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The
Gospel Magazine

And Protestant Beacon :

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

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THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE

"COMFORT YE, COMFORT YE MY PEOPLE, SAITH YOUR GOD."
"ENDEAVOURING TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE."
"JESUS CHRIST, THE SAME YESTERDAY, AND TO-DAY, AND FOR EVER."

No. 1064
New Series

FEBRUARY, 1957

No. 2264
Old Series

THE FAMILY PORTION

OR, WORDS OF SPIRITUAL CAUTION, COUNSEL, AND COMFORT.

Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."—2 CORINTHIANS i. 4.

WATER AND WINE

"Thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him."—John 2 : 10-11.

THE Lord Jesus "manifested forth His glory" in the first of His miracles or "signs"—that of providing what we believe to have been the pure juice of the grape, the common refreshment of the people of His day, when more of it was needed after the first supply had come to an end.

In those times a marriage feast was not a matter of one day, but an observance of some seven or eight days, and it is not surprising that the supply failed if there were perhaps more guests than usual, and if the parties belonged to the poorer section of the people. At any rate, we read that the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine" (verse 3). This was "when they wanted wine," or, as it is in the Greek, "the wine having failed." In the customary Eastern hospitality a failure to provide would be deeply felt. We do not know whether on this occasion the mother of Jesus had some responsibility in the catering for the guests or not, but she came to Jesus, and mentioned the need which had arisen.

To this occasion and to the miracle we invite our readers' attention. This record is not often considered by ministers of the Word; but at the end it is stated that "*Jesus manifested forth His glory.*" So, in considering it, we pray that we may be enabled by God the Holy Spirit to see something of *the Lord's glory.*

It was the beginning of His miracles (verse 11). Hence we can rule out entirely those so-called miracles in the later Apocryphal Gospels; puerile and absurd are they indeed, but they are quite excluded by the statement in John's Gospel.

Critical writers and commentators of the day who do not believe in miracles usually state that the governor of the feast (verse 10) made a rough joke about the "water" and that his remark was later turned into the account of a miracle. Such was the teaching given at great length in a lecture which I attended at Cambridge University nearly fifty years ago, and such is the "explanation" given today in the books of some popular religious writers. We regard it as sheer unbelief. In such a supposition there is no "scholarship," but rather the reverse. The same unbelief is being taught to the younger generation in our schools today, and this is the only reason why we think it right to refer to it. The verse on which the supposition is built (verse 10) is the governor's unbiassed *testimony to the reality of the wine* provided by the Lord Jesus.

As to the wine, we believe it to have been the pure juice of the grape, which was the common refreshment in Palestine. It cannot be thought that the holy Lord Jesus, who spoke sternly about the evil of "surfeiting and drunkenness," would turn six large water-pots of water into alcoholic drink to encourage and provide occasion for excess and drunkenness. That would be to make Christ a minister of sin.

The reader of the Gospel should not fail to note the very remarkable chronological detail in chapters 1 and 2. Here "*it was the third day.*" Taking this as the third day from the event last mentioned (the call of Philip), it would make *a week* together, mentioned in great detail (1: 19, the witness of John; 1: 29, "the next day"; 1: 35, "again the next day"; 1: 43, "the day following"; 2: 1, "the third day"). The writer, John, who was an eye-witness, remembered and recorded the distinct days. There are many such marks of historical accuracy in John's Gospel. The Word of God bears its own testimony to its truth.

But in the miracle Jesus "*manifested forth His glory.*"

I.—HE HAD POWER OVER NATURAL THINGS

When He made the water into the grape-juice that so refreshes and comforts, He showed that *He had power over natural things*. When later, in the storm on the lake, He rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea "Peace, be still," the disciples said one to another, "*What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?*" (Mark 4 : 41). It is never said of the prophets or apostles who wrought miracles that they "manifested forth their own glory." But here it is as if John recorded: "This was but the beginning, the first example, of that series of seven miracles, or 'signs,' recorded in this Gospel with the purpose that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ and that believing ye might have life through His Name" (John 20 : 30, 31). The first miracle was a monument of the power of the Lord Jesus. His incarnation, His appearing in the flesh, His "visiting us in great humility," might hide His real Person; but He was shown to be the Sent One, the Messiah, the Son of God.

The effect of this miracle was that "His disciples believed on Him," which we take to mean that they were more than ever confirmed in their belief in Him as the Messiah of God. John himself wrote: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1 : 14).

II.—THE KINDNESS OF THE LORD JESUS

Further, we see the kindness of the Lord Jesus in gracing a wedding with His presence and with that of His disciples. The place—Cana of Galilee—was within a few miles of His home at Nazareth. It is possible that He was invited as being a relation. His earthly mother was there also, and it seems as if she had some position of responsibility on the occasion, for she gave attention to the failure of the refreshments and also gave directions to the servants. The Lord Jesus gave them His company. He "adorned and beautified" the marriage "with His presence and first miracle that He wrought" (Prayer Book). He did not refuse the invitation, but entered into the happiness of the occasion. He rejoiced with them that rejoiced.

This has its message to young Christians. Marriage is to be "in the Lord." Believers are "not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers." "I am persuaded," said George Whitefield, "the devil can lay no greater snare for young Christians than to tempt them unequally to yoke themselves with unbelievers, as are all who are

not born of God." His Scriptural warning should not be lightly dismissed and disregarded. This is especially so where a marriage with a Roman Catholic is contemplated. "Let it suffice to advise all" (George Whitefield concluded), "whenever they enter into a marriage state, to imitate the people of Cana in Galilee, to call Christ to the marriage; He certainly will hear, and choose for you; and you will always find His choice to be the best."

III.—THE LORD'S LIBERALITY

The liberality of our Lord's provision may be noticed. As the wedding feast was kept seven days, He seems to have provided for the following days of the week. There were six large water-pots, and each contained something like 18 or 27 gallons (a firkin being about nine gallons). This would be a very large provision.

In all this we may see something of the *liberality* of the Lord in His dealings with His people. Paul said: "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4: 19). We recall the statement by James: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men *liberally*, and upbraideth not" (1: 5). God's mercy and grace in Christ is described as *abundant*—"exceeding abundant" (1 Tim. 1: 14). "God is able to make all grace *abound* toward you" (2 Cor. 9: 8). "Where sin abounded, grace did much more *abound*" (Rom. 5.20). "The riches of His grace, wherein He hath *abounded* toward us" (Eph. 1: 7, 8).

We may remark upon the Lord's reply to the words of His earthly mother. When the wine failed, she said to Him, "They have no wine" (verse 3). The Lord's reply was courteous—"Woman" was the ordinary correct and courteous address; but yet the Lord's reply was a gentle but definite rebuke. "What have I to do with thee?" is rebuke, as other passages where it is used in the Scriptures indicate. There could be no intrusion upon, or interference with, the Lord's work. In Mary's remark there was obviously something that was not right. The Lord's work in redemption was His alone.

IV.—"THOU HAST KEPT THE GOOD WINE UNTIL NOW"

Finally, we think that it is legitimate to make a spiritualised application of this miracle. Other miracles had their spiritual counterpart—the feeding of the five thousand led to the discourse on Christ as the Bread of Life (John 6). The water at the well (John 4) led Jesus to say: "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give

him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4 : 13, 14).

In the miracle Jesus turned water into wine. What was *good* was made *even better* (not what was *evil* was made *good*).

In this we may see a truth respecting the mission and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Him there is an abundance of the wine of the Gospel. In Him there is plentiful redemption, pardon, forgiveness, acceptance, righteousness, strength and power, and eternal inheritance. In Him there is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the needy hearts of His disciples. The best wine was kept to the coming of the Saviour. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." So cried Isaiah (55 : 1). The Lord Jesus said : "If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of him shall flow *rivers of living water*" (John 7 : 37, 38).

Again, we may think of a future Marriage Feast—the Marriage of the Lamb (Rev. 19 : 7-9). The expectant, waiting soul may well read this passage as well as Revelation 21 and 22, where there is a glorious description of the Heavenly City. The very best is kept to the last.

W.D.S.

WAYSIDE NOTES

"HE RESTORES MY SOUL"

SERMON BY REV. WILLIAM PARKS (Manchester), 1868

"*He restoreth my soul.*"—Psalm 23 : 3.

I DO not think it is too much to say that they who are unconscious of daily decay of soul cannot be living children of God, by which I mean, that they who are not sensible of their daily need of renewal or restoration of soul cannot be real Christians. If we were unconscious of the daily decay of our bodies, and their consequent need of restoration by suitable food, there would be no question as to our condition. We should be either dying or dead. And is it not very likely to be the case with the soul? I think so, yea, I am sure of it.

The soul that wants no good is a dead soul; the soul that is unconscious of the wear and tear to which it is subject, of the backslidings of which it is constantly guilty, of the sins of omission and commission which lie at its door, must be a dead soul. For, such is the peculiar change that a living soul has undergone, that it is exceedingly sensitive to sin, exceedingly quick in discovering a decay of spiritual strength, and exceedingly anxious to have the Lord close by it. In short, a living soul can no more do without a continual interchange of thought and feeling between itself and God, can no more do without a supply of righteousness from above, than can a living man do without a continual supply of nutriment for his body.

Ah, some of you, at least, can endorse this. How miserable you are when you think that God has forgotten! How dreadful are those times when the communication between you and the throne of grace seems to be cut off! I do not say you are right in your supposition (for God can never forget His people, and the connection between you and the throne of grace can never be severed), but these things *appear* to be so, and that makes you unhappy. Well, let me tell you, your very unhappiness under the circumstances is a clear proof that you are a living soul.

HE RESTORES

Let us now come to our text, and see how God restores a soul. I will open it for you first.

I. "*He restoreth my soul.*" The word "restoreth" is significant. It evidently implies that the soul had fallen or backslidden or been subject to decay. I think, too, that the allusion here is not to regeneration or restoration of the soul, in the first instance, from its condition by nature, for then the phrase would have been, He *has* restored my soul, or, He *did* restore my soul; but the words are, "*He restoreth my soul,*" as much as to say, "He is frequently doing it: it is a thing of daily occurrence. My soul often becomes weak and faint and weary and sore broken, but He restoreth it as often.

Oh, what a sweet reflection is this! and what a sound one, too! For we actually are as dependent upon God for our spiritual being as we are for our physical being. "In Him we live and move and have our being," asserts the apostle, alluding to our natural life. Surely, then, it must be so with regard to our spiritual life, unless we can make it appear that spiritual life is of less consequence than natural life. Brethren in the Lord Jesus, rely upon it, it is God who restoreth your souls, as well as keeps you in mere animal life.

SOME METHODS BY WHICH HE RESTORES

And now let us look into some of the methods by which God restoreth a soul, and reflect upon some of the consequences.

First, *Prayer* is one of God's ways of restoring a soul. Of course, it is the Spirit of God who is the prime motive power in this matter, but He uses means; one of those means is *prayer*. God puts the prayer into the weary, decaying soul, and then answers it. Oh, what a mystery are the ways of God! He gives faith and then rewards it; He gives repentance and then accepts it; He gives prayer and then answers it.

The natural man cannot receive this, consequently he sets to and manufactures a theology for himself, in which the creature starts and the Creator concludes. But who can be first with the everlasting God?

"Oh, but this is contrary to reason!" "It is the most absurd thing in the world, that a Being should reward His own acts in another person." Be it so, I answer. I could name a score of as great seeming absurdities as these that yet are held by natural men. "But let God be true though every man be proved a liar."

When I speak of prayer, I do not mean loud prayer, or long prayer, or even audible prayer, but that continuous chattering in broken accents carried on from morning to night by a living soul, beseeching God for grace, for help and strength. And oh, how precious is the answer when it comes! Ay, and even if it be long delayed, the soul is restored by the very act of speaking to God!

Secondly, another means by which God restoreth the soul is *His own Word*—whether read or heard. Cannot some of you testify to the fact that you have felt vigour infused into your poor decaying souls by reading your Bible? and cannot others tell us of how they have been refreshed and renewed by hearing the word preached? Why, you have been quite like new beings—you have gone on your way rejoicing as you have received a message either way, from your glorious God who restoreth the soul.

But oh, what darkness and misery have you experienced when you have read the word, and no light shone upon it; or as you listened to some preacher who "darkened counsel with words without knowledge!" Then you have understood the words of the Psalmist, "In Thy light shall we see light," for you were convinced that the Spirit's light is indispensable to the understanding of the word. And then again, you have seen the truth of the exhortation, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" And then you were driven to prayer for light to be vouchsafed to you, and your soul was restored for the time being. The word itself, though a means in God's hands for restoring the soul, if unaccompanied by the Spirit, is of no use

in this business. This should be a warning to us never to read or hear without solemnly invoking God's Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth.

Thirdly, another of God's ways of restoring a soul is by *Affliction*. And this assumes various shapes and forms. The Lord, you know, has said, "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." Ah, what a pregnant sentence! what a mysterious statement! The choosing is very gracious and very wonderful, but the furnace of affliction seems to dash all the graciousness to the earth!

But, nay, my hearers! It is of the infinite wisdom of God that our road to heaven should be through affliction! For it takes our eyes off the world—it weans the heart from sin—it awakens the energies of the soul for heaven—and draws the spirit into close communion with God. "The word 'affliction,'" says an old divine, "is of large import. It signifies something that beats down, that presses sore, and is grievous and tormenting—it takes in all the trouble we meet with from men—all the wounds we receive from enemies, as well as in the house of our friends. It takes in all our domestic trial, all our inward struggles and temptations, and all our crosses and tribulations." Oh, what an expansive term! It is very well that young converts do not clearly see all that is before them in this plan of God's, for they would be dreadfully discouraged if they did. But, brethren, it is a great fact. It is another fact that affliction will accompany us to our graves; it is a third fact that it is a great instrument in God's hands for restoring our souls!

It is this last fact that deprives affliction of its gloomy aspect. It would be gloomy, indeed, if God were to afflict without cause; but, my dear hearers, this cannot be. There is so much corruption in the hearts of those who walk closest with God, that, if God were not to send them affliction, they would forget themselves. Oh, if we were not afflicted, we should not know ourselves! Our pride would master us; our lust would ruin us; our lethargy would kill us. God knows all this, and in very compassion and love puts us in the furnace of affliction, and thus restores our souls continually. Were it not for temptation we should never pray; were it not for crosses we should never stoop; were it not for tribulation we should never think of heaven!

O beloved, remember, then, the design of your afflictions, and this will cheat them of half their pain! Depend upon it there is not an heir of heaven now before the throne, but who is thanking God for his sufferings here below. Sanctified affliction is the greatest proof that God can give you of His unspeakable love; for it is

written, "The Lord chasteneth whom He loveth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." Give us, then, affliction, O Lord, so that Thou restoreth our soul by it!

RESULTS OF GOD'S WORK

II. Now I would show you a few of the results of God's work upon the soul that He restoreth.

First, *the soul grows downward rather than upward*. What do I mean by that? Why this; the soul, getting a clearer knowledge of itself, becomes more humble than ever. When we first are called and justified, we are on the mount; we are tinged with spiritual pride; we think we shall never be moved; and we are ready to ridicule the idea of doubt or fear. But, as we grow older, we are shown more of the secrets of our hearts, and the abomination of those chambers of imagery; and this makes us humble. Ay, when God employs His means for restoring our souls, we are more convinced than ever that it is the glory of Christ alone that we must be beholden to for our salvation. All boasting is then excluded, and we walk humbly with our God.

Alas! what strange havoc do people in general make with that last Scripture I have quoted: "Walk humbly with thy God." There is not a pharisee or formalist or freewiller in the world who walks humbly with God. All, all are boasters, proud, imperious, who have not been shown the iniquity of their own hearts and the glory of Immanuel.

Secondly, *another result will be a deepening conviction of the freeness and distinguishing nature of God's grace*. We are all by nature free-willers: even after we have been called by grace, we are apt to think we have had something to do with our finding Christ. But, when God restoreth our soul, we are convinced that we had nothing to do with our conversion; and, farther, that if God were to withdraw now—we should be lost for ever.

Thirdly, *another result will be an overcoming of the world*: we shall get above the world; I do not mean that we shall neglect our business, but we shall feel the hold of the world upon our souls loosening—we shall be enabled to say with the Psalmist, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee."

Fourthly, *one more result—deep regret for having done so little for God*, after all the great things He has done for us. "O my God, pardon my ingratitude," is a frequent prayer with those whose souls God restoreth.

OUR YOUNG FOLKS' PAGE

TWO THIEVES AND A SABBATH-BREAKER

"**THY** Word hath quickened me," wrote the Psalmist; and the whole Psalm is filled with praise for God's Word, especially His statutes, precepts, testimonies, and commandments. Many of God's children, telling how they were brought to know Him, will quote Scriptures which came with quickening power to their hearts. But you would not expect the Ten Commandments to be called "quickening," or "life-giving," would you? Yet here are three instances in which the Eighth Commandment or the Fourth came with power to the heart of a sinner, and was the first means of awakening a consciousness of need and a longing after God.

Many years ago a lad went into a church in Shoreditch on a weekday. A pickpocket by profession, his plan was to rob the money-boxes in the church. Looking round carefully to make sure that he was alone, the boy made for the offertory box near the door. He was about to force it open, when he gave another quick look round to see that he was not watched, and his glance fell on the Ten Commandments written up over the Communion Table. One Commandment stood out, fixing the thief's attention: it was the Eighth—"Thou shalt not steal." Instantly convicted and trembling with fear, the lad crept out of the building. The arrow of God's Word had pierced his heart; he was filled with sorrow and true repentance, and began to study the Bible diligently. The Saviour revealed Himself to him in His Word, and he became a true believer.

A clergyman one day found among his letters the following, in an uneducated handwriting: "Sir, I feel ashamed before God that I should have to trouble you. I heard you the other Sunday reading over the Commandments. When you repeated the Eighth Commandment, my conscience accused me of breaking that command. I read in the Word of God the pledge robbed must be restored, and without restitution there is no salvation, if we have it in our power to restore. I took the value of one-and-sixpence from Mrs. Harris, who lives at 3 Stoke Street; and the value of one shilling from John Smith. Here is the money. I would have come to you myself, but oh! I felt ashamed to come. Oh Sir, pray for me that God would give me the grace of penitence, that I may by His grace be able to repent of my sins. Please Sir, to send the money to them. I am ashamed to go myself. I remain, yours truly, Thomas Hill."

Of course the minister hastened to pay the money where it was due; and he also found the writer of the letter. There again the

Eighth Commandment had come with quickening power, leading to the man's conversion.

Mary was the young wife of a grocer in a thriving country town. By hard work and fair dealing the couple had built up a good business. But it was wearing work; the shop-bell tinkled from early morning till late at night on weekdays, for, except during the hours of sleep, the shop was always open. Sunday was welcomed by the Johnsons after their six days' hard work, for no shops were opened on that day, and they could relax without fear of competition.

Tired out as they were by the end of Saturday, Mary and her William looked upon Sunday as a holiday. Their habit was to have a late breakfast, and then go out in the trap for a drive in the country. God had no place in their lives and home, and the thought of making Sunday a day holy to God, spent in worship and meditation, never occurred to them.

One Sunday William drove his wife in the trap to a pretty little village, close to the sea. They put the horse up at the inn, and strolled out to explore whilst dinner was getting ready. Their walk took them past the old church. Seeing the doors open, they went in to look round. The morning service was over, and the church was empty. Gazing at pillars and tablets and memorials, the Johnsons walked slowly up the middle aisle towards the Communion Table. And Mary's eye was suddenly caught by one of the Commandments written up over the Table. It was the Fourth. "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy"! Mary was transfixed. She felt as if the words had been spoken out loud to her, accusing her of having broken the Fourth Commandment. I do not know if she said anything to her husband then; but the words rankled in her heart. She could not forget them, and before they reached home again Mary had determined that in future she would "remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy."

After she returned home, and during the busy days that followed, Mary dwelt constantly on those words of Scripture. She felt that she had been found guilty of a great sin; and as she examined her heart and life, she saw that she was wrong, not only in Sabbath-breaking, but all through her ways. She sought eagerly for instruction, and soon found a church where the good news of salvation for needy sinners through the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ was regularly proclaimed. Mary began to attend this church every Sunday; she became a disciple of the Lord, and grew in grace and in the knowledge of her Saviour.

It was many years later, when Mary was drawing near the close of her life, that she spoke to her pastor of her early days, "attributing the first serious and awakening impressions on her mind to her eye

having caught, in the apparently accidental stroll into a village church, the first line of one of the commandments." So works the mighty Spirit in the hearts of sinners.

DAMARIS.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA No. 37

The whole : We are to pray for her peace.

1. Thrown by Saul at David.
2. The disciples gathered these to eat in passing.
3. Offered by Abraham instead of Isaac.
4. The room where the disciples met after the Ascension.
5. Kept by Jesse's youngest son.
6. Paul told the Thessalonians to *this* from all appearance of evil.
7. Describes the dish of butter brought to Sisera.
8. John, writing to Gaius, calls himself this.
9. Called by Nebuchadnezzar to tell his dream and give the interpretation of it.

SOLUTION OF No. 36

The whole : FRANKINCENSE (Matt. 2 : 11).

1. Fortunatus (I Cor. 16 : 17).
2. Rahab (Joshua 2 : 15).
3. Absalom (II Sam. 14 : 6 and 18 : 9).
4. Nathanael (John 1 : 48).
5. Kish (I Sam. 10 : 23 and 21).
6. Iscariot (Matt. 10 : 4).
7. Noah (Gen. 9 : 13).
8. Caesar (Acts 25 : 11).
9. Esther (Esther 4 : 16).
10. Nicodemus (John 3 : 1, 2).
11. Sanballat (Nehem. 2 : 10).
12. Elisabeth (Luke 1 : 20).

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PROTESTANT BEACON

A CHILD'S MARTYRDOM

BONNER'S PERSECUTIONS OF JOHN AND WILLIAM FETTY

(FATHER AND SON)

"SUFFER little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Among the numberless enormities committed by the merciless and unfeeling Bonner, the death of this innocent child, William Fetty, may be ranked as the most cruel. His father, John Fetty, of Clerkenwell, by trade a tailor, knew of his election of God; he was fixed secure in eternal hope, and depended upon Him who so builds His church that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

I.—"A MAN'S FOES SHALL BE THEY OF HIS OWN HOUSEHOLD"
(Matt. 10 : 36)

But, alas, the very wife of his bosom, whose heart was hardened against the truth, and whose mind was influenced by the teachers of false doctrines, became his accuser and betrayer. The popish priest of the parish, named Brokenbury, received information of this wedded Delilah, in consequence of which the poor man was apprehended. But there the judgment of an ever righteous God, who "is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity," fell upon this deluded woman, for no sooner was the injured husband captured by her wicked betrayal, than she also was suddenly seized with madness, and exhibited an awakening instance of "God's power to punish the evildoer." This intervening circumstance had some effect upon the hearts of the ungodly hunters who had eagerly grasped their prey; but, in a relenting moment, they suffered him to remain with his unworthy wife, to return her good for evil, and to comfort two children, who, on his being sent to prison, would have been left without a protector, or have become a burden to the parish. As evil men act from expedient motives, we may place the indulgence shown him to the latter reason.

Our dear Lord warned his disciples, when he gave them charge to go forth and preach His blessed gospel, to expect persecution; declaring, that through the apostacy of human nature, although He came from His Father's bosom, to bring the joyful news of peace and goodwill to men, yet so prejudiced would the enemies of His salvation be, that the very design of His errand should be reversed. "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's

foes shall be they of his own household" (Matt. 10 : 34-36). Behold the Saviour's presage, awfully verified in the betrayal of one whom God had pronounced should be as a helpmeet to her partner (Gen. 2 : 18). To what depths of perfidy will the suggestions of false system drive the unhappy subject that is estranged from God and His most holy ways. Happily, it is noticed in some narratives of martyrs, some whose affection would have led them even to sacrifice their own lives, to preserve their husbands; but here, agreeable to Scripture language, is seen the reverse.

When the true disciples of the blessed Jesus, in truth and simplicity of heart, ponder on His holy precepts, they find forgiveness of injuries among the first duties of a redeemed soul. "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us," were the words of Christ. Although afflicted John Fetty had experienced so much treachery from the woman who was bound to him by every tie, yet, with a forbearing spirit, he overlooked her misdeeds, during her calamity, endeavouring all he could to procure relief for her malady, and soothing her by every possible expression of tenderness. She became, in a few weeks, nearly restored to normal. But, alas, she returned again to her sin, "as the dog returneth to his vomit." Malice against the saints of the Most High was seated in her heart too firmly to be removed; and as her strength returned, her inclination to work wickedness returned with it. Her heart was hardened by the prince of darkness. Scarcely confirmed in her recovery, stifling the dictates of honour and every natural affection, she again accused her husband, who was once more apprehended, and taken before Sir John Mardant, Kt., and one of Mary's commissioners.

II.—"OUT OF THE MOUTH OF BABES AND SUCKLINGS THOU HAST PERFECTED PRAISE" (Matt. 21 : 16).

Upon examination, his judge, finding him steadfast in opinions which militated against those nursed by superstition, and maintained by cruelty, he was sentenced to confinement and torture in the Lollards' Tower. "Here," says the honest John Foxe, "he was put into the painful stocks, and had a dish of water set by him, with a stone put into it; to what purpose, God knoweth, except it were to show that he should look for little other sustenance; which is credible enough, if we consider their like practices upon divers before-mentioned in this history, as, amongst others, upon Richard Smith, who died through their cruel imprisonment; touching whom, when a godly woman came to Dr. Story, to have leave that she might bury him, he asked her if he had any straw or blood in his mouth; but what he means thereby, I leave to the judgment of the wise."

How distressing to every thought, are cruelties like these, and how painful to consider, that these dreadful butcheries were com-

mitted under the specious pretext of regard to the souls of men! On the first day of the third week of our martyr's sufferings,

“ In dreary cells, where reptiles stained the ground,
Where mists unwholesome cast a gloom around;
Where death in each tormenting form appeared,
Where cruel zeal its purple standard reared,

an object presented itself to his view, which made him feel his tortures with increased force, and to execrate, with bitterness, the author of his misery. To mark and to punish the proceedings of his tormentors remained with the Most High, who noteth even the fall of a sparrow, and in whose sacred word it is written, “ Vengeance is mine, and I will repay.” This object was his own son, a child of the tender age of only eight years. For fifteen days had its hapless father been suspended by his tormentors by the right arm and left leg, and sometimes by both, shifting his position, for the purpose of giving him strength to bear, and to lengthen the date of, his sufferings.

When the unoffending innocent, desirous of seeing and speaking to its parent, applied to Bonner for permission to do so, the poor child, being asked by the bishop's chaplain the purport of his errand, replied he wished to see his father. “ Who is thy father? ” said the chaplain. The boy told him, and pointing towards Lollards' Tower, showed him that his father was there in prison. “ Why, ” said the priest, “ thy father is an heretic. ” The little champion rejoined with energy sufficient to raise admiration in any breast, except of a miscreant priest, eager to execute the cruel behests of a remorseless Queen, “ My father is no heretic; for you have Balaam's mark. ” It is evident from this response that the son, William, had received instruction in the way of righteousness from his father, and could discern between truth and error, between true piety, and the way of Balaam.

Irritated by reproach, so aptly applied, the indignant priest concealed his resentment for the moment, and took the undaunted boy into the house, where having him secure, he presented him to others, whose baseness and cruelty being equal to his own, they stripped him to the skin, and applied their scourges to so violent a degree that fainting beneath the stripes so shamelessly inflicted on his tender frame, and covered with the blood which flowed from them, the victim of their ungodly wrath was ready to expire under his heavy and unmerited punishment.

In this bleeding and helpless state was the suffering infant, covered only with his shirt, taken to his father by one of the actors in this tragedy who, while he exhibited the heartrending spectacle, made use of taunts and exulted in what had been done. The dutiful child, as if recovering strength at the sight of his father,

on his knees implored his blessing. "Alas, Will," said the afflicted parent in trembling amazement, "who hath done this to thee?" The artless innocent related the circumstances that led to the merciless correction which had been so basely inflicted on him; but when he repeated the reproof bestowed on the chaplain, and which was prompted by an undaunted spirit, he was torn from his weeping parent, and conveyed again to the house, where he remained a close prisoner.

III.—INTERVIEW WITH BONNER

Bonner, somewhat fearful that what had been done could not be justified, even among his own voracious followers, concluded in his dark and wicked mind, to release John Fetty, at least for a time, from the severities he was enduring in the glorious cause of everlasting truth, whose bright rewards are fixed beyond the boundaries of time, within the confines of eternity; where the torch of persecution is for ever extinguished; where the arrow of the wicked cannot wound, even where there shall be no more sorrowing for the blessed, who in the mansions of eternal bliss shall glorify the Lamb for ever and ever. He was accordingly liberated from painful bonds, and led from Lollards' Tower to the chamber belonging to Bonner, "where," says Foxe, "he found the bishop bathing himself before a great fire," and at his first entering into the chamber, Fetty said "God be here and peace!"—"God be here and peace," said Bonner, "that is, neither Godspeed, nor good morrow!" "If ye kick against this peace," said Fetty, "then this is not the place that I seek for."

A chaplain of the bishop, standing by, turned the poor man about and said, mockingly, "What have we here—a player?" Whilst Fetty was thus standing in the bishop's chamber he espied, hanging about the bishop's bed, a pair of large black beads, whereupon he said, "My Lord, I think the hangman is not far off, for the halter (pointing to the beads) is here already!" At these words the bishop was much enraged. Then Fetty immediately afterwards saw also standing in the window, a little crucifix. "Was he handled so cruelly as he is here pictured?" said Fetty. "Yea, that he was," said the bishop. Retorted Fetty, "And even so cruelly will you handle such as come before you; for you are unto God's people as Caiaphas was unto Christ!" The bishop, being in a great fury, said, "Thou art a vile heretic, and I will burn thee, or else I will spend all I have, unto my gown!" "Nay, my Lord," said Fetty, "you were better to give it to some poor body, that he may pray for you."

Bonner, notwithstanding his passion, which was raised to the utmost by the calm and pointed remarks of this observing Christian, considered it most prudent to dismiss the father on account of the

nearly murdered child. The father, on being dismissed, went home with a heavy heart, with his dying child, who did not survive many days the cruelties which had been inflicted on him. Regarding the child's death, Foxe writes, "Whether through his cruel scourging, or any other infirmity, I know not; and therefore I refer the truth thereof unto the Lord, who knoweth all secrets, and also to the discreet judgment of the wise reader. But however it was, the Lord yet used their cruel and detestable fact as a means of His providence for the delivery of this good poor man and faithful Christian. His name therefore be ever praised. Amen."

Devout and serious reader, cry to the Lord incessantly to keep thee in the right path, to uphold thee in thy way, so that thou mayst arrive at the promised land, where this pious and valiant child is gone before thee, there to rejoice for ever, ever before the Lord of Hosts, whose praise cometh even from the mouths of babes and sucklings, and whose power is gone forth "even to the ends of the world."

F.C.

"THIS CONCERNS YOU"!

MANY of the Evangelical ministers and laity of our Reformed Church must be devoutly thankful to God for the recent manifesto on Canon Law revision issued by the Church Society. It is time indeed that we had set before us such a clear and definite presentation of the stand for Holy Scripture which all we Evangelicals ought to be taking. It surely constitutes a great rallying call to all who love the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to give their whole-hearted support to the work and witness of this Society and to that also of the Truth and Faith Committee who are so faithfully seeking to preserve for the Church our great Protestant heritage.

It would seem to many of us that if this proposed revision in its present form becomes Law, we automatically cease from being a Reformed Church for we should no longer be taking our stand on the sole authority of God's Holy Word, as we do at present according to the clear teaching of the 39 Articles.

Auricular Confession was discarded by our Reformers because it had no Scriptural authority; to re-introduce it in the light of its history and in the light of the Bible is a return to the darkness of pre-reformation days from which God has so graciously delivered us.

The Bishop of Rochester may emphatically deny that these proposed Canons would give more power to the bishops for he, of course, is deeply concerned about such a suggestion as this; but no unprejudiced person who carefully studies these proposals could fail to support this statement made by the Church Society.

—Rev. B. C. MOWLL, in *English Churchman*, January 25th, 1957.

THE STORY OF PASTEUR LECOAT

THE BRETON MISSION AT TREMEL

On a bright May morning in the year 1862, a Breton boy, about seventeen years of age, was walking along the road which runs from the village of Trémel, North Brittany, to the market town of Morlaix, a distance of thirteen miles. He was very simply clad, and his feet were bare for, like all Bretons who walk long distances, he carried his sabots over his arm, but as he walked he pondered on his path of life and wondered whither it would lead him.

For nearly three years he had been making this long journey (twenty-six miles both ways), at first once, then twice, and now, during the past year, three times a week in an ardent pursuit for knowledge. His paternal grandfather had been Treasurer to Napoleon I, but had lost all that he possessed in the French Revolution, so that the boy's earliest recollections were of a small stone house situated in a little dell, quite near to the Chapel of Saint Nicholas, the patron saint of learning. There he had watched his father (a poor sabotier) making sabots (wooden shoes) for the Breton peasants and his mother busy with her household tasks.

He thrilled, too, as he remembered how even in those early days he would frequently drop a sou into the slot at the church door in the firm belief that Saint Nicholas would help him to attain his desire for learning. As an ardent Roman Catholic he had persevered, and by the time he was fifteen he was taking daily lessons in Latin from a Roman Catholic priest with a view to one day becoming a priest himself, and devoting his life to the Romish Church.

HIS CONVERSION

But he had been born to fulfil a different purpose, and his footsteps quickened as he thought of the day when, on returning home from his daily lesson at the priest's house, he had heard the voice of someone reading to his mother. On being told that this was a Protestant man, he had refused to enter and remained outside. A little later the same thing happened again, but this time he listened, and curiosity, as well as his interest in learning, led him to ask the man what book he had been reading. The good man told him that it was a Bible, and promised to bring him one. The promise was kept, and for the first time in his life he possessed a French Bible, the reading of which led to his own as well as to his mother's conversion.

"The entrance of His Word giveth light, it giveth wisdom and understanding to the simple," he said aloud, as he realised how completely his heart and life had been changed, and of how he had given up all thought of becoming a Roman Catholic priest, and had commenced his journeys to Morlaix to seek for Protestant training.

This boy was destined to become Pasteur Lecoat, whose name stirs the hearts of all who have any knowledge of him and his wonderful work for the Breton Mission. How little he knew, as his eye rested on the bluebellied landscape and caught the soft pink glow of cherry blossoms, that he was so near the turning-point in his life.

But so it was, for Pasteur William Monod, of Paris, spent his holiday in Morlaix that year, and heard of young Lecoat, saw him, and eventually took him away to Paris. There he studied for three years at the College of the Reformed Church, and then, after taking degrees in letters and in law at the Sorbonne, in Paris, he returned to his native village, Trémel, to preach the Gospel.

PAGAN RELIGION

As Dr. E. W. Bullinger so aptly points out in his book, *The Story of the Breton Mission*, M. Lecoat had returned to a land of a corrupt religion, a place where, like the Samaritans, "the people fear the Lord and serve their own gods." The Bretons are amongst the descendants of the Celts, whose priests and Druidical monuments, Menhirs (standing stones) and Dolmens (table-stones) may be found in all parts of the country, especially in Lower Brittany. The Druids worshipped the forces of nature. They had many gods, and held in special reverence the sun-god, the war-god, gods of the wind and thunder, as well as those of poetry, art and oratory. The strongholds of their religion were powerful indeed, so powerful that up to the 17th century the country was still practically pagan.

But even whilst these early people dominated Brittany, Rome had been busy. As early as the twelfth century his emissaries entered the country, and, when in the 17th century Brittany lost her independence and became a part of France, an organised crusade was begun to graft the Romish religion on to that of the Druids. Many of the tall-standing stones were transformed into crosses, but, where the stone was too hard for the mason's chisel, crosses and crucifixes were fastened to them. Dr. Bullinger tells how that in one year no less than five thousand were so transformed by the then Bishop of St. Pol de Leon, and Protestant friends who have visited Trémel can testify to the existence of many of them in every part of that district.

The Dolmens, or table-stones, were removed to the churches, and transformed into altars. Springs and fountains were named after the Madonna or some saint, whilst the fires, which were customary at the worship of the sun, were one day "discovered" to be a commemoration of St. John the Baptist.

Thus in the course of three generations the people were changed into Roman Catholics almost without knowing it, and from venerating the stone according to pagan rites they came to worship the Romish symbols. It is sad indeed to witness in this present day the

expression and condition of these poor deluded people who live in such a state of superstition and error.

COMMENCEMENT OF WORK IN BRITTANY

In 1834, the Rev. John Jenkins had been sent out from Bethany Chapel, Cardiff, and for some years he and a small band of Welsh Christians had lived and worked in Morlaix. Then in 1844 the work had been handed over to the Baptist Missionary Society. In 1861, a year after the boy Lecoat's conversion, the Gospel was being preached in a small cottage at Trémel. In 1866, on his return from Paris, Lecoat was appointed assistant to John Jenkins, and before long they succeeded in building a chapel. Then difficulties arose. French law prohibited a foreigner and a Protestant to preach in a public building.

But Lecoat was Breton born. He obtained permission from the authorities, and in spite of strenuous opposition, and under military protection, he broke open the door and continued to use the chapel until the end of 1868, when he was ordained by the President of the Reformed Church in Brest as the pasteur of the church then in formation at Trémel. Again there were difficulties and much opposition, and it was not until 1873 that the church was formally opened for all ecclesiastical purposes.

In the meantime, the pasteur, whom God had called so young to be His servant, had married a worthy helpmeet, and together they began their lifelong work for the Mission.

THE BRETON BIBLE

The greatest and most pressing need was for a complete Bible in the Breton language, a book that could be put into the hands of the people and read to them in their mother tongue. An appeal was made to the Trinitarian Society, with the result that Pasteur Lecoat, who was eminently qualified to undertake the task, was asked to translate the whole Bible into the Breton language.

The translation of the New Testament was begun in 1883, that of the Bible in 1884, in which year eighty thousand copies of the Gospels were printed and circulated throughout the country.

"THE BRETON EVANGELICAL MISSION"

Then came a great crisis, when the Baptist Missionary Society, which had carried on the work, gave up its small mission in Europe in order to concentrate upon the greater work of evangelising Central Africa. This was a great blow to Pasteur Lecoat, but by the grace and guidance of Almighty God, a committee was formed, and a new society, "THE BRETON EVANGELICAL MISSION," came into being.

This Mission is wholly undenominational, its one aim and object being to make known the Word of God and to glorify Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In 1889 the Breton Bible was published and received with great joy, but again organised and serious opposition followed. The people were threatened by the priests if a Protestant Bible should be found in any of their homes, but in spite of all, the work went on, and one can testify to the many preaching stations in various parts of Brittany, to Schools for boys and girls, to the substantial new Chapel which has been built at Trémel, and above all to the noble, self-sacrificing work of all the helpers.

When the devoted life-work of Pasteur and Madame Lecoat was ended, the responsibility of the Mission at Trémel fell largely into the hands of the late Mdlle Le Quéré, under the guidance of Pasteur Somerville, aided by her brother (the colporteur) and her sister, and helpers. How happy and encouraging was her work, she herself often told us; of her joy in their freedom since 1906 to preach and teach the Gospel as the power of salvation to all that believe; of the eagerness with which the poor peasants drank in the good tidings proclaimed to them in their mother tongue, and the solemn assurance that the Holy Spirit was working within their breasts; and of the way in which the Mission had faithfully fulfilled its divine calling.

G.M.B.

MARAN-ATHA

Centuries have passed, and the years go by
Since the Saviour to earth came down
For the ransom of man, and so to die,—
Not laurels but thorns for His crown.

Victor of death, He arose from the grave,
Which was powerless Him to keep.
“I will come again!” this promise He gave
To the men, who should tend His sheep.

He sent the disciples, commissioned to teach
The atoning work wrought by our Lord;
And of mansions fair and prepared for each
Who, by grace, believes in God's Word.

Assurance is ours through infinite love,—
“Maran-atha, the Lord will come.”
This cheers the faint heart with strength from above;
Comfort gives, and yearnings for “Home.”

All Spirit-born souls shall surely rejoice,—
(The living and raised will be there),—
At the trump of God and Archangel's voice
When they meet their Lord in the air.

G.G.K.

POETRY

THE WAY, THE TRUTH, THE LIFE

Christ, Thou art the Living WAY
 Leading to eternal day;
 Thou our pathway, Thou our Guide,
 Thou the Source whence is supplied
 Bread of life on which we feed,
 Bread supplying pilgrim's need.

Perfect TRUTH, in Thee we see
 God's outshining Radiancy,
 For in Thee, and Thee alone,
 Traits of Godhead are made known;
 Thou with God the Father One,
 God in Thee, His only Son.

Christ, Thou art to us the LIFE,
 Nerving us for earthly strife,
 Quickening our mortal breath
 With the might which conquers death;
 Sin no more with us has sway,
 Now we tread Thy holy way.

Rodden Rectory, Frome, Somerset.

T. PITTAWAY.

HE KNEW

"He Himself knew what He would do."—John 6 : 6.

He stood upon a little hill
 A hungry throng in view,
 Dismay did the disciples fill—
 He knew what He would do.

"With all these thousands to be fed,"
 Said Philip in a trice,
 "Two hundred pennyworth of bread
 "Will not a whit suffice."

And he had been at Cana's feast,
 And at Bethesda's pool!
 And Jesu's power had never ceased,
 Nor lost His kingly rule.

Then Andrew brought a lad bright-eyed
 On happy holiday,
 With store of loaves and fish supplied;
 "But what," shrugged he, "are they?"

O blind and dull of heart to be
Engrossed with need and woe,
Thus to forget His mastery
Who knows what He will do.
For Jesu's eyes had marked the lad
Amidst that thronging scene,
And in His plan a place he had,
And in His heart, I ween.
In ordered companies they sit
Obedient to His word,
The food He takes and blesses it—
Divine and Sovereign Lord!
Forth from those hands that little store
Is wondrous multiplied,
Still as He breaks there yet is more
And all are satisfied.
Humbled and silent as they make
Their way among the crowd,
The wondering disciples wake
To faith, and hearts are bowed.
Before Him in devoted love,
Wills made anew His own,
Their purposes no longer rove,
Their lives are His alone.
And I take courage as I gaze
The speeding years through,
For well I know in all my ways—
He knows what He will do.

ERNEST W. BACON.

THE WATERS OF SHILOAH

"This people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly"
(Isaiah 8 : 6).

You will not have the gently flowing stream
Whose surging waters whisper words of peace.
You treat the word of God as idle dream
And vent your strength in boasts which do not cease.
Therefore from bondage shall not be release,
But you shall bear the proud Assyrian yoke
Whose swelling flood will burst with full increase
Upon your land. Then shall you learn that folk
Are foolish who deride the words which God hath spoke.

Rodden Rectory, Frome, Somerset.

T. PITTAWAY.

150th ANNIVERSARY

AGED PILGRIMS' FRIEND SOCIETY

"The experiment of this ministration" (2 Cor. 9: 13).

WHEN, in 1807, during a very dark and grim period in our nation's history, thirty-six-year-old James Bisset stepped forward with his bold plan for organising a scheme to provide Life Pensions for destitute old people, he was considered by many to be a man who was far too visionary for the times in which he lived. Abject poverty was a tolerated evil in those days, and caused very little disquietude to the national conscience. Even Christian people regarded him somewhat askance, doubtless considering his ideas as quite impracticable, nothing of the kind having been attempted before, at any rate not on the scale which was now contemplated by this young and zealous pioneer with his small band of enthusiastic followers.

But James Bisset was not easily discouraged. He was convinced that his plans met with divine approval, and he was determined to go ahead with "the experiment of this ministration" to supply the want of the saints. So it came to pass that through his untiring efforts, owned and blessed by Almighty God, there came into being a Society which has been continued and upheld until now in its ministrations. Spared to its 150th Anniversary year, it has by the mercy of God been preserved on its original Scriptural foundation—Protestant, Evangelical, and Udenominational; and what John Newton wrote of himself may, it is felt, be applied to this Society in looking back over its long history:—

"Many days have passed since then,
 Many changes has it seen,
 Yet has been upheld till now,
 Who could hold it up but Thou?"

On the 27th of April, 1957, God willing, the Society will celebrate this wonderful occasion at Caxton Hall, Westminster, London, S.W.1, when the 150th Anniversary Meetings will be held, at 2.45 and 5.30 p.m., to render thanks to God for all that He has been to, and accomplished by, the Society during such a long period of time. A hearty invitation is given to all readers of *The Gospel Magazine* to be present on this occasion. Especially would the Committee seek the prayers of all the Society's friends and well-wishers, whether able to be present or not, upon these Meetings, that the presence and blessing of the Lord, with divine guidance for the future, may be abundantly manifested.

PILGRIM PAPERS

“FEARS WITHIN”

A LETTER FROM THE REV. JOHN NEWTON

MY DEAR MISS MARY,— . . . The Lord is leading you in the good old way, in which you may perceive the footsteps of His flock who have gone before you. They had in their day the same difficulties, fears, and complaints as we have, and through mercy we partake of the same consolation which supported and refreshed them; and the promises which they trusted and found faithful are equally sure to us. It is still true that they who believe shall never be confounded. If left to ourselves we should have built upon sands, but He has provided and revealed a sure foundation, removed our natural prejudices against it, and now, though rains and floods and storms assault our building, it cannot fall, for it is founded upon a rock.

The suspicions and fears which arise in an awakened mind proceed, in a good measure, from remaining unbelief, but not wholly so; for there is a jealousy and diffidence of ourselves, a wariness, owing to a sense of the deceitfulness of our hearts, which is a grace and gift of the Lord. Some people who have much zeal, but are destitute of this jealous fear, may be compared to a ship that spreads a great deal of sail, but is not properly ballasted, and is therefore in danger of being upset whenever a storm comes. A sincere person has many reasons for distrusting his own judgment, is sensible of the vast importance of the case, and afraid of too hastily concluding in his own favour, and therefore not easily satisfied.

However, this fear, though useful, especially to young beginners, is not comfortable; and they who simply wait upon Jesus are gradually freed from it, in proportion as their knowledge of Him and their experience of His goodness increases. He has a time for settling and establishing them in Himself, and His time is best. We are hasty, and would be satisfied at once, but His word is, “Tarry thou the Lord’s leisure.” The work of grace is not like Jonah’s gourd, which sprang up and flourished in a night and as quickly withered, but rather like the oak, which, from a little acorn and a tender plant, advances with an almost imperceptible growth from year to year, till it becomes in time a broad, spreading, and deep-rooted tree, and then it stands for ages. The Christian oak shall grow and flourish for ever.

When I see any, soon after they appear to be awakened, making a speedy profession of great joy before they have a due acquaintance with their own hearts, I am in pain for them. I am not sorry to hear

them afterwards complain that their joys are gone, and they are almost at their wits' end; for without some such check to make them feel their weakness and dependence, I seldom find them turn out well; either their fervour insensibly abates, till they become quite cold and sink into the world again (of which I have seen many instances), or, if they do not give up all, their walk is uneven, and their spirit has not that savour of brokenness and true humility which is the chief ornament of our holy profession. If they do not feel the plague of their hearts at first they find it out afterwards, and too often manifest it to others.

Therefore, though I know the Spirit of the Lord is free, and will not be confined to our rules, and there may be excepted cases, yet in general I believe the old proverb, "Soft and fair goes far," will hold good in Christian experience. Let us be thankful for the beginnings of grace, and wait upon our Saviour patiently for the increase. And as we have chosen Him for our physician, let us commit ourselves to His management, and not prescribe to Him what He shall prescribe for us. He knows us, and He loves us better than we do ourselves, and will do all things well.

You say, "It never came with power and life to my soul that He died for me." If you mean you never had any extraordinary manifestation, something like a vision or a voice from heaven, confirming it to you, I can say the same. But I know He died for sinners—I know I am a sinner; I know He invites them that are ready to perish—I am such a one; I know upon His own invitation I have committed myself to Him, and I know by the effects that He has been with me hitherto, otherwise I should have been an apostate long ago; and therefore I know that He died for me, for had He been pleased to kill me (as He justly might have done) He would not have shown me such things as these.

If I must perish, would the Lord
 Have taught my heart to love His Word?
 Would He have given me eyes to see
 My danger and my remedy?
 Revealed His name, and bid me pray,
 Had He resolved to say me nay?

I know that I am a child, because He teaches me to say, "Abba, Father." I know that I am *His*, because He has enabled me to choose Him for *mine*, for such a choice and desire could never have taken place in my heart if He had not placed it there Himself. By nature I was too blind to know Him, too proud to trust Him, too obstinate to serve Him, too base-minded to love Him: The enmity I was filled with against His government, righteousness, and grace was too strong to be subdued by any power but His own. The love

I bear Him is but a faint and feeble spark, but it is an emanation from Himself : He kindled it, and He keeps it alive; and because it is His work I trust many waters shall not quench it. I have only room to assure you that

I am, etc.,

JOHN NEWTON.

(Letter of the Rev. John Newton to Miss M. Barham, September 3rd, 1776).

“ POSTING LETTERS ”

Miss Pool (“ Nettie ”) for a number of years wrote to the Magazine many unctuous articles. It did one good to see her benevolent countenance. But she died on March 30th, 1933; she said “ Good-night ” for the last time. Before the sun rose on that morning, she was with Christ and with the innumerable host of the loved and forgiven children of the Most High. Miss Pool said that, if ever she was looking for a different house, it would have to have a letter box near it; her correspondence was so large.

One afternoon lately I was about to go to the letter box with two letters, when a niece (and daughter of the house) offered to take them; she wanted to post a card. I am rather fond of the walk, short as it is. Each side of the road is graced with trees, beautiful all the year, so my niece let me go, with the usual advice, not to be run over. When I was about two-thirds of the way there, I was overtaken by a man who asked me if he might post for me. This suggestion is not infrequently made and thankfully accepted. But this time I involuntarily hesitated, and then said, “ But they are not mine.” There followed a very short pause, when the man said with quiet affability, “ O, I see.” He went on; I came after and very soon the missives were all in the box.

What had the man thought? No one could tell. “ The heart is deceitful above all things, who can know it? ” Is not that the truth about all our hearts? We read that Haman “ thought in his heart ” that he himself was the one who was to be honoured by the king. God knew his heart. We *may* be right in our judgments, but they are open before Him, who *knoweth*.

What did I think? Many things—confused and uncertain—such subjects as “ truth,” substitution, certainty, divine forgiveness by the one Sacrifice. “ There is none other Name whereby we must be saved.”

That is a lovely benediction in the last verse of Acts 3. Peter's sermon ended with it: "God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." This blessing, however, is not to be presumptuously appropriated. It is beyond our comprehension of love and mercy, and ours to be sought for, longed for and waited for. I was once shocked at the way an acquaintance spoke of the death and crucifixion of the Lord. We happened to meet in the city. Naturally, we were on the subject of the war then raging, 1914-18. Our national undeservings reached up to heaven, and how about ourselves? She said almost flippantly, "O well, there's the Blood." It was not so simply to be known: Jonah went down to "the bottoms of the mountains." The Psalmist in Psalm 130 cried unto God "out of the depths." *He* lifted them up, and they knew that "salvation is of the Lord."

But in such a multitude of thoughts, I had almost forgotten the man who offered to post the two letters and one post card.

FOLLOWER-ON.

THEOLOGY

CHRIST'S REDEMPTION

THE redemption which Christ has obtained is :

(1) *From the curse of the law.* "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, cursed [is] every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3 : 3). The whole law requires to be fulfilled. Otherwise God's justice would be impugned, disregarded and nullified. Wherever there is the slightest disobedience of its precepts, the law demands full satisfaction. Now Christ has borne the *penalty* due to the sins of His people. In other words, He has suffered "the curse." But what is this "curse"? It is the consequence of a broken law. Christ took the place of His sheep and endured "the whole of the wrath Divine." The bitter cry upon the cross was due to this curse. No suffering was equal to the hiding of God's countenance. "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" This was indeed the bearing of the "penalty" due to sin. Nothing separates from God but sin. Sin accomplished this when our first parents ate the forbidden fruit. It was therefore necessary that Christ should suffer a full penalty, and should restore communion with Jehovah.

(2) *From sin.* "He shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1 : 21). "Redeem us *from all iniquity*" (Titus 2 : 14).

(a) The *guilt* of sin. Here we have to consider both original and actual sins. There are also sins of omission and commission. Re-

demption has secured exemption from everything penal which these may bring upon the child of God.

(b) The *power* and *prevalence* of sin. The verses following the text at the head of this paper exhibit this beautiful truth. "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. 9: 13, 14). The same is powerfully proclaimed by Paul when he wrote: "Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6: 14).

(3) *From the power and tyranny of Satan.* This gives us the Saviour as the Avenger of His people's wrongs. Satan's power is usurpation. He nevertheless requires to be dispossessed. "Who (the Father) hath delivered us from the power of darkness" (Col. 1: 12). "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3: 8). No price whatever was paid by Satan. It is horrible to think of such a thing; yet Christ by His sacrifice overcame all the enmity of Satan, and once for all destroyed his works.

(4) *From the wrath of God.* "By nature" God's children were "the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2: 3). From this "wrath" our Lord freed us, for "Being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. 5: 9). Writing to the Thessalonians, Paul tells us "to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, (even) Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1: 10).

(5) *From the corruption of the body.* There is a redemption yet to be accomplished. "We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption [to wit] the redemption of the body" (Rom. 8: 23). "Grieve not the holy spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4: 30). "Until the redemption of the purchased possession" (Eph. 1: 14). These can refer only to the glorious *resurrection* of the body. It is called "the redemption of the body," because it is the completion of the Saviour's great work. The elect will then be perfectly restored, and sin and corruption will affect them no more. This constitutes the hope of every Christian. Blessed consummation! Longed for and looked for day! "May the Lord shortly accomplish the number of His elect, and hasten His Kingdom, that we, with all those that are departed in the true faith of His holy Name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in God's eternal and everlasting glory!"

—The late Rev. WILLIAM SYKES in *Salt of the Covenant*.

SPIRITUAL BIOGRAPHY

A FAITHFUL MINISTER

JOHN GEORGE BREAY (1796-1839)

JOHN GEORGE BREAY was born at Devonport on the 9th of April, 1796. His father's death took place in the following year and shortly afterwards his mother gave birth to twins. Thus, at a very early age, she became the widowed parent of three infants, the eldest of whom was scarcely twelve months old. It appears plain, however, that in the midst of such sorrow she well knew on whose "Everlasting Arms" she might lean for effectual support. She knew the God of all consolation, and to Him she committed herself and her fatherless children. To dedicate them to His service was her most earnest desire, and to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness formed the characteristic of all her plans. As events revealed, her prayers were graciously answered, and a blessing accompanied her pious efforts to impress upon their young minds the importance of Scriptural truth.

I.—BOYHOOD AND STUDENT DAYS

In August, 1801, Mrs. Breay placed her son under the tuition of Mr. D. Evans, minister of the gospel, Devonport, and afterwards entered him at the Grammar School, Plymouth, then conducted by Dr. Bidlake. There he remained until 1809, pursuing his studies with diligence. His abilities were excellent, and his memory retained, with unusual precision, whatever knowledge was imparted by his instructors. The methodical character of his mind was, indeed, evident, at every period of his life; but whilst he applied himself with diligence to the various studies, and received the approbation of his teachers, the source of his own highest pleasure was the BIBLE. At the age of thirteen, and when at school, he frequently walked a distance of four miles to visit his sister; and, on such occasions, it was invariably his habit to take his pocket Bible with him, and, to use his own words, "to preach to himself from it." Thus it was evident that, even at this early period, he was thirsting after righteousness, waiting at the well of living waters, and tasting of that fountain, the streams whereof make glad the city of his God.

In 1809 Mrs. Breay was accompanied by her son to Bristol, Bath and London, returning to Devonport in June. A desire was expressed that he might state his wishes for the future; but, as on a former occasion, he contented himself with assuring his mother that he would exert himself to fulfil his duty in whatever situation might be chosen for him. Mr. Dolling, his mother's uncle, a solicitor

at Chudleigh, was consulted, and he recommended a merchant's office. An application, made in 1810, to Mr. Teed, merchant and banker, of Plymouth, was immediately successful; and, on the first interview, he agreed to receive Mr. Breay as his clerk. He forthwith commenced his duties in the counting-house, and very shortly afterwards he was placed in the bank. The bank soon afterwards suffered considerable embarrassments, which caused its final close. However, Mr. Breay continued duties as an articled clerk in Mr. Dolling's office.

Soon afterwards Mr. Breay's eyesight became very weak, and it was requisite to seek medical advice. He therefore accompanied his mother to Exeter in order to consult a surgeon, who, after a careful examination, pronounced his eyes to be in a state which rendered it absolutely necessary for him to give up his situation in Mr. Dolling's office. Mrs. Breay and her son returned to Chudleigh, and communicated the result to Mr. Dolling, who was much grieved by the information. The mother and her son, whose hearts were united in one single desire to learn the will of God, saw something in these unexpected circumstances beyond a mere medical opinion. On their return home they retired for special prayer; and, on rising from this devotional act, Mr. Breay took his mother's hand, saying,

"Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his work in vain;
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain."

II.—THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

Mr. Breay's letters "are weighty and powerful." From *The Diary of Jessie Thain* (who was engaged to the worthy R. M. McCheyne), recently edited and published by Mr. Murdoch Campbell, F.C. Manse, Resolis, we read: "Finished reading Mr. Breay's Memoir. He was a minister of the Church of England in Birmingham. Enjoyed many of his letters especially. A very spiritually minded man," p. 42. An extract from a letter written to his mother reveals how God was working. Let the reader remember that Mr. Breay was but eighteen years of age at the time of writing.

"1814. My Dearly Beloved Mother, the object which I have in this letter is to state that, after earnest prayer to God for His most gracious direction, I have resolved that, could it by the blessing of God be attained, it would yield the greatest satisfaction to my mind, to be a minister of the Church of England; but in making this declaration, it will naturally be expected, and it seems to me most proper to state the reasons which induce that wish. First, let me observe, that as a minister of the gospel, it is necessary, in my opinion, that a man be first a Christian. Ah! there's the cause of sorrow to my heart; from the doubts and fears I entertain of being

a Christian, that is, converted to the blessed God; and of being a fit person to undertake the ministerial office. Recollecting no period of time from which to date the conversion of my heart, I fear much whether it has ever taken place. Previous to my going to Chudleigh, I had some delight in religious services, and at times heard the Word with pleasure, but I did not see the importance of eternal things in so strong a light as I beheld them when there. Then, and since my return, the importance of being prepared for eternity has been strongly impressed upon my mind. I am fully convinced of my being a sinner, and that, unless the blood of Jesus Christ cleanse me from my sin, I must perish; but I lament I cannot flee to, and lay hold on Him with that confidence I desire. I fear I have not rightly repented of my sins; that I do not love Jesus Christ as I ought; and I am not sufficiently zealous for the promotion of His cause amongst mankind. But leaving this point to be decided by some competent judge, I will just mention the doctrines which I conceive to be contained in the sacred volume. I believe in the doctrine of original sin, and that, as a descendant of Adam, my nature is polluted. The doctrine of unconditional and personal election, you well know, has been a perplexity to my mind, arising from a doubt of its consistency with the divine attributes, and its agreement with the Word of God; but now the inconsistency of it has vanished, and I see it agrees with the Scriptures of truth; and though not so perfectly grounded in it as I wish, and doubtless not able to answer all the objections which sophistry may raise against it, I can say, I believe it, and see it in a very different light from what I did. The doctrine of justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, I would most strenuously maintain; besides its consistency with Scripture, I am too great a sinner to be saved by any works of my own. Far from considering this doctrine leads to licentiousness, I conceive it offers the most powerful motives to holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. That sanctification accompanies justification, I also believe; and what *God* has joined *together* let no *man* put *asunder*. The perseverance of the saints to everlasting glory appears to me a most comfortable doctrine, and as true as comfortable; for were not the Christian to be supported by the assurance of a final victory over his enemies, in his spiritual conflicts, it would be enough to overwhelm him amidst the host of foes by which he is surrounded; and it is an unceasing source of encouragement that he who hath begun a good work in them will perform it to the day of Jesus Christ. The doctrines of the three Persons in the glorious Trinity; of the divinity of Jesus Christ as the Son of God; of His resurrection, ascension, etc., are truths which I hold most sacred. . . . It would yield me the greatest satisfaction to be made the humble instrument of turning one poor sinner from the error of his ways to serve the living God. Seeing the great importance of eternal things myself, I would wish

to communicate this feeling to others (and no way is so effectual as the preaching of God's Word), and to set Jesus Christ before the guilty sons and daughters of Adam. I trust God would enable me to serve Him faithfully; to 'preach the word,' not shunning to declare the whole counsel of God."

It was therefore determined that he should enter upon a course of instruction, and he was placed under the superintendence of Mr. John Cawood, minister of Bewdley. In January, 1816, Mr. Breay left Bewdley and joined students preparing under the instructions of Mr. Smith, Almondbury, near Huddersfield. In the December vacation of 1818 Mr. Breay went to Leeds to visit a friend, and heard that a minister of piety, near Nottingham, would shortly require the services of an assistant. He therefore listened with considerable interest to this information, and shortly afterwards addressed a communication to the gentleman in question, Mr. Cocker, of Ruddington, near Nottingham. Mr. Cocker replied, declaring his willingness to give him a title for the ministry.

III.—LABOURS IN NOTTS., LEICESTERSHIRE AND HUNTS.

Mr. Breay entered upon his labours at Ruddington, and was exhorted by Mr. Cocker to go forth in the strength of Christ, and to lean on an all-sufficient God. However, Mr. Cocker shortly afterwards passed to his eternal rest, and Mr. Breay received an application from Mr. J. Babington, of Cossington, Leicestershire, who was desirous to engage his services. Whilst here and at Rothley, a contiguous living in the charge of Mr. Babington, circumstances presented an opportunity of going to Cambridge. Charles Simeon was at Cambridge, and he expressed a desire to engage Mr. Breay's services whilst at college. In June, 1826, during his residence at Cambridge, Mr. Breay received the offer of the temporary incumbency of Haddenham, some fifteen miles from Cambridge. Mr. Breay's marriage took place in 1827, to Miss Peyton, of Rothley. It was from Haddenham that he went to exercise his fruitful ministry at Christ Church, Birmingham. Regarding his decision to go to Birmingham, Mr. Breay commented, "... It has been my desire to be guided by wisdom from above: and it is now my earnest prayer that the decision may be over-ruled for the promotion of the divine glory."

IV.—HIS VIEWS ON THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Writing in 1831, Mr. Breay says, "What may be the events of the future year it is not for us to know, and it would be useless to conjecture; but we know that He who is the God of His people is the same yesterday, today, and for ever; and with this we should be satisfied. Let us seek to trust His promise, love His name, and obey His will, and leave to Him the disposal of us and all that belongs to

us. Looking round at the kingdom at large, there is much reason for fearful forebodings. The pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the destruction that wasteth at noon-day, are at our doors. Still the hand of the Lord is scarcely acknowledged. . . . The rapid extension of popery and infidelity, together with the intolerant and persecuting bitterness which gains ground . . . The growth of immorality, in the midst of means of grace more abundant than ever. . . . ' Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord, shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? ' . . . May we be found faithful and stand in our lot at the end of the days. . . . " Again in 1839, ". . . . Infidelity and popery, allied to heresy of any and every kind, are to be dreaded; but *more* to be dreaded *by far* is that pestiferous principle which is working its way within our Zion. . . . I allude to Puseyism; and also to that *disposition*, fearfully prevalent among many who *reject* Puseyism, to make the externals of a church—its succession, orders, and discipline—every thing; and vital godliness, I had almost said—nothing." ". . . I view, not without apprehension, the machinations of popery, the stratagems of infidelity, . . . but I look with *far deeper anxiety* and *alarm* on evils arising within ourselves. There are strong indications of Romanism in many who sincerely repudiate the system of popery. External regularity and ecclesiastical forms are, in many cases, contended for more vehemently, if not valued more highly, than the life of God in the soul. . . . The supreme authority of the written Word of God is undermined by the inordinate value which is placed on tradition. In fact, the current of popery is setting in on our church, and will, I fear, be her severe affliction, unless Almighty God in mercy roll it back. For this let us devoutly pray."

V.—CONCLUDING MINISTRY AT BIRMINGHAM

Birmingham offered no pecuniary inducement to Mr. Breay. Desirous as Mr. Breay was to be the friend of his flock, especially in the hours of trial, he faithfully warned them of the uselessness of sending for a minister with an idea that he could, in an expiring hour, repair the negligence of a careless life; or give to that sinner a well-founded hope of salvation. . . . He deplored the error of trusting to death-bed evidence or death-bed expressions; nor could he ever be prevailed upon to administer the sacrament in dying moments to those who during their lives had evinced a neglect of their eternal interests. Mr. Breay's sermons were emphatically addressed to the conscience. His correct delineation of character was remarkable, and produced, not infrequently, a startling effect upon his hearers. A member, for instance, of Mr. Breay's congregation left his church for a time, persuaded that he had been personally attacked in a sermon. But the supposed assailant had no knowledge of his reputed character, or even of his name. On another occasion,

an individual quitted his seat during the delivery of a sermon and walked out of church, convinced that he had been the original of the minister's faithful picture.

Although Mr. Breay's soul was sustained by that close communion with God in prayer which seemed to form an essential part of his existence, the weight of numerous and important duties gradually bore too heavily upon an apparently robust frame. A few months prior to his death he nevertheless said to Mrs. Breay, "I cannot go on in this way": yet added, "Rest is all I require to restore me." He knew that the repose preparing for him was the everlasting rest which remaineth to the people of God. The week before his final illness he said, "Were it not my septenary Sunday, I should next Sunday evening close the subject of the ministry of angels, by the ministering spirit waiting on the dying believer, and finally conveying him to the realms of bliss. Oh, it is a sweet subject." And, with a countenance beaming with sacred pleasure, he added, "I have had much enjoyment this week in contemplation of it." And if he *had* been able to preach the Sabbath before his death, this last office of the angels for the believer in Christ would have been the subejct.

Mr. Breay departed this life on the 5th of December, 1839. His epitaph reads as follows :

To the memory of
THE REV. JOHN GEORGE BREAY, B.A.,
for seven years
minister of this church,
who, by the inscrutable but unerring wisdom of God, was suddenly
cut off in the midst of usefulness,
December V, MDCCCXXXIX.
Aged forty-three years.

He was a faithful under-shepherd,
The beloved pastor of a most-beloved flock.
In life it was his single object to bring sinners to Christ;
In death, he rests from his labours, for ever with Christ.
Reader, as you linger near this tablet,
Ask yourself, am I in Christ?

If any man be in Christ he is a new creature (2 Cor. 5 : 17).

F.C.

CURRENT TOPICS

WILLIAM PARKS (Manchester)

We sometimes give in the Magazine some of the Notes of Sermons of the Rev. William Parks, B.A., Rector of St. Barnabas, Openshaw, Manchester, from 1843 to 1867. He was at times a contributor to the *Gospel Magazine*, and we feel that readers may like to hear a little more about him.

He was born in Dublin on October 20th, 1809, but many of his early years were lived in London and on the Continent. He entered Trinity College, Dublin, in 1825, taking his B.A. degree in 1832.

Ordained in 1840, he was first at Rainow, Macclesfield, and then at Openshaw, Manchester, where he ministered for twenty-four years.

His book on "The Five Points" is well known, but not so many lovers of the Doctrines of Grace are able to get a copy of his "Notes of Sermons" or of his book "No Uncertain Sound" (1868).

On the memorial tablet in his church were the words :

"His views of Divine truth were distinct and unvarying, ever ascribing all the glory to Christ, for the salvation of his chosen people."

On his tomb—added at his own desire—were the words :

"Here lies a sinner, saved by grace."

PRESENTATION TO MR. TAYLOR

A cheque for £400 was presented to Mr. B. S. Taylor (Business Manager of *The English Churchman* and *The Gospel Magazine*) at a small luncheon party in London on Monday, December 31st. The Rev. F. W. Martin (Editor of *The English Churchman*) presided, and the presentation was made by Mr. J. P. D. R. Ormiston, whose father for many years combined the Editorship of both publications.

There were many warm expressions of the sanctified service given by Mr. Taylor over the long period of fifty years.

Mr. Taylor said that he was much moved by the presentation and by the very wide circle of those who had united to make it.

The Rev. H. R. H. Hill associated the Trustees of *The Gospel Magazine* with the warm tributes paid to Mr. Taylor. The Rev. C. Carter was present as also representing the Trustees of the Magazine. [*English Churchman*, January 11th, 1957.]

UNREFORMED WORSHIP

We notice that for the Bristol Children's Missionary Service, previously held at Christmas, but now being held on Saturday, February 2nd, in Bristol Cathedral, after "the dramatization of the Lessons," the "climax will be the candle-light procession."

This is the re-introduction of "Candlemas" and Candlemas Processions. We read that the collection will be given to the Church Missions to Jews.

In the Prayer Book the occasion is "The Presentation of Christ in the Temple." The Church of England, as reformed, knows nothing of "Candlemas" and its pre-Reformation ceremonies.

SERMONS AND NOTES OF SERMONS

THE GOOD SHEPHERD*

A FAREWELL SERMON BY GEORGE WHITEFIELD (1769)

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand."—John 10: 27, 28.

It is a common, and I believe, generally speaking, my dear hearers, a true saying, that bad manners beget good laws. Whether this will hold good in every particular, in respect to the affairs of this world, I am persuaded the observation is very pertinent in respect to the things of another; I mean bad manners, bad treatment, bad words, have been over-ruled by the sovereign grace of God, to produce, and to be the cause of, the best sermons that were ever delivered from the mouth of the God-man, Christ Jesus.

One would have imagined that as He came clothed with divine effieience, as He came with divine credentials, as He spake as never man spake, that no one should have been able to have resisted the wisdom with which He spake; one would imagine, they should have been so struck with the demonstration of the Spirit, that with one consent they should all own that He was "that prophet that was to be raised up like unto Moses." But you seldom find our Lord preaching a sermon, but something or other that He said was

* This seems to have been George Whitefield's last sermon in England, Wednesday, August 30th, 1769.

cavilled at; nay, their enmity frequently broke through all good manners: they often, therefore, interrupted Him whilst He was preaching, which shews the enmity of their hearts long before God permitted it to be in their power to shed His innocent blood. If we look no farther than this chapter, where He represents Himself as a good shepherd, one that laid down His life for His sheep, we see the best return He had was to be looked upon as possessed or distracted; for we are told that there was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings, and many of them said, "He hath a devil, and is mad, why hear ye Him?" If the master of the house was served so, pray what are the servants to expect? Others, a little more sober-minded, said, "These are not the words of Him that hath a devil"; the devil never used to preach or act in this way, "Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?" So He had some friends among these rabble. This did not discourage our Lord, He goes on in His work; and we shall never, never go on with the work of God till, like our Master, we are willing to go through good and through evil report, and let the devil see we are not so complaisant as to stop one moment for his barking at us as we go along.

We are told that our Lord was at Jerusalem at the feast of the dedication, and it was winter; the feast of dedication held, I think, seven or eight days, for the commemoration of the restoration of the temple and altar, after its profanation by Antiochus. Now this was certainly a mere human institution, and had no divine image, had no divine superscription upon it; and yet I do not find that our blessed Lord and Master preached against it; I do not find that He spent His time about this; His heart was too big with superior things; and I believe when we, like Him, are filled with the Holy Ghost, we shall not entertain our audiences with disputes about rites and ceremonies, but shall treat upon the essentials of the gospel, and then rites and ceremonies will appear with more indifference. Our Lord does not say that He would not go up to the feast, for on the contrary, He did go there, not so much to keep the feast as to have an opportunity to spread the gospel-net; and that should be our method, not to follow disputing; and it is the glory of the Methodists, that we have been now forty years, and, I thank God, there has not been one single pamphlet written by any of our preachers about the non-essentials of religion.

Our Lord always made the best of every opportunity, and we are told, "He walked in the temple in Solomon's porch." One would have thought that the scribes and Pharisees would have put Him in one of their stalls, and have complimented Him with desiring Him to preach: no, they let Him walk in Solomon's porch; some think He walked by Himself, nobody choosing to keep company with Him. Methinks I see Him walking and looking at the temple,

and foreseeing within Himself how soon it would be destroyed; He walked pensive, to see the dreadful calamities that would come upon the land, for not knowing the day of its visitation; and it was to let the world see He was not afraid to appear in public: He walked, as much as to say, have any of you any thing to say to Me? and He put Himself in their way, that if they had any thing to ask Him, He was ready to resolve them, and to shew them, that though they had treated Him so ill, yet He was ready to preach salvation to them.

In the twenty-fourth verse we are told, "Then came the Jews round about Him, and said unto Him, How long dost thou make us to doubt?" They came round about Him when they saw Him walking in Solomon's porch; now, say they, we will have Him, now we will attack Him. And now was fulfilled that passage in the Psalms, "they compassed Me about like bees," to sting Me, or rather like wasps. Now, say they, we will get Him in the middle of us, and see what sort of a man He is; we will see whether we cannot conquer Him; they came to Him, and they say, "How long dost thou make us to doubt?" Now this seems a plausible question, "How long dost thou make us to doubt?" Pray how long, sir, do you intend to keep us in suspense? Some think the words will bear this interpretation: Pray, sir, how long do you intend thus to steal away our hearts? They would represent Him to be a designing man, like Absalom, to get the people on His side, and then set up Himself for the Messiah; thus carnal minds always interpret good men's actions. But the meaning seems to be this, they were doubting concerning Christ; doubting Christians may think it is God's fault that they doubt, but, God knows, it is all their own. "How long dost thou make us to doubt?" I wish you would speak a little plainer, sir, and not let us have any more of your parables; pray let us know who you are, let us have it from your own mouth; "if thou be the Christ, tell us plainly"; and I do not doubt but they put on a very sanctified face, and looked very demure; "if thou be the Christ, tell us plainly," intending to catch Him: if He do not say He is the Christ, we will say He is ashamed of His own cause; if He tells us plainly that He is the Christ, then we will impeach Him to the governor, we will go and tell the governor that this man says He is the Messiah; now we know of no Messiah, but what is to jostle Caesar out of his throne.—The devil always wants to make it believed that God's people, who are the most loyal people in the world, are rebels to the government under which they live; "If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." Our Lord does not let them wait long for an answer; honesty can soon speak: "I told you, and ye believed not; the works that I do in My Father's Name, they bear witness of Me." Had our Lord said, I am the Messiah, they would have taken Him

up; He knew that, and therefore He joined "the wisdom of the serpent" with "the innocence of the dove": says He, I appeal to My works and doctrine, and if you will not infer from them that I am the Messiah, I have no further argument. "But," He adds, "ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep." He complains twice; for their unbelief was the greatest grief of heart to Christ: then He goes on in the words of our text, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand." My sheep hear My voice; you think to puzzle Me, you think to chagrin Me with this kind of conduct, but you are mistaken; you do not believe on Me, because you are not of My sheep. The great Mr. Stodart, of New England (and no place under heaven produces greater divines than New England), preached once from these words, "But ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep": a very strange text to preach upon, to convince a congregation, yet God so blessed it, that two or three hundred souls were awakened by that sermon: God grant such success to attend the labours of all his faithful ministers.

"My sheep hear My voice, and they follow Me." It is very remarkable, there are but two sorts of people mentioned in scripture: it does not say the Baptists and Independents, nor the Methodists and Presbyterians; no, Jesus Christ divides the whole world into but two classes, sheep and goats: the Lord give us to see this morning to which of these classes we belong.

WHY CALLED "SHEEP"

But it is observable, believers are always compared to something that is good and profitable, and unbelievers are always described by something that is bad, and good for little or nothing.

If you ask me why Christ's people are called sheep? as God shall enable me, I will give you a short, and I hope it will be to you, an answer of peace. Sheep, you know, generally love to be together; we say a flock of sheep, we do not say a herd of sheep; sheep are little creatures, and Christ's people may be called sheep, because they are little in the eyes of the world, and they are yet less in their own eyes. O, some people think, if the great men were on our side, if we had king, lords, and commons on our side, I mean if they were all true believers, O if we had all the kings upon the earth on our side! Suppose you had: alas! alas! do you think the church would go on the better? Why, if it were fashionable to be a Methodist at court, if it were fashionable to be a Methodist abroad, they would go with a Bible or a hymn-book, instead of a novel; but religion never thrives under too much sunshine. "Not many mighty, not many noble, are called, but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which

are mighty." Dr. Watts says, Here and there I see a king, and here and there a great man in heaven, but their number is but small.

Sheep are looked upon to be the most harmless, quiet creatures that God hath made : O may God, of His infinite mercy, give us to know that we are His sheep, by our having this blessed temper infused into our hearts by the Holy Ghost. "Learn of Me," saith our blessed Lord; what to do, to work miracles? no; "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." A very good man, now living, said once, if there be any one particular temper I desire more than another, it is the grace of *meekness*, quietly to bear bad treatment, to forget and to forgive : and at the same time that I am sensible I am injured, not to be overcome of evil, but to have grace given to me to overcome evil with good. To the honour of Moses, it is declared, that he was the meekest man upon earth. Meekness is necessary for people in power; a man that is passionate is dangerous; every governor should have a warm temper, but a man of an unrelenting, unforgiving temper, is no more fit for government than Phaeton to drive the chariot of the sun, he only sets the world on fire.

You all know, that sheep of all creatures in the world are the most apt to stray and be lost; Christ's people may justly, in that respect, be compared to sheep; therefore, in the introduction to our morning service, we say, "We have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep." Turn out a horse, or a dog, and they will find their way home, but a sheep wanders about, he bleats here and there, as much as to say, Dear stranger, shew me my way home again; thus Christ's sheep are too apt to wonder from the fold; having their eye off the great Shepherd, they go into this field and that field, over this hedge and that, and often return home with the loss of their wool.

But at the same time sheep are the most useful creatures in the world; they manure the land, and thereby prepare it for the seed; they clothe our bodies with wool, and there is not the least part of a sheep but is useful to man : O my brethren, God grant that you and I may, in this respect, answer the character of sheep. The world says, because we preach faith we deny good works; this is the usual objection against the doctrine of imputed righteousness, but it is a slander, an impudent slander. It was a maxim in the first reformers' time, that though the *Arminians* preached up good works, you must go to the *Calvinists* for them. Christ's sheep study to be useful, and to clothe all they can; we should labour with our hands, that we may have to give to all those that need.

"MY SHEEP" •

Believers consider Christ's property in them; He says, "My sheep" : O blessed be God for that little, dear, great word *My*.

We are His by eternal election : " the sheep which Thou hast given Me," says Christ. They were given by God the Father to Christ Jesus, in the covenant made between the Father and the Son from all eternity. They that are not led to see this, I wish them better heads; though, I believe, numbers that are against it have got better hearts : the Lord help us to bear with one another where there is an honest heart.

He calls them My sheep; they are His by purchase. O sinner, sinner, you are come this morning to hear a poor creature take " his last farewell " : but I want you to forget the creature that is preaching, I want to lead you farther than the Tabernacle : Where do you want to lead us? why, to mount Calvary, there to see at what an expence of blood Christ purchased those whom He calls His own; He redeemed them with His own blood, so that they are not only His by eternal election, but also by actual redemption in time; and they were given to Him by the Father, upon condition that He should redeem them by His heart's blood. It was a hard bargain, but Christ was willing to strike the bargain, that you and I might not be damned for ever.

THEY HEAR HIS VOICE

They are His, because they are enabled in a day of God's power voluntarily to give themselves up unto Him; Christ says of these sheep especially, " that they hear His voice, and that they follow Him." Will you be so good as to mind that! here is an allusion to a shepherd; now in some places in scripture, the shepherd is represented as going after his sheep; 2 Sam. 7 : 8. Psalm 78 : 71, that is our way in England; but in the Eastern nations, the shepherds generally went before; they held up their crook, and they had a particular call that the sheep understood. Now, says Christ, " My sheep hear My voice. This is My beloved Son," said God, " hear ye Him." And again, " The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and live " : now the question is, what do we understand by hearing Christ's voice?

First, we hear Moses' voice, we hear the voice of the law; there is no going to Mount Zion but by the way of mount Sinai, that is the right straight road. I know some say, they do not know when they were converted; those are, I believe, very few : generally, nay, I may say almost always, God deals otherwise. Some are, indeed, called sooner by the Lord than others, but before they are made to see the glory of God, they must hear the voice of the law; so you must hear the voice of the law, before ever you will be savingly called unto God. You never throw off your cloak in a storm, but you hug it the closer; so the law makes a man hug close his corruptions (Rom. 7 : 7, 8, 9); but when the gospel of the Son of God shines into their souls, then they throw off the corruptions which

they have hugged so closely; they hear His voice saying, Son, daughter, be of good cheer, thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven thee. "They hear His voice"; that bespeaks the habitual temper of their minds: the wicked hear the voice of the devil, the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life; and Christ's sheep themselves attended to them before conversion; but when called afterwards by God, they hear the voice of a Redeemer's blood speaking peace unto them, they hear the voice of His word and of His Spirit.

THEY FOLLOW HIM

The consequence of hearing His voice, and the proof that we do hear His voice, will be—to follow Him. Jesus said unto His disciples, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." And it is said of the saints in glory, that "they followed the Lamb whithersoever He went." Wherever the shepherd turns his crook, and the sheep hear his voice, they follow him; they often tread upon one another, and hurt one another, they are in such haste in their way to heaven. Following Christ means following Him through life, following Him in every word and gesture, following Him out of one clime into another. "Bid me come to Thee upon the water," said Peter: and if we are commanded to go over the water for Christ, God, of His infinite mercy, follow us! We must first be sure that the great Shepherd points His crook for us: but this is the character of a true servant of Christ, that he endeavours to follow Christ in thought, word, and work.

Now, my brethren, before we go farther, as this is the last opportunity I shall have of speaking to you for some months, if we live, some of you I suppose, do not choose in general to rise so soon as you have this morning; now I hope the world did not get into your hearts before you left your beds; now you are here, do let me entreat you to inquire whether you belong to Christ's sheep, or no. Man, woman, sinner, put thy hand to thy heart and answer me, didst thou ever hear Christ's voice so as to follow Him, to give up thyself without reserve to him! I verily do believe from my inmost soul (and that is my comfort, now I am about to take my leave of you), that I am preaching to a vast body, a multitude of dear, precious souls who, if it were proper for you to speak, would say, Thanks be unto God, that we can follow Jesus in the character of sheep, though we are ashamed to think how often we wander from Thee, and what little fruit we bring unto Thee; if that is the language of your hearts, I wish you joy; welcome, welcome, dear soul, to Christ. O blessed be God for His rich grace, His distinguishing, sovereign, electing love, by which He has distinguished you and me. And if He has been pleased to let you hear His voice,

through the ministration of a poor miserable sinner; a poor, but happy pilgrim, may the Lord Jesus Christ have all the glory.

“ I KNOW MY SHEEP ”

If you belong to Jesus Christ, He is speaking of you; for, says He, “ I know My sheep.” I know them, what does that mean? Why, He knows their number, He knows their names, He knows every one for whom He died; and if there were to be one missing for whom Christ died, God the Father would send Him down again from heaven to fetch him. “ Of all,” saith He, “ that Thou hast given Me, have I lost none.” Christ knows His sheep; He not only knows their number, but the words speak the peculiar knowledge and notice He takes of them; He takes as much care of each of them, as if there were but that one single sheep in the world. To the hypocrite He saith, “ Verily, I know you not ”; but He knows His saints, He is acquainted with all their sorrows, their trials, and temptations; He bottles up all their tears, He knows their domestic trials, He knows their inward corruptions, He knows all their wanderings, and He takes care to fetch them back again. I remember I heard good Dr. Maryat, who was a good market-language preacher, once say at Pinner’s Hall (I hope that pulpit will be always filled with such preachers), “ God has a got a great dog, to fetch His sheep back,” says he. Do not you know that when the sheep wander, the shepherd sends his dog after them to fetch them back again? So when Christ’s sheep wander, He lets the devil go after them, and suffers him to bark at them, who, instead of driving them farther off, is made a means to bring them back again to Christ’s fold.

There is a precious word I would have you take notice of, “ I know them ”; that may comfort you under all your trials. We sometimes think that Christ does not hear our prayers, that He does not know us; we are ready to suspect that He has forgotten to be gracious; but what a mercy it is that He does know us. We accuse one another, we turn devils to one another, are accusers of the brethren; and what will support two of God’s people when judged by one another but this, Lord, thou knowest my integrity, thou knowest how matters are with me?

“ I GIVE UNTO THEM ETERNAL LIFE ”

But, my brethren, here is something better, here is good news for you; what is that? say you: why, “ I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand.” O that the words may come to your hearts with as much warmth and power as they did to mine thirty-five years ago. I never prayed against any corruption I had in my life, so much as I did against going into holy orders, so soon as my friends were for having me go: and Bishop Benson was pleased to honour me with peculiar friendship, so as to offer me preferment, or do anything

for me : my friends wanted me to mount the church betimes, they wanted me to knock my head against the pulpit too young; but how some young men stand up here and there and preach, I do not know how it may be to them; but God knows how deep a concern entering into the ministry and preaching, was to me; I have prayed a thousand times, till the sweat has dropped from my face like rain, that God, of His infinite mercy, would not let me enter the church before He called to me, and thrust me forth in, His work. I remember once in Gloucester, I know the room, I look up at the window when I am there, and walk along the street; I know the window, the bedside, and the floor, upon which I have laid prostrate : I have said, Lord, I cannot go, I shall be puffed up with pride, and fall into the condemnation of the devil; Lord, do not let me go yet; I pleaded to be at Oxford two or three years more; I intended to make an hundred and fifty sermons, and thought I would set up with a good stock in trade, however; but I remember praying, wrestling, and striving with God; I said, I am undone, I am unfit to preach in Thy great name, send me not, pray, Lord, send me not yet. I wrote to all my friends in town and country, to pray against the bishop's solicitation, but they insisted I should go into orders before I was twenty-two. After all their solicitations, these words came into my mind, "Nothing shall pluck you out of My hand." O may the words be blessed to you, my dear friends, that I am parting with, as they were to me when they came warm upon my heart; then, and not till then, I said, Lord, I will go, send me when Thou wilt. I remember when I was in a place called Dover-Island, near Georgia, we put in with bad winds; I had an hundred and fifty in family to maintain, and not a single farthing to do it with, in the dearest part of the king's dominions; I remember I told a minister of Christ, now in heaven, I had these words once, sir, "Nothing shall pluck you out of My hand." O, says he, take comfort from them, you may be sure God will be as good as His word, if He never tells you so again. And our Lord knew His poor sheep would be always doubting they should never reach heaven, therefore says He, "I give to them eternal life, and they shall never perish."

Here are in our text three blessed declarations, or promises :

First : *I know them.*

Second : *They shall never perish;* though they often think they shall perish by the hand of their lusts and corruptions; they think they shall perish by the deceitfulness of their hearts; but Christ says, "they shall never perish." I have brought them out of the world to myself, and do you think I will let them go to hell after that? "I give to them eternal life"; pray mind that; not I will, but I do. Some talk of being justified at the day of judgment, that is nonsense; if we are not justified here, we shall not be justified there.

He gives them eternal life, that is, the earnest, the pledge, and assurance of it; the indwelling of the Spirit of God here, is the earnest of glory hereafter.

Third: *Neither shall any pluck them out of My hand.* He holds them in His hand, that is, He holds them by His power, none shall pluck them thence; there is always something plucking at Christ's sheep; the devil, the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life, all try to pluck them out of Christ's hand. O my brethren, if it were not for keeping you too long, and too much exhausting my own spirits, I could call upon you to leap for joy; there is not a more blessed text to support the final perseverance of the saints; and I am astonished any poor soul, and good people I hope too, can fight against the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints: What if a person say they should persevere in wickedness? Ah! that is an abuse of the doctrine; what, because some people spoil good food, are we never to eat it? But, my brethren, upon this text I can leave my cares, all my friends, and all Christ's sheep, to the protection of Christ Jesus' never-failing love.

FAREWELL MESSAGE

I thought this morning, when I came here riding from the other end of the town, it was to me like coming to be executed publicly; and when the carriage turned just at the end of the walk, and I saw you running here, O, thinks I, it is like a person now coming just to the place where he is to be executed: when I went up to put on my gown, I thought it was just like dressing myself to be made a public spectacle to shed my blood for Christ; and I take all heaven and earth to witness, and God and the holy angels to witness, that though I had preferment enough offered me, that though the bishop took me in his arms, and offered me two parishes when I was but twenty-two years old, and always took me to his table; though I had preferment enough offered me when I was ordained, Thou, O God, knowest, that when the bishop put his hand upon my head, I looked for no other preferment than publicly to suffer for the Lamb of God: in this spirit I came out, in this spirit I came up to this metropolis. I was thinking, when I read of Jacob's going over the brook with a staff, that I would not say so much, but I came up without a friend, I went to Oxford without a friend, I had not a servant, I had not one to introduce me; but God, by His holy Spirit, was pleased to raise me up to preach for His great name's sake: through His divine Spirit I continue to this day, and feel my affections are as strong as ever towards the work and the people of the living God. The congregations at both ends of the town are dear to me; and, blessed be His name, as He called me to Georgia at first, and I left all London affairs to God's care, when I had most of the churches in London open for me, and had twelve or fourteen constables to keep the doors, that people might not crowd too much; I had offers of hundreds then to settle in

London, yet I gave it up for God, to go into foreign clime; and I hope with that same single intention I am going now.

When I came from America last, I thought I had no other river to pass over but the river Jordan, I remember I told you so; and as the Orphan-house was then to be given, I thought, out of my hands, I then intended to retire into some little corner, and pray when I could not preach, my spirits were so low, and my nerves and animal frame so weak, but God, of His infinite mercy, has renewed my strength, and is pleased to raise my spirits, so that I find my heart is willing to go here or there, wherever God shall call.

The Orphan-house being turned into a college, is a matter of great consequence; you that have not been in America cannot tell, but I heartily wish (I am neither a prophet, nor the son of a prophet), and hope none of us will ever be driven to America for an asylum, where God's people were driven from this land an hundred years ago: clouds are growing thick, and if a spirit of moderation does not prevail among governors and governed, what but confusion must happen to persons who strive one with another, and are making sport for the devil by destroying one another? May the great and gracious God avert every impending storm; and by diffusing a spirit of moderation, and of a sound mind, and by keeping His people close to Himself, avert those storms, those terrible judgments, that we have reason to expect from our repeated provocations. I am going now to settle the Orphan-house upon a proper basis; I go now in the fall, that I may be in Georgia in the winter, which is fine weather there. The twenty-fifth of March is the anniversary of the day on which I laid the first brick of the Orphan-house; by that time, I hope, all the buildings will be finished, and the plantation settled; and then I hope to go and preach along the continent to New England, and from thence I intend, if God permit me, to return to my dear London and English friends again.

I have blessed news from the Orphan-house: one writes me word, Would to God you could send a thousand such as you have sent, Mr. Dixon and his wife, that have been old servants there; Mr. Wright, Mr. Crayne, and Mr. Wright's brother, and those that have been employed with them to carry on the work of the Lord; and I cannot think but God intends to lay a foundation for a blessed seminary for Christ: Lord Jesus, hear our prayers upon that account.

Now, I must come to the hardest part I have to act; I was afraid when I came out from home, that I could not bear the shock, but I hope the Lord Jesus will help me to bear it, and help you to give me up to the blessed God, let Him do with me what he will. This is the thirteenth time of my crossing the mighty waters; it is a little difficult at this time of life; and though my spirits are improved in some degree, yet weakness is the best of my

strength: but I delight in the cause, and God fills me with a peace that is unutterable, which nobody knows, and a stranger intermeddles not with: into His hands I commend my spirit; and I beg that this may be the language of your hearts, Lord, keep him, let nothing pluck him out of Thy hands. I expect many a trial while I am on board, Satan always meets me there; but that God who has kept me, I believe will keep me. I thank God, I have the honour of leaving every thing quite well and easy at both ends of the town; and, my dear hearers, my prayers to God shall be, that nothing may pluck you out of Christ's hands. Witness against me, if I ever set up a party for myself; did ever any minister, or could any minister in the world say, that I ever spoke against any one going to any dear minister? I thank God that He has enabled me to be always strengthening the hands of all, though some have afterwards been ashamed to own me. I declare to you, that I believe God will be with me, and will strengthen me: and I believe it is in answer to your prayers, that God is pleased to revive my spirits: may the Lord help you to pray on. If I am drowned in the waves, I will say, Lord, take care of my London, take care of my English friends, let nothing pluck them out of Thy hands.

And as Christ has given us eternal life, O my brethren, some of you, I doubt not, will be gone to Him before my return; but, my dear brethren, my dear hearers, never mind that; we shall part, but it will be to meet again for ever. I dare not meet you now, I cannot bear your coming to me, to part from me; it cuts me to the heart, and quite overcomes me, but by and by all parting will be over, and all tears shall be wiped away from our eyes. God grant that none that weep now at my parting, may weep at our meeting at the day of judgment; and if you never were among Christ's sheep before, may Christ Jesus bring you now. O come, come, see what it is to have eternal life; do not refuse it; haste, sinner, haste away: may the great, the good Shepherd, draw your souls. Oh! if you never heard His voice before, God grant you may hear it now; that I may have this comfort when I am gone, that I had last, that some souls are awakened at the parting sermon. O that it may be a farewell sermon to you; that it may be a means of your taking a farewell of the world, the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life. O come, come, come, to the Lord Jesus Christ; to Him I leave you.

And you, dear sheep, that are already in His hands, O may God keep you from wandering; God keep you near Christ's feet; I do not care what shepherds keep you, so as you are kept near the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls. The Lord God keep you, lift up the light of His countenance upon you, and give you peace.
Amen.

[The Rev. George Whitefield died in America, September 30th, 1770, aged 56, thirteen months after this Farewell Sermon.]