

Sovereign Grace Union: Doctrinal Basis

The Holy Scriptures

The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as originally given, as the inspired and infallible and inerrant Word of God, and as the sole, supreme, and all-sufficient authority in every matter of Christian faith and practice.

The Trinity

One living and true God, Sovereign in creation, providence and redemption, subsisting in three Persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – the same in substance, and equal in power and glory.

The Lord Jesus Christ

The Eternal Sonship and the essential, absolute, and eternal Deity, and true and sinless humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ; His virgin birth, death, and burial; His physical resurrection and ascension into heaven, and His coming again in power and glory.

The Holy Spirit

The Personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit, through Whom the sinner is born again to saving repentance and faith, and by Whom the saints are sanctified through the truth.

The Fall of Man

The fall of mankind in Adam, by which they have totally lost their original righteousness and holiness, and have come under the righteous condemnation of God.

Unconditional Election

The personal and unconditional election in Christ of a multitude which no man can number unto everlasting salvation, out of God's pure grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works in them.

Particular Redemption

The personal and eternal redemption from all sin and the penal consequence thereof, of all God's elect, by the substitutionary sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Effectual Calling

The effectual calling of all the elect by the irresistible grace of God.

Justification

The justification of sinners by faith alone, through the atoning death and resurrection and imputed righteousness of Christ.

Final Perseverance

The final perseverance in the state of grace of all those who have been elected by the Father, redeemed by the Son, and regenerated by the Holy Spirit, so that they shall never perish but have eternal life.

In reference to the above, consult the XXXIX Articles of the Church of England, the Westminster Confession, the Savoy Declaration and the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith.

Editorial

The latest threat to the Reformed Faith in the west is Postmodernism. This is a “radical new insight” that pontificates on human language, on our knowledge and on history. It claims that words are merely linguistic signs that we may interpret how we wish, that absolute truth is inaccessible to us, and that there can be no true history, but only narratives that express historians’ ideas and values. With one arrogant sweep, therefore, it would “deconstruct” all meaningful communication, all true Christian doctrines and all historical events. What was once certain, it avers, is now seen to be in flux, and therefore open to question. Everyone is entitled to his own opinion.

That Postmodernism is *radical* we have no doubt. It strikes at the root of all divine authority. As K. Scott Oliphint says: “If there is a consensus in postmodern thought . . . it would likely centre around postmodernism’s rejection of traditional notions of anything, but pre-eminently traditional notions of authority.” In other words, postmodern man “would want to demolish any notion of ‘the way things are’ and substitute for it the more up-to-date idea of ‘the way things are *to me*.’” Can anything be more self-centred?

Even if it is radical, Postmodernism is not *new*. It is as old as Adam, who first rejected God’s authority in the Garden. And although it bears a new name, it is only Adamic rebellion in a new guise. Just as Adam sought to assert his independence of God by seeing things his own way, and not in God’s way, so Postmodernism locates the source of ‘truth’ in man’s mind, not in the mind of God.

As for it being an *insight*, the claim is preposterous. What kind of insight is it that tells us that all the ‘creations’ of our own mind cannot connect with the outside world? This does not mean that there is no outside world. It means that whatever we claim to know is known only because we create that knowledge in our own

minds. [Bishop Berkeley said virtually the same thing, till someone asked him if the table or chair he bumped into was real or only in his mind!] Even though there is a world out there, it is by definition (i.e. ‘out there’) unknown and unknowable. [Is it not amazing that postmodernists can inform us that there is a world out there, yet that it is unknowable? By so doing, they prove Cornelius Van Til’s observation that while seeking consistency, the natural man is inherently inconsistent.] But as Francis Schaeffer says: “He is there, and He is not silent.” All creation and all history declare His glory, and even the little world within us urges us to praise Him, for we are fearfully and wonderfully made. After all, are not creation and providence God’s eternal purpose wrought out in time by His wisdom, goodness and power?

Furthermore, Postmodernism condemns the whole of our redemption, since it excludes all possibility of knowing God! If human language does not refer to a world out there, but is only a system of linguistic signs that we interpret, then the Good News that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners is meaningless, for this truth, like the rest of Holy Scripture, came to us from ‘out there.’

Since we do not understand such language, Postmodernism protests, we may interpret it just as we like. For Jacques Derrida, an influential Postmodernist author, a text has no reference point beyond itself. Words refer only to other words. So we can attach to them whatever meaning we like.

Tell me, child of Satan, the arch-deconstructionist [or Destroyer], are we really free to put whatever meaning we wish on that precious statement: “Christ died for our sins”? Though you do not know what the title ‘Christ’ means, nor in what sense He died for our sins, you are not free to put your own construction on it. You are not free to say that His death sets us a great example of self-sacrifice for any cause we believe in. Neither are you free to see it as a warning not to stick our heads out too far, because of what happened to Him. No. You are not free to say: “Words mean what

I make them mean.” The death of the Son of God in our nature is God’s own remedy for the sin of His chosen, called, penitent, believing, sanctified people. This heart of our Christian Faith is revealed history and revealed doctrine, given us by God out of His infinite, eternal and unchangeable covenant love for His people’s salvation. Are we to jettison it because of your say-so?

But, Postmodernism protests again, human language is inadequate to express true meaning about anything. And so God, the living God, the God of truth and Creator of language and understanding, simply **cannot** communicate to man in language he can understand! He simply **cannot** accommodate to man the truths He would have him believe. Not only that, man, whose mind and ear and eye God created also, **could not** possibly understand even if God could speak intelligibly to him! The Holy Spirit **cannot** enter man’s darkened, twisted mind and bring into it both light and sight! He **cannot** rectify what is wrong in man and set him on the road to complete restoration to the image of God!

What blasphemy! Is this how puny, sin-blinded, hateful modern man responds to his Maker’s daily longsuffering and goodness? Are not deconstructionists just modern Pharaohs, crying out in rebellion: “Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice?”?

In short, Postmodernism leaves everyone free to pervert whatever text he likes in any way he likes.

He can, for example, pervert the concept of ‘justice.’ No matter that God says: “Whosoever sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed” (Genesis 9.6). Postmodern man is free to change this to: “Whoever murders someone should suffer life imprisonment.” Then he can change this to: “Life imprisonment means twenty-five, or twelve, or seven years, depending on the murderer’s conduct.” This is not merely perverting the term ‘justice.’ It is perverting justice itself! Change the word and we change the thing. O, how far have we fallen from the great principle: *Fiat justitia ruat coelum* = *Let there be justice, though heaven falls!*

Moreover, he can pervert the notion of mercy. In mercy, God gave us marriage as a safeguard against sexual promiscuity and as an expression of loving unity between man and wife. Postmodernism says: “You don’t need to get married. Just hitch up with a partner. When you tire of each other, you can simply move on.” This is nothing but lust-gratifying serial monogamy, practiced for our own selfish convenience! And look at the social problems it entails in its wake – all the broken homes, broken hearts, fatherless and motherless children! Are we to let this defiance of God replace His creation ordinance of marriage without a protest?

More seriously still, when God tells us in Scripture that He is merciful, that He delights in mercy, that He will have mercy on believing penitents, the postmodernist retorts: “I can’t relate to that language. I don’t understand the meaning of the word ‘mercy,’ or of the term ‘God.’ So it means nothing to me.” In this self-destructive way, sinners forsake their own mercy and are lost.

In brief, all spiritual alienation and moral relativism spring from perverting the glory of God into the great idol self. This whole postmodern focus on self was brought home to me once after preaching on the greens at Stratford upon Avon. Meeting a party of French schoolgirls, I engaged them in conversation on the Gospel, and asked one of them what she believed in. With great vehemence she replied: “I believe in MYSELF.”

Thus, having ‘deconstructed’ all that is glorifying to God – human language, Holy Scripture, providence, divine authority, the history and doctrines of salvation, all God-given knowledge and faith and moral integrity – Postmodernism reconstructs everything to create a world centred on the great idol SELF. Ultimately, this is why it is so vile, and why we should reject it, lock, stock and barrel.

Thankfully, we have been given some literature to help us understand and combat it. Erroll Hulse has written a booklet on Postmodernism. This is available on e-mail:

chapel@mountzion.org, or on worldwide web at www.mountzion.org, or from Chapel Library, 2603 W. Wright St. Pensacola. Florida 32505. USA. In a more scholarly treatment, the Reformed historian Carl Trueman has exposed it in *The Wages of Spin* (Mentor, Christian Focus Publications) and in the *Westminster Theological Journal*. Volume 70, No.1. Spring 2008. pp 1-18. Richard J. Evans too has countered it effectively in his *In Defence of History* (Granta Books, London).

Best of all, Holy Scripture itself gives us an account of both true knowledge, pure theology and real history that is calculated to humble man in the dust and give all glory to God. On the impregnable rock of the Word of God written we may rest our whole souls. For in it our invincible God assures us that He really speaks to us through His Word; that He causes His people to understand, receive and obey it; that He will preserve the Faith He has once delivered to the saints and control the tides of history till eternity dawns. Nothing can make void this assurance. Nothing can force Him to forego His promise or renounce His oath. For nothing can assail His throne, not even Satan himself.

What *we* need to do is seek and find the grace to hold fast the distinctive tenets of the Reformed Faith and proclaim its unchangeable message, leaving the outcome securely in His hands. Meanwhile may our motto be: 'No compromise with the enemies of the sovereign God of our salvation.'

The Reformed Faith

[In May 1932 an International Conference on *The Reformed Faith commonly called Calvinism* was held under the auspices of the S.G.U. The conference's clear-cut, edifying testimony to the doctrines of grace reminds us that, long before the recent revival of Calvinism, the S.G.U. held forth these God-honouring truths faithfully and boldly. The *President's Address* on the occasion was given by Henry Atherton, minister of Grove Chapel, Camberwell, London. Here is an edited version of it. May the same Lord who raised up those earlier witnesses keep us faithful to His truth and raise up others to preserve our God-given heritage. Ed.]

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” (Jude 3,4)

The Sovereign Grace Union, since its inception and at each Annual Conference, has sought to “contend for the faith” and to expose errors. When the Union was reorganized in 1914, we did not know to what extent it would grow, and it is gratifying to see how the Lord has accepted those beginnings of worldwide usefulness.

The subject of the Conference, “The Reformed Faith,” is one that has been dealt with at other conferences, and yet the half of its greatness, preciousness and beauty has not been told. We thoroughly believe that the Reformed Faith, commonly called Calvinism, is far superior to all other religions or systems, and that it alone makes for a full ministry. On its positive side it has four outstanding principles:

1. Historical.
2. Doctrinal.
3. Experimental.
4. Practical.

Historical

If the Garden of Eden, the Fall of man, the call of Abraham and other events recorded in the Old Testament are not historically true, then for what reason did the Lord Jesus Christ quote them? Indeed, why did He become incarnate and undertake His vicarious atoning work on Calvary? If His resurrection is not an historical event, our faith is vain, we are yet in our sins, without any hope of salvation; our religion is mere sentiment, resting solely on suppositions; and the promises concerning the elect and their eternal salvation would be unprofitable, because untrue.

In the Dark Ages [c600-1500], because of ignorance concerning the historical parts of the Word of God, there existed all kinds of fanciful, allegorical interpretations, till God sent us the glorious Reformation, which drove away these spurious interpretations and gave us soundness and soberness. It is because of a lack in the ministry of maintaining the historical testimony of the Word of God that we see the spread of Mysticism and Quietism, which have produced the evil of Modernism, which is now drifting towards the quagmire of Agnosticism and Infidelity.

Yet to preach only an historical testimony is merely to lay the foundation.

Doctrinal

If no definite doctrine is proclaimed, the people perish for lack of knowledge, and are ready to accept any of the idle fancies invented by the corrupt minds and deceitful hearts of wicked men, however amiable and pleasant they may appear.

3. the Word of God we get divine revelation from God concerning Himself: His Triune Personality, His attributes, His mind, will and purpose.

Concerning the Father: in His eternal electing love giving the elect to the Lord Jesus in covenant bonds that are certain and sure.

Concerning His eternal Son: His Suretyship, Substitution and Saviourhood.

Concerning the Holy Spirit: in His procession from the Father and the Son, in His regenerating, sanctifying and keeping power.

Concerning God's predestinating purposes towards the world, especially in His eternal salvation of the elect and the eternal punishment of the reprobate.

These are truths definite and solid, about which there should be no doubt; truths that will always stand firm and faithful, and that the unbelief and wickedness of men can never alter. All through the ages God has raised up faithful ministers to maintain these great and glorious truths, and one of His chief judgments on a land is to withdraw them from the people.

Yet to preach only doctrine is merely to build the first storey of the house.

Experimental

Unless the Holy Spirit works out doctrine in a living experience the possessor has only head knowledge; but when He takes an elect vessel of mercy in hand, what a difference He makes! Then are the true knowledge of the natural depravity of man, the sinfulness of sin, the deceitfulness and desperately wicked state of the heart discovered. Then is realized the absolute necessity for the precious blood and righteousness of Christ to be applied, that the sinner may know that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin; and covered with the imputed righteousness of Christ, he stands before God complete and perfect in Christ.

Furthermore, he daily continues to experience his need of the merits and grace of Christ to be continually applied to him, as the Holy Spirit works out the travail of the soul of Christ in the experience of His elect. This was the real cause of the Reformation in all parts of Europe. This is what is lacking today; yet apart from this there is no salvation.

Practical

This is the outstanding test before the world, and it is right that we should be tested on our practice. What did the Reformed Faith, commonly called Calvinism, do for Europe and the world?

1. Calvinism gave us our Bibles in our mother tongue.
2. Calvinism gave us the right to worship God according to our conscience.
3. Calvinism gave us the apostolic practice of preaching the Gospel.

[It is more correct and more God-honouring to say that God gave us these blessings through all the Reformers. Ed.]

Many of the Reformers in Europe were Calvinists. So too were those giants in theology, the Puritans. Whilst other systems tend towards superstition, worldliness, craft, deceit, agnosticism and infidelity, Calvinism has produced truth, uprightness, honesty, liberty and godliness.

Take, for example, constitutional government. The four outstanding statesmen of their day – William the Silent, Gustavus Adolphus, Oliver Cromwell and William the Third – were all Calvinists.

Let me quote an historian, one who was far from being a Calvinist. James Anthony Froude says: “The Calvinists have been called intolerant. Intolerance of an enemy who is trying to kill you seems to be a pardonable state of mind. The Catholics chose to add to their already incredible creed a fresh article: that they were entitled to hang and burn those who differed from them. They grew harder, harsher, fiercer and more fanatical. It was extremely natural that they should. During this quarrel the Calvinists, Bible in hand, appealed to the God of battles. They dwelt as pious men are apt to dwell: in suffering and sorrow on the all-disposing power of

providence. Their burden grew lighter as they considered that God had so determined that they must bear it, but they attracted to their ranks almost every man in Western Europe who hated a lie. They were crushed down, but they rose again. They were splintered and torn, but no power could bend or melt them. They abhorred, as no body of men ever more abhorred, all conscious mendacity, all impurity, all moral wrong of every kind, as far as they could recognize it. Whatever exists at this moment in England and Scotland of conscious fear of doing evil is the remnant of the convictions which were branded by the Calvinists into the people's hearts."

This is the testimony of all reliable historians, whether friends or foes. With the decadence of Calvinism there is bewilderment among all nations.

Speaking about England, I believe there never was a time when we had such a dearth of *real, vital, sound, experimental Calvinism*. It is the God-given duty of the Sovereign Grace Union to raise high the standard of the doctrines of free and sovereign grace.

Regarding international union, it is recorded of Calvin that he said he would gladly cross ten seas to secure the union of the brethren. How his heart would have rejoiced at such a conference as this! We do pray that the Lord will bless this noble effort. We are not seeking *a mere uniformity*, but *a living unity* among the brethren, who hold and are not ashamed of the Scriptural doctrines proclaimed at the glorious Reformation.

In conclusion, let us remind ourselves that Calvinism stands for:

1. Pure and undefiled religion.
2. Civil and religious liberties.
3. National independence and prosperity.

If the Reformation was worth dying for, the Reformation is worth maintaining, and the only way we can maintain it is by contending for the same principles for which our spiritual fathers died, so that we, by God's grace, should hand them on to the coming generation.

Brethren, God bless you, and guide you in your deliberations.

The Only Refuge of the Troubled Soul ***(Part Three)*** ***by David Samuel***

Sermon 2. This concerns the sweet fruit of the apple tree.

By the fruit of Christ is to be understood, first, the unspeakable and soul saving benefits that flow to true believers from His mediatorial work. “Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1.30). Christ has purchased for the elect justification and sanctification and all other good, spiritual and temporal. He is the fount of all the graces of His people. These fruits are sweet and delightful to the believer both on account of their source and of their nourishment. The imputation to the believer of the perfection of Christ’s graces is that which renders all his imperfect performances acceptable and pleasing to God. “He hath made us accepted in the Beloved” (Ephesians 1.6). Our best works stand in need of the spotless sanctification of the Mediator to commend them to God. Augustine exclaimed: “O Lord, wash Thou my tears of repentance.”

Secondly, by the fruit of Christ we are to understand His words. “His mouth is most sweet, yea, altogether lovely” (Song 5.6). The words of Christ are sweet because they speak to our condition. What can be more suitable to a creature dying in the wounds given him by sin, than the glad tidings of a Saviour who is both willing and able to save and reconcile him to God? They are sweet also because they are seasonable. “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver” – a word in due time and place, pertinent to the purpose – so is the Gospel to the sinner. When the word suited to a poor, tempted saint’s distress is brought home in the nick of time, as we say, how sweet it is then. The words of Christ are sweet on account of the Holy Spirit, who must accompany them to make them creative and regenerative

words in our experience. Through Him they have a quickening power and agency in our lives.

Thirdly, by the fruit of Christ we understand also His works.

(1) These we must consider in order, beginning with His *Incarnation*, this mystery of mysteries, that He stooped to our nature, a privilege denied to our angelic nature. “He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham.” (Hebrews 2.16). This is the basis of the union between Christ and the true believers. “As the union between Christ’s Godhead and His humanity is forever inseparable, so the union and bond of friendship between God and believers shall never be null and void, let Devil, world, corrupt nature, death and hell do what they can.”

(2) Then there is the work of Christ’s *humiliation*. As God He is incapable of being humbled. His human nature had to be assumed before He could humble Himself. Barry maintains that Christ joining human nature to Himself was not a humbling of the Godhead, but rather an advancement of the creature, of human nature, far above anything that was or will be. While it was not a humbling of the Godhead, it was nevertheless a matchless act of condescension.

In what, then, did Christ’s humiliation consist? It consisted in laying aside claim to sinless perfection, [even though He was personally perfect. Ed.] If He had not done so the law could not have touched Him. “Christ was made, not born under the law. (Galatians 4.4)” To be born under the law presupposes a sinful, polluted nature. To be made under the law presupposes Christ’s voluntary act of subjecting Himself to the law of God, to keep it and to suffer its penalties instead of the elect. He emptied Himself, robbed Himself, of His [claim to] spotless innocence; He did it Himself: it was not the act of His Father or of His enemies. Hence His refusal to plead before Pilate and His silence before His accusers. “He was numbered with the transgressors.” (Isaiah

53.12) And this He did for the sake of His people. As the Lord Jesus Christ could be made a sinner no other way but by God's imputing to Him the iniquities of the elect, to which He Himself agreed and consented, so elect sinners can be partakers of a spotless justifying righteousness no other way but by God's imputing that of His own Son to them. As all the guilt and defilement which by sin came on God's elect was imputed to and charged on the Son of God, so all the mediatorial righteousness, both active and passive, which Christ performed and fulfilled to answer the law's demand was and is imputed to and charged on the elect in effectual calling for their free and full justification from all charge of sin.

(3) *The work of Christ's death* is sweet to the believer, for by it He took on Himself the curse and penalty of the law. It was Luther's observation that on the cross the two greatest potentates on earth were striving for victory, viz., the law of God and the sinless Son of God. The law falls on Christ, as the greatest of transgressors. It shows Him no mercy. By His death our Lord discharged the debt of all His people to the law. Its claims are exhausted. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8.1). What reason has the weakest believer to question the love of Christ who interposed Himself between him and eternal death, or to question the love of the Father who freely gave up His only begotten Son for the purpose?

The death of Christ is also sweet to the believer because it deals with indwelling sin in the heart. This is slain by the death of Christ. But let every true believer observe that it is not the *being* of indwelling sin, but its *condemning* and *reigning power*, that we understand to be put to death by the death of Christ, so that indwelling sin which yet remains in the believer shall never lay him open to condemnation or keep him under its captivating power, as [it did] before regeneration.

Again, the death of Christ is most sweet to the believer because by it the curse that was put into bodily death by sin has been taken

away. “The sting of death is sin” (1 Corinthians 15.56). This, Christ, the Surety of the believer, bore, that the curse in death might be turned into a blessing to all the members of Christ. Death is the greatest friend to the believer, for by it, that which praying, hearing, the sacraments only help to weaken is with one stroke cut off. Thus Paul: “For to die is gain” (Philippians 1.21). “All things are yours; whether . . . the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come: all are yours” (1 Corinthians 3.21,22).

(4) *The work of Christ’s glorious resurrection from the dead is most delightful to the taste of the believer, because God’s raising Him up is the actual discharge to His Son and to all who are in Him. It is as if God says: “It is enough: I am now satisfied to the full; every iota and tittle of the law is by Him perfectly obeyed, both actively and passively. I have now no more to lay to His charge, or to the elect’s charge, for whom He became Surety.”* The oftener we chew this cud, the sweeter the taste will be. Some consider the resurrection a dry chip from which they derive no sweetness, because they do not understand their interest in it. But by God’s raising Christ from the dead, no sins of God’s elect remain unsatisfied for. “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Romans 8.33-34).

The resurrection of Christ is also the pledge to the believer of his own and of all believers being raised, not only from a state of mortality, but also from a state of imperfection. “Let thy faith be never so weak, this thou wilt find by experience, that the oftener thou dost taste of this fruit of Christ’s death and resurrection, with application thereof to thyself, crying out believing, ‘My dear Lord Jesus Christ, who died to discharge the debt of my sins, and who rose again for my justification,’ the sweeter and more delightful will it be; and not only so, but thy poor weak faith will by this means gather strength day by day.”

(5) *The glorious ascension of Christ from earth to heaven* is again a fruit most refreshing to the believer, as it proves the complete conquest and victory of Christ, his Surety, over all the enemies of God's elect. He ascended up on high and led captivity captive. "Thus did Christ lead the Devil, sin, curse of the law, world, death, grave and hell captive, so that they never more can enslave or insult over any of God's elect." "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John 16.33).

Also, by His ascension He has entered heaven as our Forerunner, that He might represent His people spotless and blameless before the face of God. He has entered on the possession of the purchased inheritance, which He has purchased for His members. The believer's life and crown are in the keeping of Christ, to be secured for them till they arrive in heaven where He is.

(6) *The intercession of Christ in heaven* is most sweet to the believer. Whatever Christ prays for He most certainly obtains. "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me, and I know that thou hearest me always." (John 11.41,42). By the intercession of Christ the peace and reconciliation procured by His meritorious sacrifice is kept up and continued forever. The keeping up of that peace is as necessary as the first procurement of it. As the procurement of all good for the elect depends upon Christ's sacrifice, so the actual application of it to them depends upon His intercession. But this intercession of Christ with the Father is no matter of precarious entreaty, no favour or mercy, but that for which He has first paid a price on behalf of His people. It is therefore a matter of equity and justice.

(7) Lastly, *the work of Christ's ruling of the world*, like all the rest of His works, is sweet to the believer. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matthew 28.18). "He hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be head over all things to the church." (Ephesians 1.22). From the Scriptures it is clear that God committed the government of all things in His providential kingdom to Christ His Son, to be improved for the good and advantage of His elect. This is a high privilege and mercy, by

which God's chosen are privileged above the rest of the race, to be under the commanding power and everlasting successful conduct of such a King. If this point were rightly understood and applied as it should be, it would make the weakest believer as bold as a lion. All things are subject to Christ, not only creatures, but all the natural forces of the universe, yes, the craft and subtlety of all the church's enemies are subject to Him. "No fire can burn, no water drown, no thieves can rob, no persecutors harm, without Christ." As no second cause can of itself do good to men, so neither can it do harm.

Here then is the fruit indeed, for all that my Saviour is and all that He has done is mine through my being joined to Him by faith, and the relish of it surpasses all that the world can offer. This is the feast of fat things promised in Isaiah 25 and which was meant by Christ Himself in those words: "For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." (John 6.55). Thus, while he finds himself overcast with the shadow of the apple tree, and his spiritual senses so unspeakably cheered and ravished with its fruit, the believer cries out with Peter on the mount at the transfiguration of Christ: "Lord, it is good to be here!" (Matthew 17.3). "There is no shelter like this of the apple tree, which secures from all manner of storms, be they inward or outward; from the devil; from the envious, wicked world; from heart-corruption; or from God hiding His face. Neither is any fruit to be compared to its fruit, a fruit which never fails a hungry soul which feeds on it."

Finally, let us make some observations on this work of Barry's. Why is Christ not generally viewed today in this light, as portrayed here, as an All-Sufficient Saviour? Why are Christians deprived of the solid comforts and strength that derive from such an understanding of Christ's Person and work?

I suggest three reasons:

1. *Men generally do not see themselves today as sinners.* Even in the Church there is not a proper understanding of the wickedness and corruption of the human heart. The Marxists introduced the idea of evil in the structures of society. Others have taken this up

so that evil is objectivized. It is seen no longer in terms of human responsibility. Men are victims, it is said; they are more sinned against than sinning. It is no longer 'politically correct' to talk of people behaving wickedly by choice. This thinking is reflected in the worship and teaching of the institutional churches. Sin and the depravity of the heart are played down almost to non-existence. Man's plight is not depicted as hopeless and desperate, "without hope and without God in the world." The appeal is not to something essentially and fundamentally wrong with his condition, but merely to what is considered adventitious or accidental; and if he will turn to Christ his life will be enhanced and he will find greater happiness, fulfillment, contentment. He will be saved from meaninglessness, boredom and frustration.

The suggestion is that what man needs is a little assistance with life to get things right. He will find that Christ will afford him that assistance; or alternatively, he may find some other creed or philosophy equally helpful. This changes the terms fundamentally from the Biblical view of Christ as the only and all-sufficient Saviour. Only when we once again recognize the seriousness of sin and the utter helplessness of the sinner's condition can we appreciate the all-sufficiency of Christ as Saviour, One to whom we must fly for refuge and succour, not one whom we might choose in a moment of quiet reflection.

(2) *The nexus between Christ and His people, the elect, has been severed by liberal theology and modernistic views.* Throughout Barry's work, as indeed in the Puritans generally, we see the close relationship between Christ and the believing soul, a relationship established not merely by faith on the side of the believer, but more importantly by divine covenant on the side of God: "Justified in the person of my Surety," as Barry puts it. In Biblical terms, elect believers are "quickened together with Christ . . . raised up together with Him . . . and seated with Him in heavenly places." The believer is en Christo, in Christ, so that he receives of the fullness of Christ's grace. All that is Christ's is his; all that Christ has accomplished he has accomplished in Christ.

Now this link, this union between Christ and His people, so powerfully set forth in the Covenant of Grace, and tellingly illustrated here in Barry's work, is severed by modern theology, which rejects the ideas of covenant and election. In the 19th century, theologians like John McLeod Campbell, and before him R.W.Dale, sought to construct theories of atonement that set aside the notion of Christ dying in the place of His people and suffering the penalty due to their sins. They tried to establish the atonement on universal grounds and principles. But as Dale said at the time, this left things a bit up in the air. What is the relationship between Christ and His people? How can the work that Christ accomplished be applied to them?

The fact of the matter is, that apart from the concept of foedus or covenant there is no bond. The Biblical understanding of priesthood (and therefore of Christ's priesthood) requires that a priest act on behalf of a people, a specific people, and that that relationship must be established from the beginning, before ever he undertakes his priestly, vicarious work for them. Without this bond not only does any sacrifice cease to be truly vicarious, but all the necessary concepts of imputation, expiation and propitiation become meaningless. Dale and Campbell and others, having destroyed the Biblical framework, then turned round and railed against it because they could make no sense of its terms, now devoid of a context.

But apart from the theoretical side, the most serious loss has been to the Church and to the believer, who by the dismantling of the relationship with Christ, exemplified in the covenant, are now deprived of the spiritual blessings that flow from it, and that are set out so well in Barry's *Mystery of the Apple Tree*.

3. The third observation I have to make is this: *there has been in recent years, in evangelical circles, a separation between doctrinal and devotional teaching and literature*. It has been assumed that the doctrinal is academic and dry, and not comforting and spiritually edifying. The late Dr. Lloyd-Jones was regarded as

a doctrinal preacher; and people used to say: “You must not take young Christians to hear him, they would not be helped.” Where this stems from is not possible to go into here, but it is a harmful and dangerous distinction. For the truth is that doctrinal preaching and teaching are the most comforting teaching you can have. The whole of this little treatise on the *Mystery of the Apple Tree* is doctrinal, yet it is full of comfort and blessing to the believer. Let us not perpetuate this misunderstanding and its baneful consequences. Rather, “let us take heed unto doctrine . . . for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and those that hear thee.” (1 Timothy 4.16).

[While supplying the church at Wattisham recently, I noticed a wall plaque to the memory of Gordon Hawkins, the late Chairman of the Sovereign Grace Union Committee. From its contents, kindly sent by the church’s deacons, readers may appreciate the high regard in which Gordon was held by us all. May we seek grace to follow him who through faith and patience now inherits the promises. Editor.]

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
GORDON HAWKINS
THE HIGHLY ESTEEMED PASTOR OF THIS CHURCH
WHOM THE LORD MAINTAINED IN A FAITHFUL
AND FRUITFUL MINISTRY FOR 38 YEARS,
FROM THE FULL EXERCISE OF WHICH HE WAS
TAKEN TO GLORY ON JANUARY 11TH 2003, AGED 77.
HE GAVE HIMSELF TO THE WORD OF GOD AND PRAYER.
HE ORDERED HIS HOME AND CHURCH LIFE IN THE FEAR
OF GOD. THROUGH YEARS OF WIDESPREAD CHANGE HE
PREACHED WITHOUT WAVERING THE DOCTRINES OF
FREE AND SOVEREIGN GRACE AND ADHERED TO THE
AUTHORISED VERSION OF THE BIBLE. HE LOVED THE
LORD’S PEOPLE WITH A PURE HEART FERVENTLY. HE
GLORIED IN CHRIST’S PRECIOUS BLOOD AND
RIGHTEOUSNESS AND ANTICIPATED WITH GREAT JOY
HIS COMING AGAIN. MATTHEW XXV:23

Some Reformation Theologians: John Bradford (1510-1555)

Introduction

In all the extant biographies of England's worthies, we rarely hear of one who was 'more devout and godly' than the writer ever knew, who not only led 'a heavenly life himself', but also 'very earnestly and heartily' laboured 'to persuade others' to do the same. Yet such a man was John Bradford - scholar, royal chaplain, itinerant preacher, contender for the true faith and martyr. Not without cause did an Anglican bishop and fellow martyr, Nicholas Ridley, write to him: 'O good brother, blessed be God in thee, and blessed be the time that ever I knew thee!'

His Life

John Bradford was born at Blackley in the parish of Manchester about 1510. A local tradition, surviving to Bishop Ryle's day, points to a spot where he is said to have knelt on his last visit there and begged God to cause the everlasting Gospel to be preached there by heaven-sent ministers. A plaque to his memory may be seen in Manchester cathedral. The martyrologist Foxe tells us that he was 'of gentle parents brought up in virtue and good learning even from his very childhood.' He may have studied at Manchester Grammar School, where he is said to have been proficient in Mathematics and Latin, but we cannot be certain. He later prayed, however: 'I have most cause to thank Thee for my parents, school masters and others, under whose tuition Thou hast put me.'

Following his schooling, Bradford was employed by Sir John Harrington of Exton in Rutland as a clerk or secretary responsible for handling King Henry VIII's money under his employer's control at Bologne. In 1544 he was Deputy Paymaster of the English forces at the siege of Montreuil. Bradford remained in Sir John's employ till 1547, when he retired with some kind of pension.

In April of that year he entered the Inner Temple in order to study Common Law. Thomas Sampson, a God-fearing friend and fellow student there, informs us that he knew ‘when and partly how it pleased God by effectual calling to turn his heart unto the true knowledge and obedience of the most holy Gospel of Christ our Saviour.’ From that great turning point on, Bradford knew ‘that many sins were forgiven him’, proving by his good deeds that ‘he loved much.’ For his own part, Bradford confessed that God might have caused him long before this to be imprisoned ‘as a thief, a blasphemer, an unclean liver and an heinous offender of the laws of the realm.’ Soon after his conversion to Christ, Bradford sold ‘his chains, rings, brooches and jewels of gold which before he used to wear’, giving the ‘price of this his former vanity’ to relieve ‘Christ’s poor members which he could hear of or find lying sick or pining in poverty’ (Sampson).

In 1548 Bradford heard a sermon on the restitution of stolen goods preached by Hugh Latimer in the presence of King Edward VI. Through it God smote his conscience and led him over a period of several months to restore the amount in question to the king’s treasury. Apparently he had carried out or covered up a fraudulent transaction with the stroke of his pen, either with or without Harrington’s order, and could never rest till the whole sum was repaid. For this conscientious act he became a widely trusted man.

Bradford remained at the Inner Temple till June 1548, when he disclosed to his friend Traves a new intention. ‘If God’s will be’, he wrote, ‘. . . I am minded afore midsummer to leave London to go to my books at Cambridge, and if God shall give me grace, to be a minister of His Word.’ By August he was in Catherine’s Hall; but before another year had passed Nicholas Ridley invited him to become a Fellow of Pembroke Hall. In order to accept the offer legally, he took his Master of Arts degree, and transferred in October 1549. The University Grace Book describes him as ‘a man of mature age and approved life’, who for eight years had studied literature, arts and Holy Scripture. In Pembroke Hall Bradford

came to know Edmund Grindal and John Whitgift, subsequently influential archbishops under Queen Elizabeth I, while among his wider contacts in Cambridge were Edwin Sandys, Master of St Catherine's, Matthew Parker, another future archbishop, and Martin Bucer, Regius Professor of Divinity.

Sampson's account of his friend at Cambridge describes him as a man of 'high moral ideals and intense personal self-discipline', and one who 'did not count himself to have prayed' to his satisfaction till he had felt 'some smiting of heart for sin, and some healing of that wound by faith.' It was during his stay at the university too that Bradford began to record God's dealings with his soul in a journal. At table he seemed oblivious of the presence of others, and would 'sit in deep and prolonged silence. Sometimes his eyes would fill with tears; sometimes his face was lit with smiles.' He wept 'as well for joy as for sorrow.' At the same time, he would 'freely reprove any sin and misbehaviour . . . in any person', but with such 'divine grace and Christian majesty' that he always 'stopped the mouths of the gain-sayers.' Furthermore, he always studied on his knees, praying as he studied, and anxious to bring his 'dull heart to love Christ more.' It appears that his father had died by the time Bradford went to Cambridge University, for he wrote only of and to his mother while he was there. His correspondence reveals the most tender-hearted care for her, as she bore what Augustine sensitively terms 'the incomparable cross of widowhood.'

A University Visitation of 1549 made changes 'to establish God's Word and good learning' at Cambridge. Bucer became the central figure in inaugurating change in keeping with the Protestant Reformation, and Parker, Sandys, Grindal and Bradford were the four men with whom he discussed further reforms. They were opposed by Masters and Fellows of the university, described by one historian as entrenched in the 'well-worn grooves of the centuries.' Sometime in July 1550, on a trip to Oxford to consult his fellow continental Reformer Peter Martyr Vermigli, Bucer took Bradford with him. Just over six months later, Bradford cared for

him and during his last illness made him responsible for his burial. The Strasburg Reformer died in February 1551, 'his eyes . . . fixed upon Christ crucified', with God dwelling in his heart, and 'contemplating nothing but heaven.'

Ridley, now bishop of London, so valued Bradford's services that he called him to the capital and gave him a licence to preach, describing him as 'a man by whom . . . God . . . doth work wonders in setting forth of His Word.' Some months later Bradford was made one of six royal chaplains, four of whom were to be 'itineraries, to preach sound doctrine in all the remotest parts of the kingdom.' Bradford's roving commission was to cover Lancashire and Cheshire. His later farewell addresses to those counties reveal both how widespread were his travels and how solicitous was his concern for them. He also preached in and around London and at Saffron Walden, and was instrumental in calling many to 'repentance and amendment of life.' Foxe informs us that he proclaimed the truth in 'many parts of England . . . by the space of three years.'

All who heard Bradford, including enemies, agreed on the quality of his preaching and the godliness of his life. His 'passionate earnestness' spared the sins of neither rich nor poor, while with bold single-mindedness he rebuked the worldliness of courtiers. Indeed, he was most forthright when attacking the greed and ambition of men in power under Edward VI. Along with Latimer, Lever and Knox, Bradford 'ripped in so deep' to the 'insatiable covetousness' of magistrates in taking bribes that they could not bear to hear him. Early in 1553 he preached before the young king himself, crying out: 'I summon you all, even every mother's child of you, to the judgment of God; for it is at hand.' Even Knox, himself noted for lashing the sins of the Scottish nobility, remarked: 'Master Bradford, whom God for Christ His Son's sake comfort to the end, spared not the proudest, but boldly declared that God's vengeance should shortly strike them that then were in authority . . . Judicium Domini, Judicium Domini [The Judgment

of the Lord, The Judgment of the Lord] lamentably cried he, with weeping tears.’

Bradford continued his ministry till the early death of ‘the English Josiah’ Edward VI (July 1553). The Preface to his *Sermon on Repentance* contains a moving passage expressing both his love for the young king and his belief that his removal was a sure token of God’s wrath. Soon the fanatical papist Mary Tudor was proclaimed queen. “The consequences of Bradford’s zeal for the principles of the Reformation”, wrote Bishop Ryle, “. . . were precisely what might have been expected. Within a month of Queen Mary’s accession he was put into prison, like Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer and Hooper, and never left it until he was burned.”

His civil freedom came to an end in August 1553, when a riot at Paul’s Cross was conveniently laid to his charge, and he was summoned before Queen Mary’s Council accused of preaching without authority. He was immediately imprisoned in the Tower of London. “I thank Him more of this prison than of any parlour”, he wrote, “yea, than of any pleasure that ever I had, for in it I find God my most sweet good God always.” He jubilantly exhorted others to “die with Christ; suffer for serving Him truly and after [according to] His Word; for sure may we be that of all deaths, it is most to be desired to die for God’s sake.” It was during these months in the Tower that he penned his *Treatise on the Hurt of Hearing Mass*, followed by his *Sermon on the Lord’s Supper*. From February 1554 Bradford shared a room with Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer. The four martyrs-to-be proved loving strengtheners of each other’s faith. Wrote Latimer: “We were imprisoned . . . for Christ’s Gospel preaching and . . . because we would not go a massing.”

The execution of Lady Jane Grey the same month “was a sombre warning of what was in store for others” (Marcus Loane). In March, Bradford was transferred to the King’s Bench Prison, where he found Robert Ferrar, Rowland Taylor and John Philpot congenial companions. Taylor rejoiced that “such an angel of

God” had been sent to cheer him in prison. While there Bradford was surprisingly allowed to preach twice a day and administer the Lord’s Supper. Many townsfolk attended his ministrations. Meanwhile he devoted some time each week to calling criminals to repentance and supplying their material needs. He was even allowed to leave the prison on parole, so that “there was no day but that he might have escaped.” His letters from this period, amongst other things, reveal him to have been “a man of great learning, elocution, sweetness of temper, and profound devotion towards God” (Strype). Of other writings produced at this time were his *Defence of Election, A Declaration Concerning Religion, a Supplication* to those in authority, an *Exhortation to the Brethren in England* and several *Meditations* and *Prayers*. The way God sustained his faith and joy throughout his entire imprisonment is remarkable.

By January 1555 an old statute for punishing ‘Lollard heresy’ was revived. This was used as a legal pretext for Bradford’s condemnation. The details of his various trials are fully laid out in Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs* and summarized in Ryle’s *Light from Old Times*. In sum, Bradford refused to betray his Lord and Saviour for the sake of conformity to Rome, repeatedly telling his accusers that he was not afraid to die. Most of the charges against him focussed on his denial of the Mass and Transubstantiation; but he replied: “My Lord, I believe Christ is present there [in the Supper] to the faith of the due receiver; as for transubstantiation, I plainly and flatly tell you, I believe it not.” A fine little treatise *Against the Fear of Death* found him “climbing up the hill”, his “breath short” and his “strength feeble.” He therefore begged prayer for grace not to rest “till I come to the top . . . where I should be.”

Sentence of condemnation was passed on 31 January. At first the authorities intended to deliver him to the Earl of Derby, to be conveyed to Manchester and burnt there. But Romish bishops detained him in London. “Immense efforts were made to . . . pervert him to the Romish church” (Ryle), but all in vain.

His execution came suddenly. On the Lord's Day, 30th June, the Compter Prison keeper's wife informed him that he was to be burned the next day. Lifting up his eyes to heaven, Bradford replied: "I thank God for it; I have looked for the same a long time." About midnight he was transferred to Newgate Prison, but a great crowd had gathered along the route to bid him farewell and offer for him their prayers. He was to be burnt at four in Smithfield, but it was nine before he was led to the stake. A young man named John Leaf was burnt to death with him. Bradford and Leaf stood up, put off their clothes, and were chained to the stake. Bradford lifted up his hands and cried: "O England, England, repent thee of thy sins, repent thee of thy sins! Beware of idolatry, beware of false antichrists: take heed they do not deceive you." The antiquarian Thomas Fuller says that Bradford endured the flame as if it were no more than a gale of wind in summer, and that his "shining integrity" never shone more brightly than on that day in Smithfield.

We conclude this summary account of one of the godliest men England has ever seen with two references. One of Bradford's biographers, Aubrey Townsend, remarks that between his ordination and martyrdom Bradford ministered for only five years, two of which were spent in prison. Thus "he lived a long life in a short space of time." He adds: "Until the great day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, it cannot be fully known to what extent England has been indebted to the labours and the prayers of this devoted man."

"Let us thank God that the foundations of the Reformed Church of England were laid by such men as John Bradford." urges J.C.Ryle. Let us clearly understand what kind of men our martyred Reformers were, what kind of doctrines they held, and what kind of lives they lived." Let us also wrestle with God to raise up a new generation who will cordially embrace and fearlessly contend for the great Biblical truths for which they 'loved not their lives to the death.'

His Theology

While it is true that “the splendour of his death has eclipsed the work of his pen” (J.C.Ryle), Bradford’s writings (published by the Banner of Truth Trust in two volumes) are among the most precious legacies of the English Reformation. The following extracts are representative of his theology as a whole.

Scripture

“First, we confess and believe all the canonical books of the Old Testament, and all the books of the New Testament, to be the very true ‘Word of God’, and to be written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; and therefore to be heard accordingly, as the judge in all controversies and matters of religion.” (Works I. 370)

Election

“Faith of God’s election (I mean, to believe that we be in very deed ‘the children of God’ through Christ, and shall be for ever inheritors of everlasting life through the only grace of God our Father in the same Christ) is of all things which God requireth of us, not only most principal, but also the whole sum.” (Works I. 307)

Christ as the Only Mediator

“Forasmuch as God dwelleth in light inaccessible, and is a consuming fire, and hateth all impiety and uncleanness, and we be blind, stubble, grass, hay, and nothing but filthy, unclean and sinful; and because that therefore, as we may not, so we dare not approach to His presence; it hath pleased this God and Father of His love to send a Spokesman and a Mediator, an Intercessor and Advocate between Him and us, even Jesus Christ, His dearly beloved Son, by whom we might have free entrance ‘with boldness to come before His presence and throne of mercy, to find and obtain grace to help in time of need . . . For this our Mediator and Advocate is . . . the only darling of the Father . . . And therefore, as it cannot be but against the almighty God and Father to ask or look for anything elsewhere, at the hands of any that be departed this life . . . so we see it is manifestly against Christ Jesus our Lord, by

any other saint, angel or archangel to come and move anything at our Father's hands; as though He were not our Mediator, Advocate and Intercessor, or else not a sufficient Mediator, Advocate and Intercessor." (Works II. 281ff)

Justification

"The blood of Christ purifieth, saith St John, from all sin. And therefore He is called 'the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world', because there was never sin forgiven of God, nor shall be, from the beginning to the end of the world, but only through Christ's death." (Works I.48)

"Faith is so far from the reach of man's free will that to reason it is plain foolishness. Therefore thou must first go to God, whose gift it is; thou must, I say, get thee to the Father of Mercy, whose work it is; that, as He hath brought thee down by contrition and humbled thee, so He would give thee faith, raise thee up, and exalt thee." (Works I. 65)

Sanctification

"The old man' is like to a mighty giant . . . But 'the new man' is like unto a little child . . . 'The old man' therefore is more strong, lusty and stirring than is 'the new man', because the birth of 'the new man' is but begun now, and the 'old man' is perfectly born . . . And as, inasmuch as is an 'old man', he is a sinner and an enemy to God; so, inasmuch as he is regenerate, he is righteous and holy and a friend to God, the seed of God preserving him from sin, so that he cannot sin as the seed of the serpent . . . This battle and strife none have but the elect 'children of God' . . . whose salvation is as certain and sure as is God Himself; for they are given to Christ, a faithful Shepherd, who hath so prayed for them lest they should perish that we know His prayer is heard: yea, He promiseth so to keep them that 'they shall not perish'. And therefore they ought to rejoice, and herethrough to comfort themselves in their conflicts, which are testimonials, and most true, that they are the elect and dear 'children of God'; for else they could not nor should not feel any such strife in them." (Works I. 297ff)

The Means of Grace

Sound Doctrine

“It is higher and of more honour and majesty than all the whole world. It standeth invincible above all power, being not our doctrine, but the doctrine of the everliving God, and of His Christ, whom the Father hath ordained King, to ‘have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the world.’”

“It behoveth kings, queens, and all that be in authprity, to know that in the administration of their kingdoms ‘they are God’s ministers.’ It behoveth them to know that they are no kings, but plain tyrants, which reign not to this end, that they may serve and set forth God’s glory after true knowledge.” (Works I. 402,401)

Baptism and the Lord’s Supper

“There are two sacraments in Christ’s Church: one of initiation, that is, wherewith we be enrolled, as it were, into the household and family of God, which sacrament we call baptism; the other wherewith we be conserved, fed, kept and nourished to continue in the same family, which is called the Lord’s Supper, or the body and blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ, broken for our sins and shed for our transgressions.” (Works I. 82)

“The chief thing which I am condemned for as an heretic is because I deny the sacrament of the altar, which is not Christ’s supper, but a plain perverting of it . . . transubstantiation . . . is the darling of the devil and the daughter and heir to antichrist’s religion, whereby the mass is maintained, the supper perverted, His sacrifice and cross imperfitted, His priesthood destroyed, the ministry taken away, repentance repelled, and all true godliness abandoned.” (Works I. 450)

Prayer

“ . . . in thy prayer away with the purpose of sinning, for he that prayeth with a purpose to continue in any sin cannot be heard . . . [Therefore] Bid adieu, I say, and farewell to thy covetousness, to thy uncleanness, swearing, lying, malice, drunkenness, gluttony, idleness, pride, envy, garrulity [wordy babbling], slothfulness, negligence, etc. If thou feelest thy wilful and perverse will

unwilling thereto, out of hand complain it to the Lord, and for His Christ's sake pray Him to reform thy wicked will." (Works I. 22f)

Conclusion

We conclude this sketch of Bradford's theology with an exhortation and a prayer. We recommend that those who turn away from what passes in the present-day for reformed religion to the old paths immerse themselves in this meek martyr's writings, begging God to grant us the same spirit and faithfulness that he was given.

Exhortation

"Go to therefore, my dear hearts in the Lord, waver not in Christ's religion truly taught you and set forth in King Edward's days. Never shall the enemies be able to burn it, to prison it, and keep it in bonds. Us they may prison, they may bind, and burn, as they do, and will do so long as shall please the Lord: but our cause, religion, and doctrine, which we confess, they shall never be able to vanquish and put away."

Prayer

"O be merciful unto me, and forgive me, good Father, and grant the Spirit of thy children, to reveal unto me the ignorance of thy kingdom, my poverty and perversity, that I may lament the same, and daily labour for thy help and thy holy Spirit, to suppress the kingdom of sin in myself and in others. Again grant me that same thy holy Spirit, to reveal to me thy kingdom of power, grace, and glory; to kindle mine affections; to regenerate me more and more; to reign in me as in a piece of thy kingdom; to give to me to desire, to pray, and to labour for thy kingdom, both to myself and to others, effectually to thy glory; and to assure my conscience of thy goodness that thou wilt give me grace and glory."

Has 'the beauty of the Lord' (Psalm 90.17) been on any Englishmen as it was on John Bradford and his fellow Reformers and Martyrs?

The Doctrines of Grace in Personal Experience

By Walter C. Brehaut, Guernsey.

[The following slightly edited account bears witness not only to the wonder of God's sovereign grace, but also to the fact that the Sovereign Grace Union was being blessed by God to further His truth and confirm souls in the faith of God's elect before any modern Reformed publishing houses were founded. I mention this, not in a spirit of pride or rivalry, but as a fact for which we should be thankful. The unedited account appears in Peace and Truth. Volume 23, Number 85. January – March 1939, Page 22. Editor.]

Until the age of twenty-six I knew nothing of vital religion, although I lived an outwardly religious, moral and respectable life. . . . Brought up under sacramental teaching, I was totally in the dark concerning the grace of God, although . . . I realize that He was leading me all the time. To Him alone must the glory . . .

At the age of fifteen I was confirmed, and for a short time went regularly to Holy Communion. One day, however, the inconsistency of my presence at the Lord's table came home to me as the minister gave out the invitation: "Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in His holy ways; draw near with faith and take this holy sacrament to your comfort; and make your humble confession to Almighty God, meekly kneeling upon your knees." I realized that I was neither penitent, nor humble, nor truly anxious to lead a new life; nor did I know how such dispositions could be obtained. What a hypocrite I felt as I repeated the words of confession: "We acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, which we, from time to time, most grievously have committed, by thought, word and deed, against thy divine majesty, provoking most justly thy wrath and

indignation against us.” These were solemn words indeed! But when I proceeded further: “We do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings: the remembrance of them is grievous unto us, the burden of them is intolerable,” I felt that such statements were lies on my lips, and that I was a total stranger to such feelings. This decided me, and I did not venture again to the Lord’s table until by grace I was enabled to see my lost estate, and to hope in the mercy of God through the blood and obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . in due time the Holy Spirit enabled me by sovereign grace to place my trust in Christ alone for salvation, and to enter into life that is life indeed.

Since that time it has been my lot to come into contact with various movements that are regarded by many as Scriptural. . . . In the absence of a definitely Evangelical ministry in the National Church, I was at first in danger of being drawn into Brethrenism. I walked with the Brethren for some distance, but realized at length the unscriptural nature of their views on the righteousness of Christ, the Second Advent, the Ministry and other matters. By this time the corruptions of my evil heart had become so patent that I readily sought relief in so-called ‘Keswick’ teaching, which seemed to offer the deliverance that I desired. Having studied numerous books on the subject of sanctification, I was able to persuade myself that, having ‘surrendered all,’ I had reached higher ground. This experience, which I now recognize to be psychological and not spiritual, made me appear to my friends as one who had attained a state of sanctification for which they longed. But although for a period I outwardly maintained this position by sheer fleshly effort, I was shamefully conscious that my hold on it was weakening. . . . I now came in touch with what is called Pentecostalism. The fact that several well-known writers held identical views regarding the supposed Pentecostal blessings without being associated with the movement encouraged me to embrace its tenets. The teaching of the Japan Evangelistic Band next presented itself, and appeared to transcend that of other Holiness movements.

Through all these wanderings I was in grave danger of falling into the Wesleyan heresy of Sinless Perfection. The only thing that prevented me from persuading myself that my old man was really defunct was the fact that I felt him to be very much alive. In questioning those who claimed the ‘Second Blessing,’ I discovered that their old man was also very much alive. I now realize that the claims of those who boast of spiritual experience superior to that of ordinary Christians are unscriptural and God-dishonouring. The thought that He had allowed me to taste these heresies without being fatally poisoned by them, in order to disillusion others, encourages me to preach a Gospel that will glorify Him alone.

Out of such a state of spiritual ignorance I was brought by the tender mercy of God without the instrumentality of any man. With regard to the doctrine of election, I did not deny it, but knew practically nothing of its glorious meaning. An old lady who had attended a sound Calvinistic ministry in the Church of England often spoke to me of the great truth of sovereign grace. She gave me several publications of the Sovereign Grace Union and left me a copy of *Calvin's Calvinism* in her will. . . . One winter . . . being at a loss as to what weekly Bible reading I should give my congregation, it occurred to me that it would not be amiss to commence with the Fall of Man. Had I been able to foresee the resultant opposition and the false accusations which this move was to provoke, I might not have ventured upon it. I had, however, no inkling of where the Lord was leading me. The totality of the Fall I had believed, but I had never realized it as I did in giving these readings. The scales fell from my eyes when I saw as never before that God's sovereign election was the very basis of the salvation of His people. The doctrine that a man by his own free will can turn to God became repulsive to me as I gloried in the fact that “salvation is of the Lord.” Very soon the storm broke. I had turned Calvinist, the cause was being ruined through my preaching. Persecution rose high, so that my opponents even went to the extent of trying to defame my character. Many, however, found in the doctrines of sovereign grace a balm to their stricken hearts and an anchor to their sin-tossed souls.

This opposition, instead of causing me to keep silence for peace's sake, led me to study the subject more closely. I brought out the publications of the Sovereign Grace Union, and discovered to my astonishment that not only living men of God, but Puritans and Reformers in every age, had held these glorious truths. All this happened several years ago, and as time goes on, notwithstanding a certain coldness on the part of some who had been closely associated with me in the days of my ignorance, I feel more firmly convinced than ever that there is only one Gospel – that of the sovereign grace of God. I found that my library required drastic expurgation, and rather than fall into the temptation of selling books that taught error, I made a bonfire of them! I have never kindled a fire with so much pleasure, and to this day I do not regret my action. 'The dangers of Calvinism' have been pointed out in my presence by those who in their wisdom eschew 'extremes,' and who thus escape all persecution. If Calvinism means that all the glory for electing love, reconciliation through precious blood, the effectual calling, sanctification, final perseverance and glorification of God's people must be ascribed to Him alone, then I am not ashamed to be called a Calvinist. I desire to quarrel with no one unless he avows himself to be a worse sinner than I am. Apart from any human agency the Holy Spirit led me into these great truths, and by divine grace I wish to publish them abroad, and I hope, when freed from this mortality, to find in them a restful pillow and to join the ransomed in the everlasting song: "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us in our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Wherewithal Shall We Be Clothed?

By Jack Baker, Bexleyheath.

Once, in a Christian publication, there was a photograph published of a number of people at a religious gathering. It was such since they had a banner displayed 'All one in Christ Jesus.' Had not the banner been in place they could have been a football crowd or a group of strikers at the factory gate. They were, without exception, dressed casually. As it was a religious gathering one might expect that some, at least, would be Christians. So let us ask some questions. Does it matter what we wear when gathering for Christian worship? Why is it that Christians of a previous generation would have dressed more formally for public worship? What has caused such a change to take place?

Does it matter?

Normally the arguments run like this: 'It does not matter what we look like so long as our hearts are right. The Bible says that man looks on the outward but God looks on the heart.' (1 Samuel 16.7). And to the contrary: 'You would not go and meet the Queen dressed like that.'

Society has undergone a sea change during the last generation or so, and this has manifested itself in a number of ways.

We have longer holidays. Once, a fortnight or less was the norm. Now we have four or even six weeks and numerous bank holidays. Today there is a decline in respect for authority: for the police, school teachers, parents and grand parents.

There is less church going.

Sunday is secularized.

Observe what people wear. The fashion for many, both men and women, is jeans and trainers. Some jeans are actually manufactured torn so as to appear scruffy. Deliberately scruffy – that is how many people dress today.

But consider what we do when we come to public worship. We come before One who is infinitely holy, One who cannot look on sin. He sent His Son to die so that we might come into a right relationship with Him. If our hearts are right we will wish to appear before Him, to say the least, as though we respected His awesome majesty.

Should we come before Him as the world might come to a pop concert? He says that His people are not of the world (John 17.14-16); and does not Paul (Romans 12.1-2), when speaking of our bodies, say that we are not to be conformed to this world? Those in our picture looked as if they were conformed to the world.

Why?

God is infinitely holy. He has given us clear instructions. If our hearts are right we will wish to be obedient. We will not insult Him by coming before Him in a slipshod manner. He has said that there is to be a difference between male and female, and that this is to be evidenced in the way we dress. There has been much dispute over 1 Corinthians 11, but it is clear from the passage that men and women, regardless of local customs, are to differ in the way in which they cover their heads and wear their hair. Men are to dress in accord with their masculinity and women as becomes their femininity. Both are to be modest and discrete (cf. 1 Timothy 2.9).

Male and Female

In the beginning God created us male and female. He gave point to that fact when He gave clear instructions saying that men and women are to dress differently: 'The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so *are* abomination unto the LORD thy God.' (Deuteronomy 22.5).

This command has never been abrogated. Indeed, Paul in 1 Corinthians 11 reinforces the Old Testament injunction that a difference must be made. Scripturally, it does matter what we wear.

**Why did Christians in an earlier generation dress differently?
And why the change?**

They had less money. Most of them did not have the money to spend on casual clothes – ‘designer’ jeans or trainers, even if they had existed.

The man had a suit – he kept it for best – Lord’s Days, weddings and funerals. When necessity arose, and he could afford it, he bought a new suit and took the older one for work.

Ladies would have a dress and a hat – for Lord’s Days and special occasions.

Take a look at your family photograph album. Look at the pictures of your parents or grandparents. They were poor, but smart. They aimed to look wholesome and appropriate to the occasion, neither fashionable nor dowdy.

Our generation is unlike previous ones. Showing little respect for anyone in authority, it shows little respect for God.

Does it matter?

Yes it does. Christians are told not to be conformed to this world. By adopting this world’s fashions we are being conformed to it. By appearing before God in a deliberately slipshod manner we do despite to His majesty and holiness.

Fellow believer, before you leave home to attend public worship, consider: Would I go to meet the Queen dressed like this? Do I look as though I might be going to a football match? Am I dressed differently to the opposite sex? Am I dressed modestly and respectfully? Remember, the Lord Jesus said that we are not of this world or age. Is this reflected in the way you dress? God has left us instructions on this matter as well as on the way of salvation. Let us therefore be obedient to all that He has said. [Edited]

[Afternote: Recently, while supplying the church at Wattisham, I was so pleased to discover everyone present in the congregation, including teenagers and children, appropriately dressed for the worship of God. Editor.]

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Sovereign Grace Union was held in Providence Chapel, Chichester, on Saturday 14th June. Mr. Leslie Jarvis, Chairman of the Committee, chaired the meeting and welcomed all present. Following the reading and approval of reports by the secretary, treasurer and editor, the present committee members were re-elected.

In the service that followed, conducted by Mr. Charles Sleeman, the Union's president, Mr. Jeremy Walker addressed the congregation from Isaiah 53. Here is a summary of his address:

Isaiah 53 saturates the New Testament. Acts 8 shows the purpose for which God gave it – to preach Jesus. He is the Servant (Isaiah 52.13).

In an overview of the chapter Mr Walker observed that we may see:

1. The sinlessness that Jesus demonstrated.
2. The sacrifice that Jesus offered.
3. The sin that Jesus bore.
4. The suffering that Jesus underwent.
5. The satisfaction that Jesus made.
6. The substitution that Jesus embraced.
7. The salvation that Jesus accomplished.

After considering whom the Lord Jesus saves, he answered the questions: What is it to believe in Him? What does it mean to be united to Him?

1. We must recognize our true character.
2. We must acknowledge our desperate need.
3. We must observe our only hope.
4. We must trust our immortal souls to Him.
5. Then we may rejoice in our great salvation.
6. We should devote our whole selves to Him.

We are thankful to the Lord for continuing His good work amongst us, to Pastor John Saunders and the deacons at Providence Chapel for the use of the chapel, and to the wives of committee members for providing refreshments.

Sovereign Grace Union
Income and Expenditure – 1 January to 10 June 2008

	2008	2007	Expenditure	2008	2007
Income	£	£		£	£
Subscriptions	1,527	971	Magazine	673	636
Donations	736	1,193	Secretary's remuneration	415	400
Literature sales	66	35	Editor's remuneration	830	800
Advertising	90	90	Premises	115	115
Auxiliaries			Travel expenses	136	42
Offerings			Advertising		
Tax recovered			Speaker's fees	119	
Legacies			Stationery/Printing	12	52
CAF Income Fund distribution	830	877	Website - domain renewal		
Bank interest:			Postage/Telephone	29	13
CafCash	16				
CafGold	109	79			
			Sub-total	2,329	2,058
Totals	<u>£3,374</u>	<u>£3,245</u>	Excess Income	1,045	1,187
				<u>£3,374</u>	<u>£3,245</u>

Sovereign Grace Union
Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2007

	2007	2006
	£	£
Current Assets		
Bank accounts:		
CafGold	8,528	6,151
CafCash	1,466	1,406
Barclays	<u>2,843</u>	<u>3,145</u>
	12,837	10,702
*CAF Income Fund at cost	<u>75,000</u>	<u>75,000</u>
Total Current Assets	87,837	85,702
Current Liabilities		
Subscriptions for 2008 paid in advance	<u>255</u>	<u>249</u>
Net Total Assets	<u>£87,582</u>	<u>£85,453</u>
General Fund		
Opening balance at 1 st January	£	£
	85,453	84,835
Excess income	<u>2,129</u>	<u>618</u>
Total Funds	<u>£87,582</u>	<u>£85,453</u>

*CAF Income Fund valuation at 31st December 2007 was £70,944

We certify that the Balance Sheet and the annexed Income and Expenditure Account have been prepared from the books and vouchers of the Sovereign Grace Union and have been audited and found correct.

K J Appleton (Hon. Treasurer)

S. J. Wiffen (Hon. Auditor)

April 2008

Book Reviews

Christian Focus Publications

Queen Victoria's Request – C.H.Spurgeon. 21pp. £4.99. Hbk. ISBN 978-184550-3253.

The Duke's Daughter – Lachlan Mackenzie. 23pp. £4.99. Hbk. ISBN 978-184550-3260.

These two picture books are part of the new 'Story Time' series. Stories from 19th century preachers are presented to a new generation of children, with bright illustrations and clear text. As they hear them again and again, children will learn much about the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Miriam Lowrie

Scottish Highland Adventures – Catherine Mackenzie. 90pp. £4.99. Pbk. ISBN 978-184550-2812.

This is part of a series of factual books for 7-12 year olds set in different parts of the world. Here children will learn about Scottish wildlife, history and scenery – but each piece of information is used to illustrate a lesson from the Bible. There are attractive line drawings throughout. This book would be a lovely gift for children visiting Scotland. It has a very clear Gospel message, and could also be used by anyone giving children's talks.

Miriam Lowrie

Jonathan Edwards: An American Genius – Christian Timothy George. 160pp. £4.99. Pbk. ISBN 978-184550-3291.

This is an easily read biography of Edwards, aimed at older children and young teenagers. It covers a lot of Edwards's childhood, focusing particularly on his love of nature – especially spiders! – and showing how this influenced his preaching illustrations later. It would, though, have to be admitted that it is a workmanlike book rather than a particularly stimulating one for a younger readership.

Malcolm Lowrie

The Unheeded Christ – David Cook. 165pp. £6.99. Pbk. ISBN 978-1-84550-369-7.

It was F.F.Bruce who spoke of 'the hard words of Jesus.' David Cook asks: "What does it mean to be a Christian?" He answers by saying: "It means I have lost control of my life to Jesus." He goes on in thirteen slim chapters to highlight how Jesus' words come

across as fresh, wise, authentic and discerning, and urges us to listen again and this time not to let Him go unheeded. From the words of the chorus: 'Turn your eyes upon Jesus' he says: "If we get our perspective right, that will control the way we live."

The third century leader Origen spoke of Christians as 'money changers' who take capital of earth and change it into the currency of heaven. Cook says that the one who hears the Word and puts it into practice is wise, while the one who hears but does not, in prayerful dependence on God, is self-deceived. Are we so familiar with the words of Jesus that we fail to obey His commands? This little book, simply written, is a real challenge to all of us, of whatever age. Let us not rob God of His glory. Aubrey Ridge

It Is Not Death To Die: A New Biography of Hudson Taylor – Jim Cromarty. 499pp. £9.99. Pbk. ISBN 978-1-84550-367-3.

We are indebted to the Australian author of this biography for a painstaking treatment of the extraordinary life of the founder of the China Inland Mission, now known as the Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF).

Hudson Taylor's zeal for God, his passionate longing for the spread of the Gospel, his single-minded love for the Chinese and his willingness to devote his entire life to bringing them the message of salvation in Christ – all these themes are brought out with clarity and in a simple, even bald style, which makes the book extremely easy to read.

We cannot fail to benefit from this account of a life of suffering and triumph in the service of the Saviour. John Manton

Richard Baxter and Conversion – Timothy K. Beougher. 238pp. £10.99. Pbk. ISBN 97818-4550-310-9.

Although the title of this book is *Richard Baxter and Conversion*, it deals with far more than just one part of the theology of Richard Baxter. Baxter is well known to have been outside the Puritan mainstream theologically, and in this book Beougher uses the doctrine of conversion as a centre from which to examine the whole of Baxter's theology. He deals with Baxter's 'modified Amyraldian' soteriology, and devotes a whole chapter to the controversy over Baxter's teaching on Justification. At the root of Baxter's theological eccentricities he finds a controlling 'Political

Theology.’ According to Beougher, Baxter, influenced by other theologians, approached the Bible through the framework of seventeenth century political theory. Beougher notes that this imposition of an external framework upon the Bible meant that the Bible itself was not allowed by Baxter to critique this political framework. It is Beougher’s opinion that as a result of his espousal of political theology, Baxter was influenced towards the governmental rather than the substitutionary view of the atonement, and moved him in the direction of Amyraut’s view of the extent of the atonement. In his discussion of Baxter’s teaching on Justification he suggests that Baxter is not so far from the Reformed mainstream as is often thought, but that many of the differences between Baxter and the Puritan mainstream are due to Baxter’s rather eccentric vocabulary, and the fact that his concern was Antinomianism rather than Arminianism.

The discussion on Conversion proper occupies about half the book. In it Beougher examines how Baxter’s theology of conversion is affected by his theological peculiarities, and how Baxter’s theology worked itself out in his ministry.

Whilst this book can be heavy going at times, with the reader having to refer to long endnotes to get the most out of the book, it is an absorbing and interesting study that will reward the reader. Beougher has obviously taken the time to master Richard Baxter’s voluminous writings, and the result is a work that will be of great interest to scholars of the Puritans, and particularly to those interested in Richard Baxter.

The lack of any index is puzzling, as an index would have made the book even more useful, so that (for example) subjects such as ‘Political Theology’ and ‘Amyraldianism’ could have been looked up.

Gervase N. Charmley

The Westminster Confession of Faith Study Book: A Study Guide for Churches – Joseph A. Pipa, jr. 412pp. £9.99. Pbk. ISBN 978-1-84550-030-6.

With admirable thoroughness, the author of this demanding but rewarding study guide for churches allots 117 pages to 26 lessons in which thought-provoking questions are asked about the *Confession’s* contents. The remainder is devoted to supplying

answers to the same questions. I welcome this title particularly because many Christians are not given to thinking through their faith. With proof texts in abundance to fortify understanding, this study should be a welcome addition to every minister's or teaching elder's library. With God's blessing, it could be most fruitful in forming a sturdy defence against the many inroads being made into our Reformed Faith today.

J.M.B.

A New Inner Relish: Christian Motivation in the Thought of Jonathan Edwards – Dane Ortlund. 272pp. £8.99. Pbk. ISBN 978-1-84550-349-9.

At last we have a book that penetrates to the heart of Edwards; namely, his deep spirituality and heavenly-mindedness. Fastening onto Edwards's awareness of the 'new sense of the heart' for everything truly spiritual that God had given him, the author demonstrates from his sermons and treatises how this sense governed Edwards's motivation in all his endeavours to live in the conscious presence of God. In a day when unbelieving academics try in vain to understand him as a great 'philosopher-theologian', this is the kind of study we all need to keep us aware of divine things and help us serve our God from the right motives, especially that of His own beauty and worthiness.

J.M.B.

Evangelical Press

Devotional Thoughts on the Bible: Charles Haddon Spurgeon on Matthew and Mark – prepared by Larry Brown. 337pp. £9.95. Pbk. Spurgeon's sermons are well known. However, his Lord's Day ministry also contained a running commentary on the Bible reading which often amounted to a mini-sermon. Larry Brown has done the Church a great service by gathering together these expositions. The present volume does not cover every chapter in Matthew and Mark, but there is still as much in it as you will find in many commentaries.

The style is typical Spurgeon, overflowing with spiritual thoughts and full of sound doctrine. Here are a few typical gems: on Matthew 2.1. – "Truly Bethlehem has become, in a spiritual sense, the house of bread to all who feed on Christ." On Matthew 4.4 – "This is the only sword that Christ used against Satan – the sword

of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. There is nothing like it, and the old dragon himself knows what sharp edges that sword has.” On Matthew 15.26 – “It is the faculty of faith to see in the dark.” On Mark 9.8 – Unhappy, indeed, would they have been if they had looked about and seen none but Moses, for poor comfort could Moses bring. Or if, looking round, they had seen none but Elias . . . But Moses may go, and Elias may go . . . so long as Jesus remains, it is enough.” The book is well presented and easy to use. It is suitable for daily devotionals, or reference, or simply reading through.

Robert Dale.

Atonement Matters – Tom Barnes. 342pp. £9.95. Pbk. ISBN 978-08523-46600.

This book is subtitled ‘A Call to Declare the Biblical View of the Atonement.’ By the Biblical view, Barnes means Particular Redemption, or, as he prefers to call it, Definite Atonement. Particular Redemption is the most controversial of the ‘Five Points of Calvinism,’ and the one most often rejected by otherwise Reformed people. It is often charged with being more of a logical deduction than a Biblical doctrine; but in this timely study Barnes shows that this is far from being the case.

Atonement Matters consists of four sections. The first, and by far the largest, establishes the Biblical basis for the doctrine of Definite Atonement. The second section demonstrates that the doctrine is theologically coherent. The third section is devoted to answering objections against Definite Atonement, and a survey of the history of the controversy over Definite Atonement. The final section consists of a practical application of the doctrine, showing that it is not just an academic matter, but that it has a serious impact on the life of the Church.

The appearance of a book such as this is most welcome. Barnes’s scholarship is excellent, and he cites literature from both sides of the debate, both ancient and modern. Some of his statements are likely to be controversial in some circles. For example, he suggests that the present erosion of Penal Substitution is in part due to the erosion of belief in Definite Atonement. This is undoubtedly true.

While this is overall an excellent book, there are some features that call for criticism. Firstly, some readers may find Barnes’s tendency

to use abbreviations for key concepts such as Definite Atonement (usually given as DA) distracting. Secondly, an index would have further improved the book, especially an index of Scripture passages, since the book is overwhelmingly exegetical. This would have made the book considerably more useful to ministers and Bible students than it already is. Gervase N. Charmley

Fearless Pilgrim: The life and times of John Bunyan – Faith Cook. 528pp. £16.95. Hdbk. ISBN 978-085234-680-8.

I cannot recommend this book too highly. It is probably the best of Faith Cook's excellent biographies. Copiously illustrated and interspersed with quotations from 'the immortal tinker's' writings, it traces his career with accuracy and a flowing narrative style. Bunyan's spiritual experience - of his own wickedness, Satan's may snares and the abounding grace of God – goes far to explain why he was such an impressive preacher and tender-hearted pastor. Set in the context of a century torn with religious and political strife, including revolution and executions, Bunyan's story beautifully conveys to us the truth of his Shepherd Boy's Song:

He that is down needs fear no fall;
He that is low no pride;
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his Guide.

I would encourage everyone to buy this gem, which is very reasonable at such a price. J.M.B.

We hope, the Lord willing, to review more Banner of Truth and Reformation Heritage Books titles in our next issue. Meanwhile we strongly recommend John Aaron's translation of 'The Calvinistic Methodist Fathers of Wales' 2 volumes, £40 (B of T) and the Sermons of James Ussher and Jeremiah Burroughs's Gospel Revelation (RHB) £19.50 each.

Tapes of SGU addresses

may be obtained from Mr T. Field, 34 Pembury Road, Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 2HX
£2.50 + 50p each cheques payable to "Sovereign Grace Union"

Christ Alone - Charles Sleeman, Haslemere

Particular Redemption - Malcolm Watts

*Grace to the Uttermost - W Goodman,, London (Metropolitan Tabernacle)

"Love so amazing, so divine" - Mark Johnston

*The Imputation of Adam's sin to us - Geoffrey Thomas, Aberystwyth

*The Imputation of our sin to Christ - Geoffrey Thomas

The Imputation of Christ's righteousness to us - Geoffrey Thomas

*The Person, Priesthood and Protection of Jesus Christ (John 18)
- Abraham Thomas

*Penal Substitution - David Cassells,, Chelmsford

Justification - Henry Sant, Portsmouth

The Blessed Consequences of Justification by Faith
- Malcolm Jones,, Maescymmer

*Isaiah 53 - Jeremy Walker (AGM Sermon)

Adoption – Robert Oliver (Bradford on Avon)

God's Good Purpose – Andrew Davies (London)

The Weakness of the Law and the Power of God – Achille Blaize (London)

The Grace of Christ, The Gift of Salvation and The Glory of Heaven –
Vernon Higham (Cardiff) – 3 tapes

God's Plan for Marriage and The Family – Vernon Higham

God's Guidance in Raising a Family – Mark Johnston

The Family as the Basis of Society – Achille Blaize

'A Chosen People' – Chosen in love, Chosen with Purpose & Chosen in Christ,
-3 tapes by Mark Johnston

Perseverance – Michael Harley of Friston, Suffolk

Sanctification: Romans 6 – Austin Walker, Crawley

God our Hope: Jeremiah 14: 1-9 – Malcolm Watts, Salisbury

The Rock Christ Jesus: Isaiah 28 – Ian Densham, Hemel Hempstead

The Heart of the Cross, The Victory of the Cross, Glory of the Cross, -3 Tapes
By Andrew Davis of South Wales

Amazing Grace by Abraham Thomas of Halland

Sovereign grace by Nigel Lacey of London

Tapes previously advertised are still available.