Here We Stand

New Focus Magazine is purposefully and plainly a sovereign grace publication. We seek with every edition to uphold, explain, promote and preach the message of God’s free grace in Christ and the absolute necessity of divine power to initiate, apply and secure the salvation of sinners. We do not look to man to save himself for we know he cannot. We do not appeal to men to save themselves for we know they cannot. We believe God’s grace alone can save a soul, and we try to say it clearly.

This means we have no time for the teaching that man has a freewill with which to accept or reject God’s offer of salvation. We do not believe God has saving love for everyone, nor a will to save everyone. We do not hold there is grace from God for everyone. The nature of our sovereign almighty God and the existence of hell and judgment preclude such ideas. We do not believe the Lord Jesus Christ died for everyone on the cross nor that His death was ever intended to redeem and atone for any but those called in scripture God’s elect from every nation, from before the foundation of the world.

We believe all men and women have sinned and are enemies of God by nature. We believe, nevertheless, God the Father in eternity chose a people to justify and recover from their lost state. We believe the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, came into the world to save those chosen individuals and effectually did so by His death on the cross. We believe God the Holy Spirit quickens and converts those for whom Christ shed His blood through the preaching of saving grace and divine mercy in the gospel. We believe, once saved, those blessed individuals never will be, never can be, lost and will most certainly spend eternity in heaven in the presence and company of their God and Saviour.

We believe God in His three persons has done everything necessary for the salvation of His chosen people and there remains nothing for them to do. Beyond Christ’s sacrifice there are no works of obedience required, either to make the elect eligible for salvation, or to enable them to keep their salvation. Grace is not of works, otherwise grace is no more grace. Everything necessary for salvation is a good gift, a perfect gift and it comes from the sovereign God.

These beliefs separate us from a large part of today’s Christian church who seem neither to understand the nature of God nor the nature of man. They preach of common grace flowing from universal love, and of a frustrated desire on God’s part to save everyone. They believe Christ’s blood redeemed everyone but fails actually to save anyone. They believe in a Holy Spirit who courts the wicked with offers of mercy, but ultimately bows to man’s will and withholds defeated. We have no sympathy with this message and we can have no fellowship with its promoters.

The essence of the gospel is good news. Good because salvation is a sovereign work of grace. Good because the Lord Jesus Christ actually achieved and accomplished all our peace with God as our substitute on the cross. Good because no part of our deliverance is dependent upon our weak, wayward flesh. This is where we stand. This is what we believe. This is the heart of our message. This is the gospel of sovereign grace.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning (James 1:17).
I heard someone the other day talking about how God has blessed us; they said: ‘we’ve got houses, cars, washers and dryers, telephones and bank accounts’, and not one time did this person mention the forgiveness of sin.

The apostle Paul says: ‘I know how to be abased and I know how to abound.’ He says: ‘I have learned to be content in whatsoever state God puts me in.’ It does not matter whether I have prosperity or poverty, I need Christ, I need forgiveness, I need mercy, I need my sins pardoned, I need eternal life, and I need salvation.

That is what men need, the Gospel; it is time to return to preaching the Gospel. Let us quit preaching health and wealth and finances and happiness and these things in the flesh. We need to preach what God does for a sinner through Christ, the Gospel of His grace, the Gospel of His righteousness, the Gospel of His glory, the Gospel of His dear Son ‘in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sin, through the blood of his cross.’

Henry Mahan
The church of God in this world is like the tabernacle in the wilderness. Within it is lit up with the glory of God’s presence. We are the temple of the living God. God dwells in our midst. God the Holy Spirit resides in the hearts of His people. And the one Person who always attends the assembly of the saints is the Son of God, our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. Wherever two or three gather in His name, He is present with them (Matthew 18:20). To gather as a church in the name of Christ means much more than merely wearing His name, saying His name, or claiming the authority of His name. Those who gather in Christ’s name come together trusting His name, trusting His blood and righteousness as their only acceptance with the holy Lord God. They come together for the worship of His name, calling upon Him in adoration, prayer, praise, and faith. To gather in His name is to gather for the glory of His name, with the intent of making His name known.

Without, God’s church is guided and protected by the fiery and cloudy pillar of God’s eternal providence. As God led Israel in the wilderness, fed them, protected them, and defended them under the symbol of the fiery and cloudy pillar, so he leads, feeds, protects, and defends His church today.

Yet, outwardly, to all outward appearance, the church of God in this world is a common, unattractive, despised thing. Insofar as the nations were concerned the tabernacle was nothing but a crude tent. God was there, but they knew it not. The altar was there, but they had no use for it. The sacrifice of atonement was there but they despised it. The mercy-seat was there, but they could not see it. All they could see was a poor, homeless people, who had no place to worship but a crude tent, and a people who claimed to be the only true worshippers of God in the world. Faithful Israelites would not worship at any other altar. They refused to acknowledge as brethren any who would not worship their God. They acknowledged one way of salvation only, blood! For these things, they were always despised, persecuted, and mocked by the world around them.

The tabernacle in the wilderness was, in these ways, a symbol and picture of God’s church in this world. God dwells in His church.

**Heaven: Who Shall Enter In?**

And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

Revelation 21:27
Christ Jesus guides and protects His church. But the world, and all the religions of the world, mock and despise the church of God. That shall not always be the case.

There is a day coming when the tables will be turned. In the last day, the Lord God will reveal His glory in His church and glorify His church before all the universe (John 17:22, 23; Ephesians 2:7). In Revelation 21:10-27, John shows us the glorified church of God in the last day. Paul speaks of the same thing in Ephesians 5:25-27. Christ loved His church. He died to redeem His church. He sanctifies His church. He will perfect and glorify His church. And in the last day, the Lord Jesus will present His church, in all the resurrection glory He puts upon her, to the Father’s throne. Then all the world shall marvel at the glory and grace of God in Christ bestowed upon and revealed in His church.

Study John’s description of her glory. We shall be presented before the throne of God, before the adoring angels, before Satan, and before the eyes of the damned as a virgin bride (v. 9), the city of God (vv. 10, 11), a walled fortress (v. 12), a great, massive city (vv. 12-17), a perfect, complete city (v. 16), an indescribably wealthy people (vv. 18-21), a perfectly happy, satisfied people (vv. 22, 23), a universally honoured, glorious church (vv. 24-26).

The church of God shall be the crowning glory of the new creation in eternity. ‘As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him’ (1 Corinthians 2:9). No tongue can tell, because no mind can conceive the glory that awaits the church of God in heaven’s eternal bliss. Write my name among these blessed ones. My soul thirsts for the living God and the cherished glories is total freedom from sin. One of heaven’s greatest attractions and most precious things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

Yet some will never enter into the glory and bliss of heaven. It is written, in verse twenty-seven, ‘And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie.’ Heaven will never be polluted by sin. Almighty God is holy, righteous, just, and perfect. That which dwells with Him forever must be holy, righteous, just and perfect. In order for anything, or anyone, to enter heaven it must be perfect. Any lack of absolute, total perfection will forever exclude us from the presence of God. Perfect holiness cannot tolerate anything less than perfect holiness. When sin defiled Eden, Eden was forever destroyed. God’s law requires a perfect obedience from man and threatens any lack of perfection with death. The law required a perfect sacrifice for atonement. Even God’s own dear Son, when He was made to be sin for us, was forsaken by God and slain. God requires perfection. Heaven is a world of perfection. Defilement, abomination, and deceit shall never enter into it. Sin shall never darken the kingdom of light. Sin shall never defile the city Beautiful.

It is only right that all evil be excluded from heaven. It is not at all a matter of bigotry or harshness to declare that heaven shall never be defiled by sin. It is only a matter of righteousness and justice to which every rational man must give assent. Everything in heaven, everyone in heaven, and everyone going to heaven is in full agreement with this decree, ‘There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth.’ We have seen what sin has done to the world of the angels, the physical world, and our fallen race. We would not see heaven ruined by it.

The essence of heaven’s bliss is the total absence of sin in that blessed estate.

God’s saints in heaven are citizens of a land where there is no sin. We are going to an eternal world, where sin shall never be found. One of heaven’s greatest attractions and most cherished glories is total freedom from sin. There we shall enjoy perfect communion with Christ. There we shall have perfect conformity to Christ. There we shall exercise perfect consecration to Christ. Should sin be permitted to enter, all would be ruined! Sin would forever disrupt the peace of heaven, destroy the joy of heaven, and defile the beauty of heaven.

This exclusion of sin from heaven is the exclusion of all who are sinners. ‘There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth! No person who defiles, no fallen spirit, no sinful man can enter the gates of the New Jerusalem. No tendency to sin, no thought of sin, no will to sin, no desire for sin can go to heaven. Were it possible for a sinner to go to heaven, he could never enter into the heavenly state.

**A Solemn Fact**

Here is a very solemn fact. ‘There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie.’ Heaven will never be polluted by sin. Almighty God is holy, righteous, just, and perfect. That which dwells with Him forever must be holy, righteous, just and perfect. In order for anything, or anyone, to enter heaven it must be perfect. Any lack of absolute, total perfection will forever exclude us from the presence of God. Perfect holiness cannot tolerate anything less than perfect holiness. When sin defiled Eden, Eden was forever destroyed. God’s law requires a perfect obedience from man and threatens any lack of perfection with death. The law required a perfect sacrifice for atonement. Even God’s own dear Son, when He was made to be sin for us, was forsaken by God and slain. God requires perfection. Heaven is a world of perfection. Defilement, abomination, and deceit shall never enter into it. Sin shall never darken the kingdom of light. Sin shall never defile the city Beautiful.

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The essence of heaven is a condition, not a place. It is a condition of worship, holiness, and delight in God. If a sinner could get to the place of heaven, he still could not be in the condition of heaven. He would be out of his element. Heaven would be misery for him, if he should enter it in his natural condition of sin, rebellion, and enmity against God.

Our own hearts must give full assent to this exclusion. ‘There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth.’ If I might enter into heaven as I am at this moment with my sinful heart and nature, it would be a horrible crime for me to do so; for my presence there would defile the city of God. A man with a highly contagious deadly disease should never be allowed to mingle with healthy people in society, lest his disease infect everyone. Sanity demands such carriers of death be quarantined.

This exclusion of sin from heaven is the absolute exclusion of all who defile, make abomination, or make a lie. John is telling us that sinners of every kind must be forever excluded from the paradise of God. ‘There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth.’ No evil thoughts, words, or deeds shall enter heaven. Those who enter the city of God must be free from all these things. If we are defiled in any way by sin we cannot enter heaven. No unclean thing shall enter the temple of God (Isaiah 52:1). However, the exclusion goes far beyond moral corruptions. It reaches the spiritual corruptions of Babylonian religion.

‘There shall in no wise enter into it anything that worketh abomination.’ Abomination in the scriptures usually refers to idolatry, the making of idols, the worship of idols, and the service of idols (1 Kings 11:4-8). The most abominable thing in this world in the sight of God is false religion, idolatry! If your religion is false, if you worship strange gods, you cannot go to heaven. A strange god is a god who wants to save, but lacks the power to do so without the aid and assistance of man. A strange god is a god who sends people he loves to hell. A strange god is a god whose will is frustrated, whose purpose is defeated, whose power is limited. A strange god is a god who sacrifices His own dear Son for many who shall never taste His grace!

‘There shall in no wise enter into it anything that maketh a lie.’ All false prophets and false teachers, inventors and perpetrators of religious lies shall be damned (1 Timothy 4:1, 2; 2 Thessalonians 2:11, 12). I say this because it simply must be said, every preacher of free-will salvation, every preacher of works religion, every preacher of conditional grace, of whatever sect or denomination is included in this exclusion. Hear this very solemn warning. Realize its meaning and lay it to heart. ‘There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie.’

A Reasonable Deduction
In the light of these things, I set before you a plain, obvious, and reasonable deduction. The deduction is just this. None of us can, by any possibility, enter heaven in our present condition. You who are without Christ are without hope (Ephesians 2:11-13). You cannot go to heaven as you are. Should you die without Christ, there would be no hope of you being saved. There is no promise of mercy for you. There is no covenant of grace for you. There is no blood atonement for you. There is no pardon for you. There is no hope of life for you. All these things are in Christ, but you are without Christ. And being without Christ, you are without hope.

That which we have seen in the Word of God most certainly slays forever all hope of self-salvation (Jeremiah 13:9). Can a sinful man wash away his own sins? Can a dead...
man give himself life? Can a guilty man make righteousness for himself? Can a wicked man purge his own heart? If any of us are saved, we must be saved by God and by grace (Ephesians 2:8).

Even those of us who are saved by the grace of God must undergo a great change before we can enter into heaven. Many are of the opinion God’s saints in this world get riper and riper for heaven in progressive holiness and sanctification, until at last they are ready for heaven. That simply it is not so. No saved sinner ever imagines he is attaining greater holiness! Long after God had saved him, and after many years of faithful service in the cause of Christ, the Apostle Paul described himself as the very chief of sinners in whom no good thing dwelt (1 Timothy 1:15; Romans 7:18). Our only holiness is Christ, without whom no one shall ever see the Lord (1 Corinthians 1:30; Hebrews 12:14). Before we can enter into heaven we must drop this robe of flesh in death and be transformed into His likeness.

A Blessed Hope

Yet, John gives us, by divine inspiration, a blessed word of hope. We have seen that nothing evil will ever enter heaven, nothing and no one who defiles, works abomination, or makes a lie shall enter heaven. No one has the right to enter by nature. And no one can ever earn the right to enter. Yet there is hope. God has written a book of election, and all whose names are written in that book shall enter in. No one shall enter into heaven ‘but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.’

We must know one thing: is our name written in that book? If it is, all is well. If it is not, we must be forever damned. Are our names written there? This is certain, if our names are written there, they were written there in eternity, written there because of a covenant, and written there permanently. The Lamb’s book of life is the book of God’s election. It is the record of redemption by the blood of the Lamb. It is the promise of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised in Christ before the world began.

Let me speak personally. I trust you who read these lines can personally relate to what I am about to say. Yes, my name is written in that blessed book. I know it is because I trust the Lord Jesus Christ, and trusting Christ, I have life. By God’s free grace in Him, I have all God requires for entrance into heaven (Colossians 1:12; 2:9, 10). He is my worthiness before God. I am complete in Him. In Christ, I have atonement for all my sin (Romans 5:10). In Christ, I have perfect righteousness. His righteousness has been imputed to me in justification and imparted to me in sanctification. How can I speak with confident assurance about such great, weighty, eternal matters? I believe God. Faith in Christ is the substance of my hope, the evidence of God’s grace in me, and the solitary basis of my assurance before God (Hebrews 11:1; 1 John 5:1-13). Because I trust Him, in Christ, I am assured of a glorious change. When death comes, when I am absent from the body I shall be immediately present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:1-9). Then, when Christ comes again, I shall be transformed into His image in resurrection glory in the totality of my being (1 Corinthians 15:51-58).

Will you, or will you not, enter into heaven at last? No one will enter into heaven at last who does not enter in by faith in Christ now. He alone can give life to you. Christ alone can pardon our sins. Only Christ can make the defiled undefiled, the unrighteous righteous, and sinners saints.

May God grant you faith in Christ.

Going Home

By Don Fortner

Price £23.95 ($30.00)

206 pages hardback

These seventeen chapters are all about heaven and this is the best book I have ever read on the subject. As I read the fifth chapter, “Heaven: The Place of Satisfaction” my heart was blessed indeed.

It is certainly a superb exposition on the subject of heaven, and how God saves sinners in preparation for it. But you will find the book deals, too, with all aspects of a believer’s attitude towards death, the confident assurance of joy to come, and many helpful scriptural comforts for the experience of dying.

I believe this book will prove to be very instructive for ministers of the gospel, and those involved pastorally with the Lord’s people. It will be most helpful, too, to God’s saints who live with eager expectation in hope of eternal life with God our Saviour in our heavenly home. Oh, the glory that awaits all of God’s blood-bought children!

Extract from Foreword by Pastor Earnie W. Lucas

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Purchases through Paypal or credit card.
The Scripture sense of this word Covenant is the same as in the circumstances of common life; namely, an agreement between parties. Thus Abraham and Abimelech entered into covenant at Beersheba (Genesis 21:32). And in like manner, David and Jonathan (1 Samuel 20:42). To the same amount, in point of explanation, must we accept what is related in Scripture of God's covenant concerning redemption, made between the sacred persons of the GODHEAD, when the holy undivided Three in One engaged to, and with, each other, for the salvation of the church of God in Christ. This is that everlasting covenant which was entered into, and formed in the council of peace before the world began. For so the apostle was commissioned by the Holy Ghost, to inform the church concerning that eternal life which was given us, he saith, in Christ Jesus, ‘before the world began’ (Titus 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:9). So this everlasting covenant becomes the bottom and foundation in JEHOVAH’S appointment, and security of all grace and mercy for the church here, and of all glory and happiness hereafter, through the alone person, work, blood-shedding, and obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is on this account that His church is chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. (Ephesians 1:4) And from this appointment, before all worlds, result all the after mercies in time, by which the happy partakers of such unspeakable grace and mercy are regenerated, called, adopted, made willing in the day of God’s power, and are justified, sanctified, and, at length, fully glorified, to the praise of JEHOVAH’S grace, who hath made them accepted in the Beloved. Such are the outlines of this blessed covenant. And which hath all properties contained in it to make it blessed. It is, therefore, very properly called in Scripture everlasting; for it is sure, unchangeable, and liable to no possibility of error or misapplication. Hence, the patriarch David, with his dying breath, amidst all the untoward circumstances which took place in himself and his family, took refuge and consolation in this: “Although (said he) my house be not so with God, yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure; for this is all my salvation and all my desire, although he make it not to grow” (2 Samuel 23:5).

It is called the New Testament, or covenant, in the gospel, not in respect to any thing new in it or from any change or alteration in its substance or design, but from the promises of the great things engaged for in the Old Testament dispensation being now newly confirmed and finished. And as the glorious person by whom the whole conditions of the covenant on the part of man was to be performed, had now, according to the original settlements made in eternity, been manifested, and agreeably to the very period proposed, ‘in [what is called] the fulness of time, appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself’, it was, therefore, called Covenant, in His blood. But the whole purport, plan, design and grace, originating as it did in the purposes of JEHOVAH from all eternity, had all the properties in it of an everlasting covenant; and Christ always, and from all eternity, ‘was considered the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world’ (Revelation 13:8).
I do not think I could more appropriately or profitably devote this, the last of my new series of Tracts, than to a brief review of my ministerial labours during the twenty-four years, just now expiring, in which I have taught you, and endeavoured to build you up in your most holy Faith.

And may the Lord, the Holy Spirit, guide my pen, and make me faithful, faithful to you, and faithful to myself!

It doubtless appears to some that, in my writings, I speak too much of myself. However the Lord knows it is farthest from my desire to do so; but in speaking or writing as a public man, I feel I should be altogether forgetful of the boundless mercies of my Covenant-keeping God if I did not make mention of His peculiarly wonderful dealings with me individually. This cannot be done without being forced, as Paul was forced, to apparently boast over his contemporaries. Yet that glorious monument of Sovereign Grace took care to check himself with the confession, ‘I speak as a fool’.

I do the same. I have nothing to boast of but my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In Him, and Him alone, do I make my boast all the day long, and shall never cease to do so, as long as life lasts!

Now, in what I am about to write, I beg of all candid readers to bear this in mind. I am less than the least of all God’s ministers, I am not worthy to be called a minister, yet God being my Helper, I will speak out, I will speak the Truth, I will put on Record what I believe to be true respecting both Preachers and Hearers.

Twenty-four years of ministerial work, through much Tribulation and Persecution, ought to give a man deep experience, and entitle him to a voice in the Church of God. I am no novice then, so give me your best attention whilst I relate to you some of the scenes of my eventful life in this place.

When I first came amongst you I was determined to know nothing but Christ crucified. I purposed to glory in nothing, save in the cross of the Lord Jesus.¹

¹ Not a wooden or a metal cross, mark you, but what Paul means by ‘the cross’, i.e. Christ’s work upon the cross. You may think this explanation needless, but let me tell you that within the last few weeks I have had an anonymous letter from some very ignorant person in this city, declaring that the individual who objected to wear publicly a material emblem of Christ’s cross, was ashamed of the cross of Christ, and that to such an individual the offence of the cross had ceased!!! Such is the divinity of the Ritualists, and others!

But I no sooner showed my colours, no sooner declared ‘by grace are ye saved, not of works, lest any man should boast’ (Ephesians 2:8, 9) than a storm of hatred and rage was raised against me! The clearer I made the doctrine of the cross, the worse I was liked, till at last vicious and decided opposition was manifested, which ended in the greater portion of the influential members of the congregation leaving my ministry altogether!

This was a severe blow to me. I now began to realize the Saviour’s and the Apostle’s solemn prognostications, ‘Ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake’ (Matthew 10:22; John 15:18-20); ‘Through much tribulation shall ye enter the kingdom of God,’ and ‘If any man will live godly he shall suffer persecution’ (Acts 14:22; 2 Timothy 2:12).

Ah, how often had I read these words, never dreaming that I had ought to do with them! Like many others, I either had some confused ideas in my mind regarding hatred and persecution, or thought those warnings were especially meant for the original disciples; but to my cost, I soon found out the true meaning.

How many ministers in the present day know anything about hatred and persecution for the Truth’s sake? Not many I am sure! Where are...
the bishops, the deans, the archdeacons, the dignitaries of our church, where are the clergy who know what hatred and persecution for God’s Truth is? I know of but few such amongst the ordinary rank and file of ministers, and as for the dignitaries, none! If some of these suffer for their religious views, they have the consolation of a princely income, high position, and aristocratic sympathisers; but a man may suffer thus, and know nothing of ‘the truth as it is in Jesus’. Untruthful ministers with popular talent have the world’s applause, unholy ministers without talent have the world’s sufferance, but it is otherwise with the men of God. They are like their Master, literally despised and rejected of all unconverted persons, men of sorrows, and acquainted with grief (Isaiah 53:3). Ay, and it must be so for has declared it, ‘The servant shall be as his Master’ (John 15:20).

Well, the iron entered my very Soul through the treatment I received at the hands of God’s enemies. I was hated, maligned and abused, nonymously and anonymously, and this last piece of strategy was to starve me out, or to frighten me away. But the parties altogether mistook their man. I kept on preaching the Word regardless of all consequences, and though my worldly prospects looked gloomy, and I was often at my wits’ end, the Lord always came most opportunely to my relief, and supported me in a way of grace and providence.

At this time, some half dozen old and established believers came to the rescue. They had heard my preaching, and there being no truth in the pulpits nearer Openshaw, they gladly threw in their lot amongst us, and sat down under my ministry. Those dear children of the Lord I shall never forget. They listened to my childlike lisplings, they drank in the milk of babes for years, and unconscious to themselves taught me the way of God more perfectly. How many precious hints did these people let drop from time to time which proved a comfort to my Soul, and a light to my understanding! Some of them are gone to their rest in full assurance of union with the Lord, others of them still remain with hearts warm as ever, and hands as liberal as grace can make them. My dearly beloved, accept this slight acknowledgement for all you have done for me. You will remember when first you came how feebly and imperfectly I preached ‘the gospel of the grace of God’, but you bore with it all, seeing that the root of the matter was in me, and now you can testify to my growth in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

How different is my preaching now to what it was twenty-four years ago! So must it be with every God-sent minister. If a man does not advance in knowledge and experience as he advances in years, he is a dead minister, a poor fingerpost that points out the way but never moves an inch himself. God forbid that it should ever be so with me!

And now let me not be misunderstood. I do not mean to convey that I was free from blame in my treatment of the enemies of the gospel to whom I referred. No: I have frequently been harsh, and have used the rod unsparingly. I never took into consideration the fact that those parties had never heard the gospel preached (except one truth-hating man, who declared to me with his own lips that he had heard the doctrines advanced from his childhood, but never could abide them). It was no wonder then, that they were amazed and confounded at the rough way in which I tore up by the roots all their former fancies, false doctrines and fallacies. I ought to have made some allowance for their ignorance; for if a man naturally recoils from God’s truth when placed before him in the mildest accents, how much

St Barnabas Church, Openshaw, Manchester, where William Parks preached was built in 1837. It closed in 1959 and was demolished.
more will he write and hate and curse when he is violently assailed, and clutched with an iron hand? The Lord pardon thy servant in this thing!

I do not wish to aggravate the heavy reckoning against my opponents, but I must state this fact, viz., that not one of them ever prospered in this world afterwards, some of them died the saddest deaths, and not one of them all could say believably and experimentally upon his dying bed, 'I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day' (2 Timothy 2:12).

Alas! such is, and will be to the end of all who dare to touch the Lord's anointed, and do His prophets harm!

But there is a bright side to the picture. Very many have learnt the precious gospel through me, and have died rejoicing, and many live to this day to thank God for ever having granted them the privilege of hearing of a finished Salvation! O this FINISHED WORK! This is the refuge from the storm, and the shadow from the heat! What can the poor wretched mutilators of holy writ speak or write to comfort perishing sinners? Their tale is, 'Do, and God will finish!' 'Work and He will work!' Miserable comforters are ye all! Blind guides! Poor parrots who can repeat what you hear others say, but never having had any experimental knowledge of the sovereign grace of God yourselves, you darken counsel with words without knowledge! Besides all this, the blessings God has heaped upon me are not confined to my own parish. I have had hundreds of testimonies from all parts of the kingdom as to the acceptableness, the truth, and the savouriness of my writings! Many of these parties have never seen me: many of them had never heard of the gospel till they saw it in my tracts, but now can call me their father in God!

Do I write thus to magnify myself! God knoweth! It is all of His grace sovereignly displayed in the chiefest of sinners, and my example proves again and again that the Lord loves to do wonders by the feeblest and most unworthy of His creatures!

I now have a solemn question to put to the various ministers of our day—Which of you all can say as I have said, How many Souls have you had for your hire? Have you ever found one of Christ's sheep lost in this naughty world? It is a question not to be shirked! If not answered here it must be answered elsewhere! Be assured that the truth will come out at the last day, that if you have not a testimony to put favourably to your usefulness—You have run when no man sent you! You were never called by God the Holy Ghost to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ! O, pardon me for my plain dealing! I do it, as the Lord is my witness, as an experiment to awaken you. I do it as Paul did it, in order that by any means I might save some!

My conviction with respect to the clergy and religious professors in general is very gloomy. I believe that all the converted clergy in this diocese might be accommodated comfortably in my house! I believe Methodism to be a huge Delusion. I believe that Nonconformists are rotten to the core, for they are free-willers to a man, if I except a small knot of Baptists who rejoice in the truths of distinguished grace. Is not this a sad state of things? And what have I to gain by thus speaking out? Nothing but further obloquy and hatred and contempt, but so it is! I write as it were on a dying bed. My physicians give me but small hope of recovery. If I chose to be unfaithful, I might sneak out of this world without any more war, or tumult, but I dare not. That which the Lord has given me to speak, I must give vent to, let men think of me as they please! Yet, mark you, I believe too, that many Nonconformists are converted men, but they are in bondage, they know not the sweets of Christian liberty, but will arrive at heaven at last, though through darkness and difficulty and confusion: but saved they must be, yet so as by fire, if the Lord has converted them, for whom Jesus once loves He has always loved, and will love unto the end (John 13:1).

‘Ah, how you spoil your writings by meddling with others! Why not leave the unconverted clergy, ministers, and laymen to their Judge? Why should you trouble your head by interfering with other people’s business? Who art thou, O man, that judgest another?’ say some, who profess to be orthodox, but would be silent in such cases! In reply to all this, I would observe that the last question quoted from the Epistle of James (James 4:12) is totally wide of the mark. James himself, and Paul, who was even more searching and severe on the judgment by man of his fellow-man (cf. Romans 2:1-29), were both ‘meddlers with other people’s business’. They both most unsparingly judged and rebuked, but it was the rash in judgment, and the ignorant in judgment they thus judged. I am neither rash nor ignorant in my judgment, but I judge according to knowledge. If I believe
a man to be all wrong in his creed, I am bound to tell him so.

Besides, is not suppression of the truth literally an evasion of the ‘offence of the cross’? If I were content to hold my creed in secrecy, and let men believe that there was no difference between them and me, would it not be tantamount to being ashamed of the Cross of Christ? O you expediency-mongers, see to it! Believe me ‘there is no getting to heaven with a whole skin’!

And now my dear Brethren in the Lord, come with me into the inner precincts of my heart, and let me show you what I have passed through in the way of practice and experience.

Martin Luther said long ago, ‘It takes three things to make a divine, viz.

Reading, Mediation, And Temptation

Luther, doubtless, had his cue from Paul, who exhorted Timothy to give attendance to reading and meditation (1 Timothy 4:13-15). What sort of reading this was we may readily imagine. It could not have been the reading of the works of rabbis and doctors of the law, for these were utterly ignorant of the true meaning of God’s Word, but the reading insisted upon must have been the prayerful perusal of the Word itself, seeking out the meaning through the teaching of the Holy Ghost.

This is the sort of reading ministers ought to devote themselves to, and not the reading of Commentators, etc., who are fallible and fanciful.

Well, to this reading did I devote myself for years, but it was hard work to understand what I read. There seemed to be such contradictions and such confusion in the scriptures, that it was many a day and many a year ‘ere I got the clue. At last, two great truths broke in upon my soul, first, my own complete inability to keep the law, or God’s precepts and commandments, if my salvation depended upon my obedience.

The Holiness of God, and the Depravity of man put themselves in array before me, and I said, ‘Surely there must be someone to take wretched man’s place and answer for him if he ever is to be saved!’ That some One I discovered to be Jesus Christ. I reasoned thus, ‘I will take Christ’s illustration of sin, viz., “whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matthew 5:28). Of course this equally applies to all the Commandments of God, then, where am I? I have been angry, and therefore have committed murder! I have been untruthful, and therefore have borne false witness! I have been disobedient to my parents, and therefore am under God’s curse! I have been a Sabbath breaker, a coveter of other people’s goods, dishonest in many of my dealings, besides a cherisher of evil thoughts—what is to become of me?

‘Thus I am a sinner, both practically and spiritually! The Saviour declares me to be one of the vilest of the vile! I am lost and undone!’

But Satan came in with his sly suggestions. He said, ‘O repent, reform, turn over a new leaf, and all will be right!’

But, Nay, nay, says Christ, ‘Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’

Nay, nay, says Paul, ‘cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the law to do them’ (Galatians 3:10). This completely shuts out all hope through my efforts or doings to make things straight with the all-holy God! There is nothing for it but salvation full and free, wrought out for me by Jesus Christ. I saw the mystery, and believed! O how my heart leaped for joy!

Observe here, that at this time I was quickened by the Holy Ghost. I was a regenerated man. My very anxiety about my soul, and my intense longing to know what the word meant prove this, for no natural man ever troubled his head after this fashion. I was quickened before I gave myself to reading. Very different is this case to that of those who take all for granted, and are carried away by exciting rant, or popular preaching.

Secondly, the other great truth that my
reading brought to light was, ‘by the deeds
of the law there shall no flesh be justified’
(Romans 3:20). O what huge obstructions and
difficulties did this sweep away at once! Before
this, in reading the Old Testament history
especially, I was puzzled beyond measure
with God’s commandments, statutes, and His
ordinances. I used to say to myself, ‘There must
be two ways of Salvation, one by keeping those
laws, the other by believing in Christ.’ But the
blessed Epistle to the Romans taught me that
‘Christ is the end of the law for righteousness
to every one that believeth’ (Romans 10:4).
From that day to this I have had no doubt about
God’s way of salvation, though I have had
doubts of my interest in it. The Old Testament
commandments, statutes, and ordinances
have nothing whatever to do with salvation.
They are conditions, on the observance of
which national Israel was to have possession
of the land, and enjoy temporal blessings;
whereas salvation is wholly, completely, and
unreservedly unconditional!

God grants salvation, not of works, but by
grace; sheer, gratuitous, sovereign grace:
and this He gives according to the good pleasure of
His will!

Brethren in the Lord, thus was I delivered!
The work was done first by God the Holy
Ghost quickening me, me who never sought
Him; secondly, by inciting me to give diligence
to reading the word. ‘Ah’, say many, ‘we
don’t like those extreme views!’ Like them or
dislike them, I reply, I am going to heaven with
them in full assurance of understanding! How
common is this objection to the doctrines of
distinguishing grace! ‘Extreme—extreme!’ the
Enemy cries, ‘let us have something more in
accordance with man’s notions of right and
wrong!’

I answer, what the word teaches, and not
what man wishes, are two different things. The
word distinctly declares that God’s thoughts
are not man’s thoughts, and the whole tenor of
God’s dealings with man, proves that God’s
ways are diametrically opposed to man’s. ‘Who
by searching can find out God?’ (Job 11:7). But
let us have a word upon ‘extreme views’. What folly and inconsistency lie at the bottom of this
objection!

What greater extreme than the Eternal
Love of God for His poor sinning Church?—Jeremiah 31:3.

What greater extreme than the assumption
on the part of Jehovah Jesus of the form of
sinful man?—Philippians 2:6-8.

What greater extreme than Jesus becoming
a beggar that His Church might be rich?—2
Corinthians 8:9.

What greater extreme than the Creator
of the universe submitting to be maltreated by
His own creatures?—John 1:3; 19:18.

What greater extreme than God in
Redemption work passing by angels, and
rescuing and saving men, who by nature are
worse than devils?—Hebrews 2:16; James
2:19.

What greater extreme than God giving
grace to His Church in Christ Jesus before the
world began, to save it irrespective of all sorts
of works whatever?—2 Timothy 1:9.

These are truths known and acknowledged
by every beginner in divinity, truths so amazing
as to nonplus the highest intellectual power of
man! Yet we have preachers professing to hold
them, hesitating, parleying, shifting, shirking,
and evading in connection with other truths
as clearly revealed, such as predestination,
election, particular redemption, and final
perseverance!

What can these men mean? They who
heartily believe in the first set of truths, might
readily believe with their heads in the second.
The reason they do not is simply this:—the
first set of truths do not call in question any
individual’s expectation of salvation; the
second do. No man would object to the

The Lamb And His Bride
James Wells

I saw the Lamb and the Bride on Mount Zion; I saw
the Saviour presenting the church without spot,
without wrinkle, or any such thing; I saw the sun go
down to rise no more; I saw the moon go down to
rise no more; I saw the earth pass away to appear no
more; I saw the universe pass away; I saw the Lord
coming to judgment; I saw him on His throne, and
His people on His right hand; and I heard Him say,
“Here am I, and all thou hast given me.”
Regeneration

Regeneration is the infusion of a new principle of spiritual life. Naturally, men are dead in trespasses and sins, and, therefore, in order to their acting in a holy and spiritual manner, a living holy principle must be communicated to them. Hence the saints are said to be quickened, that is to say, they are inspired with life.

And this is a new life, and is a spring of new actions. It is called a new heart, and a new spirit, and an heart of flesh. Grace is not our old nature made better, and excited unto spiritual acts; but it is a new nature produced in our minds, by the divine infinite power and grace of God. For which reason we are said to be new creatures. Something now exists in us, which had no being in our minds before.

Nothing short of this comes up to the scriptural account of this matter. No excitations, no impulses, no aids, however forcible and great they are supposed to be, reach the intention of the Holy Spirit, in those phrases, which he uses on this subject.

Besides, our corrupt nature is not a fit subject for heavenly excitations, nor is it possible to bring it in subjection to the obedience of Christ. The carnal mind can never become subject to the Law of God. A bitter fountain will as soon send forth sweet streams, which all know is impossible.

Regeneration does not consist in acts, but in the production of a principle disposed unto actions holy and well-pleasing unto God, by Jesus Christ; and, therefore, this work is instantaneous and wrought on the mind at once.

John Brine

3 I have written elaborately upon this subject in my Five Sermons on the Five Points.
Meditation, NEW FOCUS

Alas, what times have we fallen upon! Blind guides indeed no one had the courage or the knowledge to rebuke him! made at a large clerical meeting, amidst many plaudits, and would not have risked such an observation. And yet it was purpose, is the height of impudence, to say the least of it.
sinner whom He has set His love upon is insufficient for the great instrument in God's hands for reclaiming drunkenness. Gospel and school appliances were insufficient to repress experience of all present was that the preaching of the gospel is not with promotion of education did not reach the drunkard. The logic of facts, that the preaching of the gospel and the following remarks. It seemed to him, from the inexorable clergyman, at Southport, a few months ago, to make the young clergymen, at Southport, a few months ago, to make the wretched gabble, or painful dullness, or self-stultification of what I may term 'the electro-plated Evangelicals'. They do not read the word, they consequently do not meditate upon it; hence we have silliness, or stupidity, or garrulosity, or self-seeking in our pulps. But the man of God is compelled to meditate, and this makes him profitable, humble, and honest, thoroughly furnished for every good work (1 Timothy 4:15; 2 Timothy 2: 15).

Sovereign choice was one of the chief subjects of my meditation. It amazed me! It prostrated me in the very dust! How is it Lord, I have often asked my Father, how is it that I have been chosen out of the mass of my relatives, companions, and friends? I have seen relatives consigned to the tomb without a shadow of a hope of salvation! I have seen companions of my youth cut off in their unbelief! I have stood by the newly opened grave, and seen the familiar associate consigned thereto, who died as he lived, unbelieving and unsaved. And I now know of men who were my class-fellows at school and at the university, occupying a far higher position in this world than I, who are living in the world as exemplary individuals!

And here am I plucked as a brand out of the burning sought out by the Lord, a monument of mercy permitted and privileged to proclaim the Glorious Gospel of the Grace of God! Surely there must be a cause! The cause, I tell you, was not in me, for I hated God and religion, but in the sovereign choice of JEHOVAH who will have mercy on whom He will have mercy (Romans 9:15).

O, as I have meditated on this one fact, and as I have looked back upon the way God has led me, and kept me during my life, I needed no other proof of electing love!

The continuance of divine love was another subject of meditation with me during the night watches. I wondered would God continue this love to me. I have said to the Lord, 'Lord, Thou knowest I am still a poor frail sinner; perhaps I may sin away this love, I may weary Thee; after having been indulgent to me for years, haply Thou wilt cast me off though I were the signet on Thy right hand!'

No: answered the Lord, 'For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy upon thee' (Isaiah 54:9, 10).

I shall tell you another phase of this truth that mediation brings out. It is this: God foreknew before He ever actually called a
sinner what that sinner was made of. He knew his disposition, He knew his failings, He knew he would sin, and play the rebel: yet God took pity on him, and God loved him, and now the poor sinner has proved himself to be precisely what God foreknew he would be, surely God will not cast him off! No, never! Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever: and the blessed truth is continually reiterated by Him, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee!' (Hebrews 13:5). Listen, beloved Brethren, to what the Lord has said with respect to His poor rebellious children, 'I knew that thou wouldst deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb. For my name's sake I will now defer mine anger, and for my sake I will refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off. Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction' (Isaiah 48:8-10).

O, what a considerate God! This one text speaks volumes, no putting away, no casting out, no change of mind, and simply because the Lord foreknew all the baseness and treachery His children would be guilty of, and though God hates sin, He will not cut off because of it. This of course alludes only to spiritual Israel, the seed of Abraham, both Jew and Gentile. But I will tell you what the Lord will do to His rebellious children: He will chasten them as a loving Father, and treat them as a wise parent. He will use the rod, and make them kiss it. When the chastening comes it surprises God's chosen one. He says, 'Lord, I could do with thy love, but this chastening is grievous to me!' 'Ah,' says the Lord, 'Whom I love, I chasten; and scourge every son whom I receive' (Hebrews 12:6). This puts an end to the controversy between the Father and the Child, and the latter when in his right mind rejoices that he is the subject of chastening and rebuke.

Temptation has now to be dealt with. Some years ago an old Christian man whom I never saw, wrote to me thus, 'My dear brother in the Lord Jesus, you have need of many prayers, for I am certain you are the object of fierce attack on the part of Satan, whose cause you have much injured.' Never was a truer word written! Every man who will speak the truth as it is in Jesus is sure to be fiercely opposed by the father of lies. The reason why preachers and professors in general spend such quiet and apparently happy lives is, they never oppose Satan. Poor deluded souls! They eat, and drink, and are merry with their fellows, never for a moment alluding to serious things, but speaking of the news of the day, and are 'hail fellows, well met,' with the world at large! Why should such suffer persecution? They oppose nothing, therefore Satan leaves them unmolested. But it is not so with a truth speaking minister. He must identify himself with God, and consequently he is shunned, and hated, and tempted.

Some of you little know, and little dream of the depths of temptation that I have waded through! O what horrid thoughts! What filthy and blasphemous thoughts have been poured into my soul by Satan! Thoughts more than enough to sweep my soul into hell! Peter with his lying and swearing was nothing in comparison with me! I have all but cursed the day that I was born, and would gladly have exchanged my existence with that of the brute that perisheth. I have wished to be annihilated, or to sleep eternally. And, though some will hardly believe me, I have been a coward toward my Saviour! What! you say! after your conversion? Yes, I answer, after my conversion! Men talk of having been in Satan's sieve, because they have been notorious profligates, or remarkable sinners, before some moral change has taken place in them, but let me tell them that Satan's sieve is only for the living children of God. Every unconverted man is under the influence of Satan, but this sieve is only for the blessed of the Lord, the redeemed and saved! Peter's case illustrates what I assert. 'Blessed art thou Simon Barjonah;' declared Jesus of Peter, a very little while before he was sifted as wheat! (Luke 22:31, 32).

But my Saviour stood by and reminded me of His prayer, 'I have prayed for thee that thy Faith fail not.' The result of all this (as you with discernment have detected) was experimental preaching. Through my own failings and infirmities, I knew that you, dear Brethren in the Lord, have been in the same position, and thus was I enabled to preach acceptably to you, and to remind you of my Commission, 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins' (Isaiah 40:1, 2).

5 The word 'converted' in the 32nd verse means restored, brought to thy right mind again, and not converted as used sometimes as synonymous with regeneration. A man must be regenerated who is pronounced blessed of God. Such was Peter before his fall.
Ah! there is no preaching like experimental preaching! It is like face answering to face in a glass! The anxious hearer beholds the facsimile of himself in the honest preacher, and thus is he built up in his most holy faith, and strengthened for further conflict. It is this knowledge of self that enables a minister to describe the ins and outs of the heart, to declare the absolute necessity of a finished salvation, and to say with authority, 'I have seen an end of all perfection!' (Psalm 119:96).

My space warns me to conclude. And now for a word or two on:

**Visiting One’s Parishioners**

Much fault has been found with me for not having visited from house to house, and preached in private as well as in public. There are decided enemies of God’s truth both here and elsewhere, parties who have no creed of their own, but are unanimous in picking some hole in my character, who cry out against my neglect in ‘working my parish’, as it is called. ‘Working a parish!’ I exclaim. Why this is the very essence of Arminian rubbish! Besides, many of those who are loudest in their outcry against me on this score, do not themselves visit any more than I! Frankly, do I confess, I am not a visitor, for I am not cut out for the work. I no more could visit from house to house than I could sit down and make my own clothes! Yet I do not set my face against visiting. Let those whose tastes are bent that way visit as much as they please, but mark those men in the pulpit, and what are they? Why they are the very personification of puerility, painful dullness, and commonplace! They cannot edify, for they cannot instruct. But besides which, objectors forget that all ministers are not adapted for the same work. It was never intended they should. The Apostle to the Ephesians tells us as much, ‘Christ gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edification of the body of Christ’ (Ephesians 4:11, 12). There are men who could no more do my work than they could square the circle; and there are men whose work I no more could do than I can change my nature. We cannot transform gold into lead, or lead into gold. But let us take an honest and common sense view of this question. The popular idea is this, that a parson is to be on the streets the greater part of the day, calling at one house after another, reading and praying with the inmates. But I want to know how this is to be done? If visiting consisted in a mere mechanical process of walking so much, and talking so much, then the parson might be saved a deal of trouble by employing the celebrated Indian machine, which, at the will of the priest, and by an increase of pay from the devotee, can be made to repeat as many prayers as are desired; but if visiting for spiritual instruction consists in a spiritual act of drawing nigh to God with the spirit and the understanding, I defy a man to act according to the popular idea. No really godly man can possibly visit ten houses a day, and not be convinced at the close that he has played the formalist and the hypocrite for the time being, for he cannot read the scriptures in the spirit, he cannot pray in the spirit, all that time, and wherever there is reading or praying without the spirit, God is mocked, and Satan triumphs!

Then, again, the lower classes are as jealous of the sanctity of their homes as their more privileged fellows; they hate to be intruded upon, or interrupted, especially whilst at their business. And why should they not? Suppose I were to visit the doctors, the lawyers, the merchant princes at their establishments within a certain district, and say, ‘I am come to read the word of life to you’, what would be my reception? Should I not be politely or impolitely bowed out of the place, with the intimation that they could read for themselves, or they were too busy then to grant me a hearing? Surely so! And why should not the working man or the humble cottager have the same liberty? Let no man deceive himself by saying, ‘O, the rich and well-to-do are well educated, and know the value of spiritual instruction, (would to God they did!) it is not so with the lower classes, they need to be stirred up.’ Education has nothing whatever to do with vital godliness. I could pick out men and women who do not know how to read, write, or spell, who are truly ‘taught of God’, and I could point to learned individuals who are totally in the dark with respect to spiritual things.

‘What would you do then?’ someone asks. ‘Would you not visit at all? Would you not employ the means?’ I answer, again, visiting for spiritual instruction is altogether a spiritual act. An unconverted man cannot do it, except mechanically; but a godly man knows where and when to visit, for the Lord has been before him, and intimates in some way or other, by some agent or another, or by some secret influence or drawing out of the heart, either on...
the part of the visitor or him to be visited, that there is such a one at such a house who really seeks the Lord and wants spiritual instruction, comfort, and consolation. That person will send for a godly minister. This is the way the thing is done. Parties who advocate the indiscriminate, pell mell, mechanical mode of ‘working a parish’, may sneer and scoff at these views, but such deny the power of the Holy Ghost. I can tell the objectors that I could point out numbers of instances where men and women have been brought out of darkness into marvellous light, without forced means, but not one where vital religion has ever developed itself by the compulsory method. Someone has well said, ‘We read of Christ whipping multitudes out of the temple, but never of His whipping any in.’

Of course the old tale will be brought to bear against me about ‘compelling them to come in’, but this is too childish to waste my paper upon.

And now, my dear Brethren in the Lord, I bid you farewell. My prospects on earth do not seem very bright, but this matters little whilst the glorious inheritance above is ready for my possession, and not only for mine but for that of all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth. I could go to sleep in Jesus to-night with but one regret, and that is not expedient to relate here.

But with regard to what I have written above, you who can separate the precious from the vile (Jeremiah 15:19), you who can distinguish between godly experience and natural excitement, you who have had your own senses exercised by the Holy Spirit will be able to appreciate the solemn truths laid before you.

The poor world, both religious and profane, will read this tract with incredulity and contempt, because it cannot understand the ways of the Lord. Doubtless I shall be charged with arrogance, and antinomianism, but God is my witness that I am far, far from both.

The living children of God are no boasters, no loose livers. The know that their salvation is all of the Lord, and their desire is to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit: and though they cannot do as they would wish, ‘for evil is ever present with them, yet their delight is in the law of God, after the inward man’ (Romans 7:15-25).

Brethren, you know this, you know that for twenty-four years I have taught you thus, so it matters not what the world either thinks or says respecting you or me. The experience of the Church of God often seems bordering on enthusiasm, and even daring liberty, but it is only to the world, and it no more can understand the inner or outer life of a truly regenerated man, than can the peasant understand a problem in science!

Strive, my Brethren, to walk consistently, give no occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, and you will have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:11).

Once more, Farewell!
Your faithful Pastor,
WILLIAM PARKS
August, 1867

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O Happy saints, who dwell in light,
And walk with Jesus clothed in white,
Safe landed on that peaceful shore
Where pilgrims meet to part no more.

Released from sin and toil and grief,
Death was their gate to endless life;
An open cage to let them fly
On wings of love to worlds on high.

And now they range the heav’nly plains,
And sing their hymns in noblest strains,
Their happy souls in glory prove
The heights and depths of Jesus’ love.

He cheers them with eternal smile;
They sing hosannas all the while;
Or, overwhelm’d with rapture sweet,
Sink down adoring at His feet.

Ah! Lord, with tardy steps I creep,
And sometimes sing and sometimes weep;
Yet strip me of this house of clay,
And I will sing as loud as they.

John Berridge

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SOME PERSONAL THOUGHTS

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NEW FOCUS  PRINTABLE EDITION SEPTEMBER 2018

18
Brethren, here are the reasons I use the King James Version of the Bible.

1. The Finest Text
First, I believe it was made from the best Greek and Hebrew texts, which are the preserved Word of God. I refer to the Masoretic Hebrew Text preserved by the nation of Israel, and the Textus Receptus Greek Text (or the Byzantine text). This is the Greek text preserved from A.D. 452 to 1453 by the Greek church, the Waldenses, and Albigenses.

All modern translations are based upon the reconstructed Greek text of Westcott and Hort, two Romanist oriented scholars, whose purpose was to replace the Protestant and Baptist text with those of the Roman Church and thereby wean back Protestants to the Roman fold. These two men denied the blood atonement of Jesus Christ, exalted Mary worship and the Romanish mass, denied the Genesis record, and were ardent evolutionists and had universalist tendencies.

About 95 percent of all Greek manuscripts that we have are the Byzantine type. This means that the Westcott and Hort texts disagree with 95 percent of extant sources, including Scripture quotations from the writings of the early church fathers, who antedated the texts on which the Westcott and Hort reconstruction was based. The Westcott and Hort texts came from Rome and Egypt, depicted as God’s enemies in Scripture, whereas the text of the King James Version came from Syria and Greece, the areas of the initial outreach of Christianity.

All translations since 1611 have not been made entirely from the Textus Receptus. These did include some of the Textus Receptus but they largely depended on the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. Codex Vaticanus was found in the pope’s library in A.D.1481 and Codex Sinaiticus was taken from a waste basket on a Mount Sinai monastery in 1859.

Both of these manuscripts include the apocryphal books outside of the New Testament canon. This makes the new translations based largely on these texts essentially Roman Catholic translations. They resemble Jerome’s Latin Vulgate and the Rheims-Douai versions of 1582 authorized by the Roman Catholic Church at the infamous Council of Trent.
2. Word For Word
The King James translators employed a method of verbal equivalence (a word for word translation) rather than the method of paraphrase of dynamic equivalent (a meaning for meaning). The idea of the King James translators was to give us what the Bible writers really wrote instead of what some committee of liberal scholars thought they wrote. This practice was not followed by modern day translators.

The King James translators believed every word placed in the original text was exactly as God intended. Their regard for verbal inspiration is reflected in the use of italics in translations wherever words were added in English, which were not in the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. This practice has not been followed by modern versions.

Personally, I look upon most modern versions (especially the New Testament) as new Bible versions. I say this because a translation of the Bible to be true to its name must be the writing down of the message into another language without changing its meaning. The natural man cannot understand the things of God (1 Corinthians 2:14), and he cannot be trusted to put God’s thoughts into correct English.

3. Tested, Tried, And Proven
The King James Version has been read and examined by some great minds since 1611, and wherein it has weak translations these have been pointed out by men like Henry, Poole, Trapp, Gill, Spurgeon, Pink, Graves, etc. This is not true of any of these modern versions. The examinations which have been made of these are limited, and they have resulted in unsatisfactory reports.

4. It Has Served Me Well
The King James Version has been the Bible of my Baptist fathers. It is the one I have studied, memorized and preached from for 44 years. It was the one being preached from when I was converted to Christ. It was the Bible of the church which baptized me, and of the church and men who ordained me to the ministry. It is the Bible I have heard preached all of my life. I have no plans to throw my King James Version away for some new version made by infidels from Catholic manuscripts.

5. Divinely Preserved
I believe the King James Version is a faithful translation of the preserved Word of God in the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. It is the best we have for the English speaking world in this generation. As long as any translation follows the Textus Receptus and the Masoretic Hebrew text, they are inspired. When they choose to do otherwise, they are in error. This rule applies to the King James Version as well as to others. I believe that only the original autographs were perfect or inspired. God has preserved His Word in Hebrew and Greek, but no translation has come down to us from inspired translators, and this includes the King James Version.

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Cowper’s experience as a home teacher
Cowper was constantly on the look-out for an ‘Emil’ of his own whom he could bring up the way he felt a child ought to develop. As Cowper never married and had no children of his own, he did not find it an easy matter. Of his four attempts to find and instruct a protégé, three proved successful and one a miserable failure. The failure was Cowper’s first effort. Shortly after his conversion in 1764 at St. Albans the poet found a young boy, Richard Coleman, of seven or eight years of age living with his drunkard father. The boy, too, was already an alcoholic but Cowper felt he could save the boy’s life and bring him up as a Christian. Although Cowper looked after the boy until well into manhood, he remained addicted to the bottle and to a host of other malpractices and was nothing but a burden on Cowper’s patience and pocket. Cowper’s other three protégés were his housekeeper’s son, William Unwin, for whom Cowper wrote ‘Tirocinium’. Unwin became Cowper’s closest friend and under the poet’s guidance became a school governor and educated his children by home-schooling them himself, with Cowper’s help. It was through William Unwin’s witness that Wilberforce was converted. The next ‘Emil’ was Samuel Rose a Scot’s youth who became well-known as a lawyer when he defended the poet William Blake successfully against His Majesty’s Army. Cowper’s third ‘Emil’ was John Johnson, a distant relative of Cowper’s whom the poet introduced to a life in God’s service. Johnson became a Doctor of Theology and clergyman and tenderly cared for his tutor throughout the poet’s final years of distress and illness.

Cowper aids Unwin on educating his children
In September, 1780 Unwin began to consider what steps he should take to see that his son John received a good education, so he turned to Cowper, as in most things, for advice. The poet sent him a detailed reply; the first of many letters on the subject in which he said:

... With respect to the Education of Boys, I think they are generally made to draw in Latin & Greek Trammels too soon. It is pleasing no doubt to a Parent to see his child already in some sort, a Proficient in those Languages, at an Age
When most others are entirely ignorant of them; but hence it often happens that a Boy who could construe a Fable in Æsop at 5 or 7 Years of Age, having exhausted his little Stock of Attention & Diligence in making that notable Acquisition, grows weary of his Task, & perhaps makes but a very indifferent Progress afterward. The Mind and the Body have in this respect a striking Resemblance of each other. In childhood they are both Nimble, but not Strong; they can Skip and Frisk about with wonderfull Agility, but hard Labor Spoils them both. In materurer years they become less Active, but more vigorous, more capable of a fixt Application, and can make themselves Sport with That which a little earlier would have affected them with intolerable Fatigue. I should recommend it to you therefore … to allot the two next years of little John’s Scholarship, to Writing and Arithmetic, together with which for Variety’s sake and because it is capable of being formed into an Amusement, I would mingle Geography. A Science which if not attended to betimes, is seldom made an Object of much Consideration; essentially necessary to the Accomplishment of a Gentleman, yet (as I know by sad Experience) imperfectly, if at all inculcated in the Schools. Lord Spencer’s Son when he was 4 years of Age, knew the Situation of every Kingdom, Country, City, River, & remarkable Mountain in the World. For this Attainment, which I Suppose his Father had never made, he was indebted to a Plaything; having been accustomed to amuse himself with those Maps which are cut into several Compartments, so as to be thrown into a Heap of confusion, that they may be put together again with an exact Coincidence of all their Angles and Bearings so as to form a perfect Whole.

If he begins Latin and Greek at Eight or even at 9 years of Age, it is surely soon enough. Seven years, the usual allowance for those Acquisitions, are more than sufficient for the Purpose, especially with His Readiness in Learning. For you would hardly wish to have him qualified for the University before 15, a Period in my Mind much too early for it, & when he could hardly be trusted there without the utmost Dangers to his Morals. Upon the whole you will perceive, that in my Judgment the Difficulty as well as the Wisdom consists more in Bridling in and keeping back a Boy of his Parts, than in pushing him forward. If therefore at the End of the two next years, instead of putting a Grammar into his Hand, you should allow him to amuse himself with some agreeable Writers upon the Subjects of natural Philosophy, for another year, I think it would Answer well. There is a Book called Cosmotheoria Puerilis, there are Derham’s Physico and Astrotheology together with several others in the same Manner, very Intelligible even to a child, & full of usefull Instruction.

Although this was Cowper’s first letter on the subject and he had not yet worked out a curriculum, his words already contain a number of new ideas. Firstly, children should not learn Classical (foreign) languages too early. From his Westminster days, Cowper knew that many a pupil who was a first-class Latin scholar could hardly write a letter home in English. Secondly, seemingly ‘bright’ children should not be pushed, bullied and eventually wearied by too much encouragement from ambitious teachers. Thirdly, a young boy’s mind as his body should be gradually and systematically fostered according to his age. Fourthly, writing (which we would call ‘essay writing’ or ‘composition’ today), arithmetic, science and geography, subjects which were neglected in Cowper’s day, ought to be on the curriculum. Fifthly, Cowper recommends learning by playing which was a very revolutionary thought in the 18th century when fathers expected their sons to be miniatures of themselves.

Realising that Unwin was in a far better position to teach a child himself rather than entrust him to a school, Cowper wrote again strongly advising his friend to become his own son’s tutor. The poet then sent Unwin a series of letters on education but realising how jumbled his thoughts were and how much better he could say what he had to say in poetry, he started organising his ideas into verse around 1781. His domestic situation and other ties hindered him from completing the work before 1784 but in that year Tirocinium: or A Review of Schools was sent to the printer’s along with
The Kingdom Of God Triumphant

By Allan Jellett

Price £17.95 ($23.95) + p&p

198 pages hardback

The book of Revelation can sometimes appear difficult to understand with its visions and plagues and symbolism. Too many writers have used this fact as an excuse for far-fetched and bizarre notions about the end times. This in turn has made some believers wary of delving too deeply into the message John gave to the Church for its blessing from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Pastor Allan Jellett of Knebworth Grace Church has produced a new book drawn from his recent series of sermons from the book of Revelation. In it he provides an overview and interpretation of the prophecy to comfort and encourage the Lord’s people, and to remind them that whatever happens in this world, be it in the personal lives of the saints, or the struggles amongst the nations of the earth, the Lord God is sovereign. He is in control and the Kingdom of God is now, and ever will be, triumphant.

Available from Go Publications at:
http://go-newfocus.co.uk/books
Purchases through Paypal or credit card.

Troublemakers At Frankfurt

A Vindication Of The English Reformation

By Dr George M. Ella

Price £25.00 ($35.00) + p&p

368 pages hardback

Not all the important events of the 16th Century English Reformation occurred in England. In this book George Ella shows the importance of the British exiles’ time in Europe during the reign of ‘Bloody’ Mary as they laid the foundations for the subsequent reformation of the Church in England and the doctrines that moulded its subsequent leadership in reformed theology throughout Europe and the world.

Available from Go Publications at: http://go-newfocus.co.uk/books
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The Task and John Gilpin to be published in one volume. Tirocinium was the word used by the Romans to describe a soldier’s initial training and had come to be used for training of boys at school. Cowper used the term facetiously as he campaigned against ‘universal soldiery’ i.e. military conscription, as radically as he campaigned against public schools.

The aims of education

Cowper starts his treatise by asserting that education in general has neither a basis nor a goal. Its view of man is that of a flame that flares up as if from nowhere, dies down and is no more. This is too low a view of man for Cowper and an equally low view of God and His plan for mankind. Cowper argues that man has been created by God, the High King of Heaven, to rule the earth and all that is found in it. Any education must therefore start on this premise. It must seek to make man worthy and capable of his task. Thus Cowper argues:

’Tis plain the creature, whom he chose t’invest
With kingship and dominion o’er the rest,
Receiv’d his nobler nature, and was made
Fit for the pow’r in which he stands array’d,
That first or last, hereafter if not here,
He too might make his author’s wisdom clear,
Praise him on earth, or, obstinately dumb,
Suffer his justice in a world to come.

This once believ’d, ’twere logic misapplied
To prove a consequence by none denied,
That we are bound to cast the minds of youth
Betwixt the mould of heav’nly truth,
That, taught of God they may indeed be wise,
Nor, ignorantly wand’ring, miss the skies.

If the ground of all education is the fact
that man has been invested with the crown of creation, what is education’s goal? Logically speaking, explains Cowper, it is eternal communion with God as His eternal steward. A thing of sheer madness, however, has happened. Man has been made but man has also been marred. He has rejected his high calling and descended from the eternal throne God has made for him. Adam’s offspring is blind in part to its true calling. Education therefore has now three goals. The pupil must know for what high calling he has been made; he must know that man has sinned and fallen short of God’s glory and the glory that was his own and he needs to be led back to the Lord he has rejected. Thus the future-orientated task of the school is to see that boys:

… learn with wonder how this world began,
Who made, who marr’d, and who has ransom’d man:
Points which, unless the scripture made them plain,
The wisest heads might agitate in vain.

In other words, schools need a textbook equal to the curriculum’s task and this can only be the Scriptures first and foremost.

Part 3 next issue
The New Focus conference this year in London was an opportunity for friends to gather to hear the gospel of sovereign grace declared passionately and powerfully. We were once again privileged to have able preachers whose ministry has proven to be a blessing to the Lord’s people over many years. Pastors Don Fortner, John Graham, Harry Qazi, Allan Jellett and Peter Meney ministered the gospel to us over the two days.

In addition to the preaching service and an opportunity for communion at the Lord’s table, a service of ordination was conducted by Don Fortner for Peter Meney for the purpose of formally recognising his calling to preach the gospel. Pastor Meney is presently in the process of moving to the USA to minister at Sovereign Grace Church in Great Falls, Montana. The official ordination is a requirement imposed by US authorities for the granting of a visa. All the sermons including the ordination service can be listened to at Freegraceradio.com under the relevant preacher’s name or by searching ‘New Focus Conference’ on Sermonaudio.com.

We are grateful for the fellowship and hospitality of Pastor Harry Qazi and the brothers and sisters at Merton Evangelical Church who once again undertook to host our gathering and provide refreshments. It was a pleasure to meet up with friends often not seen from year to year for the mutual encouragement such occasions afford.

Those attending were also given an opportunity to purchase Don Fortner’s new book *Going Home* and Allan Jellett’s new title *The Kingdom Of God Triumphant*.

Plans for next year’s gathering are still being considered. Details will be posted on the New Focus website as soon as possible.