all the people, were sprinkled with blood, (Exodus 24:6-8; Hebrews 9:19-22). And hence we find Old Testament saints chanting their hymns of salvation to God, and the Lamb. Job knew that his kinsman Redeemer lived, (Job 19:25). David sung his dying love song, in the believing views he had of a Covenant ordered in all things and sure; and which was all his salvation, and all his desire, (2 Samuel 23:5). And indeed, all the faithful, in every age of the Church, from the first dawn of revelation, in Abel's faith offering, down to Zachariah's day at the Altar of Incense, in the moment of Christ's coming, blessed God, in the soul-living expectation of the mercy promised (Luke 1:72). Reader! learn to estimate, the high privileges of redemption in Jesus; and be it your daily song of thanksgiving, and praise, that you are not come to the Mount that might be touched, (that is on which the Lord by his descent might be said to touch, though not touched by man,) and that burned with fire; but you are come to Jesus the Mediator; and to the blood of sprinkling! Oh! the blessedness, the preciousness, the unspeakable greatness of the mercy! Jesus, your Jesus, if so be you have tasted that the Lord is gracious; to whom coming (1 Peter 2:3, 4). And in, and through, and by Jesus, to God the Judge of all.
We must never overlook the goodness, wisdom, and minute detail of God's providence. It is magnificently displayed in the way the Lord God arranged for Esther to be made queen of Persia at precisely the time she was needed, and in the way King Ahasuerus was inclined to grant her desire for the deliverance of Israel, and the destruction of those who sought to destroy them.

Corruption And Grace
The vile things that transpired during and as the result of the feast Ahasuerus held for his revelling friends are but a small display of the depravity of our fallen race, and the vile corruptions of our hearts by nature. Let us, by every remembrance of sin, be inspired to give thanks to our God for the pure gospel of His free grace in Christ. The angels call it “glad tidings of great joy”. Truly it is that! The gospel of Christ is good news to poor sinners, who feel a body of sin and death, uncleanness, inordinate affections, and obscene lusts within. It tells poor, needy, dirty sinners that there is a fountain open for sin and uncleanness, grace for the guilty, and mercy for the most vile in Christ Jesus! It is the proclamation of liberty to poor captives. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, proclaims deliverance in the gospel by His great salvation. Deliverance from sin! Deliverance from death! Deliverance from the law! Deliverance from the wrath to come! Deliverance by His blood, His grace, and His power!

Overruling Providence
How sweet, comforting, and joyful it is to see God's overruling providence in the book of Esther! We see here how he makes even the corrupt passions and deeds of wicked men serve his purpose, the good of his people, and his everlasting praise. Never does the Lord God more strikingly display His sovereignty and grace than when He compels the wicked to promote the purposes of His sovereign will. God’s people were about to be brought into great danger. How shall the Lord deliver them? Wicked King Ahasuerus divorses his Queen

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Vashti to gratify his anger. He marries Esther, and makes her, a Jewess, queen of Persia! This young Queen Esther shall be the Lord’s instrument by which He shall preserve His people in captivity.

There is more to the story. Mordecai is made aware of a plot against the king’s life. A record is made of his loyalty in the chronicles of the kingdom. Mordecai is forgotten until one night when Ahasuerus cannot sleep. A servant reads from the chronicles; and Mordecai is brought forward to be rewarded. The man Haman hated, and planned to hang, is now exalted to Haman’s place; and Haman, the Jews’ enemy, is hanged on the gallows he built to hang Mordecai. Sweet it is to my soul to watch the ways and works of our wondrous God! “Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.” “The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew Himself strong in the behalf of His elect!”

No Harm, Only Good

Never was there a more deadly plot devised by any wretch than that which Haman devised against the Jews. But all his devices fell upon his own head. So shall it be with all the devices of the devil. Satan’s schemes and assaults upon our God and His Christ and His church shall fall upon his own head (Romans 16:20).

It is not enough merely to say that Satan and his devices shall do no harm. The Book of God reveals much more than that. The Word of God tells us plainly that they shall all do good. “For all things work together for good to them that love God”. Does Satan plan my soul’s destruction? Does he want to get me in his snare? Does he desire to have me, that he may sift me as wheat? Without question, these things are so. At times, I feel his power utterly overwhelming! He joins with my corruptions to cast me down. He raises Moses up to accuse and condemn me. But when he does, I am then forced to cry to the Lord for help. I am compelled to fly out of myself and take refuge in my High Tower, Christ Jesus!

How sweetly, how graciously the Lord our God overrules even the devices of the devil for our souls’ welfare and good. Therefore God the Holy Ghost, by His servant James, teaches us to rejoice when we fall into divers temptations. Blessed Lord Jesus, let me rest my soul always on you, on your finished work of salvation, and on your everlasting purpose of grace, worked out every day, every hour, in all the minute details of your sovereign, universal providence for my good!

Many true believers, I fear, read the Word of God very little. As a result of their neglect of the Holy Scriptures they get little comfort from the Word when they need it, they are never really established in the truth of God, and their lives are a long, sad history of mistakes made because of their ignorance of God’s revelation. This neglect of God’s Word is as shameful as it is costly. If you have been negligent in this area, repent of your negligence at once and begin reading the Word of God this very day with regularity, seeking to know and worship Him of whom the Book speaks.

Are you willing to read the Word of God? Do you want to profit from it? Here are seven suggestions which I picked up from J. C. Ryle several years ago that will help you to profit by the reading of the Word of God.

1. Read the Bible with an earnest desire to understand it. Do not be content to just read the words of Scripture. Seek to grasp the message they contain.
2. Read the Scriptures with a simple, childlike faith and humility. Believe what God reveals. Our reason must bow to God’s revelation.
3. Read the Word with a spirit of obedience and self-application. Apply what God says to yourself and obey His will in all things.
4. Read the Holy Scriptures every day. We quickly lose the nourishment and strength of yesterday’s bread. We must feed our souls daily upon the manna God has given us.
5. Read the whole Bible and read it in an orderly way. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable.” I know of no better way to read the Bible than to start at the beginning and read straight through to the end, a portion every day, comparing Scripture with Scripture.
6. Read the Word of God fairly and honestly. As a general rule, any passage of Scripture means what it appears to mean. Interpret every passage in this simple manner, in its context.
7. Read the Bible with Christ constantly in view. The whole Book is about Him. Look for Him on every page. He is there. If you fail to see Him there, you need to read that page again.
John Gill’s importance for lovers of true teaching

In a truly positive sense, no man has influenced the development, growth and renewal of the Particular Baptists more than John Gill (1697-1771). Whereas William Kiffin is rightly called the Father of the Particular Baptists, John Gill is seen as the wise Schoolmaster who not only led hosts of future Baptists to a knowledge of Christ, but also gave them a curriculum of sound teaching to accompany them throughout their growth in grace from the nursery to the grave. At a time when the Anglican Church was discussing the abolition of the Athanasian Creed and Dissent was on the wane, many adherents of the General Baptist churches were leaving the teaching of Christ for that of Arminius, Grotius, Arius and Socinius. Over a period of fifty years, throughout this time of general apostasy, Gill rallied the Particular Baptist churches around the Banner of Truth and fitted them out with a programme of doctrine and discipline which protected them against the downgrading of the gospel going on in other denominations. An eye-witness of some 20 years of Gill’s work as a gospel teacher and preacher was his friend and admirer John Collet Ryland, a Baptist minister and college Principal who himself asserted a strong influence for good on 18th century Particular Baptist church life. Ryland was convinced that God had specially chosen Gill to lead the Particular Baptists out of oblivion and doctrinal disunity. In 1777, when dealing with the falling away of the Arminian Baptists, Ryland, the Calvinist, wrote:
“At present blessed be God, we believe there is no apparent apostasy in our ministers and people from the glorious principles we profess.” He goes on to say, “Much of the credit for this unswerving allegiance to the doctrine of Scripture, under God, must be attributed to John Gill, known affectionately as Dr. Voluminous.”

Ryland knew what he was talking about as he had come under Gill’s teaching as a young man and had moved in an inter-denominational circle of good friends, including James Hervey, John Brine and Augustus Toplady, who were all greatly indebted to ‘Dr Voluminous’. In fact, Ryland had taken a census of the Particular Baptist churches in the 1750s at the height of Dissenting decline and found that even at this sad period in the history of the Baptist churches, Gill’s church was the largest of them all, being three times the size of the average London church in membership and was a strong and positive influence that had kept not only many a Baptist church from following in General Baptist steps but many an Anglican and Independent local church also.

**Gill’s birth and upbringing**

The hero of our story, as this we must call him, was born in Kettering in the county of Northamptonshire on November 23. o.s. 1697, the son of Edward and Elizabeth Gill née Walker who can be regarded as Particular Baptist pioneers in the neighbourhood. The Gills ran a small textile business and were in membership at a local Dissenting church, called locally the ‘Great Meeting’ which had been founded by the Rector of Kettering who had been ejected from the Church of England in 1662. Originally the holding of a particular view of the ordinances was not a condition of membership though a confession of faith was required of new members. Edward Gill was occasionally asked to preach by his pastor.

One of the elders, William Wallis, became convinced that a church should be just as united on the doctrine of baptism as it was on other essential doctrines but as this led to strife in the church, it was amiably thought best that Wallis and his followers should form a church of their own which could then be run completely according to Baptist principles. Thus the ‘Little Meeting’ was formed at Bailey’s Yard, Kettering, with Wallis as its first pastor. Soon the members were calling themselves Particular Baptists1 to emphasise that they believed in the Reformed doctrine of particular atonement as opposed to the General Baptists who stressed the universal possibilities of the atonement rather than its particular saving efficacy.

The new, open-communion Baptist church at Kettering prospered and grew4. Eventually Edward Gill was elected as one of its deacons and he is recorded as possessing a good witness because of his ‘grace, his piety, and holy conversation’.5

During the unrest leading up to the founding of the Particular Baptist church, Edward met, wooed and won his Elizabeth and the two were married. Soon Elizabeth was able to tell her husband that she was expecting a child, and Edward was immediately convinced that his wife would bear a son who would become a household word amongst the Baptists. This fond thought was strengthened on the very day that the child was born. It was, indeed, a son and Edward could not contain himself and ran into the street in great joy, proclaiming the good news to anyone and everyone. The first person he met was Chambers, the woodman, who was unloading a supply of logs in the yard. Edward was in the process of telling him the good news at the top of his voice when a complete stranger passed by and overheard the joyful tones. The man came over to the exuberant father and said sagaciously, “Yes, and he will be a Scholar, too and all the world cannot hinder it.” Then the stranger continued on his way and was never seen again.

After this incident, you can be sure, Edward and Elizabeth watched young John’s development closely, looking for signs of budding intellect. Soon they received proof enough that their son, whom they named John, was indeed of far more than average intelligence and thus they sent him to the local grammar school at a very early age. Needless to say, John soon

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1 John Collet Ryland, *The Beauty of Social Religion*, circular letter, Northamptonshire Baptist Association, 1777, p. 7. Gill was called Dr. Voluminous because of the great amount of theological works he produced.

2 Old style. The Julian or Old Style English Calendar was abolished in 1752. Eleven days were dropped when the Gregorian or New Style Calendar was introduced and 1 January became the first day of the year instead of 25 March. Many people thought they had become eleven days older and marched in protest through the streets, demanding that their eleven lost days should be given back to them.

3 The term is thought to have first been used as an official name by those Baptist leaders who drew up the rules for the Particular Baptist Fund in 1717, thus distinguishing themselves from the General Baptists who were not allowed to take part in the maintenance of the fund.

4 According to Geoffrey F. Nuttall, the Little Meeting revised its church covenant in 1768 barring the ‘unbaptised’ i.e. those who had not entered into church membership through believers’ baptism, from the Lord’s Table. *Northants. and the Modern Question*, p. 120.

5 The 1772 biography, *Sermons and Tracts*, vol. i., p. v.
surpassed in learning even those pupils who were considerably older than himself. Before he was eleven years of age, John had become so very proficient academically that he had become the wonder of the neighbouring literati and clergy who encouraged him with almost paternal pride.

One of these local ministers was a Richard Davis (1658-1714), pastor of the Independent Church at Rothwell (called locally Rowel), just a few miles away. Gill could have had no better instructor than this wise man who combined academic acumen with an earnest desire to spread Christ’s Kingdom. In 1748, Gill said of Davis, “His memory has been always precious to me, partly on account of his great regard both for my Education, for which he was heartily concerned, and also for my spiritual and eternal welfare.” Davis urged Gill never to neglect ‘the one thing needed’ and told his young friend, “If you know Christ well, it is no matter though you are ignorant of many other things; if you are ignorant of Christ other knowledge will avail but little.” Davis praised Davis’ “very powerful and evangelistic Ministrations’ with his zeal for soul-winning.” He had seen how Davis evangelised no less than eleven counties, founding churches wherever he went. Davis trained weavers, carpenters, tailors and farmers to go out into the highways and bye-ways to bring sinners to Christ. In so doing, he earned the animosity of many sleepy pastors in an 80 miles radius of his Northamptonshire church who woke up to find that Davis was doing their evangelistic and pastoral work for them. It was Davis who laid the foundation stone of the work of the Spirit in Olney, Bucks, where Anglicans Moses Brown, William Cowper, John Newton and Thomas Scott, Baptist John Sutcliff and Independent Samuel Greatheed afterwards laboured, all providing their contribution to what has become the Olney Revival.

As sure as John Gill is to be found in a bookshop

Soon John was recognised far and wide as a young scholar of note. He was seen every market day, sitting in the local bookshop, reading whatever instructive tomes he could lay his hands on or discussing points of style and grammar with the more learned people of Northamptonshire. This picture so left its mark on Kettering that when a person wished to emphasise that anything was true, he would say, “It is as sure as John Gill is to be found in the bookseller’s shop!”

John Gill’s grammar school days, however, were soon numbered. John’s schoolmaster, an Anglican, took his religion seriously and encouraged his pupils to attend prayers at the local parish church during weekdays. Baptist parents, however, believed that this otherwise well-mean act might one day prejudice their own children against their own denomination. After a good deal of debating, they decided they must withdraw their children from the school, no matter what disadvantages they might incur because of this move. The more affluent Baptists boarded their children out with private tutors or in private Dissenting schools. The clergy of all denominations in and around Kettering came to the assistance of John’s parents and strove to find him such a means of furthering his education. Applications were made in London and specimens of John’s work were sent off in the hope that they would earn a scholarship for the young protégé. John’s youth and learning, however, proved a stumbling block as such bursaries were only available for boys who had not yet reached John’s proficiency, though they were much older. Edward Gill had not given up hope that his son would one day become a notable Baptist minister but the Dissenting academies and colleges he applied to argued that John was already far too advanced for them and they envisaged difficulties if John were placed amongst less talented students. There was no hope of John’s finding an early place at a university as such institutions were closed to Dissenters. The words of the stranger at John’s birth, that the world might wish to hinder John’s progress, were thus coming true.

For the next eight years, John worked in his father’s business but his understanding parents gave him every opportunity to learn auto-didactically. John improved in Latin and Greek and purchased Buxtorf’s Grammar and Lexicon so as to learn Hebrew. He then tackled Logic, Rhetoric, Moral Philosophy and Science. Languages proved to be his greatest delight and through reading the Latin writers, he developed a great interest in Theology.

His conversion and baptism

Though blessed with a loving family and with many friends, John often felt pangs of horror and fear in his breast both because of nervous fevers but also because of besetting sin and a sensitive conscience. At other times, however, even when very young, he would experience deep insight into spiritual truths which were a joy

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6 Taken from Gill’s Preface to Davis’ Hymns Composed on Several Subjects, London 1748.
7 Ibid.
to his soul. When John was 12 years of age, he heard Mr Wallis preach on Genesis 3:9, “And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?” During the following weeks and months John was constantly reminded of this question, “Where are you?” and found that he was in a wretched state spiritually, fearing that he would die unconverted. John turned to his pastor for help and a ray of hope, following conviction, entered his life. Wallis died soon afterwards but John’s parents and the church members helped John on towards a sound experimental faith in Christ.

John Gill was greatly loved by the members of his church and the change in his life did not go unnoticed. After William Wallis’ death, his son, Thomas Wallis took over the pastorate of the church but only on a part-time basis. After a few years the members realised that young Gill was being called of God to assist their pastor. He, however, had not yet testified openly to a saving work in Christ, believing that he ought to do this first at baptism and when he had ample evidence that he was truly converted. Gill also had come to realise that once he started to make a public confession of Christ, he should continue to do so as a minister of the Gospel. At the age of nineteen, Gill was satisfied that such a time had come. Thus on the first day of November, 1716, John Gill was baptised in the local river. Already proficient at writing, John composed a hymn to be sung at the ceremony. As he passed through the waters a large crowd of believers and onlookers sang his words:

Was Christ baptiz'd to sanctify
This ordinance he gave?
And did his sacred body lie
Within the liquid grave?

Did Jesus condescend so low
To leave us an example?
And sha’n’t we by this pattern go;
This heavenly rule so ample?

Thus the prayers of many members of the Little Meeting were answered as Gill made a public testimony in thought, word and deed to the salvation which he knew by the Scriptures and experience was his.

On the following Sunday, 4th November, Gill was formally admitted into membership of the Kettering Particular Baptist Church and invited to take part in the Lord’s Supper. During the same evening, at a private house meeting, he opened his Bible at Isaiah 53, read the text and commented on a few verses. After this friends told Gill of their conviction that he was called to be a minister of the Word and asked him to preach a full sermon at the same place on the following Sabbath evening. The text Gill turned to was, ‘For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified,’ (1 Corinthians 3:2), which, Gill’s first biographer records, ushered in ‘a charming season to the godly people.”

After preaching for several weeks in this way, Gill was officially asked to assist Wallis in his work and was soon preaching regularly both at his own and other church meetings. Like teenager Charles Haddon Spurgeon over a century later, Gill now quickly gained a reputation as a fine preacher and was soon well-known and loved for miles around and even in the capital.

(John Gill: Part 1 of 5, to be completed.)

9 Perhaps it was this private experience of Gill’s that caused one of his rare breaks with usual Reformed Baptist teaching. He argued that Genesis 17, the covenant with Abraham, “was not made with him and his infant-seed; but with him and his adult offspring”, drawing parallels which caused him to believe that baptism is to be administered “to adult persons only”. This is in contrast to other Particular Baptists such as the Gospel Standard churches who baptise believing children. See Body of Practical Divinity, Book III, Of Baptism, pp. 324, 325. This aspect of covenant teaching and Gill’s eschatology are the only features of his total teaching that I cannot accept. Otherwise, I consider myself a Gillite on all counts.

10 John Rippon, A Brief Memoir, p. 8.

11 One of Gill’s successors.
In vain the fancy strives to paint
The moment after death,
The glories that surround the saints,
When yielding up their breath.

One gentle sigh their fetters breaks;
We scarce can say, “They’re gone!”
Before the willing spirit takes
Its mansion near the throne.

Faith strives, but all its efforts fail,
To comprehend that flight:
No eye can pierce within the veil
Which hides the world of light.

Thus much (and this is all) we know,
They are completely blest;
Have done with sin, and care, and woe,
And with their Saviour rest.

On harps of gold they praise His name,
His face they always view;
Then let us followers be of them,
That we may praise Him too.

Their faith and patience, love and zeal,
Should make their memory dear;
And, Lord, do Thou the prayers fulfil
They offered for us here!

While they have gained, we losers are,
We miss them day by day;
But Thou canst every breach repair,
And wipe our tears away.

We pray, as in Elisha’s case,
When great Elijah went,
May double portions of Thy grace,
To us who stay, be sent.
early beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ, our common Saviour, who has loved us, and given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice of a sweet savour unto God; His Father, and our Father, His God, and our God; in an everlasting covenant which cannot be forgotten.

As God who comforts those who are in any trouble, comforted me in all my distresses; I, like the apostle of the gentiles, would be instrumental in comforting you with the comfort wherewith I myself am comforted of God. You, beloved, like me, know that in you, that is, in your flesh, dwelleth no good thing. You feel a nature totally depraved and deplorably disordered; minds most carnal and earthly; wills stubborn and perverse; affections vicious and vile; understandings dark; and swarms of evil thoughts arising out of hearts deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. You find an evil law in your members warring against the law of your minds, and although to will is present with you, how to perform that which is good, you find not. You experience a perpetual warfare. The flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are as contrary the one to the other, as light and darkness, life and death, God and the devil, heaven and hell.

War Between Old And New

Between these two contending parties you must never expect peace, no, not one single moment while you breathe. The old man will never give up the contest, till death stops his breath: nor will the new man ever yield, while God is on his side, and that will be always. He never leaves His own. Though the old man is obstinate, and is aided by the gates of hell, and the battle is ever so hot, the new man shall be victorious in the end.

While the breast is the seat of war, the mind is often bewildered and uncomfortable;
the spirits flag, the heart trembles, doubts and fears arise, the soul is faint and weary, and sometimes ready to give up all. Under these circumstances comfort is greatly wanted, and much desired; and the God of all comfort has richly provided it in His counsel, and freely published it in His holy word.

My desire being to comfort the disconsolate, I shall lay before you a few scripture truths, which the God of love has intended for the consolation of His dear children in the field of battle.

His Everlasting Love
1. He who made you has fixed His love upon you freely in His Son. He loves you unchangeably, in all states and conditions, from eternity to eternity. Whatever changes, internal or external, you may pass through, the love of your God is the same. You may suffer the loss of wealth, health, ease, reputation, friends, and, like Job, be stripped of all your earthly comfort; but you cannot be deprived of your heavenly Father's affection. "He rests in His love, and joys over you with singing." Love runs through all His purposes concerning you, and all His dispensations toward you.

His Eternal Election
2. He has chosen you in Christ Jesus to be His people for ever, and adopted you to be His children and heirs. He has given Himself to you, to be your God and Father, your portion and inheritance forever.

His Eternal Union
3. He has united you to His Son, Jesus Christ, and fixed you in Him, never to be separated from Him. Jesus and you are one. One body, one building, one vine. Your union with Christ commenced with your election in Him. Free sovereign grace was the cause of both. God's eternal and immutable love is the bond of your union with Jesus: therefore it can never be dissolved. That God who choose you in Him, keeps you in Him. Being in Christ, all that He is, and all that He has is yours. His abundant grace; His perfect righteousness; His complete atonement; His consummate holiness; His eternal redemption; His perfect and all glorious salvation; His unsearchable riches of glory and blessedness, are all your own: on this very ground that you are Christ's. Christ and you being one, you stand in Him complete before the throne of God. You are washed from all your sins in His blood; you are justified from all things by His righteousness: yea, you are law-fulfillers, and the righteousness of God in Him. The Father views you with infinite delight. He sees no spot in you. There is no curse, no condemnation for you. You are saved with an everlasting salvation, and shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end.

His Everlasting Covenant
4. God has made with you an everlasting covenant; not a covenant of works, but of grace; not a conditional, but an absolute one; not one all confusion and disorder, but one ordered in
Job Hupton was born near Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire in March, 1762. In early life he received clear spiritual direction from the teachings of a godly mother, yet he would not allow them to influence his life. On the contrary, he hardened his heart against them. From his early years, working as a blacksmith, he passed his leisure time in the company of wayward friends; but the prayers of his mother followed him. When he was twenty-two years of age, while in a public house, his conscience was awakened, and he was led to see his lost condition. Shortly after, at Walsall, near Birmingham, the truth was still more deeply impressed upon him by a sermon preached by Rev. John Bradford, curate of Frilsham, Bedfordshire, one of Lady Huntingdon’s preachers; but still he did not find acceptance with God. Anxious days followed until one day, while at his forge, the darkness passed from his mind as he was meditating upon the words of Isaiah, “Arise, shine, for thy light is come.” After this he attached himself to one of the Countess of Huntingdon’s chapels at Walsall and was admitted to her college at Trevecca. He preached for her Connexion for some nine years. In September, 1794, having adopted Baptist views, he accepted a call to the pastorate of the Baptist church in Claxton, Norfolk (seen below in 1971). Here he had a long and useful ministry. He died at Claxton on 19 October, 1849 having been a preacher of the Gospel for more than sixty-four years.

From 1803 to 1809, Hupton contributed many articles, hymns and poems to the Gospel Magazine. A few years before his death his prose contributions to the Magazine were brought together in a volume entitled “The Truth as it is in Jesus”. His “Hymns and Spiritual Poems”, with a brief memoir, were collected and published in 1861. His compositions appeared in the Gospel Magazine under the signatures of “Ebenezer”, “Eliakini” and “J. H—n.”

He is with us:

Hear your leader speak to you. His language breathes love, and is pregnant with encouragement. “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness.” “Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life.” Yet a little while, and you shall lay down your arms and take your crowns; shall quit the field of war, and enter into the joy of your Lord. Your toils, your fears, your cares, your struggles, your sighs, groans, and tears will all be over, and all will be peace, rest, joy, and infinite delight through endless days. Therefore gird up the loins of your minds, be sober and hope to the end; for the grace which shall be brought to you at the appearing of Jesus Christ. That you may be steadfast and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, prays your fellow soldier.

Everlasting Promises

5. God has given you exceeding great and precious promises, suited to all your cases. The fulfillment of these promises is certain, because the promise is faithful and Almighty. These promises are breasts of consolation to the distressed, milk for babes, and meat for strong men; you may safely trust them, and in trusting them, you will sweetly enjoy them.
I am sure that every poor sinner who gets a glimpse of Christ will wonder. Wonder at the provision and gift of such a Saviour; wonder at the very name He bears; for His name is “Wonderful”; wonder that he should not have been permitted to sink to hell without having such a sight; wonder at the love that gave Him; wonder at the love that brought Him; wonder at the love that revealed Him. And this will lead to admiration; just as the spouse in the Canticles admires Him, when she admires Him from head to foot, and closes the description with “He is altogether lovely”. And the more Jesus is seen and known, the more He must be admired. By-and-bye He is to come “to be admired in all them that believe” and be sure of this one thing, they will be recognized as having admired Him before. If you see nothing in a precious Christ on earth, do not deceive yourself by expecting to admire Him in the day of judgment. There is no other ground of hope before you. He is “to be admired”.

Then if the soul sees enough of Him to admire Him, he will proceed to talk about Him. Something like Philip and Nathaniel after they had seen a little of Him, “We have found the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth.” Something like the poor Samaritan woman at the well. She left her water pot and ran into the city. She must talk about Him, and cried out, “Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did”. My hearers, I

He shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe ...

2 Thessalonians 1:10
am quite sure, if you have had a spiritual view of Christ for yourself, you cannot help talking about Him, Nay, more; all other talk will be reckoned “small talk” by you, if His name is not introduced. “To you that believe He is precious” and you cannot but talk of Him. But this is only one feature in the case, which I have referred to by way of illustration.

An object may be wondered at, and admired, and talked about, and still be by-and-bye forgotten; or, if it is not forgotten, the wonderer, and admirer, and talker about it, may become totally indifferent to it. It may have cost him something to get a sight of it; and if he would see it again, he must pay again. But not so with a view of Christ. The effect of a sight of Christ by faith is an interest in Him, sought, claimed, and enjoyed; and I know that, if the Holy Ghost has shown you His beauty, you will never be satisfied without feeling an interest in Him, and you will seek it accordingly. Rest not short of saying, “My Lord and my God” so as not only to have a sight of Christ as the Saviour of poor ruined sinners, but to be able to say, “He is mine.” “I know whom I have believed.” To claim Him, as we say on one of our cards to which we often have to refer,

All that He is, and has, and does, I claim, To all His promises He writes my name; All that He suffers to be done must be, Ruled by His everlasting love to me.

You know that in the Canticles the Church is represented as having lost sight of Him for a little while, and she runs about the streets and lanes (means of grace) to seek after Him, saying, “Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth?” By-and-bye she meets with the watchmen, “Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth?” They smite her and take away her veil—a great kindness too. They smite her and take away her veil, for her frowardness, and also that she might see Christ clearly when He did come. By-and-bye she went away; the watchmen took no notice of her. By-and-bye she found Him. What then? “She held Him fast, and would not let Him go.”

Do you know, beloved, what that clinging of faith is so as to hold Christ fast? It is an old-fashioned way of dealing with God. Jacob did it, you know. “I held Him fast, and would not let Him go.” Moreover, “I brought Him into my mother’s house [the Church], into the chambers of her who begat me” and there she enjoyed the love of the precious Christ she regained the sight of. I want this effect produced in my own soul, and in yours; the mighty attractions of His charms to constrain us, not only to appropriate and claim all we find in Himself as our portion forever, but in the appropriation of all that He is to enjoy a holy peace, a heavenly calm, a sacred felicity, a believing trust, together with a joyous anticipation of spending an eternity along with Him. And when the soul gets into this blessed state and standing, and really claims and enjoys this precious Christ she is gazing on, oh, how bright is her expectation! “I shall shortly be like Him, and see Him as He is.” And when we see Him again, it will not be “through a glass darkly” a smutted glass such as we look at an eclipse with; but the glass shall be broken, the veil shall be taken away, and we shall be “like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.”

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NEW FOCUS PRINTABLE EDITION JUNE 2014
Plain Bible Speaking

I believe that the greatest need of the church, the greatest need of the preachers and people of our day is a return to plain, Bible preaching. Preaching that is true to the Scriptures and preaching that men and women can understand, answering questions that people are asking, not answering questions that nobody cares about, but dealing with the issues that concern the people.

Now, Paul was conscious of this; I can see that he is conscious of this need in his day. In our text he talks about his own preaching. Listen how he describes his own preaching. He is speaking to Corinth, a city that greatly appreciated enticing words of man’s wisdom, and intellectualism.

He is talking to people who were intrigued with these things. He said, “When I came to you preaching the Gospel, I did not come with wisdom of words. I did not use worldly wisdom. I didn’t come with excellency of speech.”

“It doesn’t matter if my speech is plain and contemptible. At least you understand what I am saying,” he said. Paul didn’t come with enticing words of man’s wisdom. He didn’t come arguing and debating. Everybody wants to debate and argue.

My friends, the kind of preaching that God blesses, the kind of preaching that God uses, the kind of preaching we need to hear is the preaching in the power of the Holy Spirit. That is what Paul said; “I came preaching in the Spirit and in the power of God.”

And the end of that preaching? Notice the last verse, “That your faith, shall not stand in the wisdom of men.” Some say, “I believe this because I was persuaded that it

And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

1 Corinthians 2:1, 2
was true by a speaker I heard. He was so persuasive and he was so convincing.”

Paul said, “I don’t want your faith to stand in my persuasion or in my argument; I want your faith to stand in the power of God that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men.”

If one man can talk you into a position, another can talk you out of that position. If one man can talk you into a religion, then another can come along who is a better speaker or a little smarter and talk you out of that religion.

When the Samaritan woman heard the Master, she went down into the city and she said, “Come and see a man that told me everything I have ever done. Is this not the Christ, (is not this the Messiah?)”

They went running out and heard the Master for themselves. They turned to the woman and they said, “Now we believe, not because of your words but because we have heard him ourselves.”

That is what Paul is saying here; “I didn’t come to you with oratory and excellency of speech and enticing words of man’s wisdom, (debate and logic, argument, and intellectualism).” He said, “I came to you in the power of the Spirit preaching the Word of God that your faith should not stand in my wisdom or in the arguments of men, nor in the schemes of men but that your faith should stand in the word and in the power of God.”

Paul himself said, “I know whom I have believed. I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.” It’s a personal, living, intimate, vital, union with Jesus Christ. That’s salvation!

Here is an interesting little tick-box chart by which modern presentations of the gospel can be compared to the inspired pattern of Apostolic preaching. We may ask, “When the Apostles went preaching the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ as recorded in the chapters from the Acts Of The Apostles shown, on which occasions did they address the subjects shown?” If the apostles preached in a particular way ought we not to follow their example or show good cause why we diverge?

Apostolic preaching is the standard by which all other gospels can be compared and assessed.

“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship ...” (Act 2:42).

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<td>Pray the Sinners’ Prayer</td>
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<tr>
<td>You need to get rid of your old habits</td>
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<td>You need to start new habits to please God</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christ proclaimed</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christ crucified</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christ raised</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call to repentance and faith in Christ</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christ having fulfilled Old Testament prophecy</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
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The 2014 New Focus Conference at Egglesburn Baptist Church in Teesdale, Co. Durham, in May, was an opportunity to worship our great God, share fellowship with like-minded believers and enjoy a short season of gospel preaching. Each of these blessings is invaluable.

Pastor Don Fortner from Danville, U.S.A. ministered on all of the three days of the conference and sermons were also delivered by pastors Allan Jellett from Knebworth and Peter Meney from Eggleston.

Don Fortner preached on Friday evening from 1 Peter 1:1-3 revealing how the salvation of the elect is a sovereign work of the Triune God. On Saturday evening his message on Lessons From The Life Of Job reminded us that suffering is an integral part of every Christian’s experience in this world. And on the Lord’s Day he spoke from Mark 7:37. His title for the final occasion being, “He Hath Done All Things Well”. This emphasis upon the glorious accomplishments of the Lord Jesus Christ was a common theme throughout the conference.

Allan Jellett ministered from Acts 4:23 “There Own Company” and showed how the distinctive message of the gospel bound the apostles and early disciples together and distinguished them from the religion of their day. Allan then showed how this contrast continues today when the true gospel is preached.

Peter Meney preached from Song Of Solomon 3:1-4 under the title “Him Whom My Soul Loveth” and drew some implications of the Lord’s love for His people, particularly, and perhaps a sometimes less mentioned consequence, of their love for Him.

All the sermons can be listened to on Free Grace Radio and the New Focus Magazine website. Just type those words into your browser or go to www.go-newfocus.co.uk and follow the links. Audio recordings of the sermons are available on CD from the New Focus office.

We were delighted to welcome visitors from all over the country including new acquaintances and old friends. Many contacts were made which will undoubtedly be taken up and renewed in the future. We were also pleased that some local visitors attended several of the meetings and heard a clear declaration of the gospel of free and sovereign grace. Visitors from some local churches were also a welcome addition to the friends who travelled from further afield.

A good number of families were present this year with young people making up a large proportion of the congregation. A fine display of new and second-hand books, and children’s material was provided by the Christian Bookshop in Ossett, and we are again indebted to Jeremy, Lorna and family for making such a fine selection available.

We are grateful to the congregation at Egglesburn Baptist Chapel for their generosity and warm welcome. Services were hosted at the church and a local village hall to facilitate hospitality. Those who gathered for the whole weekend enjoyed warm days and beautiful Teesdale scenery, a gracious token from the Lord to remind us all of His love and care for His people.