

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

This year marks the quincentenary of the birth of the Reformer John Calvin, which took place on 10th July 1509. Simple candour, not idol-worship, constrains us to state our belief that he was among the most humble, self-effacing, God-honouring men who ever lived. In his death-bed farewell to his fellow pastors of Geneva, he confessed: “I am nothing . . . all I have done has been worth nothing . . . I am a miserable creature. But I can say that I desired your good, that my vices have always displeased me and [that] the root of the fear of God was in my heart . . . As to my doctrine, I have taught faithfully . . . and I have not corrupted one single passage of Scripture . . . as far as I know. . . . I have always studied to be simple. I have written nothing out of hatred against anyone, but I have always set before me faithfully what I considered was for the glory of God.”

It was in this spirit that Calvin issued precise instructions for his funeral. Nothing was to distinguish it from that of any other Genevan citizen. His body was to be sewed into a white shroud and laid in a plain pine coffin. No oration or singing was to take place at the graveside. No headstone was to be erected to his memory (though on a simple stone the initials J.C. were carved). To this day the site of his unmarked grave in the cemetery of Plain-palais remains unknown. It is entirely appropriate that he who devoted his life to the glory of God alone wished to have no glory bestowed on himself.

In keeping with Calvin’s spirit, we hope to commemorate his life and ministry in appreciative articles, without foolishly attempting to claim that he was “the greatest.” Calvin himself would have desired no memorial at all to his legacy; but we value his contribution to the great work of God known as the Protestant Reformation too much to remain silent. We will therefore mention it *Soli Deo Gloria*.

John Calvin: An Appreciation

Introduction

In an address marking the quatercentenary of Calvin's death (27th May 1564), from which this article draws its four main headings, Adam Loughridge remarked that the citizens of Geneva "wept over the departure of their father and chief comforter next to God." His enemies, by contrast, waited maliciously for the announcement that he had left a fortune large enough to embarrass his flock and to give them the opportunity to attack his integrity. They were disappointed. He bequeathed a legacy in a wholly different currency: "lovers of truth in every land today are the happy beneficiaries of a life's work that was majestic and monumental." (*The Monthly Record of the Free Church of Scotland*. September 1964. 181.)

Tangible memorials may now be seen throughout the world - the impressive Reformation Monument and University in Geneva itself, along with schools, colleges, seminaries, universities, churches, societies, libraries, and publications in many nations and languages. Whole peoples, churches and religious movements have been shaped under his influence. Think of Swiss neutrality and strength through the centuries, Elizabeth I's and Puritan England, Knox's Scotland, Welsh and Ulster Evangelicalism, the Dutch First and Second Reformations, the Pilgrim Fathers of North America, and the great Missionary Movement of the 19th century. Think too of certain great national leaders: William the Silent, Gaspard de Coligny and Oliver Cromwell, and leading theologians: John Owen, Jonathan Edwards, Wilhelmus a Brakel, William Cunningham and Charles Hodge. Think too of beneficial ideals: parliamentary democracy, limited monarchy, civil and religious toleration, the rights and liberties of subjects, humanitarian aid, Christian culture and scientific endeavour. Students of Calvin's contribution to the French language have been converted to Christ through reading his *Institutes*, while his teachings are being studied in the Brazilian and African jungles, to

name no more. All these are fruits of the Biblical principles disseminated from Calvin's Geneva. His most enduring memorial, therefore, lies in his enormous influence for good and the challenge it poses for each succeeding generation. Let us consider these in four particular areas.

1. A Truly Bible-based Theology

During Calvin's own lifetime, students from all over Europe flocked to the Academy he founded, which John Knox described as "the most perfect school of Christ on earth since the days of the apostles." There they learned the first, middle and last principles of the oracles of God. Philip Melancthon, the brilliant leader of the Lutheran Reformation after 1546, even styled him 'The Theologian', as if there were no other! Perhaps James Packer best summarizes Calvin's theology when he says: "Bible-centred in his method, God-centred in his outlook, Christ-centred in his message, he was controlled throughout by a vision of God on the throne and a passion that God should be glorified. His theological aim in the last analysis was to declare his vision, as he had received it from the Scriptures, in order that God might receive praise thereby." (*Collected Shorter Writings*. 4. 162.)

Here is the first challenge to us today. We may call ourselves 'Calvinists'; but are we really? "The Calvinist is the man who has seen God, and who, having seen God in His glory, is filled on the one hand, with a sense of his own unworthiness to stand in God's sight as a creature, and much more as a sinner, and on the other hand, with adoring wonder that nevertheless this is a God who receives sinners." Again, "He who believes in God without reserve and is determined that God shall be God to him, in all his thinking, feeling, willing - in the entire compass of his life activities, intellectual, moral, spiritual . . . is . . . a Calvinist." Finally, "The Calvinist is the man who sees God behind all phenomena, and in all that occurs recognizes the hand of God . . . who makes the attitude of the soul in prayer the permanent attitude . . . and who casts himself on the grace of God alone, excluding every trace of

dependence on self from the whole work of his salvation.” (*Calvin and Augustine* - B.B.Warfield. 491f.)

Calvin’s second theological challenge is to the godless materialists of today. Materialistic atheism has nothing to offer: nothing of value, nothing durable, nothing for the mind, nothing for the heart, nothing for the present, nothing for the future, nothing for eternity. Its devotees walk in darkness, confusion, self-contradiction and despair. Let all who hold the truth of God’s existence, infinite intelligence, almighty power, judicial holiness and amazing mercy in contempt answer the challenge. They will all be found wanting. Calvin’s God is the only true and living God, “the God of the Bible, the God of the Universe, the God of the Ages, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Loughridge), the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.

2. The Power in Faithful Preaching

Calvin did not think of himself primarily as a theologian, but as a pastor and preacher. The only title to which he laid claim was that of ‘Minister of the Word of God.’ His sermons were the first by continental Reformers to be published and translated into other languages. The numerous reprints before 1600 attest their immense popularity. Calvin did not read his sermons; neither did he use notes. From the depths of his cavernous memory he ‘read’ both his Hebrew and Greek texts, then proceeded to expound and apply them in the most popular style. His addresses abound with everyday images designed to lodge the truth in the minds of the people; they also conclude with the most heart-melting cries to God.

A sample from his *Sermons on the Epistle to the Ephesians* gives us some idea of the life and vigour that the Spirit of God infused into his preaching: “Let the pastors boldly dare all things by the Word of God . . . Let them constrain all the power, glory and excellence of the world to give place to and to obey the divine majesty of this Word. Let them enjoin everyone by it, from the

highest to the lowest. Let them edify the body of Christ. Let them devastate Satan's reign. Let them pasture the sheep, kill the wolves, instruct and exhort the rebellious. Let them bind and loose thunder and lightning, if necessary, but let them do all according to the Word of God." (Quoted in *The Legacy of Sovereign Joy* - John Piper. 114.)

Claims R.B.S.Eccles: "We do not really know Calvin until we have read his sermons." (*Calvin's Doctrine and Practice of Preaching. Peace and Truth.* 1976:3. 4.) This assessment is true. Indeed, Calvin's biographer, Emile Doumergue, singled out his preaching for special treatment in a work entitled *Calvin, the Preacher of Geneva* (1909) and remarked: "Here is the Calvin who seems to me the real and authentic Calvin, the one who explains all the others: Calvin, the preacher of Geneva, moulding by his preaching the spirit of the Reformed of the 16th century." (Quoted by Harold Dekker, in *Sermons from Job - John Calvin.* xii.)

We should be very grateful that so many of Calvin's sermons are available to us today; we should avail ourselves of them. The power of God is wont to burn into our hearts through them. They show us the rottenness within, the wonder of God's remedy, our need to beg for mercy, our warrant to do so, God's trustworthy character, His great and precious promises, and our duty to give Him all the honour for all the good we receive. Intermingled with his proclamations of the Gospel we find passionate pleadings with sinners to be reconciled to God, calls to believe on the only Mediator between Him and us, and gracious encouragements to come to Him. From time to time, too, we find perceptive exposures and sharp rebukes of heresies and errors, fads and fashions, all of which cling like leeches to the truth as it is in Jesus. "It was evangelicalism at its purest and most stable expression," comments Warfield, with its constant emphasis on the ever-present fact of sin and God's gracious salvation from sin. Neither did this salvation rest in man, but in the free, unmerited, sovereign grace of God.

Through the blessing of God on this preaching, Geneva became a reformed city and a model of morality for the world, “the garden of the Lord where blood red roses grew.” (J.R.Fleming) It was this preaching that taught the common man his freedom from popish and kingly tyranny, and laid the foundations for modern democracy. What a liberating message it is to hear that all men are free and equal in the sight of God, and how humbling to be told that not one of our privileges is due to us, but to God. Here lies its challenge to the insidious tyrannies of our day, stalking both churches and nations in their quest for evil power over men’s bodies and souls.

3. The Need for Self-denying Godliness

In the Preface to Calvin’s *Commentary on the Psalms* we read: “God subdued my heart and made it docile.” Truly, he was in life *The Man God Mastered* (the title of Jean Cadier’s short biography of the Reformer). We dismiss out of hand the malicious caricatures that have been spawned both during his lifetime and since. Suffice to say, Calvin was not the pope of Geneva; he was not obsessed by predestination; he did not burn Servetus at the stake; he was not “the ogre of legend . . . the egotistical fanatic, hard and humourless, the doctrinaire misanthrope, the cruel dictator with his arbitrary, uncaring, devilish God.” (Packer. *op. cit.* 4. 14.)

In fact, he was bluntly honest, truly humble, free from self-pity, cool-headed, warm-hearted, frugal in lifestyle, sensitive, appreciative of beauty and other men’s gifts, unflinching and unstinting in his devotion to God and others. His motto, a hand holding a burning heart, with the caption ‘Prompt and Sincere’ says it all. The Libertines of his day hated his godliness simply because it condemned their ungodliness. The Reformed loved him for his godliness, powers of leadership and strict adherence to the law of God as the standard of life. He was, as one once said, the conscience of Europe. Here again is a mighty challenge to our lawless, selfish, hedonistic age.

4. The Need for Spiritually Militant Protestantism

The only viable option to both the benighted ecumenism and the secular humanism of our day is the kind of militant Protestantism that Calvin endorsed. “Calvin’s experience and teaching warn us of the folly of compromise with an uncompromising Romanism that gives nothing and demands all. He was under no delusion regarding this system that had blighted Europe for centuries, and, but for the grace of God, would do so again.” (Adam Loughridge) The constant stream of refugees from all over Europe showed him the relentless and autocratic cruelty of those who thought nothing of burning so-called ‘heretics’ to death, sometimes roasting them over a slow fire. His *Reply to Sadoleto*, the cardinal who tried so hard during Calvin’s absence from Geneva to win back the independent republic to Rome, indicates beyond doubt that accommodation and compromise towards such an inflexible system were impossible. On the other hand, his letters to such leaders of church and state as Thomas Cranmer and the King of Poland show just how ardently he longed for unity in the fundamentals of the Gospel. Such unity is the only basis for agreement and cooperation in worship and evangelism today. Now is the time for true spiritual Protestants to take their stand together against both a spurious ecumenism and a bureaucratic European Union, run by non-elected power seekers.

Conclusion

Both the influence and the challenge of Calvin endure today because they are grounded in an infallible authority, the written Word of God; in a sovereign God, who will not give His glory to another; in an all-suitable, all-sufficient Saviour, who needs no man-made mediators or atonements; in a Gospel that makes men right with God and each other by faith alone, without recourse to human merit; in a motive, the glory of God, that brings with it the highest moral standards and the greatest joy this world can know; and in the prospect of an eternity of pure bliss in the presence and enjoyment of this God, His angels and redeemed people for ever. These are reasons enough to remember the Genevan Reformer today.

Calvin's Institutes

Introduction

So many appreciative articles of Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* exist that in adding to their number we could be in danger of falling into a spirit of adulation that ill suits Calvin's humble view of himself. We shall therefore select a few that avoid this danger and indicate some important aspects of the Reformer's *magnum opus*. In this way we hope to best serve the purpose of our commemoration, to glorify God rather than Calvin.

Appreciations

Among Calvinists, the *Institutes* has found several admirers. William Cunningham regards it as "the most important work in the history of theological science. (*The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*. 295)

B.B. Warfield, while noting its high literary and systematic value, draws our attention to its contemporary pastoral influence: "It was Calvin's *Institutes* which, with its calm, clear, positive exposition of the evangelical faith on the irrefragable authority of the Holy Scriptures, gave stability to wavering minds and confidence to sinking hearts . . . in the face of the calumnies of the enemies of the Reformation." (*Calvin and Calvinism. Works*. V. 373)

James Packer reminds us that its controversial passages are "essential to its design." As a prominent spokesman for the Reformation, which was essentially "a renewal of biblical faith amid ecclesiastical paganism", Calvin was constrained by his calling to be "a fighting man." Accordingly the *Institutes*, "as a Reformation manifesto and apologia, could not but be a fighting book." Its denunciations of Romanists, Anabaptists, Socinians, Servetus and even Lutherans, therefore, are no "mere appendages to his positive teaching", but plain expressions of Calvin's "commitment to the conflict of God's Word with human error, as well as sin." (*Collected Shorter Writings*. 4. 143-6)

The noted Calvin translator and analyst Ford Lewis Battles emphasizes the Reformer's strongly experiential approach. "If we

come to Calvin's *Institutes* as a source book for systematic theology", he claims, ". . . it will afford us valuable insights indeed. But in such a reading we come to know but half the man." Observing how Calvin's exegesis "strongly enters the experience of biblical characters, in whom he finds a reflection of his own", Battles even heads a section in his analysis of the *Institutes* 'Spiritual Biography in Systematic Form.' He therefore asks: "What is at the heart of the *Institutes*, read in this personal, experiential way? For man, it is a handbook of piety." (*Analysis of the Institutes of the Christian Religion of John Calvin*. 14-18)

Some non-Calvinists are surprisingly unstinting in their critical acclaim. The Jesuit Kampschulte, for example, terms it "the most remarkable and important literary achievement of the Reformation in the realm of dogmatic theology." (*Johann Calvin: seine Kirche und sein Stadt in Genf*. 1. 274)

The Lutheran Kostlin commends it even more fulsomely. "On account of the incomparable richness of its doctrine", he writes, "its virile and pious theological thought; its religious and Christian sentiment, so serious and so profound . . . today it still merits careful study by all who desire to teach or learn dogmatic theology." (*Studien und Kritischen*. 11)

No less appreciative is the testimony of the Liberal E. Reuss. After listing its various qualities, he concludes: "the immortal *Institutes* excels all other of this type." (*Calvinus: Opera*. 1. ix)

Summary of the *Institutes*

The literary history of the *Institutes* has been recorded many times. All we need to note is its gradual growth "from a small, concise outline of the faith to a full and sustained essay on the Christian religion" (Battles). This growth involved no change in Calvin's beliefs. But it involved an enlargement that took in Augustine's doctrines of grace, Chrysostom's expositions, Bucer's writings on predestination, the author's response to the pastoral needs of Strasburg and Geneva, and his replies to the theological opponents he encountered between the first (1536) and final (1559) editions.

This final, definitive edition is divided into four books, corresponding to the four parts of the Apostles' Creed. The first deals with our knowledge of God the Creator and Providential Ruler, the second with our knowledge of Him in Christ as Redeemer, the third with the way in which we receive His grace revealed to us in Christ, and the fourth with the means by which He invites us into the Society of Christ, the Church.

Calvin's arrangement of its contents is logical, his style is lucid, his grasp of each subject is masterly, its foundation is Biblical, and its aim - to exalt God - is evident throughout. For these reasons Calvin is recognized by general consent as "*the* theologian of the Reformation" (S. Leigh Hunt).

On Reading the *Institutes*

The *Institutes* once formed the staple diet of some British theological colleges. It is still studied in some North American seminaries. It is not, therefore, milk for babes. However, it has been condensed by several Reformed writers, and two of its sections are available as separate items. One is *Truth For All Time*, the other *The Golden Book of the Christian Life* (both Banner of Truth Trust). As the titles indicate, one deals with doctrine, the other with practice. These are admirable starters for the timid.

For bolder spirits, Battles offers six guidelines for reading the work complete:

1. Want to read it.
2. Begin at the beginning.
3. Persevere to the end.
4. Be patient.
5. Apply it to our own times.
6. Use my *Analysis* as an aid.

Finally, because Calvin "wrote the *Institutes* to draw Christians to the Scriptures", continue to study "beyond the *Institutes* to the Scriptures that are its source."

Conclusion

The observations of two opponents of the Reformed Faith remind us just how lamentably we have fallen since the days of Elizabeth I.

Writes Scultingius: “In England, Calvin’s book of *Institutions* is almost preferred to the Bible itself . . . The pretended English bishops enjoin all the clergy to get the book almost by heart, never to have it out of their hands, to lay it by them in a conspicuous part of their pulpits; in a word, to prize and keep it as carefully as the old Romans are said to have preserved the Sybilline oracles.”

“The *Institutes* of Calvin are so greatly esteemed in England that the book has been most accurately translated into English, and is even fixed in the parish churches for the people to read. Moreover, in each of the two universities [Oxford and Cambridge], after the students have finished their circuit in philosophy, as many of them as are designed for the ministry are lectured first of all in that book.” (Templeton, quoted in Toplady’s *Works*. 2.20).

O that God would restore such zeal to our unreformed university theological faculties and Bible colleges!

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“The great point . . . is that we are consecrated and dedicated to God, and therefore should not henceforth think, speak, design or act without a view to His glory . . .

We are not our own; therefore neither our reason nor will is to rule our actions and counsels. We are not our own; therefore let us not make it our end to seek what may be agreeable to our carnal nature. We are not our own; therefore, as far as possible, let us forget ourselves and the things that are ours.

On the other hand, we are God’s; let us therefore live and die to Him. We are God’s; therefore let His wisdom and will preside over all our actions. We are God’s; to Him, then, as the only legitimate end, let every part of our life be directed. (*Institutes*. III. vii. 1.)

Recommended Calvin Reading

Many British Calvinists are woefully ignorant of Calvin's life, writings and influence on the modern world. We recommend the following selected titles to those who wish to make good this deficit.

Life

The Man God Mastered - Jean Cadier (IVF)
Calvin - Emanuel Stickelberger (James Clarke)
John Calvin - Williston Walker (Christian Focus)
The Life of John Calvin - Theodore Beza (Banner of Truth)
John Calvin: His Life and Influence - Robert Reymond (Christian Focus)
This was John Calvin - Thea Van Halsema (Baker)

Daily Readings from Calvin

Day by Day with John Calvin (Hendrickson)
This is my Heart: Devotional Readings (Reformation Heritage)
Grace and its Fruits: Selections from Calvin on the Pastoral Epistles (Evangelical Press)

Sermons by Calvin

Sermons on the Beatitudes (Banner of Truth)
Sermons on Acts chapters 1-7 (Banner of Truth)
Sermons on Ephesians (Banner of Truth)
Sermons on Galatians (Banner of Truth)
Sermons on the Ten Commandments (Baker)
Sermons from Job (Baker)
The Deity of Christ (Eerdmans)
The Mystery of Godliness (Eerdmans)

General Studies

The Writings of John Calvin: an Introductory Guide - Wulfert de Greef (Baker)
Let Christ be Magnified - Merle d'Aubigne (Banner of Truth)

Calvin: The Origins and Development of his Religious Thought - Francois Wendel (Collins)

Calvin and Calvinism - B.B. Warfield (Volume V of Ten Volume Works. Baker)

Calvin's Wisdom: An Anthology - Graham Miller (Banner of Truth)

Special Studies

The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology - Edward Dowey (Eerdmans)

Calvin and the Atonement - Robert Peterson (Christian Focus)

Calvin and the Sabbath - Richard Gaffin (Christian Focus)

Calvin and the Biblical Languages - John Currid (Christian Focus)

On Prayer: Conversation with God - John Calvin ed. John Hesselink (Westminster John Knox)

Calvin's Christology - Stephen Edmonson (Cambridge)

Calvin's Teaching on Job - Derek Thomas (Christian Focus)

Analysis of the Institutes - Ford Lewis Battles (Presbyterian and Reformed)

Influence

After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition - Richard Muller (Oxford)

Calvinism in History - N.McFetridge (Solid Ground)

The Emergence of Liberty in the Modern World: The Influence of Calvin - Douglas Kelly (Presbyterian and Reformed)

The standard histories of the Reformation, anthologies of Reformation writings, theological journals and magazines all contain ample references to Calvin and his contribution to our knowledge of God and of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Some Reformation Theologians: Guillaume Farel (1489-1565)

Introduction

Until recently, Guillaume or William Farel was known outside Switzerland only as the inflammatory preacher who threatened Calvin with the wrath of God if he chose the quiet life of a student instead of fighting for the Reformation. Yet the Farel of 1536 already had a career behind him as pastor, itinerant church planter, educator and Christian apologist. Mentored by Lefevre d'Etaples, mercilessly criticized by Erasmus, befriended by Capito and Bucer in Strasburg, Oecolampadius in Basle and Zwingli in Zurich, he was an acknowledged Reformer in Neuchatel and Geneva by the time Calvin came on the scene. Furthermore, he had produced a reasoned but embryonic statement of the faith to establish wavering believers during the turbulent confusion of the 1520s. He is therefore worth including in our series on Reformation theologians.

His Life

Farel was born of devout Roman Catholic parents near Gap, among the Dauphine Alps of France. Nursed in the bosom of 'Holy Mother Church', even in boyhood he would gnash his teeth "like a furious wolf" when he heard anyone speak against the pope.

At the age of twenty-one he was sent to Paris to study Hebrew, Greek and Philosophy. While at the Sorbonne, he became acquainted with Jacques Lefevre, on whose benighted soul the light of divine truth was beginning to dawn. Farel heard his humanist professor say that salvation is of grace, that the innocent One was condemned and the criminal acquitted, that the cross of Christ alone opens the gates of heaven and shuts those of hell. This proved to be good news from a far off land to the young student,

who attributed his conversion to his aged friend's instrumentality "All things", he testified, "appear to me under a new light."

At Lefevre's suggestion, Farel was appointed professor in the college of Cardinal Lemoine; but soon afterwards he moved to Meaux, where the reform movement was already under way. In the wine-producing town of Aigle, Farel began his ministry as teacher using the Bible as his text book, but he "was often beaten for his adherence to the Gospel." (Gabriel Mutzenberg) Only the outbreak of persecution forced him to flee to Basle, where his fiery defence of the Gospel led to his expulsion from the city. His burning zeal produced similar results in Strasburg and Montbeliard.

Nothing daunted, Farel published his comments on the Lord's Prayer and the Creed in French (1524), and began an itinerant ministry in the Swiss cantons of Berne, Neuchatel and Vaud. "The great traveller" (Jacques Courvoisier) visited the Waldensian Valley of Angrogne (1531) and attended the Synod of Chanforan (1532) where the Waldensians joined the nascent Reformation movement. Under his influence the valleys of the Jura rallied to the Reformed Faith.

Indefatigable as ever, he turned his attention next to the imperial city of Geneva. Here he conducted services in his own hired rooms. Cited before the Bishop's vicar, he was threatened by the local monks and canons, thrust out of court and expelled from the city. But by 1533 the Genevan citizens had begun to renounce their papal connections and embrace Reformed church polity and worship. It was therefore safe for him to return.

In 1536 the Genevan authorities abolished the mass and swore to observe "the holy evangelical law and word of God." In the same year, Calvin entered the city, looking for a quiet haven in which to pursue his studies. Recognizing his genius, Farel laid hold of him and persuaded him to enter the public arena. No sooner had Calvin agreed to do so than Farel set off for Neuchatel, where large audiences and considerable hostility attended his preaching. While

here he attended, with Calvin and Peter Viret, the momentous Lausanne Disputation, which led to fundamental reforms.

Back in Geneva by 1538 Farel shared the sentence of banishment pronounced on Calvin, and proceeded to Neuchatel and then Metz. His recall along with Calvin three years later encouraged thousands of Christian refugees from all parts of Europe to follow them. Later he assisted the diffident Calvin to deliberate on the case of Michael Servetus, the anti-Trinitarian who had already been condemned by Rome to be roasted over a slow fire. He accompanied the wretched blasphemer to the place of execution, pleading with him to the last to recant.

Farel's marriage to a young woman at the age of sixty-nine cooled his relationship with the disapproving Calvin; but by the time of the latter's death (1564) they had been reconciled. On hearing of Calvin's final illness the eighty-year old veteran walked from Neuchatel in time to see him alive. "Farel had a long interview with him", a chronicler reports, "and on the morrow took his departure for Neuchatel."

During the Spring of the following year, Farel made a final journey to Metz, a scene of his earlier ministry, and preached with all his former fire and fulness. But the exertion proved too much for his frail frame, and he returned to Neuchatel only to die.

Dr. C.G.McCrie concludes his sketch of the Reformer by noting that Farel's zeal was often rash and reckless. Despite his undoubted preaching gifts, "the impetuous orator often alienated his hearers by indulging too freely in denunciation and invective." In mitigation, we believe that the corruptions of his age demanded such denunciation, so that when the eyes of the people were enlightened, they could be built up in the faith by the more positive Gospel preaching of such men as Calvin, Bucer and Bullinger. In this connection William Farel has been aptly described as the John the Baptist of the Swiss and French Reformation.

His Theology

Our abridgment of Farel's theology is gratefully extracted from Robert White's much fuller treatment in the *Westminster Theological Journal*. 69:1. Spring 2007. It is based on a *Summary* of the Christian Faith he published in 1529 at the prompting of Oecolampadius, who felt that Farel's French compatriots needed a primer in their own language to clarify points they did not understand. Accordingly it is addressed to "all who love our Lord and desire to know the truth." With Europe plunged into gloom and confusion, the Lord Jesus, "the Sun of Righteousness", can alone dispel the darkness of confusion and error. Everyone, therefore, must look to Him. Spiritual leaders especially, who influence whole communities for good or ill, must learn to apply Scripture as God intended, and not as a pretext for persecuting believers. They must "learn the Saviour's kindness and gentleness, and not the Pharisees' cruelty and rage."

The book's first fifteen chapters draw some sharp contrasts between God and man, law and gospel, sin and righteousness, flesh and spirit, unbelief and faith, merit and grace, man-made tradition and divine Scripture. A chapter on the Lord Jesus stands alone. Chapters sixteen to thirty-six identify the true church, which does not contain the cult of saints, the veneration of relics, auricular confession, the inventions of false pastors, pilgrimages, indulgences, purgatory, obligatory fasting, priestly absolution, the mass, and the prohibition of vernacular Bible translations. Three further chapters, dealing with the civil magistrate, marriage and the education of children, lead to a treatment of the last things. Here we shall summarize Farel's teaching on the knowledge of God, the saving work of Christ and the church and its ministry.

The Knowledge of God

In answering the question: How may God be known? Farel is practical and unspeculative. All human teaching, he says without apology, is useless to bring us to know or worship God aright. Rather than bring us knowledge, understanding and certainty, unregenerate reason only calls down the wrath of God upon all

who follow it. If God is to be known, He must reveal Himself. This He has already done in Holy Scripture. All that is not according to His written Word is sin. But here we see what God is like, and that is all we need to know. Most of all, we need to know Him as good. This theme is threaded throughout the whole *Summary*. His goodness is seen in the wealth and beauty of creation, in the image in which He created Adam, and chiefly in His salvation, to receive which “begets such trust in His great goodness that nothing can part us from His love.” In Christ we know for certain “God’s great kindness and endless mercy.”

In addressing the problem of how sinners appropriate God’s revealed goodness, Farel informs us that when He speaks through Scripture to our heart [i.e. our will and affections], He engenders a “true and lively faith.” This faith brings us “true experience and knowledge of God our Father, who is good, perfect, powerful and wise, and who for His love’s sake . . . has redeemed us through Jesus our Saviour.” Without this “light of faith” and “brightness from God’s Word”, all remains under the powers of darkness. But by the indwelling Spirit of God, Scripture authenticates itself to the believer as he grows in knowledge, obedience and trust.

Scripture is so clear, Farel concludes, that to seek to know God without it is not to know Him at all. Neither church tradition nor private judgment has any right to be heard. The Spirit brings the believer into willing subjection to the Word, in which He speaks with one voice. We must, then, read it as a whole and consistently with itself. And since both Testaments focus on a redemption conceived in heaven and wrought out on earth, all our saving knowledge of God is by grace.

The Saving Work of Christ

Farel’s teaching on salvation stands squarely on the Bible’s representation of man as “wicked, helpless, deranged, and reckless, full of falsehood and hypocrisy, thinking only evil and sin, in which he is conceived and born.” Erasmus’s belief in the

potential goodness of the natural man finds no echo in Farel. Man needs a Saviour, and that Saviour is Jesus.

Though Christ's mediatorial offices are barely mentioned, His deity and intimacy with the Father are everywhere stressed. He is the "most dear Son" in whom dwells all the Father's life, wisdom, power, grace and righteousness. To receive Him, therefore, is to receive the Father. Through Him we have eternal life, the inheritance of heaven, deliverance from sin, and the privilege of adoption.

At the heart of Farel's doctrine of salvation stands Christ's perfect atonement for the sins of believers. The motive behind it is the Father's love, the necessity for it is the Father's justice, the way it is procured is the Son's obedience. Penal substitution is of its essence: God's law demands obedience, man's sin offers only disobedience, Jesus bore the penalty for this disobedience, the law's curse fell on Him, the believing lawbreaker is set free. Farel's teaching is full of references to Christ's sacrifice, burden-bearing and cleansing from sin. "He shed His precious blood for the forgiveness of sins, and to purge us of our transgressions: He is the Lamb of God who bears the sins of the world . . . When we believe this our hearts are purified and our souls quickened." This passage from death to life is by grace alone.

Farel follows Augustine rather than Luther in his understanding of justification. "To be justified is not so much to be *declared* righteous as to be *made* righteous." (Robert White, summarizing Farel's view). Nevertheless, this justification, unlike that of Rome, is immediate and permanent, and bears fruit in a holy life. One thing is certain: "If then we are justified and saved by grace, it is not by works."

While speaking of believers more than of the elect, Farel clearly believes in election. God's love is electing love. In Christ, and by the Holy Spirit, He redeems and quickens only those He has ordained to eternal life. His decree, rooted in His good pleasure, is

unconditional and unchangeable, and may embrace a soul “born and bred in Turkey, and the babe which dies in its mother’s womb.” Without defending this truth, Farel is content for us to grasp that salvation is of the Lord, not of our free will or merit. All glory for it, therefore, must be given to Him. Only once does Farel refer to “the children of wrath ordained to death.” He teaches that it is God’s justice that condemns sinners to eternal punishment, and that unbelief closes heaven to all who reject Christ. His emphasis remains on the goodness of God, which is designed to lead even the worst to repentance; and for such as do repent, “gentle Jesus waits to receive them into His mercy.”

The Church and its Ministry

The stark contrasts that appear in Zwingli’s *True and False Religion* (1525) are most evident in Farel’s treatment of the Church. Confronted with the anti-Biblical corruptions of Rome, and determined to clarify for bewildered believers the nature of the true Church, he here mingles denunciation with exposition more than anywhere else in the book.

For Farel, the groundwork of the Church’s life and activity is laid in the believer’s union with Christ. Along with all other believers, he is incorporated into His spiritual Body. Together, they share a common life, purpose and destiny. By definition therefore, “the church . . . is the holy assembly of believers joined in true faith to the body of Jesus Christ whose members they are.” On no account must we think of it as a hallowed space or building. It has no hierarchy and no man-made rules and regulations. Prayer and praise are its offerings to God, not Christ in the mass. Its main concern is to hear, believe and obey “the holy voice of Jesus.” In its work, the simple are taught, the weakest are honoured, the gifted serve the good of all, and teachers explain and apply Scripture in the language of the people only to edify them. Here Jesus’s model of self-denying service (Matthew 20.25-27) and Paul’s teaching on mutual dependence (1 Corinthians 12-14) are realized. The contrast to Rome’s monarchy-headed hierarchy,

strict separation of ‘clergy and laity’, mystifying rituals and neglect of Scripture is total and plain for all to see.

Farel says little of the Holy Spirit’s role in forming and sustaining church life: this privilege was to be given to Calvin. But he does emphasize the Spirit’s ministry in making the children of God increasingly like their heavenly Father, especially in goodness.

The invisible faith that joins believers to Christ is normally visible. When congregated, their pastors teach, exhort and admonish them from Scripture. In this function they follow Jesus, the Good Shepherd, in nourishing the flock, striving to set them an example like His, and fighting off soul-destroying wolves.

Farel sees clearly that Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are the only New Testament sacraments. In keeping with his warm-hearted appreciation of Christian fellowship he views them as love tokens given by Christ to His people. He leans towards adult baptism in stating that all who desire to “follow and live for Jesus” should be baptized. In the Supper, we “confess that our Lord gave up His body in death so that we, out of love for Him, might love one another, and lay down our lives for each other.” It is therefore more than a thanksgiving and memorial meal. Its communal aspect reminds us of the early Methodist love feasts.

One far-reaching view of the Church shared by Farel and his fellow Reformers is that it is a mixed body. Wheat and chaff, good and bad fishes, work and worship in it side by side. Consequently we should not try to form a “pure” church, like the Anabaptists, because “we do not know the heart as God knows it . . . We know only externals”, which are “common to the good and the bad.”

In such a mixed body discipline is necessary, for anyone may raise scandals that threaten the Church’s peace and unity. Working from Matthew 18.15-17, Farel teaches the whole parish body to excommunicate, yet only from the Lord’s Table, not from church attendance or normal social intercourse. Neither should sentence

be carried out vindictively, but in a spirit of love, prayer and concern that the guilty may find rapid repentance.

The pastor's authority is confined to the limitations of God's Word and the congregation's consent. In handling the keys of Christ's kingdom, he may only admit penitent believers and exclude impenitent unbelievers. Each offender must confess his sin to God alone and receive absolution in his conscience from God alone. The pastor is no priest. Neither has he right to the people's unconditional obedience. Finally, believers must weigh his doctrine in the balance of Scripture. If found wanting, both it and he must be repudiated. The pastor thus remains in a state of perpetual probation.

In sum, the true Church is a loving, serving Church. Its members are to spend and be spent for each other. In this way they fulfil the law of Christ, follow His example and act as salt and light in society. In this wider context fasting and almsgiving serve the purpose of feeding the hungry, clothing the ill-clad, and helping all in need, even their enemies. This is how the indwelling Spirit expresses Himself, not in pompous ritual and empty gestures of goodwill. Echoing Luther, Farel concludes: God "has no need . . . of us or our goods; it is in our neighbour that He wills to be served, inasmuch as what we do to our neighbour we do to God."

Conclusion

Historically, Farel was both a staunch champion of Protestant insistence on *Scripture Alone* and the most persuasive, influential voice in the early French-speaking Reformation. The fact that his *Summary* is only "a short entry and introduction" to the Christian Faith rather than a full exposition should endear its teaching to us; for it contains elements that are now wholly neglected by those who profess the full-orbed Gospel. Let us examine ourselves in its light.

Luther in Leipzig

Martin Luther had barely ignited the Indulgence Controversy (1517) that sparked off the Reformation when a staunch and persistent champion of Popery attacked him. This was John Eck, doctor of theology and chancellor of the university of Ingolstadt. He challenged Luther's *Ninety-Five Theses* with a pamphlet called *Obelisks* (from the dagger-shaped symbol used in ancient manuscripts to point out spurious or corrupt passages). In it he pilloried Luther as "a fanatic Hussite, heretical, seditious, insolent and rash . . . dreaming, clumsy, unlearned and a despiser of the pope." Luther responded with a pamphlet entitled *Asterisks* (the star symbol used in printing to mark omissions and obscurities).

Before the debate progressed further, it was taken out of Luther's hands by his hot-headed Wittenberg colleague, John Bodenstein of Carlstadt. While Luther was away in Heidelberg, Carlstadt produced a set of theses against Eck, denying free will and asserting the authority of Scripture. Eck countered with some theses of his own, claiming the supreme authority of the pope. Towards the end of 1518 Luther himself produced twelve theses against Eck. This attack on the false claims of the Roman see caused an immense stir, resulting in a challenge from Eck to debate openly the disputed points. Following negotiations, Leipzig, at that time a bastion of Romanism, was chosen as the site of debate.

For six months Luther prepared himself for the forthcoming conflict, prayerfully studying Scripture, Church History and Canon Law. His spirit was undaunted by the prospect. "I beseech you," he urged his friend Spalatin, "be not fearful, nor let your heart be downcast . . . You know that if Christ did not rule me I would have perished long ago." Referring to Rome as "that spoiler of the Bible and the Church" and "Babylon," and to Eck as a "crafty, arrogant, slippery, loud-mouthed sophist," he denied the superiority of

Rome over all other churches, resolving not to bear with its “perverse interpretation of God’s Word.”

Luther arrived in Leipzig on 24 June 1519. The “crucial encounter” (Hans Hillerbrand) was to be held in the hall of the Pleissenburg, a castle at the south-east angle of the city walls. On the day appointed, a large audience gathered, containing dukes, counts, abbots and knights, several doctors of law, masters of arts, licentiates of theology and civic dignitaries. Two pulpits facing each other were erected in the great hall, which was colourfully decorated with tapestries and armorial shields. Tables were at hand for notaries to record the debate. The entire scene resembled a mediaeval jousting tournament.

The first meeting took place on 27 June. For a week Eck and Carlstadt debated on free will. Even after succeeding in getting his opponent’s books removed from the hall, Eck found himself out-manoeuvred, but refused to concede defeat.

The following week Eck debated with Luther on the primacy of the pope. Claiming the support of Scripture, the ‘Church Fathers’ and the Council of Constance (1415), which had condemned John Huss, Eck rounded off his polemic by declaring Luther a Hussite heretic. Luther replied by reminding his audience that neither the entire Greek Church nor the ‘Fathers’ had ever been under the papacy, while some articles of faith condemned by the Council of Constance were plainly asserted by Christ, Paul and Augustine.

The third week was pre-occupied with penance, purgatory, indulgences and the absolving power of the priest. After observing Eck’s subtlety, inconsistency and evasiveness, Luther left the end of the disputation to Carlstadt. Our Reformer’s proclamation of Christ alone, “and not a man,” as “the Head of the Church Militant . . . by virtue of God’s own testimony,” closed with the sure word of faith: “We see not our Head, yet we have Him.” Despite his resounding victory in debate, Luther and his friends were treated “like the bitterest enemies” by the citizens of Leipzig, while Eck

was feted throughout the city, being invited to dinners, escorted around the place on horseback, and given a robe and gown.

Before all parties returned home, however, the Duke of Pomerania invited Luther to read and preach from the gospel for the day in the castle chapel on 29 June. “Suddenly,” he exclaimed, “the report of my preaching filled the city, and such a vast concourse of men and women came to hear me that I was compelled to preach in the debating hall, with all the professors and other hostile listeners sitting around.” As the gospel reading [Matthew 16.13-19] covered the topics of debate – the grace of God and the primacy of Peter – Luther summarized for his audience the whole disputation, “to the great annoyance of Leipzig,” he gleefully noted.

The sermon begins with a brief defence of his attack on indulgences, motivated, he assured everyone, by compassion for “the poor common people . . . being deprived of their scanty livelihood” and by anger at the greed of the Church. And since God had never commanded indulgences, he adds, “salvation gets on very well without” them.

Next Luther challenges anyone to come forward and prove the lies and heresies with which he had been unjustly charged.

After reading the lectionary passage for the day, he then expounds it, clearly showing that since all knowledge of salvation is revealed to us only by our Father in heaven, then salvation must be by grace alone. The first step heavenwards, then, is to confess that we “cannot become or do good” of ourselves, to despair of ourselves, “and then call upon His divine grace,” in which we should “steadfastly trust.” Anyone who teaches otherwise, he adds for good measure, is a self-deceived deceiver. Moreover, the saving grace of God lifts men above themselves, enabling them to live a life of good works. Thus God’s grace always precedes our good works. The “yearning for God” of Psalm 42.1-2 and longing to be good is both “initiated by grace and . . . continues until death.”

The briefer second part of the sermon demolishes papal claims by reminding his hearers that the keys of the kingdom of heaven were not given to Peter “personally, but rather . . . to the Christian

Church.” As for priestly absolution, no man can be sure that his sins are forgiven, claims Luther, until he believes in a gracious God. “If he believes . . . he is saved; if he does not believe . . . he is damned.” This faith “the grace of God works in us.” Therefore we should “praise and thank God” for comforting our conscience “through the medium of men.”

While he was not at this stage free from priestly terminology, Luther here clearly asserts the Protestant view of pardon as ministerial, not sacerdotal, and of faith as entirely a work of grace, not as man’s natural or even aided response to the work of Christ.

Though Eck replied with four counter-sermons, and Luther was not invited to preach again in Leipzig, the Reformer in a letter of 20 July remarked perceptively: “Because Eck and Leipzig sought their own glory and not the truth, it is no wonder that they began badly and ended worse.”

“The Leipzig Disputation,” writes T.M. Lindsay, “was perhaps the most important episode in the whole course of Luther’s career.” It led him into clearer views of the Headship of Christ and of the anti-Christian nature of papal pretensions. Further, it “provided a platform [from which] to expound his doctrine of the authority of Scripture . . . or Scripture alone. Luther’s commitment to the Scripture’s authority over the church fathers, councils and even the pope resounded throughout the debate.” (Stephen J. Nichols) Moreover, his arguments made such an abiding impression on the twelve-year-old (later Duke) George of Anhalt, a Leipzig student who sat on one of the tapestried benches, that as an adult he “came forward boldly on the side of the Reformation. (John Stoughton) Other students too received into their hearts seeds of divine truth that would never perish, but would bear Reformed Truth far beyond the borders of Germany. A printer in Basel, a bookseller in Pavia and salesmen at the Frankfurt Trade Fair all helped to spread thousands of copies of the debate’s proceedings.

Neither did Luther’s rejection by the dignitaries and citizens of Leipzig end his associations with the city. Like John Knox in

relation to St. Andrews, Luther had predicted: “I shall one day preach God’s Word in Leipzig.” And so he did. In May 1539 he was found in the pulpit of the Nikolaikirche. “There was such a crowd,” writes Waddington, “that all the spaces about the pillars and railings and passages were full, and many stood out of doors and heard him through the windows.” On that occasion many Leipzigers were converted to the Protestant Faith, and we trust to Christ also.

Ever since Luther’s day Leipzig has had strong Lutheran connections, the most notable being the musical ministry of the world’s greatest composer, Johann Sebastian Bach. His cantatas and passion settings are still performed in St. Thomas’s, where he was Cantor, and in St. Nicholas’s, *solī Deo gloria*, as he wrote on his manuscripts.

Finally, beginning in 1982, the regular Monday prayer meetings for peace held in St. Nicholas’s became so influential that by 1989 they had become a rallying point for peaceful protests against the atheistic Communist government. The result was the peaceful overthrow of the GDR regime and the re-unification of Germany.

The wheels of divine providence may often grind slowly, but they always grind surely. The seed planted as long ago as 1519 is still bearing good fruit.

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Special Notice

In keeping with the stated aims of the Sovereign Grace Union, the Committee has agreed to allocate books setting forth the doctrines of grace to students who are being called to minister to the churches. Anyone wishing to benefit by this grant of books should apply in writing to the Treasurer, whose name and address may be found inside the front cover of *Peace and Truth*.

Gospel Unity

[So much has been written on Christian Unity, both true and false, that it might appear superfluous to say more on the subject. We realize that there will never be perfect unity till all the ransomed people of God shall gather round and worship the Lamb in the midst of the throne for ever. Yet “unity is of the essence of the Body of Christ” (R.B. Kuiper); that is, the Church. This is why John Calvin was ready to cross ten seas if only he could be a means of promoting it, and why John Dury devoted his life attempting to unite the Protestant churches of Europe, and why Jeremiah Burroughs penned his healing book *Irenicum*, and why James Durham wrote his treatise on Scandal, and why John Howe did all he could to promote union amongst Protestants, and why Thomas M’Crie wrote his fine work on Church Unity. This, too, is why so many unions, denominations, fellowships and societies have been formed in pursuit of this elusive goal.

As we continue to groan within at the present disunity of the Church, and long for the perfect unity of heaven, let us consider some thoughts on the topic by the Puritan John Flavel. They appear in a sermon on 1 Corinthians 1.10 – ‘Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.’ (*Works*. Volume 3. Pages 592-608. B of T. 1982.) Ed.]

“Unity among believers . . . is as desirable a mercy as it is a necessary . . . duty.” (594)

“There is a twofold union, one *mystical*, betwixt Christ and believers; another *moral*, betwixt believers themselves: faith knits them all to Christ, and then love knits them one to another.” (594)

“Union with Christ is fundamental to all union among the saints.” (595)

“Unity amongst those who hold not the Head is rather a conspiracy than a Gospel unity.” (595)

“Sincere Christianity holds fast the soul by a firm bond of life to the truly Christian community.” (595)

“Tongue-unity flows from heart-unity; heart-unity . . . from head-unity; and all three from union with the Lord Jesus Christ.” (596)

“The manifestative glory of God . . . is exceedingly advanced by the unity of His people . . . Romans 15.5-6.” (596)

“The unity of the saints . . . greatly depends upon the exercise of patience one toward another.” (596)

“Acts 2.46-47. Oh! What cheerfulness, strength and pleasure did the primitive Christians reap from the unity of their hearts in the ways and worship of God!” (597)

“When schisms have rent churches asunder, they [believers] go away from each other exasperated, grieved and wounded.” (597)

“Reflect upon the scandal your divisions give to the world; how it hardens and prejudices them against religion and reformation.” (600)

“Divisions render saints . . . dead one to another whilst they are alive.” (602)

“Ah, how lovely, how sweet and desirable it is to live in the communion of such saints as are described [in] Malachi 3.16; to hear them freely and humbly . . . open their hearts and experiences to one another!” (602-3)

“If God turn not our hearts one towards another, He will come and smite the earth with a curse, Malachi 4.6.” (603)

“It greatly concerns . . . such as are vested with office-power [in the churches] to beware whom they receive into their communion.” (603)

“None ought to be admitted to church communion but such as do appear to the judgment of charity (comparing their professions and conversations [i.e. conduct]) to be Christians indeed, that is, men fearing God and working righteousness.” (604)

“From vainglorious [church] doctors, contentious pastors and unprofitable questions, [may] the good Lord deliver us.” [Martin Luther, quoted with approval.] (605. f.n.)

“What peaceful societies should we have if our lips transgressed not the laws of love and kindness.” (606)

“How dearly hath pride, especially spiritual pride, cost the churches of Christ!” (606)

“Remember, friend, that an unforgiving spirit is a bad sign of an unforgiven person.” (607)

“There is little credit to the name of Christ from a dividing, wrangling people.” (607)

“Tremble . . . at the thoughts of divisions and separations.” (607)

“When God intends to make the hearts of men one, He first makes them new. Ezekiel 11.19.” (608)

“Return . . . to the primitive spirit of love and unity; forbear one another; forgive one another; mortify your dividing lusts; cherish your uniting graces; ‘mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine ye have learned, and avoid them.’ Romans 16.17.” (608)

An Open Letter

[The following Open Letter appeared in the April 1923 issue of *Peace and Truth*. It reminds us of our need to experience the power of the glorious truths we profess. Editor.]

MY BRETHREN AND SISTERS IN THE FAITH OF GOD'S ELECT, I am writing these lines to you who are favoured to dwell beneath the shadow of the Almighty, and who are walking in that narrow way that leads to the celestial city.

And how good it is when in our journeying we can walk together with the love and unity of the Gospel and fulfil the exhortation given by Jacob of old: 'See that ye fall not out by the way.' As I pass along life's journey my heart is often grieved to see how few there be that walk in love, but rather seem to contend and strive about words to no profit. The apostle writes to his spiritual children and admonishes them to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. Mark well his theme – the faith, not my sect. Not my personal views of worshipping God, but the faith of God's elect. This was the great central theme of the apostle's teaching – Christ in you the hope of glory.

And if Christ be in you, brethren, why do ye rend and tear those who love our Lord and Saviour, and are earnestly desirous of spreading forth the glories of electing love which are treasured up in Christ, and who wish to walk in peace with all men, especially with those who love our Lord and Saviour in sincerity and truth? Some say: 'I am of Paul,' others: 'I am of Apollos,' others: 'I am of Christ.' My brethren, read what James says, chapter 3.

How circumspectly we ought to walk. 'Touch not Mine anointed and do My prophets no harm,' says the Word. John says: 'He that loveth his brother abideth in the light.'

Therefore let us walk as dear children, by the precious grace of Christ, showing an ungodly world that the love of Christ dwelleth in us, and as disciples of our great Emmanuel walking together in love, 'forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.'

And may 'the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work that do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ.'

Yours in the Gospel,

A LOVER OF THE S.G.U. AND A STRICT BAPTIST

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Christ the Only Mediator – John Flavel

God's Purpose of Grace – William S Plumer

An Accomplished Redemption – W J Grier

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A Useful Booklet

W. H. Molland's booklet 'Salvation: The Gift of God or the Choice of Man?' is available free of charge from Mr T. Field whose address is inside the front cover of this magazine. A contribution towards postage would be appreciated.

Matthew Henry's Calvinism

Introduction

Few today confine Calvinism to the Five Points of doctrine settled in 1618-19 by the Synod of Dort. It is now acknowledged by many to be a God-centred way of life as well as a God-given system of truth. To think of it otherwise is to sever its branches and fruit from their roots and trunk. On this occasion, therefore, we shall use the Five Points merely as a convenient framework for our thoughts.

In the writings of Matthew Henry the Bible commentator (1662-1714) truth and life, or doctrine and practice, are both so full of the sap of God that they form one organic whole. Thus we have a complete tree. As we study his Calvinism, may the Lord make us thankful for his balance, and grant us more of it for ourselves.

Total Depravity

“Grace is not born in us,” states Henry bluntly. “No, we were *shapen in iniquity*. (Psalm 51.5). We brought into the world with us corrupt, depraved, degenerate natures. We were called transgressors from the womb. (Isaiah 48.8). We brought into the world with us a carnal mind. (Romans 8.7). [We] derive corrupt natures from the loins of our first parents [Adam and Eve]. Faith and love and other graces are flowers that do not grow in nature’s garden. Jews and Gentiles [are] all born under sin. (Romans 3.9-19) . . . Even the children of saints are born in sin. Grace doth not run in the blood.”

Rendering us guilty before God, our native depravity leaves us in a helpless plight. Even when the elect have a decreed and promised inheritance laid up for them in heaven, that inheritance “was mortgaged into the hands of divine justice by sin,” so that “we are

altogether unable of ourselves to redeem this inheritance.” Hence our need of our Kinsman Christ to redeem it for us, take up the mortgage, and open the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

What is more, our depravity prevents us from injecting the least spiritual life into ourselves. “Wherever this good work is begun, it is of God’s beginning . . . We could not begin it of ourselves, for we are by nature dead in trespasses and sins: and what can dead men do towards raising themselves to life?”

Henry’s private confession of faith confirms these statements: “I believe . . . that all the sons of men are born children of disobedience, wanting original righteousness, and under a corruption of the whole nature, slaves to the flesh, the world, and the devil.”

So does a private paper composed on the occasion of his ordination: “Have I ever been inwardly convinced,” he asks himself, “of the lost and undone condition in which I was born, that I was by nature a child of wrath, even as others? Did I ever see myself wallowing in my blood, in a forlorn, outcast, helpless state, lost and ruined for ever without Christ?”

While, then, Henry does not give the doctrine the detailed, analytical treatment of John Owen, Jonathan Edwards or Thomas Boston, it clearly forms a fundamental element in his teaching, for it lies at the base of all his remarks on man’s universal need of salvation by the sovereign grace of God.

Unconditional Election

The salvation of God’s people, however, does not commence in time, with the removal of their guilt and the renewing of their nature. Its source, claims Henry, lies deep in “the counsels of everlasting love.” In a series of sermons on Titus 1.2 - ‘In the hope of eternal life which God that cannot lie promised before the world began’ - he states clearly that “God did from eternity design a remnant to this happiness - and the promise is in pursuance of that

design - the elect are chosen *to salvation* as the end, *through sanctification* as the means. (2 Thessalonians 2.13). Election is the first link in that golden chain [of] which glorification is the last link. (Romans 8.30).”

When God prepared the dinner of heaven (Matthew 22.4), adds Henry quaintly, He determined precisely “who should be the monuments of His grace in the enjoyment of it. The names of those that are designed for heaven are written in heaven. (Luke 10.20).”

Furthermore, God’s choice of who shall sit at table in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb is not conditioned by anything foreseen in them. It cannot be, for the elect are children of the Covenant of Grace. “This covenant was founded in free grace, purchased by Christ’s blood . . . revealed to the Old Testament saints, [and] brought to clearer light by the gospel.”

Besides, all our mercies are covenant mercies. “They flow from God’s mercy” and “are ordered . . . in kindness to us,” (2 Samuel 23.5), not paid to us as wages. Election is of necessity unconditional.

Practical as ever, Henry leaves this doctrine with a solemn caution: “This mystery of election is not to be curiously pried into, much less presumed upon, but adored with wonder, love and thankfulness, as it will be to eternity when the mystery of God shall be filled up.”

Limited Atonement

In keeping with his practical, non-controversial approach to theology, Henry throws all the emphasis on Christ’s work of delivering sinners *from sin*, rather than on the question of whom God intended to save by His Son’s atoning death. In expounding Matthew 1.21 - ‘thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins’ - he says: “Those whom Christ saves, He saves from their sins; from the guilt of sin by the merit of His

death, from the dominion of sin by the Spirit of His grace . . . Christ came to save His people, not in their sins, but from their sins; to purchase for them, not a liberty to sin, but a liberty from sins.”

Accordingly, he answers the question: For whom did Christ die? by affirming that “those who leave their sins, and give up themselves to Christ *as His people*,” are the only ones with an ‘interest’ in His blood, and in “the great salvation which He has brought.” However mildly and practically Henry states the truth, here is no Arminian universalism, but Calvinistic particularism.

We see his practical-experiential approach again in Henry’s remarks on John 1.29 - ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.’ Christ, he says, “purchases pardon for all those that repent and believe the gospel, of whatever country, nation or language.” This explanation is fully in keeping with the Saviour’s intention to open the door of salvation, after His resurrection, to the whole world, not to the Jews only.

When he does write on the specific intention of the Father in making His Son an atoning sacrifice for sin, Henry consistently limits it to the elect, whom he often terms ‘the remnant.’ “The promise of eternal life,” he says, “was purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ. The eternal promise was purposed in Christ. (Ephesians 3.11), the remnant [were] chosen in Christ. (Ephesians 1.4). That’s the consideration in this charter or grant.” [i.e. the Covenant of Grace].

Nevertheless, Henry continues to explain his doctrine expositively, not systematically. Commenting on the blessedness of the pardoned sinner (Psalm 32.1-2), he says: “the true believer’s transgressions of the Divine law are all forgiven, being covered with the atonement. Christ bare his sins, therefore they are not imputed to him.” Later on in his exposition he calls us to note “the character of him whose sins are pardoned; he is sincere, and seeks sanctification by the power of the Holy Ghost. He does not profess

to repent, with an intention to indulge in sin, because the Lord is ready to forgive. He will not abuse the doctrine of free grace. And to the man whose iniquity is forgiven, all manner of blessings are promised.” To him alone, therefore, is the death of Christ applied, along with all its benefits.

Throughout the whole teaching process, Henry’s habit of mind always embeds his doctrine in the Biblical text, much as a fossil is found embedded in its rock matrix. Perhaps this is a major reason for his popularity as a commentator.

Irresistible Grace

Under this rubric, Henry writes as one unconscious of the *furor* created by Pelagius, Arminius and their adherents in the Church. He is so taken up with the wonder of God’s saving grace that theological debate could hardly be further from his mind. Reading 1 Corinthians 4.7 - ‘who maketh thee to differ, and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?’ - he exclaims with child-like wonder: “’Tis a gift, a free gift!” Grace is not a product of our natural powers, as heathen philosophers taught, but “the gift of God.”

Neither is it a gift we can simply stretch out our sin-infected hands and receive. We are cast for our reception of it entirely upon the work of the Holy Spirit. Speaking of the New Birth (John 3.5-7), “the Lord Jesus explains to Nicodemus the *author* of this blessed change, and who it is that works it. To be born again is to be *born of the Spirit*. The change is not brought about by any wisdom or power of our own, but by the power and influence of the blessed Spirit of grace.” While Pharisees place all their religion “in external purity and . . . performances,” the Lord places it in the spiritual renovation of the heart. And “when we consider the holiness of the God with whom we have to do, the great design of our redemption [and] the depravity of our nature,” we should not be surprised “that we must be born again” by a power outside ourselves.

Moreover, we can no more resist the Spirit's inner saving working than we can resist water when it cleanses our skin, or wind when it blows on us. (John 3.5,8). "This comparison is here used to show that the Spirit, in regeneration, works . . . as a free agent." That is, He "dispenses His influences where, and when, on whom, and in what measure and degree, He pleases."

"The Spirit also works *powerfully*, and with evident effects." When He converts a soul, that soul is made willing to be Christ's. "Christ's people are a willing people. The Power of the Spirit going with the power of the Word to the people of Christ is effectual to make them willing." (Psalm 110.3). In short, however much they may have resisted His calls before, in the day of His power they are brought to Christ by irresistible grace.

Perseverance of the Saints

When he considers the last of the Five Points, Henry remains as doctrinally Calvinistic yet pastorally-orientated as ever. The classic proof-text of John 10.28-29 provides a springboard for his exposition of this precious truth. Following some remarks on the happiness of Christ's sheep in having nothing less than eternal life settled on them, he assures us that "the Lord Jesus has undertaken for His people's security and preservation to this happiness . . . *They shall by no means perish for ever*; so the words are. As there is an eternal life," he continues, "so there is an eternal destruction; the soul not annihilated, but ruined . . . All believers are saved from this." Though merely human shepherds lose some of their sheep, "Christ has engaged that none of His sheep will perish, not one." Their everlasting happiness is being kept "in reserve" for them, and He who reserves it to them "will preserve them to it."

Perhaps Henry never states the truth of the saints' perseverance better than in his private confession of faith. Having attributed the commencement of the application of redemption to the Holy Spirit, he goes on to assert: "[I believe] that the same Spirit continues to dwell in them, and to work all their works in them, weakening their corruptions, strengthening their graces, guiding

their way, comforting their souls, witnessing their adoption, enabling them more and more to die unto sin, and to live unto righteousness, and keeping them faithful and steadfast unto the end.”

In pondering the divine keeping, we must not forget that God preserves His people through their diligent use of His appointed means. King David, for example, “had made God’s Word his preservative from the paths of Satan, which lead to destruction.” Therefore, “if we carefully avoid the paths of sin, we will avoid destruction.” And “those who would proceed and persevere in the ways of God, must, by faith and prayer, get daily fresh supplies of grace and strength from Him.” (Psalm 17.8).

Similarly, while it is the Lord Himself who keeps a city (Psalm 127.1), nevertheless He employs the watchmen’s and citizens’ diligence in keeping it. “Our care must be to keep ourselves in the love of God,” he adds tenderly, thinking primarily of God’s spiritual city, the Church, for “we must use the proper means very diligently.” In this way Henry indicates how Scripture maintains a constant balance between God’s sovereignty and our responsibility. Yet in the last analysis, His preservation secures our perseverance.

Conclusion

Matthew Henry’s irenic spirit ensures that he is always moderate in stating and gracious in contending for the doctrines of grace, or Calvinism. As his biographer J.B. Williams says: “Mr Henry deplored the proneness of mankind to make religion so much the matter of *dispute*; and to waste in argumentation the zeal which ought to be employed in what is practical.” Henry himself warns us against the danger of losing “the power of godliness,” and even our own souls, while contending for forms: “the form of words, the form of worship, the form of government.” Though all three are important in their own place, may we all heed his warning.

The Future of Europe

By

John Gresham Machen

[In 1932 John Gresham Machen, the Founder of Westminster Theological Seminary, Pennsylvania, climbed the Matterhorn. While musing from the summit on the grandeur and beauty of the Alpine snow peaks that surrounded him, he began to wonder about the future of the Europe that lay beneath them. His prescience is note-worthy. Editor.]

“What will be the end of that European civilization, of which I had a survey from my mountain vantage ground – of the European civilization and its daughter in America? What does the future hold in store? Will Luther prove to have lived in vain? Will all the dreams of liberty issue into some vast industrial machine? Will even nature be reduced to standard, as in our country the sweetness of the woods and hills is being destroyed, as I have seen them destroyed in Maine, by the uniformities and artificialities and officialdom of our national parks? . . . Will all things in Church and State be reduced to one dead level, coming at last to an equilibrium in which all liberty and all high aspirations will be gone? Will that be the end of all humanity’s hopes? I can see no escape from that conclusion from the signs of the times: too inexorable seems to me to be the march of events. No, I can see only one alternative. The alternative is that there is a God – a God who in His own good time will bring forward great men again to do His will, great men to resist the tyranny of experts and lead humanity out again into the realms of light and freedom; great men, above all, who will be the messengers of His grace. There is, far above any earthly mountain peak of vision, a God high and lifted up who, though He is infinitely exalted, yet cares for His children among men.”

Book Reviews

Banner of Truth

Lloyd-Jones: Messenger of Grace – Iain Murray. 288pp. £16.00. Hdbk. ISBN 13: 978-0-85151-975-3.

Dr D Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981) was one of the leading Evangelical preachers of his day. This valuable book expounds his views on preaching, on assurance and on church unity, and, for good measure, contains a CD of ‘the Doctor’ preaching on John 8.21-24.

Amid the wealth of material it is difficult to pick out individual chapters for especial praise, but the chapter entitled ‘Lloyd-Jones and Spurgeon Compared’ is quite brilliant.

Mr Murray does not agree with Dr Lloyd-Jones at every point, particularly on the subject of assurance. But both men agree in ‘seeing the glory of God as the end of all Christian life and thought.’

John Manton

Memories of Sandfields – Bethan Lloyd-Jones. 104pp. £5.50. Pbk. ISBN 978-0-85151-998-2.

This delightful, heart-warming booklet is a glimpse into the first eleven years of Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones’s ministry in ‘Sandfields,’ Aberavon, written by his wife. Her easy, flowing conversational style makes it seem as if she is sitting next to you as you read it. Events in the church’s life, the memorable visit to Canada and thrilling accounts of conversions during those years make you realize what the grace and power of God can do by the Holy Spirit when He builds a church and changes lives. This is a little gem, and should lift the heart of the reader and make you long to see God at work like that again today.

M.E. Brentnall

The Calvinistic Methodist Fathers of Wales (2 volumes) – translated by John Aaron. 800 and 816 pp. £40.00. Hdbk. ISBN 978-0-85151-997-5.

John Aaron has done a wonderful job in translating the original Welsh of John Morgan Jones and William Morgan, giving us for

the first time their faithful account of God's work of spiritual transformation of the Principality in the 18th and 19th centuries.

With a wealth of background material, including a description of the moral condition of Wales at the beginning of [Calvinistic] Methodism, the panoramic vista records the lives and labours of such gracious and gifted men of God as Howell Harris, William Williams, Thomas Charles, Ebenezer Morris, Thomas Jones and John Elias, besides a host of lesser known figures.

Fascinatingly illustrated, the narrative explains such characteristic features as the Association, the Exhorters, the First Ordination and the Clergymen who Remained. The insights afforded by this excellent record are most edifying. Highly recommended. J.M.B. *Living Faith* – Samuel Ward. 96pp. £3.25. Pbk. ISBN 978-0-85151-980-7.

This book is one of a new range of 'Pocket Puritan' small paperbacks. Richard Rushing has taken the contents from the Sermons of Samuel Ward to form an exposition of 'the just shall live by faith.' "Among all the gifts of God," says Ward, "there is none more useful than faith." The seeker is first of all exhorted to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and then the believer is encouraged to strengthen his faith in order to experience fullness of joy. The writer fears that many believers do not really live by their faith. Much in this small volumes is heart warming, such as the question: 'Can you be sad when you have all possible treasures laid up in heavenly places, where moth and rust and thieves may not come?' and the reminder: 'Our treasures are out of the devil's reach, and not only for a number of years, but for ever and ever.' Included is a memoir of Ward by J. C. Ryle. Christopher Banks *Impure Lust* – John Flavel. 80pp. £3.25. Pbk. ISBN 978-0-85151-981-4.

Another title in the 'Pocket Puritan' series, this short work is taken from Flavel's 'The Harlot's Face in the Scripture Glass.' In it Flavel offers ten arguments to show us the sinfulness and effects of uncleanness, adultery and fornication. There follows seven directions how to be kept from these sins. The brief time it takes to read this work will be time well spent and will do eternal good.

Included is a brief introduction to Flavel and his writings taken from a 1968 Banner of Truth magazine. Christopher Banks

Heaven a World of Love – Jonathan Edwards. 120pp. £3.25. Pbk. ISBN 978-0-85151-978-4.

Another in the ‘Pocket Puritan’ series, this is an exposition of 1 Corinthians 13:8-10. The doctrine Edwards draws from the text is that heaven is a world of love because God, who is love, dwells there. In heaven He will impart His love perfectly to all His people. By contrast, the impenitent have neither right nor portion in that world. If they were to be admitted into heaven, it would be no longer heaven. They are exhorted to be wise and flee to Christ before it is too late. The final section seeks to stir us up to seek after heaven. Included is a brief summary of the life of Jonathan Edwards. Christopher Banks

Anger Management – Richard Baxter. 64pp. £3.25. Pbk. ISBN 978-0-95151-979-1.

In this brief work Baxter tells us that anger was given us for our good, because it stirs us up to vigorous resistance against whatever opposes God’s glory. But it can also be sinful. We are given examples of sinful anger and how to deal with it. One way is to think much of Christ and His exemplary meekness and patience. Warmly commended. Included is an account of Baxter’s life by J. C. Ryle. Christopher Banks

Christian Focus Publications

Brothers, We are not Professionals – John Piper. 288pp. £10.99. Pbk. ISBN 978-1-85792-8938.

This work is summed up in its subtitle: ‘A Plea to Pastors for Radical Ministry.’ With typical passion, Piper writes of the need for ministry to be freed from all that is unnecessary. He reminds us that the holiness of the minister is far more valuable to his people than any professional organization skills he may have. There is much to ponder here about the direction many full-time pastors have taken, often at the behest of their congregations. Two small criticisms would be that the chapter on Baptism seems misplaced in such a work, and many of the chapter titles are somewhat

cryptic. However, this is a volume that deserves to be widely read by pastors and congregations alike.

Malcolm Lowrie

John Welch: The Man Who Couldn't Be Stopped – Ethel Barrett. 159pp. £4.99. Pbk. ISBN 978-1-85792-9287.

This is the latest addition to the Trailblazers series of Christian biographies for 9-14 year olds. John Welch was a Scottish preacher of the 1600s. But before that, he was a wild youth who ran away from home and joined a gang of robbers. His life gets even more exciting after his conversion to Christ, and he stands against street fighters and kings without fear. This book will teach children of the trials faced by Christians of the past, and of the faithfulness and power of God in all circumstances. It is an excellent story, and deserves to be better known. Miriam Lowrie
Trees in the Pavement – Jennifer Anne Grosser. 172pp. £4.99. Pbk. ISBN 978-1-84550-3420.

This new novel for 9-13 year olds reads very well. It tells the story of a young Albanian Muslim girl who flees from Kosovo to London with her family. She struggles to make friends, fit in to her new surroundings and retain her roots. The family's Christian neighbour gives her testimony to them, and a clear Gospel message is presented. This book also deals with the issues of racism, bigotry and the difficulties of those who turn to Christ from other religions. The story is engaging, and the author seems to understand a child's view of the world.

Miriam Lowrie

Evangelical Press

Isaiah Volume 1: chapters 1-39. An E.P. Study Commentary – John L. Mackay. 864pp. £29.95. Hdbk. ISBN 978-085234-656-3.

This profound but eminently readable study commentary by the Professor of Old Testament in the Free Church College, Edinburgh, delves into various explanations of the text with admirable clarity and fairness. For example, after discussing alternative interpretations of Isaiah 7.14 he assures us that its most consistent reference is to the Lord Jesus Christ as Messiah. Translated from the original, the Biblical text is spaced away from the main body text, with key phrases in **bold**. The commentary proceeds steadily through each short section, adding a personal

practical reflection on it. This superb study method thus relieves the mind from weariness through trying to assimilate too much detail, and leaves the reader breathing space to turn the lessons learned into prayer. We are pleased and thankful that Professor Mackay adopts the conservative view of the book as a whole, deeming it to be the work of one person, Isaiah the prophet himself. If the first part of the commentary handles the main subject – condemnation – so beautifully, we eagerly anticipate volume 2, dealing with the consolation of God’s people through redemption. J.M.B.

Reformation Heritage Books

Night of Weeping, Morning of Joy – Horatius Bonar. ISBN 978-1-60178-032-4.

How glad we are that the ‘Prince of Scottish Hymnwriters’ gave in to pressure that he should write a sequel to *Night of Weeping*. We benefit for having the two books under one cover. The pen of the poet makes the reading a dual blessing.

The expression of Rutherford: ‘Our little inch of time suffering is not worthy of our first night’s Welcome Home to Heaven’ is dealt with in fifteen chapters on ‘Night’ and twelve on ‘Morning Joy.’ Every chapter has excellent teaching and challenging material, making it very suitable for home group study.

We live in an age when the mention of heaven brings a reaction that reveals how poor is the understanding of the joyful anticipation of what should uplift all believers. Sadly this applies to many church-going folk. We should encourage all ministers and house group leaders to give priority to these matters in their planning of future studies. They are far too much neglected.

The author concludes with these words:

In that morning, a kingdom;
In that kingdom, glory;
And in that glory,
The everlasting rest,
The Sabbath of eternity.

Strongly recommended.

Aubrey Ridge

Preacher of God's Word: Sermons by Christopher Love. 178pp. £15.00. Hdbk. ISBN 1-57358-096-1.

This **Soli Deo Gloria** title, now distributed by **Reformation Heritage Books**, is a fine companion to Don Kistler's life of Love entitled *A Spectacle Unto God*. The contents include some of Love's finest sermons: Christ's Prayer the Saint's Support, A Description of True Blessedness, and four sermons on Wrath and Mercy. With an easy style, very similar to that of Jeremiah Burroughs, Love never fails to instruct soundly and apply thoroughly. Perhaps the following extract may whet the reader's appetite for the rest: "So there is no possibility of life by the covenant of works because in our lapsed estate, in our estate of corruption, the covenant of works is impossible to be fulfilled by us . . . Oh, then, what cause have we to admire the infinite, unspeakable mercy and goodness of God in making this covenant of grace with man, a sinner . . . !" Highly commended. J.M.B. *Quaint Sermons of Samuel Rutherford.* 384pp. £21.00. Hdbk. ISBN 1-57358-101-1.

This much-loved volume, with a Preface by Andrew Bonar, the editor of Rutherford's *Letters*, is full of good things. I cannot understand Christians refusing to read him on account of his exotic style, which, after all, grows out of the Song of Songs and the author's passionate love for Christ. The eighteen sermons here deal much in pastoral encouragement for those believers who are discouraged, depressed, backslidden or longing for greater enjoyment of Christ. Among the most moving addresses are The Weeping Mary at the Sepulchre and The Church Seeking Her Lord, while his seven sermons on The Forlorn Son are superb. What a unique privilege it was for the parishioners of 'Fair Anwoth by the Solway' to have sat under his ministry! J.M.B.

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

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