

# *Peace & Truth*

The Magazine of the Sovereign Grace Union

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**2013:4**

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**£1.50**

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# Peace & Truth

The Magazine of the Sovereign Grace Union

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*Published quarterly by the Sovereign Grace Union for the proclamation and defence of the Doctrines of Free and Sovereign Grace.*

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**Subscriptions:** *All membership subscriptions are due on 1st January.*

*The annual subscription is £8.00 (£9.50 for overseas).*

*Cheques should be made payable to "Sovereign Grace Union" and sent to the treasurer.*

Subscribers are eligible for membership of the Sovereign Grace Union.

**Website:** [www.sgu.org.uk](http://www.sgu.org.uk)

**Registered Charity No. 247867**

## Aims and Objects

To further the proclamation and defence of the doctrines of Free and Sovereign Grace.

To print and reprint literature expounding such doctrines.

To encourage publishers to issue such literature and to help its circulation by purchase and distribution to Clergy, Ministers, Christian Workers, Theological Students, Members of Parliament and others.

To hold Conferences and Meetings to re-affirm the old truths in these days of apostacy and declension.

To circulate tracts, pamphlets and books, maintaining the Doctrines of Grace, which may be presented to the Union for that purpose, and to print and circulate such tracts, etc., for which any person, or Society, undertakes to provide the funds.

To raise a testimony against the evils of Priestcraft, Popery, Ritualism, Arminianism, Rationalism, Liberalism and Higher Criticism.

**Membership** is open to all who are in agreement with the Basis, Aims and Objects of the Union.

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## 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*

It is a sad fact that many Christians have virtually lost sight of the glorious doctrine of predestination. Those of us, however, who wish to be instrumental in carrying the torch of truth into the next generation will not deem it wasteful either of magazine space or readers' time to remind ourselves of what it means to us who hold the Reformed Faith dear. May the One who predestines all that comes to pass, and His people in particular to eternal life, bless to us our brief meditation on it.

### **Biblical Meaning**

While there are several nuances within the Biblical doctrine of Predestination, the Greek word 'proorizō', from which the term 'predestination' is derived, refers in the New Testament to God appointing a position for a person in advance. This appointment is always according to His deliberate purpose. With respect to each believer it means that his/her exact place in the divine plan is appointed beforehand, even from eternity. There are three spiritual states to which God's people are predestined: nature, grace and glory.

### **Nature**

As the Providential Disposer of all things, God predestines each one of us to take the place He assigns to us in nature according to the good pleasure of His will. Whether we are to be born "boy or girl, rich or poor, dull or clever, white or coloured" is "the most tremendous predestination conceivable." We see it taking place daily, and we ourselves are subject to it in our entire existence, "our position in life being entirely dependent on it." (Abraham Kuyper)

King David keenly realized this: "In thy book all my members were written . . . when as yet there were none of them." (Psalm 139.16) That is, all the physical members into which he as an embryo in the womb was to develop were predetermined by the

Creator, and were recorded in His eternal mind before they actually came into being. Thus the awesome truth emerges that everything about us is marked out in eternity. Well may John ‘Rabbi’ Duncan exclaim: “Oh, what a solemn thing it is to be a man! Made so exalted, fallen so low, capable of being raised again so high!”

In view of this tremendous fact, let us never complain of our lot, for it was ordained by infinite wisdom. If we are highly favoured, let us thank God for it; if not, we have no grounds for complaint, for “all more than hell is mercy.” (C. H. Spurgeon) Rather, let us resolve with King David (and the late Rendle Short, who displayed this text on a blackboard to his students before every lecture): “I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”

Further, let us abhor the loathsome and unnatural practice of changing gender out of a desire to be other than God made us. We are not our own, to do with our bodies and personalities whatever we like. We are the Lord’s, and should seek to glorify Him in the nature He gave us.

### **Grace**

The Bible also teaches that God has predestined certain individuals to receive saving grace. (Romans 8.29-30; 9.11-12; Ephesians 1.4-5; 1 Thessalonians 1.4; 5.9; 2 Thessalonians 2.13) Their election is wholly unconditional, springing as it does from His eternal purpose. In every case, those who believe unto salvation do so because they “were ordained to eternal life.” (Acts 13.48) They were chosen “that they might believe, not because He foresaw that they would believe.” (Augustine) In sum, God “predestinated a certain and definite number of individuals to everlasting life . . . before the foundation of the world was laid.” In so doing “He acted according to His sovereign will, and was not influenced by the foresight of their faith or good works or perseverance.” This purpose cannot be thwarted, for it ensures that none of the elect should perish. (Robert Shaw)

We need “special prudence and care” in handling this solemn truth. If we are taught it by the Holy Spirit, it will yield humble “praise, reverence and admiration of God” for choosing such unworthy sinners as we are. If we receive it as God intends, it will never lead to careless living or hopeless despair, but will produce holy comfort and calm assurance. Such was its effect on a dear young believer of our acquaintance, who said submissively on her deathbed: “I know I am one of God’s elect.”

### **Glory**

Penitent believers are finally predestined to glory. (Romans 8.28-30) Here we shall concentrate on three aspects of this inconceivable privilege.

First, in connection with our souls: “The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory.” (*Westminster Shorter Catechism*. Answer 37) This astonishing transformation is part of God’s predestinating purpose and of Christ’s legacy to them. Having removed the sting of sin by His own death in their place, Christ transforms death into an entrance to life. The moment they leave this earthly body, their souls join the illustrious company of the redeemed whose spirits have already been made perfect. (Hebrews 12.23) All remains of indwelling sin, which so plagued them in this present life, is instantly purged from them, and they enter a state of perfect purity in glory.

Second, with respect to both body and soul: at the resurrection, the bodies of believers are predestined to be raised up in glory to be re-united to their glorified souls. They shall bear forever the image of their glorified Saviour and be perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God. (1 Corinthians 15.43; 1 Thessalonians 4.17; 1 John 3.2) “What a glorious sight that will be,” exclaims Christmas Evans, “when the glorified soul sees the frail bark of its body coming in on the morning tide of the resurrection!”

Third, each believer is predestined to enjoy a certain degree of blessedness and glory. From Luke 19.17, 1 Corinthians 15.41-42 and 2 Corinthians 9.6, Jonathan Edwards elicits the truth that “there are different degrees of happiness and glory in heaven.” This difference will be according to “their eminency in holiness and good works here.” The fact that some will receive a greater reward than others “will be no damp to the happiness of those who have lower degrees of happiness and glory . . . for all shall be perfectly happy, every one shall be perfectly satisfied.” Though every vessel cast into this ocean of blessedness will be full, “some vessels are larger than others,” according as God has determined. There shall be no envy of the larger vessels by the smaller, for “perfect love shall reign throughout the whole society” of the glorified.

### **Conclusion**

Dear friends, let us not carp at God’s predestination of us. We are but clay in the Potter’s hands. “It is easier to complain of the decree than to change it.” (Samuel Rutherford)

Rather, let us make our calling and election sure, by believing on Christ and living a holy life. If we bear the marks of God’s elect, we may be comforted with the knowledge that our portion in nature, grace and glory is appointed by our gracious God, who does all things well. So we may say with the apostle Paul: “By the grace of God I am what I am.” (1 Corinthians 15.10)

We end with a remarkable anecdote:

A dying woman was left without hope by her priest. After he had left her cottage, William Guthrie called on her and ministered the Gospel to her immortal soul. By the blessing of God she was drawn to trust Christ alone for salvation. Soon afterwards, she died. On reaching home, Guthrie told his wife that he had witnessed a marvel: “I found a woman in a state of nature, saw her in a state of grace, and left her in a state of glory.” To all three states, she was predestined by God.

## ***Shall we Read “The Message”?***

*by*

***Gervase N. Charmley***

Eugene Peterson published *The Message: The New Testament in Contemporary English* in 1993. A whole Bible version was finally completed in 2002. The casual shopper in the average Christian book shop today could be forgiven for thinking that it is yet another of the veritable flood of English translations of the Bible that have been released since the 1970s. Increasingly popular among evangelicals, *The Message* may even be found in pulpits, and is used by many as their Bible version of choice in personal reading and even study. There is no denying the popularity of *The Message*, and at our Church book shop in Hanley we have had several customers come in and ask if we stock it. We do not, and this for good reason.

Some people may ask, “why are you so picky? Isn't it a good thing that people are reading the Bible?” Well, that is just the problem; someone reading *The Message* is getting the false impression that he or she is actually reading the Bible, when in fact they are doing nothing of the sort, they are actually reading one man's explanation of the Bible. To put it more forcefully, they may be getting *The Message*, but they are not getting God's message.

Although increasingly marketed as a Bible translation, and treated as such, *The Message* is not a translation at all, but a paraphrase of the Biblical text. Though the publishers market it as a “translation from the original languages” that “communicates the original Hebrew and Greek”, the fact is that it is nothing of the kind. Though Peterson worked from the original languages when he wrote it, *The Message* is Peterson's putting what he thinks is the message of the Bible into his own words. Paraphrases have their place, but it is certainly not the same place as belongs to an accurate translation of the Bible from the original languages.



Anyone comparing Peterson's work with an actual translation will find very quickly that it departs widely and very quickly from the text. In place of the majestic opening of the Authorised Version, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." *The Message* reads, "First this: God created the Heavens and Earth – all you see, all you don't see. Earth was like a soup of nothingness, a bottomless emptiness, an inky blackness. God's Spirit brooded like a bird above the watery abyss." It sets the tone for the rest of the work, the rather debased style, the unnecessary expansion of the text, and the introduction of striking imagery ("a soup of nothingness") that in fact adds nothing and has no basis in the original text.

No translation of the Bible can convey everything that is in the original text; there are for example cases of word-play in a number of places, something that is almost always impossible to convey in translation. Nevertheless, the goal of all translation is to convey as much as possible what is in the original text *and nothing more*. *The Message* fails here, for not only does Peterson omit certain passages, but he also adds new passages.

One of the most helpful critiques of *The Message* is an article by the Methodist scholar Neil Richardson entitled "Should Eugene Peterson's *The Message* be Read in Church?" that was published in the *Epworth Review* in October 2009. Though by no means a conservative evangelical, Richardson's conclusion is that it should not be, and his reasoning is sound. Though I had always been suspicious of *The Message*, and therefore avoided it, I was truly shocked at how bad it really is. In his article, Richardson identifies nine different types of problem with *The Message's* renderings of the Epistles of Paul: inaccuracies of translation, misleading rendering, references to Jews and Judaism, colloquialisms and anachronisms, additions, disappearances, a general blandness, unnecessary paraphrase, and reductionist renderings. For the sake of brevity, I will use the same headings.

## **1. Inaccuracies of translation**

There are many places where, though a direct equivalent of a word should be used (lists in particular), Peterson gives a less-than-equivalent rendering. So in Galatians 5:19-21, Peterson renders Paul's description of 'The Works of the Flesh' as: "It is obvious what kind of life develops out of trying to get your own way all the time: repetitive, loveless, cheap sex; a stinking accumulation of mental and emotional garbage; frenzied and joyless grabs for happiness; trinket gods; magic-show religion; paranoid loneliness; cutthroat competition; all-consuming-yet-never-satisfied wants; a brutal temper; an impotence to love or be loved; divided homes and divided lives; small-minded and lopsided pursuits; the vicious habit of depersonalizing everyone into a rival; uncontrolled and uncontrollable addictions; ugly parodies of community. I could go on." It would be difficult to find the equivalents for some of these in the original text or indeed in a decent English translation. In Romans 1:18 Peterson writes that, "But God's angry displeasure erupts as acts of human mistrust and wrongdoing and lying accumulate". The original word here is *apokaluptetai*, which means "is being revealed", and is significantly the same word used in the preceding verse of God's righteousness. For the sake of a striking metaphor, Peterson has actually abandoned what Paul wrote. Romans 8:35 is another example of a list where Peterson has significantly amended what Paul wrote, "Bullying threats" is not a satisfactory equivalent to the more accurate 'danger' in the ESV. In Romans 8:38, rather than the accurate (and sublime) "neither life nor death", Peterson has "Nothing living or dead," which is flat and dull.

## **2. Misleading readings**

These are paraphrases that misunderstand Paul. The first example Richardson gives is Romans 2:10, where *The Message* reads, "if you embrace the way God does things, there are wonderful payoffs". The context shows however that Paul's perspective is the future, the Second Advent, not the present. To describe the eternal glories of God's presence as "wonderful payoffs" is frankly painful. In Romans 8:26, we read, "If we don't know how or what

to pray, it doesn't matter". The words "it doesn't matter" have no antecedent in the Greek at all. At times Peterson is trying to smooth out Paul's style, which is never a good idea. Romans 5:10 in *The Message* reads: "If, when we were at our worst, we were put on friendly terms with God by the sacrificial death of his Son, now that we're at our best, just think of how our lives will expand and deepen by means of his resurrection life!" Even if "While we were at our worst" is accepted as a half-way decent rendering of the Greek, "now that we're at our best" is by no means an acceptable rendering of what should be translated "now that we are reconciled." Paul is often uneven in his writing style, but that is Paul; one should not try to smooth Paul out, for then he ceases to be Paul. Worse, Peterson's reading encourages the believer to look at his own state ("now we're at our best") rather than to the finished work of Christ ("having been reconciled"). While such language is all too common in evangelicalism, it comes from Arminianism and encourages us to think that the Gospel is what gets us "saved", but that once we have believed our standing with God is based on our works and level of sanctification. It brings the law back in and instead of pointing to Christ points to ourselves.

### **3. References to Jews and Judaism**

Peterson is not a proponent of the New Perspective on Paul. He is however far too ready to overplay the legalism of Pharisaism, so that in Romans 7:6, instead of 'Letter', we have, "oppressive regulations and fine print". The rendering of 2 Corinthians 3:15, "Whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds," as "Even today when the proclamations of that old, bankrupt government are read out, they can't see through it" is simply awful, almost Marcionite in its portrayal of the relationship of the Old and New Testaments. Then there are such gratuitous additions to the original as "all their talk about the law is gas" in Galatians 6:13. There is simply no need to do this, Paul knew what he wanted to say, and God knew what he wanted Paul to write.

### **4. Colloquialisms and anachronisms**

In Romans 8:3-4 the Authorised Version reads: "For what the law

could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

In *The Message* this is changed out of all recognition to, "God went for the jugular when he sent his own Son. He didn't deal with the problem as something remote and unimportant. In his Son, Jesus, he personally took on the human condition, entered the disordered mess of struggling humanity in order to set it right once and for all. The law code, weakened as it always was by fractured human nature, could never have done that. The law always ended up being used as a Band-Aid on sin instead of a deep healing of it. And now what the law code asked for but we couldn't deliver is accomplished as we, instead of redoubling our own efforts, simply embrace what the Spirit is doing in us."

It is hard to tell that the second is meant to be rendering the same text as the first! The imagery may be striking, but it is completely unwarranted by the original text. To deal with the first metaphor, "God went for the jugular when he sent his own Son", Paul often uses sporting metaphors, but here there is no such metaphor. The "Band-Aid" (sticking plaster" is of course quite anachronistic as well as an American Colloquialism that does not travel well.

There are some places where a colloquialism obscures the meaning of the text, such as 2 Corinthians 7:13, "That's what happened—and we felt just great." Which is all very well, but the original literally reads, "Because of this, we have been comforted." The anachronisms include a reference to sandwiches in 1 Corinthians 11:33. Anachronism is always a danger in a paraphrase of didactic material like the Pauline letters, but should be avoided as much as possible due to the danger of distorting the original and distracting the reader. Introducing sandwiches in 1 Corinthians 11 is a good example of unnecessary anachronism: "go home and eat" would have been just as understandable, if not more so.

## 5. Additions

A paraphrase is bound to be longer than the original, but Peterson is guilty of addition for the sake of addition in many places, and many of these are misleading and distort rather than clarify Paul. For example in Galatians 6:14-15 we read, "I have been crucified in relation to the world, set free from the stifling atmosphere of pleasing others and fitting into the little patterns that they dictate." Gone is Paul's striking image of the world crucified to him, and in its place is this long 'explanation' of the idea of Paul being crucified to the world that in fact explains nothing. One gets the impression that there are places where Peterson is making Paul say what he thinks Paul *ought* to have said, rather than what Paul actually meant to say.

## 6. Disappearances

Paul's striking words, 'And the world is crucified to me' are certainly not the only omission. What is striking in fact is that the phrases that are missing are often ones that are somewhat difficult; one cannot avoid the impression that where Peterson did not understand what Paul was saying *and knew that he did not*, he just left that bit out. The phrase "God will destroy him" is lacking in 1 Corinthians 3:17. In Romans 12:20-21 Paul's striking metaphor of heaping coals on an enemy's head by kindness is excised. In 1 Corinthians 10:6 the phrase "These things happened as examples for us" has been replaced with the rather bland, "the same thing could happen to us." The troubling thing is that phrases and passages are being omitted despite the fact that they appear in every Greek manuscript; the omissions are not textual choices, they are entirely at Peterson's pleasure.

## 7. Blandness

Though in places Peterson has introduced striking (though often misleading and always unnecessary) metaphors, overall *The Message* tends in the opposite direction, replacing Paul's *own* striking language with bland platitudes, something that makes Peterson's introduction of his own striking phrases all the more egregious. So in Romans 5, where Paul wrote, "Where sin

abounded, grace abounded far more", Peterson renders it, "When it's sin versus grace, grace wins hands down." "Abba! Father!" at Romans 8:15 becomes, "What's next, Papa?" At Romans 8:18, "The revelation of the children of God" becomes the appallingly banal "what's coming next?" The language is more fitting for a question at a variety performance, or at the dinner table than it is for Paul's great theme! In Romans 8:37, instead of "more than conquerors" we have, "None of this phases us." The rendering of 1 Corinthians 4:8 completely eliminates Paul's biting sarcasm, something that happens time and time again in *The Message*. Paul wrote, "Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you." But Peterson writes, "So what's the point of all this comparing and competing? You already have all you need. You already have more access to God than you can handle. Without bringing either Apollos or me into it, you're sitting on top of the world—at least God's world—and we're right there, sitting alongside you!" This is simply not Paul's point here; Paul's point is they are *not* reigning, they only *think* that they are! But Apparently sarcasm is too much for Eugene Peterson, or at least he feels his readers cannot handle it.

In 1 Corinthians 7:29 an eschatological reference, "the time is short" becomes, "Time is of the essence", and worst of all, in Romans 2:4, "the riches of his kindness" becomes, "because he's such a nice God." One gets the impression that Peterson really is not competent to paraphrase Paul.

## **8. Unnecessary**

There are places where some of the additional material is just unnecessary; Peterson seems to have let himself go and often paraphrased for the sake of paraphrasing rather than just where it makes the text clearer. There is no need to paraphrase where the original is clear enough already, and it only makes the resulting text more obscure rather than less so. So why add "How can they render justice if they do not believe in the God of Justice?" to 1 Corinthians 6:6? That has nothing to do with Paul's point, and the

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text is clear enough without it. In 1 Corinthians 15:4-9 Paul refers to the resurrection appearances of Christ, in verse 7 Paul writes that Christ was “seen of James...” Peterson writes that Christ “spent time with James...” there is just no reason to change “seen” to “spent time with”, it does not make the text any clearer. And of course “The Message” is not an adequate, or clearer, substitute for “The Gospel”, lacking as it does entirely the concept of good news. If the word is to be put into modern English, then the time-honoured “Good News” is freely available.

### **9. Reductionist renderings**

Richardson explains, “By this I mean paraphrases which reduce or remove the extraordinary, eschatological, counter-cultural nature of Paul’s writings.” Peterson does not always do this, of course, but he does it a lot. “Affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity” are just not adequate replacements for, “Love, joy, peace” in Galatians 5:22, and the list of the fruit of the spirit gets worse from there. “Be cheerful” is not the same as “be joyful” (1 Thessalonians 5:16). Again, Peterson’s tendency is to reduce the Bible to his own level, rather than being lifted by it.

### **Conclusion**

So what is to be done? *The Message* is obviously not a Bible translation, or even a terribly good paraphrase. Rather than allowing the Bible to expand his understanding, Peterson has often contracted the Bible to fit his own ideas, omitting those bits that he cannot fit, and adding his own material in far too many places. With the aim of making the Bible and the Gospel comprehensible, he has actually done something quite different; he has made them manageable, which is not to be done. While paraphrases can be useful in their proper place, they must be faithful to the original material, and that is precisely where *The Message* falls down. To read *The Message* in Church as if it is a Bible translation is misleading and wrong. When *The Message* is read, the reader must be aware that he is reading what Eugene Peterson thinks God meant to say, not what God actually said. The charge may sound harsh, but it is quite accurate.

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*The Message* should not be marketed as a Bible at all, and there the publisher is emphatically to blame. What ought to be marketed as a paraphrase (because it is) is being marketed as a Bible version (which it emphatically is not), and being read in churches. Preachers are making points based on *The Message*, points based on things that the original text does not say. It would be funny, if it was not so deadly serious. *The Message* does not belong in the pulpit. No-one should use it as their primary Bible, because it is not a Bible. If a person reads only *The Message*, then he is not getting all of God's message, and what he does get is heavily filtered through Eugene Peterson.

So why has it been marketed as a Bible version? The simple answer is because of the desire of all the major American Christian publishers to have an 'in-house' Bible version that they can use in their publications. Crossway has the ESV, Zondervan the NIV, Broadman and Holman the 'God's Word' Translation, and Thomas Nelson the NKJV. Navpress have *The Message*, and are determined to use it as if it were a Bible translation. So we have as their offering in the lucrative study Bible market, The Message Study Bible. So much for comments that "*The Message* is not meant to take the place of study Bibles" (introduction to the 2003 edition of *The Message*).

Brethren, these things ought not to be so. *The Message* is not a translation of the Bible, it is not a Bible at all, it is one man's personal *paraphrase* of the Bible. There it differs from every Bible version, in that it is one man's *interpretation*, and one that is far from adequate.

There is another reason why *The Message* should not be treated as a Bible version; there is no lack of people who would like to re-imagine the Bible for their own purposes, creating a 'Bible' that left out or completely re-worked passages they find difficult or challenging. Treating *The Message* as though it were a Bible makes such projects seem that much more acceptable in our postmodern age. Peterson is relatively innocuous compared to



those ideologues who would alter the Biblical text in a few key places to remove the condemnation of certain specific sins, and whom an acceptance of Peterson's work as a Bible would encourage to do just that.

[Neil Richardson's original piece is found in *The Epworth Review* Vol. 36, No. 4, Pp. 71-77.]

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#### AFTERNOTE

The above excellent critique of yet another modern perversion of Holy Scripture gives us the opportunity to urge our readers to adhere to the Authorised or King James Version.

John Burgon (1813-88), the learned and stalwart defender of the traditional New Testament text, rightly alerts us to the Satanic source of modernistic currents in Bible 'translations' and revisions. In his *Revision Revised*, he writes: "Vanquished by THE WORD *Incarnate*, Satan next directed his subtle malice against *the Word written*." Burgon elsewhere reminds us of the "perpetual miracle" of God's protection of the sacred manuscripts against all kinds of corrupting influences. Let us not be under any illusions of either unbelieving 'scholarship' (which is woefully unscholarly) or crude popularizers. The history of the New Testament text in particular is, as Burgon pointed out, the history of a conflict between God and Satan. The latter will not hesitate to 'raise up' heretics, critics or popularizers who are only too ready to change God's inerrant Word into some esoteric or vulgar product of their own.

But, as Edward Hills assures us: "Satan's attack upon the Holy Bible is bound to fail," because it is both the bringer of the Gospel of eternal salvation to God's elect and the Word that is established forever in heaven. Let us keep in mind the words of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." (Matthew 24.35) Editor

## ***Robert Haldane's Doctrine of Grace (Culled from his Commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Romans)***

### **Introduction**

In 1816, Robert Haldane (1764-1842), a Scottish philanthropist and champion of Evangelical Calvinism, paid a visit to Geneva, in Switzerland. There he found a number of students for the ministry who were all blind to the truth as it is in Jesus, owing to the rationalism of the Venerable Company of Pastors controlling ministerial education. These felt attracted to Haldane and his beliefs, so he arranged for them to come regularly twice a week to the rooms where he was staying. Here he expounded Paul's mighty Epistle to the Romans. Under the Spirit's powerful application of its truths to their hearts, one by one they were converted.

Among them were young men who were to become notable figures in the revitalized Evangelical movement not only in Switzerland, but also in France: Frédéric Monod, a founder of the Free Churches in France; César Malan, who played a key role in the conversion of John 'Rabbi' Duncan; Louis Gaussen, the author of 'Theopneustia,' a fine treatise on the inspiration of Scripture; and Merle d'Aubigné, writer of the classic 'History of the Reformation.' It was at their request that Haldane put his Bible studies in Romans into print; hence his Commentary.

The same truths that distinguished 'Haldane's Revival' in Geneva are prominent in the Commentary: (1) the need for personal experience of God's grace; (2) the divine inspiration and authority of the Bible; and (3) Calvinistic doctrine over against Pelagianism and Arminianism. Throughout, Haldane's orthodoxy is "blended with love and life." (Reuben Saillens) This will become clear as we study his theology of grace.

### **A General Survey of the Epistle**

At the close of his Preface, Haldane encourages us to study the Epistle in order to obtain, by the blessing of God, “an exact and comprehensive knowledge of the distinguishing doctrines of grace, in their various bearings and connections.” “Here they appear in all their native force and clearness, unalloyed with the wisdom of man.” A further reason for studying it is the proneness of the human mind to “soften the strong features of divine truth,” and to accommodate them to “its own wishes and preconceived notions,” thereby attempting the task of reconciling “error with orthodoxy.”

In his overview of the Epistle’s teaching, Haldane notes that in the doctrinal part (chapters 1-12) the apostle’s design is to close the door to all hope of being justified before God by works, as proposed by the Law, and to show the way “of grace by Jesus Christ, which the Gospel reveals.” His subsidiary purpose is to establish the truth that “justification by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ, abolishes the distinction which the Law had made” between Jew and Gentile, and opens the door to both classes “indifferently.” To this end, he “humbles them both” – the Jew for his proud “self-merit,” the Gentile for his “blind ignorance and unrighteousness.” A hideous picture of their common ruin and condemnation, or “universal guilt and depravity,” thus prepares the way for God’s “revelation of grace,” by providing a righteousness that neither Jew nor Gentile could ever attain by themselves.

This salvation, provided “freely by His grace,” is received by faith, Abraham being a prime example of God’s way of justifying sinners. To complete this view, Paul contrasts Adam, the source by imputation of our common condemnation, with Christ, the source by imputation of believers’ justification. (Chapters 4-5)

Subsequent chapters argue that, rather than encourage licentiousness, a free justification by grace is the very foundation of holiness through believers’ union to Christ, rendering them free from all condemnation incurred by their nonconformity to the Law. The wonder of the whole scheme is expressed in an exultant

catalogue of believers' "highest consolations," amidst all their present sufferings and struggles. (Chapters 6-8)

Contemplating these blessings makes Paul mourn over the sad plight of his fellow Jews. Yet they are not all doomed. An elect line within the elect nation, as the true seed of Abraham, shall receive all promised spiritual blessings, and so shall be saved along with believing Gentiles. (Chapters 9-11)

From this point to the end of the Epistle, Paul reminds his readers of the practical fruits of the doctrines of grace he had been teaching and the mercies of God they unfold. The total surrender of themselves to God, and loving care for each other, are but their "reasonable service," while "the morality here inculcated is the purest and most exalted" imaginable.

Haldane concludes his general survey of the Epistle with a challenge to all the "boasted moral systems" of heathen philosophers. They are not to be compared, he says in effect, with "the purity and beauty of the virtues enjoined by Paul" in these closing chapters.

### **A Definition of Grace**

In his comments on Romans 1.7 – "Grace to you" – Haldane opens up several Biblical nuances and connotations of the term 'grace.' Together, these serve as a definition. "Grace or favour is spoken of in Scripture in three points of view: either as the unmerited favour of God towards men, as existing in Himself; or as manifested in the Gospel, which is called the Gospel of the grace of God; or in its operation in men."

As he expands this definition, we become very conscious of the preacher in Haldane as well as the expositor. "Every part of redemption proceeds on the footing of grace. It originates in the grace of God, and flows, in its first manifestations and in all its after acts, from the same unceasing fountain, in calling, adopting, regenerating, justifying, sanctifying, strengthening, confirming

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grace – in one word, it is all of grace. On this account Peter calls God the God of all grace, which teaches that God is in Himself towards His people grace – grace in His very nature – that He knows what each of them needs, and lays it up for them, and communicates it to them. The whole of the salvation of man, from the counsels of God from eternity, is planned and executed to ‘the praise of the glory of His grace’ (Ephesians 1.6) ‘who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.’ (2 Timothy 1.9)” This rich expansive sermonic treatment, which characterises the entire commentary, preserves it from being a merely academic exercise.

### **Grace in the Gospel**

#### **a. Bestowed for its Preaching**

“One of the first acts of the power of Jesus Christ after His resurrection,” observes Haldane, “was to bestow His Spirit and His grace on those who were chosen by Him, to qualify them to be His witnesses and the heralds of His Gospel.”

Paul refers to this grace in his introduction to the Epistle (1.5). Here, comments Haldane, ‘grace’ is what “he had experienced in his conversion, and in every subsequent part of his course,” enabling him to fulfil the office of apostle in proclaiming the Gospel.

#### **b. The Source of all Saving Blessings**

Grace next forms the leading feature of his greeting to the saints in Rome (1.7). In his epistles to the churches, “grace is uniformly placed first in order, because it is the source whence peace and all the blessings of salvation flow.” Its mention here gives Haldane the occasion to re-iterate the first of his definitions of “grace” as “the free unmerited favour of God to sinners in the plan of salvation,” a favour inseparably linked with “peace.” For good measure, he adds pointedly: “God communicates all blessings to those to whom He gives grace, and to none besides; for whatever does not proceed from grace is not a blessing. It is to the praise of

His grace that exercises mercy, and brings those who were His enemies into a state of peace with Him.”

### **c. Justification**

The prime blessing bestowed on the people of God is their justification. To clarify the truth that we are “justified freely by God’s grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (3.24), Haldane draws on several witnesses: Scripture itself, the Westminster Confession of Faith, John Owen, the First Helvetic Confession of Faith, and the Homilies of the Church of England.

This justification before God “stands opposed both to accusation and condemnation.” It is a single divine judicial sentence, “at once complete,” consisting in “the imputation of a perfect righteousness, the actual pardon of all past sins, the virtual pardon of future sins, and the grant and title to the heavenly inheritance.” Being united to Christ as his righteousness, the believer possesses a righteousness “fully answerable to all the demands of the Law,” and is therefore accepted by God.

The freeness of this divine act rests in the fact that nothing in it “belongs to or proceeds from man. It is perfectly gratuitous on the part of God. Nothing is required of man, either by way of “preparatory dispositions to merit it at the hand of God,” or of “price or satisfaction.” Grace “excludes . . . both price and merit.” Even in its operation, it is “without cause or motive on the part of man.” The very term ‘freely,’ meaning ‘without a cause’ in man, excludes everything that might be construed as “cause or condition in his justification.”

“The means by which it is received is faith,” which in 4.16 “is placed in opposition to all works whatever,” for “it is of faith, that it might be by grace.” Faith is the God-appointed means by which man receives the gift of righteousness that God is pleased to bestow on him. Because God justifies the ungodly (4.5) it comes to them “solely by grace – free, unmerited favour.” “And if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace.”

(11.6) To round out his exposition, Haldane quotes Luther against Erasmus: “How are good endeavours and merit consistent with a gratuitous donation? . . . He who affirms the justification of all men who are justified to be perfectly free and gratuitous, leaves no place for works, merits or preparations of any kind . . . and thus at one blow he demolishes both the Pelagians with their complete merits, and our [Roman] sophists with their petty performances.” The great blessing of justification proceeds from the free grace of God, through the redemption purchased by His dear Son.

The re-appearance of the word ‘grace’ in 4.4 and 16 forms part of the apostle’s same argument against justification by works; so Haldane does not repeat himself, but merely adverts to Abraham, who “did not obtain righteousness by faith” considered “as a good disposition,” for that would have made faith a meritorious work. He simply believed on Him who justifies the ungodly.

#### **d. Through Christ, not Adam**

When ‘grace’ as free, unmerited favour is referred to again, it is during Paul’s complex reasoning contrasting the effects of Adam’s first sin with those of Christ’s righteousness. (5.12-21)

Here Paul “illustrates and displays the Gospel salvation, by contrasting it with the misery and ruin introduced by the fall, and manifesting, in the plan of mercy, a superabounding of grace over transgression, and thus . . . exhibits the foundation both of condemnation and of justification.”

We may summarize Haldane’s treatment of this section in a few sentences.

First, “the Apostle means to tell us not merely that sin commenced by one, but that it came upon all the world from one.” When he says ‘all the world,’ Paul means “all of the human race, and not all merely who actually sin.” Even infants are included: “Since, then, infants die, it proves that they are sinners.”

Second, “Adam stood as the head, the forefather and representative of all his posterity. They were all created in him, and in the guilt of his sin, as well as its consequences, they became partakers.” “Adam’s sin was as truly the sin of every one of his posterity as if it had been personally committed by him.”

Third, Paul “proves that sin was in the world by the undeniable fact that there was death; and if this proves that there was sin, then it inevitably follows that there must have been law . . . But before the Mosaic law, as well as afterward, death reigned in the world universally, and with supreme dominion.” Had sin not been universal, “the justice of God would never have required that they should suffer for it.” In short, “the human race have always been under law, and have universally been transgressors.” This truth “must always stand, not on our ability to see its justice, but on our belief that God speaks true, and that it is just.”

Fourth, since Adam’s sin “involved all his posterity in guilt and ruin . . . consequently in him [they] are guilty by his disobedience.” And since “all are condemned by that sin, all must be guilty by it, for the righteous Judge would not condemn the innocent . . . It was his personally; it is ours because we are in him.” We do not therefore die for our actual transgressions, but as suffering “the penalty of the first sin.” And if we are all condemned, we cannot be innocent.

Fifth, but by “the one act of giving Himself for our sins, Christ brought in everlasting righteousness,” so that, just as “all who have been one with Adam were involved in his condemnation,” so “all who are one with Christ shall be justified by His righteousness.” The ‘all’ of the latter clause cannot apply to all men without exception, for then it would follow that all mankind are justified. But “Christ is not the head of all mankind, but of the Church, and to all but the Church He will say, ‘I never knew you.’” The ‘many’ of verse 19 “applies to all in Christ,” and to them only.



So then, “the testimony of God in the Scriptures,” both here and elsewhere, “leaves no doubt on the subject. Adam’s sin is our sin. Christ’s righteousness is the righteousness of all His people.”

To counter objections to the truths of original sin and the imputation of Adam’s sin, particularly from Moses Stuart, Haldane demonstrates, with the help of Brown of Wamphray, Pictet, Witsius, Luther, Calvin and the Westminster Confession, that God would be unjust to make us suffer for sin that is not properly ours. In all His dealings with us, God is equitable. We have no ground for complaint.

God’s whole procedure in this matter magnifies His grace, for where sin abounded unto death, grace abounds unto righteousness through our Lord Jesus Christ. Not only so, “grace reigns THROUGH RIGHTEOUSNESS, even the righteousness of God, which fulfils His law, and satisfies His justice, and displays His holiness.”

Finally, Haldane explains that the eternal life that grace brings through the risen Christ comes to believers with the express purpose of destroying the eternal death that sin brought on us. Just as the first Adam brought eternal death on all in communion with him, so the last Adam imparts spiritual and eternal life to all in communion with Him. The universal sway of sin is therefore perfectly countered by the reign of righteousness brought in by Christ for all believers. “Grace therefore reigns in their salvation, which is wholly and entirely of free favour.”

### **Grace in the Soul**

Once the Gospel has been received into the soul, grace operates on men both passively and actively. “God produces all, and they act all. God is the sole author and source of their acts, but they themselves properly are the agents.” For example, by the grace of faith “God purifies the hearts of believers (Acts 15.9)” but they also “purify themselves.” (1 John 3.3) They work out their own

salvation, while God works in them “both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” (Philippians 2.12)

Haldane deliberately makes this point because some falsely “infer from the doctrine of grace that there remains nothing for man to do.” Such errorists neither understand what they say or whereof they affirm. True, he adds, “Grace is in our hearts a living principle, implanted by God, and at His sovereign disposal.” Yet at the same time, “to exercise this principle is as much our duty as to preserve our life and health.”

This cooperation with God does not apply, he adds, to “grace as the principle of renovation”; for this is wrought “by the sole operation of the Holy Spirit,” whose work in the new birth “stands in opposition to every notion of independent power in man, by which it might be supposed he could regenerate himself.” (1.7) Here, subjects of the new birth are entirely passive.

Yet at the opening of Chapter 5 they are reminded of the initial blessings that their justification has brought them. The peace of reconciliation they enjoy with God is accompanied by access by faith into the grace in which they now stand. (5.2) Having entered into a “state of grace,” as distinct from their former state of nature, “they have access by one Spirit unto the Father, by that new and living way” which Christ has consecrated for them through the rent veil of His flesh. “They have access to a mercy-seat, to which they are invited to come freely,” and with boldness to “enter into the holiest by His blood.” This is the grace in which they “stand . . . accepted by God.” Not only so, “they are fixed in this state of perfect acceptance, conferred by sovereign grace, brought into it by unchangeable love, and kept in it by the power of a faithful God.” He who has vowed: “They shall be my people, and I will be their God,” has also promised: “I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.” (Jeremiah 32.38,40) Here grace guarantees the final perseverance of the saints.

That salvation by grace alone does not open the door to licence to sin, but is the ground of holiness, is the burden of chapters 6 and 7 of Romans. Having “fully exhibited the universal depravity and guilt of man, and the free salvation through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ,” Paul now “proceeds to prove the intimate connection between the justification of believers and their sanctification.” (6.1) This proof meets us in the form of a reply to the false inference that since we are saved by grace overcoming sin, may we not continue in sin, so that grace may abound all the more? This objection has been advanced by cavillers at the doctrine of grace “in all ages.”

No! replies Paul vehemently. By virtue of their union with Christ, believers died to sin when He dies, and rose to righteousness when He rose. Having been baptized into His death, they have also been baptized into His resurrection. They must therefore reckon themselves as dead to sin and alive to righteousness. Grace does not condone or sanction sin, but eschews and combats it.

Furthermore, God’s promise to His people is that sin shall not have dominion over them. His grace in them shall prevail over it, despite the intensity of their struggle against it. Were they still under the dispensation of law, or the covenant of works, then sin would have been in dominion. But now they are under the dispensation of grace, and the covenant of grace, they have been freed from sin’s dominion. Being reconciled to God, they have His law written in their hearts, and “have every spiritual supply through Him who is full of grace.”

This grace “operates within them,” enabling them to live soberly, righteously and godly in Christ Jesus. This is “the great principle of evangelical obedience.” “Holiness is not the result of the Law, but of the liberty wherewith Christ has made His people free. He sends forth the Spirit of grace into the hearts of all who belong to the election of grace, whom God hath from the beginning chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth . . . Jesus Christ is the absolute master of the hearts of His

people, of which He has taken possession, and in whom He reigns by the invincible power of the Spirit of grace.”

The conclusion is inevitable: “What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.” Liberty is not licence. “The freedom from the moral law which the believer enjoys is a freedom from an obligation to fulfil it in his own person for his justification – a freedom from its condemnation on account of imperfection of obedience.” And this is perfectly “consistent with the eternal obligation of the moral law as a rule of life to the Christian.” Nothing is more self-evident than that, “if the moral law is not a rule of life to believers, they are at liberty to disregard its precepts. But the very thought of this is abominable. The Apostle therefore rejects it in the strongest terms.” (6.14-15)

It is in the practical application of the Gospel to Christian living (12-16) that the term ‘grace’ appears again, this time in reference to the wisdom Paul had received in order to instruct the churches. In a tone of distinctly apostolic authority, he inculcates the duty of making a just estimate of our own gifts. We may not from ignorance overvalue ourselves and despise others. Entire devotion to God, in both body and soul, will not make us think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think. To this particular sin we are all naturally prone. We should therefore judge ourselves according to the measure of our faith. Nor should we affect humility, by speaking of ourselves contemptuously. “This species of hypocrisy ought to be avoided” just as much as its opposite.

Moreover, because we are all members of the same body in Christ, we should remember that it is only by His grace or favour that Christ “confers His gifts” on us. We must not, therefore, abuse them, but employ them for the good of all. (12.3,6)

With the same apostolic grace Paul uses boldness to express his desire that the power of the Holy Spirit would abound in his brethren in the faith. (15.15)

## **Grace and Israel**

Haldane spends considerable space in clarifying the relationship of Israel as a nation to the saving grace of God. Paul, he explains, never takes his eyes off the state of the Jews throughout his treatment of God's great salvation, but feels obliged to meet a powerful objection to their forlorn condition, in view of their unique privileges.

“If there was a people upon earth to whom, more than to another, the blessings of the Gospel belonged as a birthright, it was assuredly to the descendants, according to the flesh, of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. But,” replies the apostle, “they had wilfully rebelled against their God; they had rejected the Messiah, and consequently forfeited the rights and immunities secured to their fathers by covenant.”

In his next reference to grace, therefore, Paul explains that though a majority of Abraham's descendants were now rejected, “there was to be a remnant saved.” Of that remnant he himself was a striking example. That remnant, he reminds us, “is a remnant according to the election of grace.” Even in Elijah's day, when the prophet thought himself the last witness for the God of Israel, the Lord had reserved to Himself seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal. That remnant was “necessary for the preservation of the nation” from which Christ should come. So, just as God had formerly reserved a remnant for Himself “by His gracious influence and special agency,” in the same way, when the apostle was writing, “He had reserved, according to His sovereign choice, a remnant of that nation.” To remove all notion that this choice was the “reward of an inherent good foreseen in those chosen, or of anything meritorious performed by them, the Apostle adds that it was of grace. It was an unconditional choice, resulting from the sovereign free favour of God.”

Opponents of election base God's choice on men's “good works foreseen.” But Paul expressly declares that the source of election is grace. “And if by grace, then is it no more of works.” “Grace and

works are here stated as diametrically opposite and totally irreconcilable.”

This doctrine, Haldane rightly infers, implies both “the total inability of man to recover himself from guilt and ruin” and “the necessity for this end of Divine interposition.” This truth “has ever been highly offensive to human pride and human wisdom.” Yet the apostle’s uncompromising statement “can never be silenced,” even though it has been “subjected to the most violent perversions.” The very fact that the doctrines of Election and Divine Sovereignty are so clearly taught in Scripture affords abundant proof that “they are not the invention of man.” Not only could they have never suggested themselves to the human mind; they have never pleased that mind without its prior conversion.

At this point, Haldane quotes a fine passage from Jonathan Edwards, to the effect that the Scriptures must be divine, because the blindness of men’s minds and the strong prejudices of their hearts reject their teaching as “most absurd and unreasonable.” Because Election and Divine Sovereignty are so opposed to “the Arminian and Pelagian doctrine of free will,” so natural to man in his state of alienation from God, they indisputably prove “the truth of the Bible.” (11.5-6)

### **A Concluding Prayer**

Towards the close of this mighty epistle, the apostle Paul, “from the abundance of his heart, and his great concern for the Christians at Rome, here within a short compass twice prays that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ might be with them.” (16.20, 24)

The prayer clearly asserts the Deity of the Lord Jesus, for it is a prayer to Him, “and if He is not God, what grace has He to bestow on His people?”

It further “implies that there is a constant supply of grace to be communicated from Christ to His people . . . in all ages, in all countries.” Those who have been bought by His precious blood

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will be “supplied with grace by Him continually,” enabling them to persevere to the end.

And so, Haldane concludes, “there is great need of such earnest petitions, for without the constant supply of the grace of Christ we could not abide in Him.” On this note of dependence Haldane’s references to grace in Paul’s Epistle to the Romans ends.

### **Conclusion**

An honest reading of Robert Haldane’s commentary yields only one conclusion, namely, that his theology of grace is precisely the same as that of the apostle Paul. It is therefore the same (we say it with reverence) as the theology of grace of God Himself, who will not give His glory to another. For, as his fellow apostle says, Paul’s Letters are as much God-breathed as all the other Scriptures. (2 Peter 3.16) Herein lies the value of such faithful, God-honouring writings. May the Lord who gave them to us make us prize and use them to His glory.

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**The annual Sovereign Grace Union  
meeting at Orange Street Chapel  
(immediately behind the National Gallery)  
will be held (the Lord willing)  
on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> October  
at 6.30 p.m.  
Preacher: Jack Seaton (Inverness)**

**The Central Committee meeting  
is due to meet at 4.00 p.m.**

**Tea will be served between these meetings.  
All are welcome.**

***A Bicentenary:  
Robert Murray M'Cheyne  
(1813-43)***

Although Robert Murray M'Cheyne did not take his place among the founders of the Free Church of Scotland (he was taken to glory just before the Disruption) he fully sympathised with their rejection of state control of the Church of Christ in Scotland, and would have been among them when their Deed of Separation terminated their official relationship with the national church. As minister of St. Peter's, Dundee, he was "honoured by his Lord to draw many wanderers out of darkness into the path of life." (His epitaph) The holiness of his character and the faithfulness of his preaching combined to impress the most careless souls with the things of God. Awesomely solemn in his awakening addresses to the ungodly, and very tender in his gospel invitations and ministrations to the sick and bereaved, M'Cheyne was truly "a burning and shining light." Yet it was only "for a season." At the age of thirty and after only seven years in the pastorate, he was taken to be with Christ, "which is far better."

Perhaps the best way to commemorate his Spirit-anointed life and ministry is to remind ourselves of his humble sense of indebtedness to the Lord Jesus Christ for all His blessings, providential and redemptive, as expressed in one of the loveliest of his *Songs of Zion*, entitled *I am debtor*.

Let us note first his review of all the way that the Lord had led him:

*When this passing world is done,  
When has sunk yon glaring sun,  
When we stand with Christ in glory,  
Looking o'er life's finished story,  
Then, Lord, shall I fully know -  
Not till then - how much I owe.*



Then comes his awareness of the dreadful doom of the ungodly:

*When I hear the wicked call  
On the rocks and hills to fall,  
When I see them start and shrink  
On the fiery deluge brink,  
Then, Lord, shall I fully know -  
Not till then - how much I owe.*

Next follows his believing prospect of being with Christ, loving Him purely, gazing on His holy beauty and being acquitted through being clothed in His spotless righteousness:

*When I stand before the throne,  
Dressed in beauty not my own,  
When I see Thee as Thou art,  
Love Thee with unsinning heart,  
Then, Lord, shall I fully know -  
Not till then - how much I owe.*

After this comes his sense of being among the heavenly choir, praising Christ for ever:

*When the praise of heaven I hear,  
Loud as thunders to the ear,  
Loud as many waters' noise,  
Sweet as harp's melodious voice,  
Then, Lord, shall I fully know -  
Not till then - how much I owe.*

Later on in the poem, his awareness of Christ's electing grace and effectual call, of union with Him and sanctification by His Spirit, draw forth true gratitude, coupled with the practical desire to express his indebtedness by loving Christ and others in return:

*Chosen not for good in me,  
Wakened up from wrath to flee,  
Hidden in the Saviour's side,  
By the Spirit sanctified,  
Teach me, Lord, on earth to show,  
By my love, how much I owe.*

To this moving poem we add a few gems from M'Cheyne's writings on the Lord Jesus Christ:

Surely, brethren, an eternity in hell will not be too much for those who despise the blood of Christ.

If we are Christ's, He will make us preach Himself.

What a lovely person Christ is!

I do not ask you, Are you following a godly minister? But, Are you following Christ?

Christ is the kindest of all teachers.

[Revelation 5.6-9, 12] It is the death of Christ that is the joy of the New Jerusalem.

Are you Christ's? Then you will never perish.

How happy are those of you who can say, Christ is my King.

How will you meet Christ in the Day of Judgment?

Finally, we recommend Andrew Bonar's *Memoir and Remains of Robert Murray M'Cheyne*, M'Cheyne's *New Testament Sermons* and *Old Testament Sermons* (Banner of Truth), *From The Preacher's Heart*, *A Basket of Fragments*, *Mission of Discovery* and *The Seven Churches of Asia* (Christian Focus).

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### Correction

On page 48 of the last issue, I wrote of Calvin as a **secessionist** (one who secedes from a church or belief). The word should have been **cessationist** (one who believes that supernatural, extraordinary gifts ceased after the apostles' generation and the closing of the Biblical canon.) Apologies to our readers. Ed.

## ***A Quatercentenary: George Gillespie (1613-1648)***

George Gillespie, whose quatercentenary falls this year, was the most learned writer and debater on church issues to adorn the Covenanted Church of Scotland. His *Dispute against the English Popish Ceremonies* and *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*, both of which remain unanswered to this day, along with his vanquishing of the Erastians Coleman, Lightfoot and Selden in the Westminster General Assembly, mark him as among the most distinguished stars in the galaxy that adorned the 17<sup>th</sup> century Church. Though barely thirty when he joined his fellow commissioners meeting in St. Margaret's, Westminster, he had studied accurately all the points that were raised in the Assembly's debates, and was as familiar with Patristic learning and Talmudic lore as any of his opponents. The legend that, when asked to pray, he unwittingly framed the Assembly's answer to the question 'what is God?' is now discounted. However, the account of his demolition of Selden's arguments for a state-controlled church is authentic. Matthew 18.15-17 was under discussion in relation to excommunication. Selden sought to prove that the passage referred to Jewish practice in civil courts of law. After two Independents had failed to reply convincingly, Gillespie stood up and refuted him by proving that the passage related to purely spiritual matters. When Gillespie sat down, even Selden graciously acknowledged defeat in the oft-quoted words: "That young man, by this single speech, has swept away the learning of ten years of my life." Throughout his opponent's speech, Gillespie was observed marking something in his note book. Instead of summaries of the Erastian's arguments, however, all that could be seen were repeated jottings of the words: "Da lucem, Domine; da lucem!" That is: "Give light, Lord; give light!" His last work was a stirring testimony against associating with malignant enemies of truth and godliness. O that God would raise up many Gillespies today!

## *The Cross of Christ*

### **Introduction**

A recent writer complains that “contemporary gospel preaching . . . rarely explains the cross of Christ,” that is, it fails to tell us that “He died bearing the transgressions of His people . . . suffering the divine penalty for their sins . . . forsaken of God and crushed” beneath His wrath. It may be so. The complaint prompts us to write the following article.

### **The Cross: a fact and a doctrine**

The cross as a fact is recorded in that most profound Gospel according to John: “And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called ‘the place of a skull’ . . . where they crucified him.” (John 19.17-18) The cross as a fact is recorded in that inimitable passage where the apostle Paul exhorts the Philippian church to mutual love and humility as exemplified in the life and death of Christ: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (Philippians 2.5-8)

The cross as a doctrine is set forth in that glorious phrase: “having made peace [i.e. between God and his sinful people] through the blood of his cross.” (Colossians 1.20) The cross as a doctrine appears as the only basis of union between Jews and Gentiles: “that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross.” (Ephesians 2.16) The cross as a doctrine surfaces again in Paul’s refusal to preach in high-flown scholastic language: “lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.” (1 Corinthians 1.17)

Let us briefly consider both fact and doctrine.

As a fact of history, the cross was divinely planned: in His infinite wisdom, God both decreed in eternity that the redemption of His elect should be by the cross, and in due time brought His dear Son to the cross. The cross of Christ is thus the focus of God's eternal purpose and of its providential fulfilment. The apostle Peter makes this clear in his remarkable address on the day of Pentecost: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." (Acts 2.23)

It is impossible to conceive or feel the pain and anguish the sinless Saviour suffered on the cross: the agony of physical crucifixion, the pain of shame before a gaping world, and the spiritual dereliction He experienced as His soul sank into the abyss beneath the stroke of divine justice. It may help us a little to realize that He bore an infinite hatred to the very sins which caused Him such pain on the cross, even while He was suffering for them.

Even in its outward aspect the cross of Christ was an act of violence. The conflict between the Jews and Jesus, and between God and sin, was brought into the open, and the Son of God bore the brunt of both. To be "cut off out of the land of the living" (Isaiah 53.8) was to suffer violent judicial punishment at the hands of God and man. As John Murray writes: "there were no lower depths possible;" his humiliation and suffering were "inimitable, unrepeatable, unrepeatable." Yet it all actually took place, so that the Redeemer of God's elect could of His own free choice finish the work God gave Him to do. Nothing less could save them, and nothing more was required to save them.

As a doctrine, the cross is an awesome display of the holy attributes of God. The old adage expresses the matter well: what God's justice demanded, his love provided. "All God's justice and all God's love are focussed on the cross." (Augustus H. Strong)

The cross is a symbol of the curse, not only in the opinion of men, but also by the decree of God. "Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree." (Deuteronomy 21.23; Galatians 3.13) This is what God's

justice demands of everyone to whom He imputes sin; and this is what Christ bore when He hung on the cross. The Highland minister Lachlan Mackenzie states the case bluntly when he says: “His people deserved the death of the cross, and therefore our Lord was crucified.”

What was he doing when he hung on the cross? Let the Christ-loving poets tell us:

“On the cross thy body broken  
Cancels every penal tie;  
Tempted souls, produce this token,  
All demand to satisfy.”

(Joseph Hart)

“Inscribed upon the cross we see  
In shining letters, ‘God is love;’  
He bears our sins upon the tree;  
He brings us mercy from above.”

(Thomas Kelly)

In short, by His cross Christ bore our curse. The deepest significance of the cross was its awful expression of God’s curse on sin. “Through it the bitterness, the anguish, the desolation of that curse” was “ministered to the . . . soul of our Lord.” (Roderick A. Finlayson) The Jews saw it in that light; God viewed it in that light; Christ Himself interpreted it in that light. The cross was God’s chosen instrument of His curse.

By his cross He endured the retributive judgment of God that was due to us. He made an all-sufficient, expiatory and satisfactory sacrifice for His people’s sins. He propitiated God’s wrath by expiating those sins, and so removed them out of God’s sight. By His cross He made the final act of atonement for sin, making an end of sin and bringing in an everlasting righteousness.

This is why John Calvin can write: “our salvation consists in the doctrine of the cross;” why Martin Luther can write: “the cross of Christ runs through the whole of Scripture;” why Charles Haddon

Spurgeon can write: “the world’s one and only remedy is the cross;” and why Leon Morris can write: “Christianity is a religion about a cross.”

Dear reader, is this how you view the cross of Christ? Can you say with Elizabeth Clephane:

“Beneath the cross of Jesus

I fain would take my stand”?

And with Augustus Montague Toplady:

“Nothing in my hand I bring,

Simply to thy cross I cling”?

John Charles Ryle addresses us with some solemn remarks on the cross: “You must know his cross . . . or else you will die in your sins;” “unless you know the power of Christ’s cross by experience . . . unless you are willing to confess that your salvation depends entirely on the work that Christ did upon the cross . . . Christ will profit you nothing;” “beware . . . of a religion without the cross;” “there are hundreds of places of worship . . . in which there is everything almost except the cross;” “there are thousands of religious books . . . in which there is everything except the cross;” “if Christ had not gone to the cross and suffered in our stead, the Just for the unjust, there would not have been a spark of hope for us.”

Men and women, pretending to honour Christ, have dressed up his cross in the gaudiest colours: ‘it represents God’s sympathy with suffering mankind;’ ‘it teaches us how to die;’ ‘it shows us how far he was willing to go for his cause;’ and so on. This will never do. In its naked ugliness, its unmasking of human guilt and depravity, and its revelation of the righteous judgment and amazing love of God, “the cross passes judgment upon us all,” for “you cannot remain neutral in the presence of the cross.” (D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones) Either it is the essence of foolishness or it is our only hope. Which is it for you and me?

## *Reality*

In a most searching chapter of his excellent book *Practical Religion*, John Charles Ryle handles the subject of reality in religion. By reality he means “that which is genuine, and sincere, and honest, and thorough . . . not base, and hollow, and formal, and false, and counterfeit, and sham, and nominal.” False religion is mere “show, and pretence, and skin-deep feeling, and temporary profession, and outside work,” whereas real religion is “something inward, solid, substantial, intrinsic, living, lasting.” In surveying his own age, he concludes: “On every side we want [i.e. need] MORE REALITY.” This is because reality is a much rarer thing than people imagine, and because unreality is one of the greatest dangers to true Christianity.

In support of his claim, Ryle cites those parables of the Lord Jesus Christ which contrast the real and the counterfeit (such as the parables of the wheat and tares, the two sons, the ten virgins and the great supper). They all point sharply to the danger and uselessness of any Christianity that is not “real, thorough and true.”

He then directs us to the castigating language of the Lord Jesus about the scribes and Pharisees: they are “hypocrites . . . serpents . . . vipers” who cannot escape “the damnation of hell.” Though more moral and decent than tax-collectors and harlots, their false profession was more abominable before God than all the immorality of the latter. Nothing, he concludes, is more displeasing to Christ than hypocrisy and unreality.

Finally, Ryle reminds us that every Christian grace has its own counterfeit. The *repentance* of King Saul, Ahab, Herod and Judas Iscariot was counterfeit. The *faith* of Simon Magus and demons was counterfeit. The *holiness* of Joash and Judas Iscariot was counterfeit. The *love* of those who call others “dear brethren” with a great show of affection while bearing a lurking grudge in their hearts is counterfeit. The *humility* of those whose pretended lowliness hides a proud heart is counterfeit. The *praying* of those



who ‘pray’ to be seen of men is counterfeit. The *worship* of those who draw near to God with their lips while their hearts are far from Him is counterfeit. The religious *talking* of those who speak like God’s people while their heart follows their covetousness, or seem to speak with the tongues of angels though their talk is as hollow as sounding brass or tinkling cymbals, is counterfeit.

All these counterfeits teach us the immense importance of reality in our Christian profession, and of the immense danger of an unreal, empty profession.

Then, bunching Anglican, Nonconformist, Ritualistic, Evangelical and Revivalist religion together, Ryle sees so much of it as “utterly unreal.” Indeed, he feels there was never so much unreality as in his day, although men boiled over with zeal for their own church, or mode of worship, or sound doctrine, or ecstatic experiences. Such religion, he concludes, is bound to perish, sooner or later; for it is all “base metal from the devil’s mint, and is worthless in God’s sight.” So, he adds, wherever I turn my eyes I see abundant cause for the warning: “Beware of base metal in religion. Be genuine. Be thorough. Be real. Be true.”

May we all heed Ryle’s warning. Only recently, I was told by a well-known ‘Reformed’ writer that there are many Christians in Britain, that I must not be a Jeremiah, that I must learn to get along with those who disagree with my kind of Christianity. The Scottish minister Lachlan Mackenzie of Lochcarron was much nearer the mark when he said that the time would come in these islands when a man could walk from north to south, and from east to west, and not meet a godly man *en route*. He also said (without claiming the least prophetic insight) that Britain would never be defeated by her military enemies, but would destroy herself through internal corruption. Dear friends, are not these days upon us? Christ has largely withdrawn His Spirit from us, we have treated Him so shoddily. Is there anyone crying to Him to open the windows of heaven and pour out such a blessing that we could hardly contain it? Is there anyone crying to Him to return in mercy to our God-denying land? May God help us in our desperate plight.

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## *Annual General Meeting*

The Annual General Meeting of the Sovereign Grace Union took place at Hope Strict Baptist Chapel, Redhill, on Saturday 1st June, 2012.

As usual the day began with the Business Meeting which was presided over by Mr Leslie Jarvis. In the opening devotions Mr Jarvis directed our attention to 1 Samuel 30:6 where David encouraged himself in the LORD his God, and we were exhorted to do likewise. The chairman welcomed all and expressed thanks to all who made the day possible, but above all to the Lord. The usual reports from the Treasurer, Secretary and Editor were presented.

Mr Roland Burrows was the preacher for the day. In the afternoon his text was 2 Timothy 2:13, "Yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself" and in the evening, Ezekiel 37:3, "Son of man, can these bones live?"

In between the services, a fine tea was provided by the church at Redhill.

Sovereign Grace Union  
Income and Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31 December 2012

Income			Expenditure		
	2012	2011		2012	2011
	£	£		£	£
Subscriptions	1,359	1,016	Peace & Truth magazine	4,339	4,042
Donations	1,708	939	Secretary's remuneration	1,145	1,095
Tax recovered	168	322	Editor's remuneration	2,290	2,190
Advertising	126	96	Travel expenses	653	623
Literature sales	5	52	Speaker's fees	185	375
Auxiliaries	1,333		Premises	119	154
Offerings	315	585	Advertising/Website	248	230
CAF Income Fund distribution		992	Printing/Stationery	301	436
CAF Fixed Interest Fund distribution	1,692	1,147	Postage/Charges	86	129
Bank interest:	3	11	Computer	270	
			Grants		600
Sub-total	6,709	5,160			
Excess Expenditure	2,927	4,714			
Totals	<u>£9,636</u>	<u>£9,874</u>		<u>£9,636</u>	<u>£9,874</u>

May 2013

Sovereign Grace Union  
Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2012

	2012	2011
Current Assets	£	£
Bank accounts:		
Cafgold	8	2,908
Cafcash	31	31
Barclays	<u>970</u>	<u>2,140</u>
	1,009	5,079
*CAF Income Fund at cost	<u>75,000</u>	<u>75,000</u>
Total Current Assets	76,009	80,079
Current Liabilities		
Midland Printers		1,202
Subscriptions for 2013 (2012) paid in advance <u>408</u>	<u>408</u>	<u>348</u>
Net Total Assets	<u>£75,601</u>	<u>£78,529</u>
General Fund	£	£
Opening balance at 1 January	78,528	83,243
Excess Expenditure	<u>- 2,927</u>	<u>- 4,714</u>
Total Funds	<u>£75,601</u>	<u>£78,528</u>

\*CAF Fixed Interest Fund B Income valuation at 31 December 2012 was £73,100

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.

G P Haddow (Hon. Treasurer)

S. J. Wiffen (Hon. Auditor)

**May 2013**

## *Book Reviews*

### **Reformation Heritage Books**

*The Practice of Faith, Hope and Love* – Godefridus Udemans.  
Translated by Annemie Godbehere. 500pp. \$15.00. Pbk. ISBN  
978-1-60178-214-4.

This major work by a leading 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch divine, superbly translated into idiomatic English by our good friend Annemie Godbehere, using the Authorised Version for all quotations, treats the primary Christian graces as fruits of the Holy Spirit. Faith He plants in the heart by the hearing of the Word, Hope He nurtures as the grace that looks patiently and perseveringly forward to the fulfilment of God's promises, and Love He cultivates towards God for His own sake and towards our neighbour (both friends and enemies) for His sake. Uniquely, yet appropriately, Udemans links Faith with the Apostles' Creed, Hope with the Lord's Prayer, and Love with the Ten Commandments. By so doing he offers us a comprehensive treatise on the experiential and practical outworking of Reformed doctrine and ethics. His underlying thesis is that the whole of life – spiritual, intellectual, emotional and moral – is to be lived in grateful obedience to the will of our heavenly Father.

Among the many valuable aspects of the book, we single out the following:

Udemans always distinguishes Christian graces from moral virtues; he insists that the power of godliness is far preferable to intellectual knowledge; he shows great discernment between the genuine fruits of the Spirit and their man-made counterfeits; he attaches to his chapters sections for self-examination and comfort; his treatment is very orderly and concise; he includes apt quotations from both 'Church Fathers' and other Protestant and Reformed writers; he substantiates every position he takes with quotations from Holy Scripture. All lovers of the best theology and fine English would both enjoy and benefit from this work. We wish Annemie God's rich blessing on all future work she may undertake in this field.

J. M. B.

*Contentment, Prosperity and God's Glory* – Jeremiah Burroughs, edited by Phillip L. Simpson. \$10.00. 144pp. Pbk. ISBN 978-1-60178-232-8.

“If adversity has slain her thousands, prosperity has slain her ten thousands.” This quote from Chapter 5 of this book sums up the reason for it. Jeremiah Burroughs (1599-1646) was one of the best-known of the Puritans, one of the few Congregationalists in the Westminster Assembly. He knew many reversals as he faithfully preached the Gospel in the changing political climate of the 17<sup>th</sup> century; however, in 1641 he was appointed lecturer to three London churches, including Stepney, one of the largest and wealthiest in the land (materially speaking. Ed.) It was here that he preached the sermons later published as *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment* on Philippians 4.11-12, on the need to be content in times of adversity. He followed this with three sermons on the need to be content in times of prosperity, later published as *The Art of Improving* (i.e. Applying. Ed.) *a Full and Prosperous Condition for the Glory of God* in a book entitled *Four Useful Discourses*. It is this which Phillip Simpson has very helpfully edited for modern readers, adding material from a sermon to parliament on the same text. The Puritans have been described as “physicians of the soul,” and Burroughs certainly lives up to that description here. The subject is explored in minute detail: what it means to be content with abundance; the difficulty of learning to be full; the necessity, excellence and mystery of it, with practical directions on how to learn this lesson. It is an important lesson still. Although we lament our present economic problems, and many Christians today are poor, many also are very rich in this world’s goods compared with previous generations and with people in other parts of the world. Burroughs shows that, if anything, it is more difficult to be content in prosperity than it is in times of want, our fallen nature being easily taken up with worldly goods, misusing them, boasting of them, clinging to them, and yet wanting more. We may add that the modern “prosperity gospel” is completely alien to Burroughs, who teaches us to be content in whatever state we may be, and to seek God’s glory both in poverty and wealth. There is a helpful Preface giving an outline of

Burroughs' life. The original version can still be obtained, but this modern version is easier to read, and the publishers are to be thanked for making it available to us. It will be both a challenge and an encouragement to your soul!

Robert Dale

*A Faith Worth Teaching: The Heidelberg Catechism's Enduring Heritage* – ed. Jon D. Payne and Sebastian Heck. 272pp. \$30.00. Hdbk. ISBN 978-1-60178-218-2.

This collection of essays on the 'subordinate standard' of the Dutch and German Reformed churches and their numerous spiritual progeny admirably fulfils the aim of the publishers; namely, to trace the historical origin and spread, and to demonstrate the contemporary relevance, of a catechism that is both doctrinally objective and experientially applied. It would be invidious to prefer any one contribution before another; they are all very good, so different to the chaotic, 'purpose-driven,' experience-based, celebrity-led, compromising professedly Evangelical writings of today. The contributors cannot emphasize too much the need for a thoroughly Biblical grounding in our most holy Faith. Their emphasis, under God, accounts for the survival and stability of remaining Reformed churches in the west, and for the zeal of young churches in the east, where every Lord's Day evening sees its splendid teaching expounded and applied by faithful ministers of the Gospel. Under God's blessing, this collection would amply repay its prayerful study.

J.M.B.

*The Gospel Call and True Conversion* Paul Washer. 188pp. £12.99. Pbk. ISBN 9781-601782-236-6.

There is always a need for books which outline in detail the basic facts of the Gospel. In this outstanding book Paul Washer does this in great depth but marvellous clarity. The early chapters on Repentance and Faith are an antidote to so much of modern Evangelicalism, which plays down the need for repentance. His words on the 'believer's prayer' style of evangelism are very helpful in showing up the dangers that are present in offering a dreadfully false sense of security to many. He also shows that all believers are grafted into the body of the Church, and that individualism can be very damaging to both the Body and the believer himself. A great strength of the book is that it is saturated

with Scripture references, quoted in full. This book deserves a wide readership – and could have a huge impact on many churches in their approach to Gospel presentation. Malcolm Lowrie

*Anselm of Canterbury* – Simonietta Carr. 62pp. £13.99. Hdbk. ISBN 9781-601782-41-0.

As always with the *Christian Biographies for Young Readers* series, this is a beautifully produced book. It is illustrated throughout with original artwork and photographs of places and manuscripts. It tells the story of Anselm's life, while introducing some of the problems faced by the church of his day, and pointing out the significance of his writings for the church through the ages. The language is kept at a level children can understand, even when explaining theological concepts. It would perhaps be more appropriately used in Christian schools or by home educators than as a gift for a child. Miriam Lowrie

Without reviewing each book, we commend to all our readers the series entitled *Profiles in Reformed Spirituality*. To date, I have been sent profiles of the spirituality of John Calvin, Thomas Goodwin, Samuel Rutherford, George Swinnock and Horatius Bonar. A companion volume in the same series, but published by Joshua Press, covers Oliver Cromwell. The average size of these paperbacks is 184 pages. They contain a brief introductory biography, extracts from these godly men's writings and the occasional comment from the editors. J. M. B.

### **Wakeman Trust**

*The Personal Spiritual Life* – Peter Masters. £4.95 (£3.50 from the Metropolitan Tabernacle Bookshop) 127pp. Pbk. ISBN 978-1-908919-20-5.

This is a collection of twelve chapters (maximum length 12pp each) dealing with various Biblical aspects of the Christian life. It would greatly benefit any serious seeker after salvation, or any believer who needs encouragement in the faith.

All the chapters are good, though the one entitled 'Feeling the Presence of the Lord' is outstanding.

Examples of other subjects handled are: the indwelling Spirit; holiness; joy; gifts; encouragements; prayer; humility; and commitment.

The book is easy to read, but none the less profound for all that.

John Manton

### **Banner of Truth Trust**

*Silent Witnesses* – Garry J. Williams. 248pp. £14.50. HB/DW. ISBN 97818-4871-217-1.

This is a very stimulating book. Written by the Director of the John Owen Centre at London Theological Seminary, it seeks to draw lessons on theology, life and the Church by looking closely at historical councils and figures of importance, such as Calvin, Luther, Owen and Edwards. Williams shows great skill in sketching short biographical studies before turning to the important issues of theology that each discussed. Perhaps the most interesting chapters relate to the Council of Chalcedon (451) where issues of huge importance with regard to the Person of Jesus Christ as God and Man were discussed. Williams shows the importance of preaching a ‘full Christ,’ and exposes the dangers to any believer or congregation of a ‘half learned Christ.’ The book ends with a chapter on the importance of Church History and the fact that it is so neglected in our day – to the great detriment of many believers.

Malcolm Lowrie

*Old Paths* – J. C. Ryle. 490pp. £15.00. Hdbk. ISBN 978-1-84871-227-0.

Described by one reviewer as “this lovely and very lively book,” *Old Paths* presents Ryle’s thorough, manly, unflinching adherence to Biblical, Protestant, Reformed, Practical Christianity. Attractively re-typeset, it compresses more evangelical truth into its pages than shelves full of other vaporous outpourings. Along with his *Practical Religion* and *Holiness*, I rank it among the best of Ryle’s works. The plain, punchy English style is as modern as any recent titles, while its message is perennial. What more can we say about a book that deals so faithfully with the Word of God, eternal realities and our precious souls?

J.M.B.



**Guardian Books. 20 Hannah Court, Belleville, Ontario, Canada. K8P 5J2. Email: [info@essence-publishing.com](mailto:info@essence-publishing.com)**

*A Personal Appreciation of D. A. Macfarlane* – J. Cameron Fraser. £5.50. 62pp. Pbk. ISBN 978-1-4600-0039-7. Available in the U.K. from [peterreynoldsbooks.com](http://peterreynoldsbooks.com)

Those who have John Tallach's appreciation of Mr. Macfarlane's life and ministry, *I Shall Arise*, may find this title disappointingly brief, and the price expensive, especially as the author grew up in Mr. Macfarlane's home. Still, it confirms the portrait that those of us who knew him keep treasured up in our hearts. Canny Highlanders used to show their perception of Mr. Macfarlane's spirituality and godliness by naughtily classifying Free Presbyterian ministers as follows: "Way out to sea, Mr. Macfarlane and Mr. MacSween (Oban); a.n.other (who shall remain nameless) sitting in his boat on the shingle, being pushed towards the sea by his lackeys; a.n.other and the rest, far inland!" Whatever the truth in this vivid picture, Mr. Macfarlane's spiritual stature may be gauged by referring to our sketch and his sermon in 'Peace and Truth' 2012:2. "The memory of the just is blessed."

J.M.B.

### **Privately Published**

*Solomon's Song: A Series of Sermons by Philip R. Kinderman.* 340pp. £8.00 plus £1.50 postage. Obtainable from Miss M. Stonelake. Flint Cottage, Church Lane, Hellingly, Hailsham. BN27 4HA.

It is impossible to state our debt to Miss Muriel Stonelake for reproducing from tapes our late dear friend's meditations on the best of songs in book form. They breathe the same humble, devout, loving atmosphere that we felt in Philip's sermons on Ezekiel. As with the former title, there is no need to enter into a detailed review. We simply recommend it to every reader who longs for a closer walk with the Saviour and needs help along the way. The "savour of His good ointments" will fall on us if we desire it. We merely add a prayer of the late Donald Macfarlane, Dingwall: "Lord, give us a nostril."

J.M.B.

## CDs of SGU addresses

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  
The Life and Work of John Calvin by Gervase Charmley  
The Meaning of "All Israel" by Don Underwood of London  
Such A Great Salvation by Winston Saunders of Selhurst  
What Christ will do - and how by Neil Pfeiffer  
Omnipresence and You, by Keith Hoare of Herne Bay  
Omniscience, by Paul Relf of Chatham  
Omnipotence - Something Understood, by Graham Thrussell of West Sussex  
Jacob's Ladder - Dafydd Morris of Wales  
God's Sovereignty and Human Responsibility - Gary Brady of London  
God's Full Sovereignty, our Full Salvation - Timothy Burden of Eastbourne  
The Unchanging Gospel - Jeremy Walker of Crawley  
John 1:17 - John Saunders of Chichester (AGM 2009 Evening Sermon)  
Our Reasonable Service, Romans 12:1 by Alun Higham of Cardiff  
Romans 16 by John Saunders of Chichester  
The Flood: The creation of a New world by Stephen Lloyd of Gravesend  
  
The Inspiration of Scripture by Christopher Buss  
The Authority of Scripture by Leslie Jarvis  
The Inerrancy of Scripture by Andrew Coats  
The Sufficiency of Scripture by David Levell  
Romans 8:1-8 by Fred Rainsford  
The Spirit and the Believer by Alun Higham  
Grace Alone by Timothy Burden  
Faith Alone by Jeremy Walker  
Christ Alone - by John Cheeseman  
To the Glory of God Alone by Graham Trice  
The Freewill Controversy by Clifford Parsons  
Faith and Saving Faith by Tim Martin  
Romans 8:28 by Alun Higham

Tapes previously advertised are still available on request from:-

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

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## **East Anglian Auxiliary**

November 4th, Monday 7.30pm, Zoar Baptist Church, Ipswich IP4 2LH  
*Preacher:* Pastor Gerald Buss (Chippenham)

## **Kent Auxiliary**

October 17th, Thursday 7.30pm, Aenon Baptist Church, Chatham. ME4 5RF  
*Speaker:* David Sprouse (Cuckfield). *Subject:* 'The Grace of God in the Life of Jonah'

For meetings of the Scottish Auxiliary please ring Rev. Paul Jennings on 01346 582 521

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*As ministers are willing to travel considerable distances to speak at these gatherings, it would be appreciated if friends and supporters of the Union could be present, if at all possible.*

*Leaflets announcing the meetings, for display on Chapel notice boards, etc., will be made available nearer the time of the meetings.*