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Peace & Truth

The Magazine of the Sovereign Grace Union

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Peace & Truth

The Magazine of the Sovereign Grace Union

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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.

Sovereign Grace Union: Doctrinal Basis

The Holy Scriptures

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

The Trinity

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

The Lord Jesus Christ

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

The Holy Spirit

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

The Fall of Man

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

Unconditional Election

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

Particular Redemption

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

Effectual Calling

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

Justification

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

Final Perseverance

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

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

Editorial

This year sees the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's act in nailing the 95 Theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, the event that is widely recognised as the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. It is of course an oft-remarked on fact that nothing could have been further from the mind of the Augustinian monk than the turning of Western Christendom on its head on that day at the end of October, but that is what happened.

The first of those Theses was "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, "Repent" (Mt 4:17), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance." The subject before Luther was that of sin and repentance. Rome said that when Christ spoke in Matthew 4, he was in effect calling on people to do Penance, that is to be sorry for their sins and to do works that in some sense made "satisfaction" for those sins; that it was first and foremost a matter of works, which works helped to make peace with God. The Latin Vulgate, by an unfortunate mistranslation, encouraged this view, which severely distorts the idea of repentance.

So what is repentance? The *Westminster Confession of Faith* (Chapter 15) defines it thus: "Repentance unto life is an evangelical grace, the doctrine whereof is to be preached by every minister of the Gospel, as well as that of faith in Christ. By it, a sinner, out of the sight and sense not only of the danger, but also of the filthiness and odiousness of his sins, as contrary to the holy nature, and righteous law of God; and upon the apprehension of His mercy in Christ to such as are penitent, so grieves for, and hates his sins, as to turn from them all unto God, purposing and endeavouring to walk with Him in all the ways of His commandments." The Greek term translated as "repentance" in the English Bible is *Metanoia*, and literally means "a change of mind," but as the Confession rightly points out, it is not a merely casual change of mind, as one may change one's mind about the desirability of a cake or a type of coffee, it is a change of *heart*, as we would say in English, and one

that is brought about not by man, but by the work of the Holy Spirit.
We cannot change our own hearts, but,
True belief and true repentance
Are Thy gifts, Thou God of grace.
(Hart)

In Acts 5:31, we read of Christ, "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." The two go together, without repentance there is no forgiveness. Yet it is a constant experience of the Church that people try to separate the two. Traditionally, Rome, by denying the possibility of the certain knowledge of forgiveness of sins, has erred in one direction; however much the devotee of Rome may repent, they can never truly know their sins forgiven. On the other hand, much modern religion errs in the other direction, by teaching that not only do we come to Jesus as we are (a precious truth that must not be taken away), but that we can remain as we are.

One variation of this is the so-called "Carnal Christian" teaching, that a person may accept Jesus as Saviour, and thus receive forgiveness of sins, but not as Lord, and thus remains enslaved to sin and worldliness. We do not find this in the Scriptures are all, instead we find that the believer is "a new creature" (2 Corinthians 5:17), who seeks the things of Christ, not the things of this world. Now since we struggle with remaining sin, we pray daily for the forgiveness of our sins - and that is where Luther's Thesis comes in. Preaching the Law without forgiveness takes away the joy of the Gospel; preaching the Gospel without repentance takes away the need of the Gospel. But the true Christian preacher proclaims the Law and its condemnation of sin, and the Gospel and its forgiveness of sin. A Christianity without repentance makes the cross of no effect, since it says that what Christ died for, we may live in and enjoy. But true Christianity knows that repentance and faith come together, and that where they are together, there is peace with God. We do not love our sins, but we are not dragged down to hell by them - we turn daily from self to Christ, from sin to righteousness, receiving the Gospel, and the forgiveness of sins. It is a wonderful thing that Christ gives what he calls for - repentance.

Two Letters of Martin Luther

Introduction

Like the Apostle Paul, Martin Luther was a great letter-writer. It was the only way for him to keep in touch with his friends and fellow-workers in the Reformation, and he enjoyed the fellowship of words. He left behind him a great number of letters, many of which open up a remarkable window into his life and work. We present here two such letters, taken from Margaret A. Currie's *The Letters of Martin Luther* (London, Macmillan, 1908).

1. To his father Hans Luther, telling him he is now free from his monastic vows, and enclosing a copy of his book on *The Vow*.

November 21, 1521.

To his dear father, Hans Luther, from Martin Luther, his son.

My reason for dedicating this book to you was not to honor your name before the world, thus disobeying St. Paul's admonition, not to seek honor after the flesh, but to explain its contents.

It is almost sixteen years since I took the monk's vows without your knowledge or consent. You feared the weakness of my flesh, for I was a young fellow of 22 (I use Augustine's word) and full of fire, and you know the monkish life is fatal to many, and you were anxious to arrange a rich marriage for me. And for long this fear and anxiety made you deaf to those who begged you to be reconciled to me, and to give God your dearest and best. But at last you gave way, although you did not lay aside your care; for, I well remember telling you I was called through a terrible apparition from heaven, so that, when face to face with death, I made the vow, and you exclaimed, "God grant it was not an apparition of the Evil One that startled you." The words sank into my heart as if God had uttered them, but I hardened my heart against it, till you exclaimed, "Hast thou never heard that one

should obey his parents?" In spite of this most powerful word I ever heard out of a human mouth, I persevered in my own righteousness, and despised you as being only a man.

But were you then unaware that God's command must be obeyed first of all? Had you been able, would you not then have exercised your paternal prerogative, and dragged me from beneath the cowl? Had I known, I would have suffered a thousand deaths rather than have acted as I did. For my vow was not worth such deception... But God, whose mercy is boundless, has brought about great good through my errors and sins.

Wouldst thou not rather have lost a hundred sons than not have beheld such marvelous blessing? Satan must always have foreseen this, for he has poured out the whole vials of his fury upon me... But God willed that I might learn the wisdom of the high schools and the sanctity of the cloisters for myself...

Dear father, do you ask me to renounce monkish orders? But — God has been before you, and has brought me out Himself... and has placed me, as thou seest, not in the miserable, blasphemous service of monachism, but in the true divine worship, for no one can doubt that I serve God's Word.

Parental authority must yield before this divine service; for, "whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me," says Christ. Not that parental authority ceases with this; but where Christ's authority clashes with that of parents, the latter must give way.

Therefore I send you this book, from which you will see how miraculously Christ has redeemed me from my monkish vows, and endowed me with such freedom, that although I am the servant of all men, I am subject to Him alone. For He is my sole Bishop, Abbot, Prior, Lord, Father, Master! I know no other. I trust He has deprived you of your son, so that, through me, He may help the sons of many others, and prevent you rejoicing alone. I know you will do no more

in this matter.

Although the Pope should assassinate me, and cast me into hell, he cannot raise me up again to slay me once more. For should he condemn me, and burn me, my heart and will shall still stand out against his absolution. I hope the great day is approaching when the kingdom of wickedness will be cast down and destroyed. Would to God we were considered worthy to be burned by the Pope, that our blood might cry out for vengeance, and thereby hasten his end.

But, if not worthy to testify with our blood, let us cry to Him alone, and plead for mercy, so that through our life and voice we may bear witness that Jesus alone is our Lord and God — blessed to all eternity. Amen. In Whom may you be blessed, dear father — and the mother — thy Margaret, along with our whole connection — all of whom I greet in Christ Jesus.

From the wilderness. MARTIN LUTHER

2. To Justus Jonas. Luther receives a copy of the Bull condemning him in Rome twenty-five years before.

December 16, 1543.

Grace and peace! I received your letter, my Jonas, with the enclosed copy of the Bull in which Luther was condemned twenty-five years ago. You know what, since then, has been written, spoken, and attempted in every way to accomplish our destruction. And what do they still leave untried? This fury against us is, as the Scripture says, everlasting, like that eternal fire which will never cease, and which awaits them. For even in hell they will not stop maligning God's Son. Praise be to God, who has separated us from their society through His holy calling.

Concerning the progress of the war, about which you write us, we only know that the Emperor put the French to flight, avoiding a battle. He is probably imitating the cunning of the Turks, who weary out the enemy, refusing to fight unless compelled to; meanwhile the

expense incurred disgusts and tires us out. Did you hear that the Emperor said to the Duke of Julich : "I have paid more money for your generals than for the whole war." And the Prince of Nassau Orange said to his uncle: "Ah, dear uncle, what will you gain from the Emperor? Your officers have cost him more money than all the war." What will be the outcome of all this treachery on the part of princes and kings? War is now carried on with money, not with arms. The soldiers are paid by their princes, and receive presents from the enemy. Through such valour was Luxemburg taken, the French general paying 20,000 ducats to the Emperor's mercenaries to deliver up the town and pretend they were conquered.

It is also said that Andrea von Doria (1466-1560, Admiral of the Holy Roman Empire) concluded a secret understanding with Barbarossa Pasha (a Muslim Corsair and Admiral of the Ottoman Empire, against whom Andrea Doria fought) at sea, saying: "Are we among friends? Why should we destroy one another? *Thy* as well as *my* lord will still remain Emperor!" Truly a heroic way of bleeding kings, princes, and peoples! What will be left for the poor man if we have to satisfy these insatiable demands? We shall soon feel this diabolic greed in our pockets.

And lastly, it is reported that the Turks have massacred three thousand citizens and old men and also pastors in Stuhlweissenburg, so that their corpses were heaped over the town walls. Satan is becoming afraid, and rages, because his time is short. May the Lord protect His own, or enable them through His joyful spirit to mock at his wrath, whether they may be preserved or destroyed.

It is said that the Emperor intends to reinstate the Duke of Brunswick, but through what means I know not. Let us pray for our princes. For I doubt not, if a war broke out, that our *Centaurs*¹ would do as the Julich people did — after they had squeezed everything out of our princes, they would sell them for money.

1. The reference is to the mythical centaurs, wild creatures who plundered humanity, Luther's point is that the people see the princes as nothing more than a source of money

Money, only money! This is the maxim of those in power. They will sacrifice nothing for the Fatherland. They only wish to enrich themselves, and under the pretext, or by means of the opportunity which war affords, swallow up everything. "Devour" in the devil's name; hell will give you enough of this. Come, Lord Jesus, and hear the sighs of Thy Church! Hasten Thy appearing, for the evils are coming to a height.

I have written this in order to write something. Farewell, and teach your church to hasten the day of the Lord through their prayers. God will listen to the sighing for the day of redemption. All the signs foretell this.

Your own
Martin Luther.
Wittenberg.

The Forgiveness of Sins
By David Smith of Siddall

O what a joyful sound, "Thy sins are forgiven." The Lord as an act of His sovereign grace can blot out and forgive five hundred pence debtors as well as fifty pence debtors. Then again I say we cannot limit the Holy One of Israel in the disposal of His grace "which is without money and without price," to the chief of sinners; no, not of a Manasseh who made Jerusalem's streets to swim with innocent blood, nor of a Saul of Tarsus, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples to destroy the saints at Damascus; no, nor a thief upon the cross, nor of a Mary Magdalene who was a sinner. No, because the "blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin."

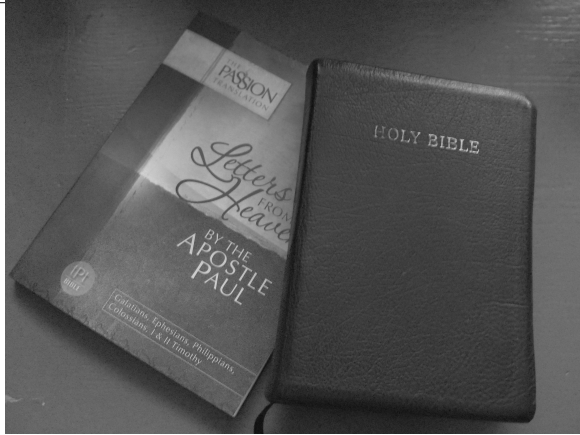
Thus Kent the poet speaking of that precious blood says,

"That sacred flood, from Jesus' veins,

Was free to take away

A Mary's or Manasseh's stains,

Or sins more vile than they."



The Passion Translation: A Critique

Introduction

Why an article on a new Bible version in English? The market of English Bible versions is overstocked already. On no conceivable principle do we need all of the two dozen or so versions already on the market, and there is literally no reason whatsoever for yet another to be released. So the release in 2014 of the first volumes of The Passion Translation (TPT) passed us by. However, TPT is being promoted, and being sold in Christian bookshops. Unsuspecting Christians are being told that this is the Bible version that at last puts the Word of God into the “heart language” of modern English speakers. Seeing this, we examined a part of this new “translation.” What we found was an English version of the Bible that is considerably worse than any English version available today, not excepting those produced by the cults. As a result, it is of great importance that we know how to speak to friends and family members who may ask about this new “translation,” and know how to warn against it.

Background:

The Passion Translation is the work of Dr. Brian Simmons, formerly employed by New Tribes Mission as a missionary linguist. It is described on *The Passion Translation* website thus: "The Passion Translation brings God's fiery heart of love and truth to this generation

using Aramaic, Greek, and Hebrew manuscripts, merging them together with the emotion and truth of God's Word in a way that's accurate and faithful, yet clear and readable."¹ This is typical marketing language, as it actually tells us very little about TPT, but sounds flashy and impressive. Those marketing *The Passion Translation* seem to like the language of "God's fiery heart of love", because the website's Frequently Asked Questions page uses it over and over again. We do not recall reading such language in the Bible.

The first question that any discerning Christian should be asking concerning TPT is: "Why did Simmons feel there was a need for a new English version of the Bible?" Speaking about the reason for the work, the website says, "The reason is simple: God longs to have his Word expressed in every language in a way that unlocks the passion of his heart. The goal of this work is to trigger inside every reader an overwhelming response to the truth of the Bible, revealing the deep mysteries of the Scriptures in the love language of God, the language of the heart." This sounds terribly passionate and very important, but what does it actually *mean*? It may just be a bit of purple prose for marketing reasons that doesn't actually mean anything (one should never overlook the possibility), but if it does mean anything of substance, does it not imply that God has either been forced to wait until the 21st century for Dr. Simmons to come along and finally give the English-speaking world the "passionate" translation he has always been longing to give? Or perhaps Simmons believes that for some reason God has chosen to wait and give the translation to him? Either way, it is a somewhat arrogant claim, and one that ought to give the reader pause for thought. The claim implies that this is the most accurate translation possible, yet the reality is quite the opposite, it is one of the *least* reliable.

TPT, which is not yet complete, is being published at the moment in a series of slim paperback volumes, each containing a book, or several books, of the Bible. We have used as the source for this article *Letters from Heaven by the Apostle Paul*, which contains Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and I and II Timothy.

1. <http://www.thepassiontranslation.com/> accessed 8/10/2016

This was chosen for two reasons, firstly that TPT has a particular problem with the New Testament that is not present in the Old Testament, and secondly because it is our experience that it is particularly in the writings of Paul that New Testament paraphrases tend to become “unstuck” as it were; as the Scripture itself says, in Paul's writings “are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.” (2 Peter 3:16).

The Issues:

There are three primary issues with TPT, the first and second of which apply to the whole project, the third to the New Testament in particular. First of all is a grave theological issue; Simmons seems to claim some sort of special supernatural divine guidance in his work, a guidance that his friends and associates speak of in their commendations of TPT. The second is that TPT is not strictly a translation at all, but an expansive paraphrase that is nevertheless claiming to *be* a strict translation. Thirdly, there is a major textual issue, in that Dr. Simmons seems to erroneously believe that the New Testament was written in Aramaic, and therefore treats the early Aramaic translation of the New Testament as the (or at least a) primary text, regarding the Greek as a translation, that is, as secondary.

Claims to Divine Guidance

The theological issue is perhaps the most troubling aspect of the whole project. Dr. Simmons is a Charismatic, and associated with the more extreme wing of the Charismatic movement, that known as the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR). Simmons is in fact considered one of the “Apostles” of the NAR, and his work is endorsed by such people as Dr. Che Ahn of Harvest Rock Church in Pasadena (who is also counted an Apostle), Dr. James Goll of Encounters Ministry (counted a prophet), and Katherine Ruonala, the female “pastor” of Glory City Church in Brisbane, Australia.² Che Ahn writes in his endorsement, “Brian Simmons is a brilliant

2.http://www.elijahlist.com/words/display_word.html?ID=12057, accessed 8/10/2016

man who has been given revelation and insight into a deeper meaning of the Scriptures." How, we venture to ask, does such a claim differ from that of the cults, who claim for their leaders a special ability to interpret the Scriptures not given to lesser mortals? "Pastor" Ruonala (we put the title in quotes because God's word forbids women from being pastors) writes, "Brian and Candice are friends of the Holy Spirit and it is with His guidance that the Bible is being opened to us with greater clarity than ever before through this translation project." The endorsements border on claiming for TPT actual divine inspiration! *The Passion Translation* website itself says, "the process of Bible translation cannot be considered a perfect science, but more of an artistic, Spirit-led production." This claim to special divine guidance is troubling, because it blurs the line between translator and text, something which could – and in fact does – lead to excessive freedom in paraphrasing the text. If the translator believes he is getting direct revelation concerning "a deeper meaning of the Scriptures," he will take less care over the actual words, and more over his own interpretation of those words. And that is indeed what we find here.

A translator or paraphrast who knows that he is a man doing the best that he can with normal linguistic tools, subject to the text, is going to be self-critical, taking care that he is not reading his own ideas into the text. He is still liable to failure, but he is not mistaking his ideas about what would "sound good," or how to make the text sound "relevant" for the work of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, a man who believes that he is being granted special supernatural divine guidance into the "deeper meaning" of the text will tend to regard those ideas as the revelation of God, with dangerous results.

This is a problem created by Charismatic theology, which suffers from the tendency to blur the lines between our feelings and God's revelation. We remember in our university days hearing well-meaning Charismatic students say, "I feel God is telling me..." as the prelude to some claim of modern-day direct revelation, and when that theology is let loose on Bible translation, the result is a

“translation” that puts the translator, not the original text, in the driving seat, so to speak. TPT is an extreme example, but it is not the only version to come from the Charismatic stable. In 2009 British Charismatic Colin Urquhart published *The Truth New Testament*, in the preface to which he speaks of what “I believe God wanted” him to do.³ In the same preface he writes of how he “sensed the Lord encouraging me,”⁴ in the peculiarities of his own translation. Yet Urquhart is modest and mild compared to Simmons! We venture to suggest that the Charismatic movement, with its emphasis on supposed modern-day prophecy and revelation, represents a real danger to Protestantism by this tendency to subordinate the Bible to claims of modern-day direct revelation, made by teachers, and now by "translators."

Expansive Paraphrase

Speaking of the “translation methodology” adopted, the website says, “You may have heard about two kinds of Bible translations: formal equivalence and functional equivalence... OK, so which of these two sides does *The Passion Translation* take? In many ways, both... While we’ve worked hard to express the original biblical languages in modern English, we believe there really is no such thing as a consistent word-for-word translation. Yes literal meaning matters, but the full meaning of a passage doesn’t transfer from word-to-word. Our translation philosophy is that the meaning of God’s original message to the world has priority over its exact form, which is why our goal is to communicate the meaning of Scripture as clearly and naturally as possible in modern English.” So far, so clear, another dynamic equivalence translation claiming to be “the best of both worlds” (why not just say, “this is a dynamic translation because meaning is what matters most”? This would have the merit of being open and honest rather than beating about the bush).

But actually, it is not a dynamic equivalent translation like the NIV, it is simply an expansive paraphrase. Like *The Message*, TPT freely adds whole phrases in an effort to make the text "plainer", actually

3. Colin Urquhart, *The Truth New Testament* (Eastbourne, Integrity, 2009) P. 5

4. *The Truth New Testament* P. 6

obscuring the text in the process. Ironically, in explaining why TPT does not capitalize pronouns referring to God, the editorial director of the project, writes, “Original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek manuscripts do not do this. To capitalize these pronouns is adding something to the original text that does not otherwise exist.” Surely to object to capitalizing personal pronouns referring to God, a relatively minor issue of style, yet to allow for the *adding of whole phrases with no antecedent in the original*, is surely straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel!

Such paraphrases have a long history; *Codex Bezae Cantabrigensis*, a parallel Greek and Latin text produced in the 5th century and given by Theodore Beza to Cambridge University,⁵ may be characterised as such, due to the odd tendency it has to rephrase the Greek. More modern examples include Kenneth Taylor's *The Living Bible* (TLB), published in 1971, and *The Message* by Eugene Peterson (see Peace and Truth 2013:4). We regarded *The Message* as the worst of these, but TPT manages the astonishing feat of being considerably *worse* than even this.

In the preface to *The Living Bible*, Taylor, who can be regarded as a representative examples of modern paraphrasts, writes, "To paraphrase is to say something in different words than the author used. It is a restatement of an author's thoughts, using different words than he did."⁶ He goes on to explain that the purpose of a Bible paraphrase is "To say as exactly as possible what the writers of the Scriptures meant, and to say it simply, expanding where necessary for a clear understanding by the modern reader." That word "simply" is the key – the only possible reason to paraphrase the Bible is to simplify "idioms and patterns of thought the are hard for us to follow today," to quote Taylor again, and to explain "technical words." Taylor cautions, “There are dangers in paraphrases, as well as values. For whenever the author's exact words are not translated from the original languages, there is a possibility that the translator, however

5. Beza regarded it as an oddity rather than a reliable manuscript.

6. Note that this is not an endorsement of TLB, it is simply being used as an example of an earlier work of a similar type. We do not endorse TLB, regarding it as deficient in several areas.

honest, may be giving the English reader something that the original writer did not mean to say.” The reason for this is simple – the paraphrast is, unavoidably, engaged in the work of interpretation. And there is always the very real possibility that for all his attempt to give "the author's thoughts," the paraphrase may in fact give the thoughts of the paraphrast.

This becomes more likely when the original contains “things hard to be understood,” and when the theology of the paraphrast is in error. So *The Living Bible*, being written by a man with an Arminian theology, renders Acts 4:27-28, “For Herod the king, and Pontius Pilate the governor, and all the Romans — as well as the people of Israel — are united against Jesus, your anointed Son, your holy servant. They won’t stop at anything that you in your wise power will let them do.” This falls far short of the AV, “For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.” Taylor, apparently finding the idea that God had predetermined all that was done in the Crucifixion, left that out of his paraphrase.

We find similar issues with Simmons, although largely connected with his Charismatic theology. So Ephesians 1:2, “grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” becomes, “May God himself, the heavenly Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, release grace over you and impart total well-being in your lives.” The idea of “releasing an impartation” is a teaching of the wing of the Charismatic movement to which Simmons belongs. Another example is Ephesians 1:10, “that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him,” is not in any way equivalent to, “And this detailed plan will reign supreme through every period of time until the fulfilment of all the ages finally reaches its climax – when God makes all things new in all of heaven and earth through Christ Jesus.”

Also, since paraphrases are usually the work of one man, he may simply make mistakes. A good example of this from *The Living Bible* is Taylor's rendering of John 12:15, "Don't be afraid of your King, people of Israel, for he will come to you meekly, sitting on a donkey's colt!" There is simply no way that the text can fairly be understood to be calling on Israel not to be afraid of the King, but rather it is declaring that the coming of the King puts an end to fear. An equivalent mistake in TPT is found in Galatians 4:6, where "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father," is rendered, "And so we would know for sure that we are his true children, God released the Spirit of Sonship into our hearts – moving us to cry out intimately, 'My Father! You're our true Father!'" Simmons has missed the point of the phrase, "the Spirit of his Son," which connects the Holy Spirit intimately with Christ.

As the previous examples show, recent paraphrases, such as *The Message*, have tended to go far beyond earlier examples such as Taylor in expanding the text, but Simmons grants himself much greater freedom to put in the text that which he believes is "implied by the context" (a phrase found repeatedly in his footnotes). Like *The Message*, he also tends to expand for the sake of expansion, resulting in the addition of whole sentences that have no explanatory value at all – and therefore no value whatsoever. And he is far more prone to do this even than Peterson.

In the AV, Colossians 3:18 reads, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord." TPT reads here, "Let every wife be supportive and tenderly devoted to her husband, for this is a beautiful illustration of our devotion to Christ." Leaving aside for the moment the other issues (we shall return to them), the idea of the wife's love to her husband being an example of our love for Christ, while Biblical (see Ephesians 4:22-24), is simply not found in *this* text, it has been brought in from elsewhere, however much Simmons' footnote may insist that this is "implied in the text."

Just a few verses later on, in verse 24, the same issue arises, in the AV it is, “knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.” TPT reads, “For we know that we will receive a reward, an inheritance of kingdom authority from the Lord, as we serve the Lord Yahweh, the Anointed One!”⁷ “Of kingdom authority” is simply added to the text by Simmons, and comes from Simmons' theology, not anything in the text or context.

The same issue is found once again in Colossians 3:15, which in the AV reads, “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.” TPT reads, “Let your heart be always guided by the peace of the Anointed One, who has called you to peace as part of his one body. And always be thankful, overflowing with gratitude for your life-union with Christ.” The final phrase is a classic example of expansive paraphrase, which actually adds nothing to the understanding of the text, and has no antecedent in the original.

While adding his own ideas to the text, the paraphrast may at the same time remove precious truths from the original. In Colossians 3:14, the AV reads, “And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.” TPT reads, “For love is supreme and must flow through all of these virtues. Love becomes the mark of true maturity.” The idea of love having to “flow through all of these virtues” is Simmons' addition to the text, while the precious Biblical idea of Christian love being a “bond” that joins is omitted.

Some of this expansion is in the clear interests of inserting into the text the theology of the New Apostolic Reformation, so that in Colossians 3:13 the AV reads, “forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.” in TPT the same verse reads,

7. Incidentally, another issue with TPT is the rather confusing variety in rendering *Christos*, which is sometimes rendered as “Christ”, but also as “Messiah” and “Anointed One.” While the AV employs the riches of English vocabulary to good effect in many places, this is one place where the uniform use of a single English word makes sense and a variety of language creates unnecessary confusion.

“Tolerate the weaknesses of those in the family of faith, forgiving one another in the same way you have been graciously forgiven by Jesus Christ. If you find fault with someone, release this same gift of forgiveness to them.” The idea of “releasing” a spiritual gift to others is a common one in the NAR, yet one with no Biblical warrant. Simmons has “remedied” this by gratuitously inserting it into the text.

Colossians 3:16 is another example of this, reading in the AV, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” TPT renders this, “Let the word of Christ live in you richly, flooding you with all wisdom. Apply the Scriptures as you teach and instruct one another with the Psalms, and with festive praises, and with prophetic songs given to you spontaneously by the Spirit. As the fountain of grace overflows within you, sing to God with all your hearts!” The idea that the Holy Spirit “spontaneously” gives “prophetic songs” to people is one that is common in the Charismatic movement, and has been read into the text here. It is by no means however the best interpretation of the text. On the other hand the AV “spiritual songs” is simply a literal translation of the Greek, without any interpretation at all.

Another common idea in the NAR is that of “prophesying over” people. So we find that in Ephesians 6:22, the phrase “and that he might comfort your hearts,” becomes in TPT, “And he will also prophesy over you to encourage your hearts.” Note that here the expansion consists entirely in the insertion of an NAR concept into the text. This is the method of the cults, whose teaching comes from outside the Bible and must be inserted into it, not that of Christians, for whom the Bible is the source of our teaching.

It is also striking that many of these expansive paraphrases do not in fact make the text any easier to understand. Colossians 3:10 reads in the AV, “and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.” TPT renders

this as, "For you have acquired new creation life which is continually being renewed into the likeness of the One who created you, giving you the full revelation of God." In what way is "new creation life" clearer than "the new man"? It is not, and indeed it is considerably worse, since it is jargon. The Charismatic movement, especially in its NAR form, is rife with such jargon, as is TPT. Those outside the movement that produced TPT are likely to find it impenetrable in many places, while those inside are simply being deceived into thinking the movement's extra-Biblical teaching is found in the Bible.

The word "destiny," with its overtones of ego, is strikingly absent from the Authorised Version, but modern-day Charismatic teachers want to teach that God has given to every believer a special dream-destiny to carry out. So this teaching is simply imported into the text in TPT. In the AV, Ephesians 1:11 reads, "in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." TPT renders this instead as, "This is why God selected and ordained us to be his own inheritance through our union with Christ! Before we were even born, he gave us our destiny, that we would fulfil the plan of God, who always accomplishes every plan and purpose in his heart." So it seems that it does not matter if a teaching is not found in the Bible, it can always be inserted!

There is also the Free-Will teaching that is to be expected from such an effort as this. Galatians 5:25, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit," becomes the extraordinarily ungainly, "We have now chosen to live in the surrendered freedom of yielding to the Holy Spirit," suggesting quite another idea than Paul originally wrote by the Spirit. Now instead of being an exhortation to Christians to be what we already are, it is simply a declaration about what has happened in the past, and what the believer has "chosen" to do with his own free will.

From the examples already given, readers will have noticed that Simmons is incredibly prone to expansion in his renderings. It is not

uncommon for him to add a dozen or more words to a Bible verse, sometimes even doubling its length. To refer to some of the verses already quoted, the AV translation of Colossians 3:16 has 33 words, in TPT there are 57; Ephesians 1:11 contains 27 words in the AV, Simmons' version has 46. Perhaps the worst example of this tendency is his rendering of Galatians 5:22-23, which the AV translates, very literally "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." Simmons renders this, "But the fruit produced by the Holy Spirit within you is divine love in all its various expressions. This love is revealed through:

Joy that overflows,
Peace that subdues,
Patience that endures,
Kindness in action,
A life full of virtue,
Faith that prevails,
Gentleness of heart, and
Strength of spirit.

Never set the law above these qualities, for they are meant to be limitless."

There are 22 words in the AV translation. Simmons' paraphrase contains 64, making it almost three times as long! And yet it is considerably less clear than the original. What is more, Simmons is actually *correcting* Paul here; he is saying that Paul should have said something other than he actually did say. The reason for this is that Simmons has correctly noted that "fruit" is singular, but has failed to understand that the singular "fruit" here is a Christian character made up of all the graces of the Spirit in the verse, and so has assumed that it must be one particular grace - namely love. Surely a simple guide here would be that if you have to re-write the Bible to fit your interpretation, your interpretation is certainly wrong! And this is the great problem of expansive paraphrases; rather than letting the original text stand, with any ambiguity (real or merely perceived), the paraphrast tries to remove ambiguity, even at the expense of the original meaning of the text.

Aramaic

We are used to textual issues in the New Testament of modern Bibles, but TPT has a textual issue that puts all other textual issues to shame. Simmons is an advocate of the bizarre hypothesis that *the entire New Testament was originally written in Aramaic*, and that the early Aramaic manuscripts of the NT are therefore to be given priority over the Greek. Ignoring for a moment the other issues, this hypothesis alone is sufficient to render the entire project completely worthless as it relates to the New Testament.

While our Lord would have spoken Aramaic in daily life, this is quite a different issue from the idea that it was the original language of the NT. The New Testament is a Greek document, not a translation of an Aramaic one. When it comes to Paul's Epistles in particular, the hypothesis of Aramaic originals is nonsensical; there is no hypothesis on which the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians would have been Aramaic-speakers, they would have spoken Greek in their daily lives, and letters addressed to them written in Aramaic would have needed to be translated before the majority of the congregations could have understood them. Yet Dr. Simmons gives priority to the Aramaic!

The TPT website tries to justify this, first saying, "Greek speaks to the mind while Aramaic and Hebrew speak powerfully to the heart." Which sounds good, but is simply meaningless verbiage. Again, it says, "While it is generally agreed upon that Greek was the language in which the New Testament was written, for several decades there has been a debate surrounding the primacy of Greek versus Aramaic as original texts for the New Testament." This is incoherent; if the NT was originally given in Greek, then to appeal to some "Aramaic layer underlying the New Testament" is tantamount to rejecting what God actually said for something else that is at best a guess. Furthermore, the Aramaic New Testament manuscripts that we have today are translations from the Greek, not documents from which the NT writers were working. The Biblical doctrine of Inspiration relates (2 Timothy 3:16) to the *Scriptures*, that is the writings, and those writings in the NT are in Greek.

The ancient Aramaic version of the New Testament is certainly one of the oldest translations of the NT, and this is due to the fact that many of the earliest Churches were in Aramaic-speaking areas, such as that in Syrian Antioch. Nevertheless, it is a translation of the original Greek, and in some places departs rather markedly from that Greek, with its own examples of expansive paraphrase. Giving priority to it is like giving priority to the Latin Vulgate, giving up the original for a translation. It is a serious error.

The Second London Baptist Confession gives the historic Reformed position on the Scriptures in Chapter 1, Section 8, “The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic; so as in all controversies of religion, the church is finally to appeal to them.” This is in marked contrast to the teaching of Rome in the Council of Trent, which in its Fourth Session “ordains and declares, that the said old and Vulgate edition, which, by the lengthened usage of so many years, has been approved of in the Church, be, in public lectures, disputations, sermons and expositions, held as authentic.”

A translation of a translation inevitably leads to a loss of meaning, and to the confusion of meaning. To give one example from the Douay-Rheims Bible, which is translated from the Latin Vulgate, in the AV Job 22:24 reads, “Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks.” The Douay-Rheims reads here, “He shall give for earth flint, and for flint torrents of gold.” Not only is this very far from the AV, which is translating direct from the Hebrew, but ideas are introduced that are not present in the original. And so we find it in TPT.

The use of Aramaic as a primary source text conveniently allows Dr. Simmons to give his readers an English text that in places departs markedly from all previous translations. So to return once again to

Colossians 3,⁸ in the AV Colossians 3:25 reads, “But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.” But TPT reads quite differently, “A disciple will be repaid for what he has learned and followed, for God pays no attention to the titles or prestige of men.” This is entirely different, and yet there is *not one* Greek manuscript that reads anything like the Aramaic, all Greek manuscripts read as the TR here. We cannot know why the Aramaic translator decided to depart from the Greek here, but it is absolutely certain that he did so.

And to return to Colossians 3:18 and the reason it reads, “Let every wife be supportive and tenderly devoted to her husband,” Simmons has followed the Aramaic rather than the Greek, where the concept of being “tenderly devoted” is added. That is not to say that wives should not be tenderly devoted to their husbands - that is not the issue here - but that Colossians 3:18 does not say such a thing.

We see one of Simmons' reasons for using Aramaic in the same chapter. Colossians 3:5 in the Aramaic adds a word that is most useful for Simmons' NAR theology. In the AV, “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” TPT says, “So you must consider your life in this natural realm as already dead and buried. Live as one who has died to every form of sexual sin and impurity. Live as one who has died to *diseases*,⁹ and desires for forbidden things, including the desire for wealth, which is the essence of idol worship.” Quite apart from other issues with this "translation", the word “diseases” is supplied from the Aramaic, and there is absolutely nothing approximating it in the Greek. It is of course very useful if your theology says that Christians ought not to suffer from diseases, because it conveniently provides you with a proof-text where there is none in the original Greek.

8. Yes, everything that is wrong with TPT can be illustrated by a single chapter in Colossians. In fact it can probably be demonstrated by almost any chapter chosen at random from Paul's Epistles.

9. Emphasis added

And there is another vital point here that we must not miss; if the Aramaic is the original (which of course it is not), it allows Dr. Simmons to, at least by implication, devalue all other translations; he alone of all English Bible translators has translated the original. There is something *Gnostic* about all this, a claim to special knowledge that no other Bible translator has. There is something, indeed, of the cultic about the pronouncement, resulting as it does in a “Bible” that reads very differently from *any* other, and which claims to have recovered things lost or hidden for most of the history of the Church. It is a worrying development, especially since this "Bible" is being sold in Christian bookshops all over the English-speaking world, not just distributed within a sect.

The One-Man Translation

We have already referred to some of the issues resulting from the fact that *The Passion Translation* is a one-man effort, but that point needs to be reiterated. While William Tyndale and Martin Luther both produced outstanding translations, as did William Morgan in Welsh, Bible translation is one of those matters where there is safety in numbers; here is the proverb true, “and in multitude of counsellors there is safety,” (Proverbs 24:6). The Authorised Version was produced by about fifty of the greatest scholars in England at the time, including all the relevant professors from Oxford and Cambridge, ensuring that there are no idiosyncratic readings, and no riding of hobby-horses. TPT, on the other hand, like *The Living Bible* and *The Message* is a one-man effort – and it shows.

Tyndale was a man remarkably free from hobby-horses, a man possessed by the teaching of the Bible itself and passionate about bringing it to the English people. He strove to be as accurate to the original languages as he could, even at times adopting their idioms and word-order, and coining new words such as “Passover” and “Scape-goat” where there was no existing English word that would adequately convey the meaning of the original. He strove for accuracy in translation, and achieved it, bringing the Bible into English. This passion for the original seems almost entirely missing

in Simmons, as he adds whole phrases and concepts for no apparent reason. No committee could have produced something as eccentric and often downright bizarre as this work.

One suspects that the outright descent into jargon at times is also a result of the one-man nature of this work. Before reading TPT, we regarded the phrase “propagandists for foreign deities” in the *New English Bible* rendering of Acts 17:18 as the worst example of jargon in a Bible translation, but TPT positively overflows with phrases such as “Kingdom realm,” “New creation life,” “Prophecy over you,” and so on. None of these phrases actually communicate to ordinary English speakers, and so they do not simplify, but rather obscure, the texts where they are introduced.

Idiosyncratic renderings are to be expected of one-man translations, and more so of paraphrases like TPT. Another feature, one we also noted with *The Message*, is that many of Paul's striking metaphors are deleted and replaced with flat prose as if the author believes his readers are too dull to understand simple metaphors; for example, in Galatians 5:7, TPT says, “Before you were led astray, you were so faithful to Messiah. Why have you now turned away from what is right and true? Who has deceived you?” Compare the AV, “Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?” The metaphor of the runner is deleted, and a lot of extraneous verbiage has been put in to try to, apparently, make Paul clearer than the Holy Spirit made him.

In other places, he tries to make Paul's metaphors “neater”, as in Galatians 6:9, where “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not,” becomes, “And don't allow yourselves to be weary or disheartened in planting good seeds, for the season of reaping the wonderful harvest you've planted is coming!” Paul's metaphor is elegant and restrained, Simmons makes it clumsy and overdone. There is probably an ulterior motive in operation here, however; in NAR circles the term “seed” often means money given to a ministry. By re-phrasing Galatians 6:9, Simmons has given a text for preaching that concept

Conclusion

The Passion Translation is unnecessary, that is something that we know before even picking it up – there are so many English translations out there already, with so many different methods of translation that there is literally no corner left of the market uncovered. But when we engage with the translation, we find that it is just horrendously bad.

The claims to some sort of special divine guidance mean that Simmons has been tempted to be significantly and dangerously less self-critical than other translators, and this is shown in many ways, particularly where his theology has been inserted into the text. The method of expansive paraphrase adopted means that he has inserted a great deal into the text that simply is not in the original. Finally, his use of the Aramaic as primary and his consequent devaluing of the Greek gives us a version that simply does not accurately reflect what the Holy Spirit actually gave the Church.

The Passion Translation is not merely unnecessary, it represents an enormous misstep in Bible translation in many ways, and of all the Bibles in the market today that are not published by actual cults, it is by far the worst. It is no clearer, and indeed it is *less clear* than just about every other translation out there. There is no advantage whatsoever in using this translation, indeed the person using it will be at a considerable disadvantage than if he were reading almost *any* other translation, with Simmons standing between him and God in a most intrusive way. The TPT website says, “*The Passion Translation* is an excellent translation you can use as your primary text to seriously study God’s Word.” It is not, in any way. There is literally no reason any believer should read this, and every reason why it should be avoided.

The Passion Translation is published by Broadstreet Publishing Group, Racine, Wisconsin, USA.

All quotations from TPT in this article are from *Letters From Heaven by the Apostle Paul* (Racine, Broadstreet, 2014).

The Great Heresies: 4 - Apollinarianism

Introduction

The study of what historians refer to as “the Great Heresies” is no mere intellectual or antiquarian exercise, but shows the main lines of error that have affected the Church over the centuries. In Gnosticism we are confronted with the fatal lure of claimed secret knowledge, and of a matter-spirit dualism to explain away evil; in Modalism with a simplistic and ultimately rationalistic attempt to explain away the Trinity as one divine person playing different roles, and thus make the being of God completely comprehensible to the natural man; and in Arianism with an attempt to explain the Trinity in terms of one supreme God and a created “god” through whom he does all his other works. We may say that in Gnosticism the issue is Revelation, in Modalism the reality of the distinctions of the Trinity, and in Arianism the co-equality of the Persons of the Trinity.

It is also important to emphasise that the heretic, on the whole (Gnosticism being the great exception), does not set out to deny the truth taught in the Scriptures; rather he begins with one particular truth, and so distorts it as to deny other truths of equal importance. Even the Gnostics began with the truth of the transcendence of God, and ended by denying that God can have any direct dealings with the creation; the Modalists began with the unity of God, and ended by denying the reality of the Trinity; and Arius began with the real distinction between the Father and the Son, and ended by denying the deity of the Son. Apollinarianism began in like manner, with the great truth of the deity of Christ, and ended by denying the real *humanity* of the Incarnate Son.

As a result of the Arian controversy, the full deity of Christ was settled as the doctrine of the Church by 381. But at the same time, the question arose, almost as a matter of course, as to what that meant. If Jesus of Nazareth is indeed “God with us,” then *how* is he with us? This is a mystery that is in fact far beyond our human comprehension, but such is the nature of fallen man that we almost

instinctively seek to pry into matters that we cannot possibly understand. The result is always false teaching, and usually heresy. Thus a number of heresies relating directly to the person of Christ arose; the first of these Christological heresies was called Apollinarianism, after its founder, a Bishop of Laodicea.

History

By all accounts, Apollinarius¹ the younger was an intelligent and cultured man. Born in Laodicea in about 315, he was the son of a Christian teacher from Alexandria, also named Apollinarius, who had settled in the city. He and his father were well respected in the small orthodox community there, and in 361 he was elected their Bishop. Laodicea is of course one of the Seven Churches of the Revelation, and a Church to which Paul refers in his Epistles. Though it had an honourable history, by the fourth century it had only a small orthodox congregation, giving its bishop plenty of time to devote to other activities, such as writing and studying. This suited Apollinarius, who was a deeply learned man, trained in philosophy and literature as well as theology.

During the reign of the Emperor Julian the Apostate (361-363), Christians were forbidden by law from teaching the Classics. In order to get around this prohibition, Apollinarius and his father had worked together to render parts of the Scriptures into Classical literary forms so as to teach rhetoric and other classical studies without falling foul of the law. The Church historian J.W.C. Wand characterises him as “a true Greek in the line of the great thinkers, never shrinking from the effort to tackle any intellectual problem, however involved.”² This was not always a good thing, for such efforts must always be governed by Scripture if they are to be profitable, and Apollinarius fell into the fatal error of going beyond Scripture, and thus wandering aside into vain and unprofitable speculations.

1. Also spelled Apollinaris by some writers.

2. Wand, *The Four Great Heresies* (London, Mowbray, 1955) p. 72

Like most of the heresies dealt with in this series, Apollinarianism began with a truth, that of the deity of Christ. Apollinarius appeared on the orthodox side during the Arian conflict, contending earnestly for the true and proper deity of Christ. He was also insistent that there is only one person of Christ; that is to say that the incarnation does not mean the joining of a divine person and a human person (such a concept actually destroys the idea of a true incarnation), but there is only one Christ. So far, so good; the problem arose when Apollinarius tried to explain the exact mechanics of the Incarnation. Since these are not laid out in Scripture, we must in fact take great care here, and indeed with humility confess that we *cannot* know. With Hart we must say,

How it was done we can't discuss,

But this we know, 'twas done for us.

We know the *fact* of the Incarnation, what is recorded for us in Scripture, but that is all. The *mechanism* is beyond the very possibility of our understanding.

This is where Apollinarius went astray, he tried to answer the question of “how it was done.” He began with the question, “what is man?” meaning this in terms of nature; what is human nature, and how does the Incarnation work in terms of that nature? The human nature is, we know, made up of both a physical and a spiritual component, but there has been, and remains to this day, a debate as to whether human nature is made up of two parts or three; the so-called Trichotomist debate.³

Apollinarius seems originally have held to a Dichotomist position, that man consists of body and soul. In his eagerness to explain the Incarnation, while emphasising the unity and true deity of the person of Christ, Apollinarius fell into the trap of denying the full humanity of Christ, for he taught that the Divine nature took the place of an element of the human nature. In his earlier writings he spoke of the “enfleshed Divinity”, and by it meant that the human soul was, in

3. For a full discussion of this controversy, see John Laidlaw, *The Bible Doctrine of Man* (Repr. Stoke on Trent 2005), Pp. 66-131

Jesus, replaced by the Divine person. Later on, probably in an effort to answer his critics, Apollinarius moved to the Trichotomist position, that human nature consists of three parts, the body, the soul, and the spirit, and that in the Incarnation the Divine nature took the place of the human spirit, conceived of as the highest part of man's nature.

Apollinarius began to teach his peculiar heresy in about 352, before he was elected bishop, but it was only ten years later that it came to the attention of Athanasius and the wider Church. The Arian controversy was after all the great conflict of the time, and it took priority in the minds of everyone. Nevertheless, when one within the Nicene camp began to teach heresy on a different matter, the orthodox had to come together to deal with what might otherwise have been a serious threat from within.

The fact of Apollinarius' election to the Episcopate is an important one, and one that should not simply be passed by, for it points us to some of the reasons that false teachers often get into the ministry. He had been teaching heresy for the best part of a decade at least, and yet he was elected Bishop of Laodicea in 361, by a small Orthodox community that contended with error on every side. At first it seems surprising, but on further reflection, it should not surprise us in the least. He was local, well-known and popular, and a good communicator. He said a lot about the deity of Christ, and opposed the great heretical challenge to the Church at the time, Arianism. But he was himself as great a danger to the Church as Arius, perhaps more of a danger in that his heresy was more subtle.

It was perhaps his election to the bishopric of Laodicea that brought his false teaching to the attention of the wider Church. Athanasius, the leader of the Orthodox party, saw clearly that however much Apollinarius seemed to be an ally against the Arians, it was in fact critical that he be opposed, otherwise an equally precious doctrine would be endangered. So in 362 he called a local council at Alexandria, where a number of doctrinal issues were discussed, among them the error of Apollinarius, which was roundly

condemned. This, however, did not deter Apollinarius, who at this point revealed himself to be completely unwilling to receive correction. By 373 there was a defined Apollinarian party gathering around the Bishop of Laodicea, and battle lines were drawn.

It is notable that among the classic theological works of Athanasius is a noted treatise *On the Incarnation of the Word*; he understood that the Incarnation matters, and unlike Apollinarius and those who followed him, would not give it up or compromise its reality even in the interests of an apologetic against the Arians. Nevertheless, it was not Athanasius who took up his pen against Apollinarius, but his Cappadocian allies.

The Cappadocians

Athanasius' primary concern was, understandably, Arianism, which had originated closer to home, and was therefore the greater issue in Alexandria. The reply to Apollinarius was therefore left largely to the Cappadocian Fathers, Basil of Caesarea, and Gregory of Nazianzus. Basil (330-379) and Gregory (329-390) were probably the greatest Eastern theologians of the era; they were also personal friends. They had studied together at the University of Athens, and so were every bit as well-educated as Apollinarius, if not more so, since as far as we know, Apollinarius did not study at a university. But more important than this, they did not set the same store in philosophy that Apollinarius did. Both men understood that the Christian theologian is not an innovator, a man who comes up with new and hitherto unknown ideas, nor one who pries into the mysteries of God, but a humble disciple in Christ's school. Both men also saw themselves as simple servants of the Church, not philosophical teachers seeking their own disciples. Basil and Gregory were even more active against Arius than Apollinarius, so that no accusation of that sort could reasonably be made against them.

There were, the Cappadocians argued, two great issues at stake in the controversy, Divine Impassibility, and the reality of Redemption. Basil emphasised the point of Divine Impassibility, that

the Divine nature itself cannot be made to suffer. Yet if in the Incarnation the Divine Word took the place of the human soul of Christ, it followed unavoidably that the Divine Word as such suffered. Gregory, on the other hand, emphasised Redemption, coining the phrase, “What is not assumed cannot be redeemed.” There was the great difference; Apollinarius was first and foremost a philosopher, considering the philosophical question of how God can become man. On the other hand, Gregory was, as he is remembered by posterity, a theologian, whose great concern was how the Incarnation saves sinful man.

Gregory insisted on his great point, “What is not assumed is not healed.” Christ Jesus came into the world, he pointed out, to save sinful men, and this required a full and proper Incarnation, as Hebrews 2:17 puts it, “Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.” But Apollinarius really taught only a partial Incarnation, in which Jesus had only a human body. But the body is not the main seat of sin in us, we are all conscious that sin is a matter of the soul even before it is of the body. A partial Incarnation in which the Son of God was only made partially “like unto his brethren,” but was not “in all things... like unto his brethren,” left the root of the matter unaddressed.

Apollinarius attempted to address this criticism by adopting a Trichotomist position and modifying his teaching accordingly. Now he said that Jesus had a human body and soul, but that the spirit, the higher part of human nature, was replaced by the Word. But this did not address Gregory's point at all, for it still meant that Apollinarius was teaching that Jesus had a defective, partial human nature, and the very highest element in man, which distinguishes man from the animals, was not assumed, and therefore not healed by Christ's work. Apollinarius made nonsense of Christ's work in the interests of his own heretical view of Christ's person.

There was also the vital matter of Christ's active obedience to the Law, which is imputed to believers. If the Incarnation was only the Son of God in a human body, there was no human will in that obedience to render to God obedience in our place, so it is not *human* obedience at all. And that meant, Gregory pointed out, no salvation! But that was Apollinarius' great blind spot, he had become so involved in the intricacies of philosophical speculation that he had simply forgotten that the Incarnation was in order to accomplish an end, namely the salvation of sinners.

Apollinarianism

Even though corrected by Athanasius and the Cappadocians, Apollinarius refused to reconsider his teaching, much less recant, and battle lines were drawn. By 377 there was the beginnings of a recognisable Apollinarian party, as the Bishop of Laodicea drew away followers after himself, and the battle became heated. For their part, the Orthodox refused to compromise on this central issue.

While the controversy was serious, over vital issues, it never caused as serious a division as Arianism. In part this was because of the lessons that had been learned from the Arian controversy, that theology is a serious business, and a whole Bible approach must be taken in its consideration. Isolated proof-texts taken out of their context cannot establish a doctrine. Apollinarius was not given the time and opportunities Arius had; people listened to what he was saying rather than thinking in purely personal terms, and he did not play local politics. And Apollinarius was simply no Arius; while popular enough at Laodicea, he lacked the arch-heretic's charisma and support network. Local synods condemned Apollinarius and his followers, at Rome in 377, Alexandria in 378, and Antioch in 379. With these three key centres united against him, Apollinarius and his party had been effectively rejected by the Church.

The controversy was one of the key issues at the Council of Constantinople in 381 AD, where Gregory of Nazianzus served as President for a time. The Council re-affirmed the Nicene Creed, with expansions, and insisted on the key point against Apollinarius,

that the eternal Son of God “was made man.” Nicea had used the word, “man” rather than “flesh,” and Apollinarius' abuse of the Biblical language showed why that mattered; he explained “flesh” in an overly literalistic way, and the Nicene “made man” corrected him. It was, the Creed declared, “for us men and for our salvation” that Christ was Incarnate, the very point Gregory insisted upon. Christian theology is never mere speculation. So while Apollinarius tried to appeal to the word in isolation, Gregory and the Council insisted on the *meaning*, even as the orthodox had refused to be swayed by Arius' false reasoning concerning the word “Son.” This is why Creeds and Confessions exist; not to take the place of the Bible, but to set forth the Bible's teaching in such a way as to answer heretics and false teachers who twist Scripture.

The Emperor Theodosius, who had come to the throne in 379, regarded himself as the appointed guardian of orthodoxy, and with the Council's decision that Apollinarianism was a heresy, he decided to act. In 384/5 he issued an edict against those who taught the doctrine, and a second edict was issued in 388. This time Apollinarius himself was exiled, and he left Laodicea never to return, dying in 391. Apollinarianism was practically dead, yet the issue of the person of Christ remained, and it would take several more controversies before it was truly settled.

Later history of Apollinarianism

Apollinarianism was condemned at Constantinople, and has been regarded as heresy ever since – quite rightly. However, that does not mean that it has gone away. In that it represents, like Modalism and Arianism, a naïve attempt by man to comprehend the incomprehensible, it is almost inevitable that when people start thinking about mechanics of the Incarnation, Apollinarianism will suggest itself as an “easy answer,” particularly when the issue of the Atonement is not brought in.

Just as Apollinarius himself fell into heresy because of his philosophical speculations, so Apollinarianism remains a danger to

the philosophically-minded, who wish to go beyond what is written and pry into the mechanics of the Incarnation. This is seen most clearly in certain of the 19th century Kenotic teachers. Basing their speculations on Philippians 2:7, where the Greek behind “Made himself of no reputation” is literally “emptied himself” (Greek, *Ekenosen*), they taught that the Incarnation involved in some sense a change in the Divine nature of Christ, in which certain divine attributes were given up.⁴

Prominent among these teachers was Gottfried Thomasius of Erlangen (1802-1875), who taught that the *Logos*, i.e. the Second Person of the Trinity, was transformed into a human soul in the process of Incarnation, and that this “depotentiated” Logos was then the soul of Jesus. A.B. Bruce states that Thomasius taught that “The Logos, to all intents and purposes, is transformed into a human soul.”⁵ Yet there was an ambiguity in Thomasius' teaching, perhaps because he realised that it was a form of Apollinarianism, or at least that it came close to it. Thomasius' Erlangen colleague, Johannes Heinrich August Ebrard, refined Thomasius' teaching, yet retained the ambiguity as best he could.

Wolfgang Friedrich Gess (1819-1891), who taught at Basel and Göttingen, explicitly stated in his *Scripture Doctrine of the Person of Christ* that the Logos was transformed into a human soul and that this was the soul of Jesus, so that the Incarnation consisted of the clothing of this human soul with a human body. With this he left behind all ambiguity, and taught out-and-out Apollinarianism.

If the Kenotic version of Apollinarianism is more subtle than the rather crude original, in that it claims to teach the full humanity of Christ during his Incarnation, it is none the less ruinous; for if Jesus' human spirit was the Second Person of the Trinity *transformed into* a human spirit, then the glorification of Christ must mean that Divinity regaining its original nature, so that the glorified Christ

4. The following section is based largely on the treatment in A.B. Bruce *The Humiliation of Christ* (2nd Ed., Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1881)

5. Bruce, p. 148

no longer has a human spirit, so he is *now* less than human. Furthermore, it makes the Divine nature subject to change, explicitly denying the immutability of God, just as Basil pointed out. If the Divine nature can be transformed into a human soul, what becomes of any distinction between Creator and creation?

Influenced by the earlier German Kenoticists, the German Church historian Adolf von Harnack (1851-1930), whose theology saw the "deification" of man as the end of Christianity, came to believe that Apollinarius was correct in his view of the Incarnation, and the orthodox were in error. This is unsurprising since Harnack was unsound on the purpose of Christ's Incarnation. Where something other than the Bible is in the driving seat, as it were, it should come as no surprise to find false teaching.

But it is not only in theological colleges and among the philosophers that Apollinarianism rears its ugly head. In simpler, more naïve circles, the danger of Apollinarianism is often not discerned, and so it is fallen into. Often this is not made explicit, but there is a silence on Christ's humanity, and a picture is presented of a Christ who is God with a human body, but who lacks the human heart. It was this image of Christ the divine judge, untempered by fellow-feeling, that Luther in his pre-Reformation days was tormented with, and which was a major element in the unbiblical exaltation of Mary as mediator and friend of sinners in the medieval church.

And this incipient and almost instinctual Apollinarianism is not only found in Rome; it can also be found in a certain reaction against teachings that assert a purely human Christ, as in contemporary liberalism and historic Unitarianism. In such cases the theological conservative may come to regard *any* assertion of the humanity of Christ as a *de facto* denial of his deity, and therefore an assertion of heresy, resulting in an imbalanced and unhealthy theology. We have seen this in some Fundamentalists,

fulminating against thoroughly orthodox statements simply because they assert that Christ is fully human, when there is no denial of the deity of Christ.

And there are of course those who teach an explicit and outright Apollinarianism in the Churches, some of whom even come from a Reformed background, and attempt to boast of their heritage. Apollinarius himself boasted of his heritage; he was an opponent of Arius, Bishop of an orthodox Church - and yet he was a heretic for all that, because of his teaching.

The Error of Apollinarianism

The fatal error of Apollinarianism is that, in an attempt to safeguard the deity and the unity of Christ, it ends up denying his humanity. It is a warning, like most of the great heresies, that our theology needs to have a Biblical balance, and therefore must be grounded in the Bible. Ultimately Apollinarius, although he opposed Arius, fell into the same trap; his theology became separated from the Bible, and so he wandered away from the truth to become lost in a maze of airy speculations. Because of his preoccupations, it landed him in a different place from Arius, but one equally divorced from Biblical truth. The Cappadocians escaped this, not because they were not educated in philosophy, but because they were aware of the source of Apollinarius' categories, and recognised that they were imposed on the text from outside, and not derived from it.

Apollinarius began with good intentions, the trouble was that he tried to explain what is not explained (and what cannot be explained), and he did so using categories derived from secular philosophy rather than the Bible. There is a sense in which Apollinarianism is to Christology what Sabellianism is to the Trinity: a sacrificing of the distinctions in the name of the union, under the influence of ideas derived from elsewhere than the Bible.

The Apollinarian answer as to how the Incarnation works “makes sense” from a philosophical standpoint; the absence of a part of the human nature provides a convenient “hole” as it were in which the

Divine nature can be fitted. The problem is that it is too convenient; it reduces a glorious mystery to a level where we can understand it, and by so doing, actually destroys the reality of the Incarnation.

The reality of the Incarnation is destroyed because, in Apollinarius' teaching, Jesus Christ is not perfect man; he is imperfect, because incomplete, man; an imperfection that is not moral, but one of nature, yet nevertheless real and utterly ruinous to the doctrine. Apollinarianism, from this angle, appears as a type of *Docetism*, the heretical teaching that Jesus Christ only *appeared* to be human. Whereas the Docetism of the Gnostics consisted in a denial of his physicality, that of Apollinarius is more subtle, but just as real, in that the human nature of Christ is, considered in itself, a partial one, a body alone, or a human nature lacking that highest element which distinguishes man from the animals.

In fact the Biblical teaching on the Incarnation completely precludes the idea that “flesh” always simply means the body, whether it is animated or otherwise. John 1:14 says, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” Obviously John is not saying that the Divine nature took to himself a body alone, but that he became man. Apollinarius went so far as to say that it was really improper to call Jesus a man, but the Bible does just that, in Romans 5:15, Paul speaks of “the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ,” and of course there is the familiar phrase in 1 Timothy 2:5, “the man Christ Jesus.” We venture to say that the Scripture is of greater authority than the mere speculations of Apollinarius.

Again, Paul's use of the word “flesh” shows how dangerously misguided Apollinarius' narrowing of the word was. In Romans 3:20, Paul writes, “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.” Does Apollinarius really expect us to believe that only human bodies are justified? Or that it is only the body that cannot be justified by the Law? Of course not. Again, in Romans 6:19, Paul says, “I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh.” Does this mean Paul's readers were

unwell? No, he refers to the infirmity of the whole of human nature as affected by the fall.

Gregory of Nazianzus hit the nail on the head with his great theological statement, “What has not been assumed has not been healed.” While the phrase is not in the Bible, the *idea* certainly is. Romans 8:3 says, “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.” Christ is our substitute; he became man so that he might be that substitute, and to be a true substitute, he must be made fully man, “Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren” (Hebrews 2:17). Apollinarius insisted that “flesh” meant a human body only, but Gregory noted that the seat of sin in fallen men is not really the body, but the soul. As our Lord said, “out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies” (Matthew 15:19). Not the heart as a muscle, of course, but the heart as the core of a man's being. Thus “the flesh” is not only the body, but the soul as well, the fullness of human nature.

So an Incarnation that was nothing more than God wearing a human body does not touch the problem; such a being cannot truly be spoken of in the words of Hebrews 4:15, “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Such a being cannot really know temptation at all, nor our infirmities. Apollinarius takes away the mediator, as he takes away the true humanity of Christ.

Apollinarianism leaves us with a Christ who cannot save, and who, since he is not truly man, cannot be a mediator between God and men. Yet 1 Timothy 2:5 is very clear, “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” Uniting God and man in his person, he is the perfect mediator; Apollinarius takes away that mediator, and gives us God in disguise, as it were, never truly entering into man's experience.

Lessons of the Apollinarian Controversy

The first lesson that we learn from this controversy is the vital one that we must always take great care not to react against one heresy by falling into the opposite error. Apollinarius was so concerned about the true deity of Christ that he forgot the equally vital doctrine of the true humanity of Christ, that he became man for us and for our salvation. He lost his balance, and ultimately lost the doctrine of the Atonement as a result.

And that is the second lesson we learn; that we can be so concerned about theological controversies that we forget the atonement. Apollinarius became so obsessed with the *mechanics* of the Incarnation that he forgot the *reason* for the Incarnation. The Bible is a unity, and Biblical theology is united; everything is joined up, it is not a matter of separate topics that do not interact with each other, but a great harmonious “body of divinity,” all working together and together displaying the glory of God.

Just as it was the Arian controversy that led Apollinarius to take his eyes off the cross, modern controversies over such vital subjects as the Inerrancy of Scripture can, if we are not careful have the same effect on us. But the temptation needs to be resisted; we must have a theology that is a whole-Bible theology, and a vision that is focused on the Cross of Jesus Christ. And this must be the reason we engage in controversies, for the honour of Christ and his cross.

A third lesson from the Controversy is that, as the proverb has it, “a little learning is a dangerous thing.” Apollinarius was a fairly cultured man, but that learning went to his head. Basil and Gregory, university graduates, were able to see beyond the allure of classical culture in a way that Apollinarius was not. We too need to be able to look beyond the glitter of a writer's Ph.D. or Chair of this, that, or the other, and remember that all the treasures of wisdom are in Christ. That is not to speak against education; anti-intellectualism is just as dangerous as the exaltation of the intellect, but to insist on a realistic approach to learning, and to subordinate all learning to Christ. “The world through wisdom knew not God,” the Bible cautions us; it is not worldly philosophy that opens up the Bible for

us, but the Holy Spirit, and all theology must be in the light of this great truth.

Like all the great heretics, yet perhaps most strikingly among them, Apollinarius stands as a great warning against speculation in theology. The Christian theologian has no business going beyond what is written in the Scriptures, and must take great heed of Deuteronomy 29:29, “The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever.” We deal with what God has said; what God has not revealed, we cannot know, and so ought not to pry into.

The Apollinarian controversy also challenges us to have a full-orbed Biblical view of the Incarnation, which will protect us against many errors. In his notorious book *Honest to God*, Bishop John A.T. Robinson accused orthodox Christianity of teaching that Jesus was “God dressed up like a man,” like a man in fancy dress. But that is emphatically *not* the orthodox teaching; it is sheer Apollinarianism, which was denounced as a heresy for good reason. The orthodox response to Robinson is therefore that he has caricatured, either deliberately or accidentally, the orthodox position, and so attacked a heresy rather than the target he claims to be aiming for. And the Apollinarian controversy reminds us of this, and allows us to reply, “I quite agree that such an idea is wrong – and that is not what I believe, nor what the Bible teaches.”

Conclusion

We have on one shelf in our library four books, which we have arranged together to spell out a message, they are: *Which Jesus? This Jesus, The God-Man, Christ the Lord*. There are many “Jesuses” being taught out there, just as Paul in 2 Corinthians 11:4 speaks of he that “preacheth another Jesus,” so we must ask the question, “Which Jesus?” Since questions are asked in order to be answered, we reply, “this Jesus,” and then explain that he is “The God-Man, Christ the Lord.” All of these points are of vital importance, and to deny any is ruinous. Apollinarius denied the

humanity of Christ; that is to say that he was perfectly happy talking about Christ as God, but never as man. This is a warning to us who hold tenaciously and properly to the deity of Christ in the face of liberal denials, that we must also hold to the complementary truth that the Incarnation is true and real. "God was manifest in the flesh."

The study of the Apollinarian controversy should leave us in wonder at that one who was born, and yet who is eternal, at the God-Man who is ascended on high and remains "God with us," and also God for us, as our mediator and advocate, our great high priest. What Apollinarius denied is unutterably precious to believers.

*With joy we meditate the grace
Of our High Priest above;
His heart is made of tenderness,
His bowels melt with love.*

*Touched with a sympathy within,
He knows our feeble frame;
He knows what sore temptations mean,
For He has felt the same.*

- Isaac Watts

*This wondrous Man of whom we tell,
Is true Almighty God;
He bought our souls from death and hell;
The price, His own heart's blood.*

*That human heart he still retains,
Though throned in highest bliss;
And feels each tempted member's pains,
For their affliction's his.*

-Joseph Hart

Book Reviews

Privately Published

Calvin for Today by John M. Brentnall. Paperback, no ISBN, Pp. 173. £12

John Brentnall needs no introduction to readers of this magazine, as he was, until his retirement in 2015, our editor. In this attractive volume he has collected together essays on various topics relating to John Calvin and his theology. As the title suggests, the main thrust of these essays is Calvin's theology as it addresses the Church, and the world, today. There is much food for thought here, presented in an accessible and readable form.

This book may be obtained from:

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Soli Deo Gloria Publications

The True Christian's Love to the Unseen Christ by Thomas Vincent, 144pp \$25 Hbk ISBN: 978-1-877611-57-5

Thomas Vincent (1634-78) is perhaps not one of the better known Puritans today, but he was highly regarded in his own day, and lived quite a heroic life. Ejected from the Church of England in 1662, he became an assistant at Doolittle's Academy in Islington and was there at the time of the Great Plague and the Great Fire of London in 1665-6. Many ministers fled the city, but Vincent remained, ministering to the sick and dying, and preaching in the parish churches. Thousands came to hear him and it is said that people were converted at every sermon. Extracts from his "God's Voice to the City" were printed in *Peace & Truth* 2004:3. The present volume (out of print since 1812) is an exposition of 1 Peter 1.8, "Whom having not seen, ye love..." with an appendix based on John 14.21, "And he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." In true Puritan style, he analyses the Christian's love for Christ, and Christ's

gracious manifestations of himself to his people, in every imaginable detail. He does so, however, with great tenderness and warmth of heart, showing on every page his own rapturous love for Christ, and a deep love for the souls of men. Perhaps a short extract from the final peroration will best give the flavour of it: "Shall I gain no hearts for Christ by all my sermons which I have preached concerning the love of Christ? My Lord and Master has sent me to woo you, to win your hearts for Him; may I speed or not? Shall my message be accepted, and Jesus Christ, the most lovely Person find entertainment with you?" Readers unfamiliar with the Puritans may require a little patience and extra concentration to adjust to the style and language, but it will be well worth while. A truly great book, which will be a great blessing to everyone who reads it.

- Robert Dale

Christ All in All - What Christ is Made to All Believers by Philip Henry. Hbk. 365 pp. ISBN. 978 1601784780. £21.56 on Amazon.co.uk

This book, by the father of the Bible commentator Matthew Henry, contains the substance of 41 sermons preached around the mid-17th century. The author was among the 2000 or so clergy ejected from their livings in 1662 for refusing to conform to the anti-Puritan legislation known as the Clarendon Code. Each sermon is based on a Biblical statement regarding Christ, e.g. 'Christ Is our Hope'; 'Christ Is our Shield'; 'Christ is the Door', etc. The author reveals a massive knowledge of Scripture, and considerable powers of concentration are required from those of us brought up on lighter 'fare'. The gracious work of the Holy Spirit in making Christ real to believers is emphasized throughout. - John Manton

The Westminster Conference

The Power of God for Salvation, Pbk, Pp. 117. £7.50

The Westminster Conference always delivers a selection of papers to inform and to make the reader think, and the 2015 papers are no exception. From a paper on the pastoral theology of Andrew Fuller to one on Isaac Watts' *Guide to Prayer*, this is an excellent little collection. That on John Owen's Eschatology by Crawford Gribben

deserves special mention, as it shows Owen moving from an approach primarily derived from his times in his earlier writings to one based more firmly in the Biblical text – always a challenge for those preaching and teaching on the subject.

As with previous years' papers, copies are available from the Conference Secretary

John Harris
18, Nook Green
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Banner of Truth

Every Promise of His Word by Rhett P. Dodson, Hbk, Pp. xii+370
ISBN: 9781848716698, £15.50

Subtitled "The Gospel According to Joshua", this excellent work is a volume of expository sermons, and not a commentary in the full sense of the term. As his name suggests, the author is an American, and the reader should make allowances for that; it shows in his use of anecdotes and illustrations that are probably not as clear or familiar to the British reader as to the American. Those allowances should be made precisely because the meat of this volume is excellent, preaching Joshua as Christian Scripture, as it ought to be preached. If illustrations are the windows of a sermon, it cannot be said of this book, as it is of Hardwick Hall, that it is "more glass than wall." The windows have a purpose, which they admirably fulfil.

Jewels from John Newton – selected by Miller Ferrie, 384pp,
£15.50 hbk, ISBN 978-1-84871-555-4

John Newton is best known for his dramatic conversion - the blasphemous slave trader who became a minister of the gospel - and for his hymns, "Amazing Grace" being the most famous. He was also, however, a voluminous writer. Hundreds of his letters have been published, and many of his sermons. His *Works* fill four volumes in the Banner of Truth's 2015 reprint. From this wealth of

material, Miller Ferrie has selected 366 short extracts, one for each day of the year (with a bonus for Leap Year!) Many of them come from the collection of letters known as *Cardiphonia* ("The Utterance of the Heart") but there are also extracts from "Messiah", "The Guilt and Danger of Such a Nation as This", "On Communion with God" and other works. This is not the first time Newton's works have been used for Daily Readings: Day One published *365 Days with Newton* (also actually 366!) in 2006. This is, however, no duplication, the Day One volume being based on unpublished sermon notes, this Banner volume on published works. Both are well worth having. Concerning this selection, Miller Ferrie remarks how impressed she was with Newton's honesty in admitting his struggles, sinfulness and failures, and how encouraged she was with his constant reminders of God's trustworthiness. Newton is easy to read, and yet profound, with a deep understanding of the human heart. These daily readings will undoubtedly do any reader good. - Robert Dale

Bible Names, Alison Brown, Banner of Truth, 9781848716292, pb 32pp, £3.50

This is another beautifully illustrated book by the talented Alison Brown. Here she introduces children to 13 Bible characters, arranged chronologically from Adam to Timothy. Each left hand page has a full colour picture, in her distinctive and thoughtful style, with the character's name and its meaning. The right hand page tells their story briefly, fitting it into God's grand plan of redemption; thus the book becomes a mini bible overview for children. There is a space to draw a picture, a bible reference, and some sentences with missing words to fill in, making sure the story has been understood. The book ends with a reminder of each name, its meaning, and the main lesson of each story in one sentence. This is a very attractive and useful book for children aged 5 to 8 years.
- Miriam Lowrie

A Bible Alphabet Busy Book, Alison Brown, Banner of Truth, 9781848716285, pb 31pp, £3.00

Following on from Alison Brown's *Bible Alphabet* picture book

and the matching *Activity Book*, we now have a book for children who are developing their writing skills. Beginning with Ark and ending with Zion, each page has a keyword, a bible reference, and a black and white drawing. Underneath is a simple writing activity – missing words, missing letters, questions to answer, jumbled sentences – which takes the child through the bible story. The words the children need are included on the page, to help less confident writers. The last pages give a Who's Who quiz, recapping all the stories in the book. As in the previous books in the series, the language is straightforward, the font easy to read, and the illustrations attractive. It would be a great follow on for children who are moving beyond simple colouring books. - Miriam Lowrie

J.C. Ryle: Prepared to Stand Alone, by Iain H. Murray. Pp. 273+xv, Pbk ISBN 978-1-84871-679-7, £8.50, Hbk ISBN 978-1-84871-678-0, £15

John Charles Ryle, first Bishop of Liverpool, was a remarkable man by any measure, and in this new account of his life, Iain H. Murray conveys a striking impression of that remarkable man in both his personality and his teaching. This being the bicentenary of Ryle's birth, it is an opportune time for such a book – even more so since it is fifteen years since the last major biography of Ryle appeared, and during that time the long-lost manuscript autobiography that Ryle wrote of his early years has been rediscovered. Murray makes great use of this resource, along with many others. A lively narrative, which we found hard to put down, is further enhanced by illustrations that help to bring the reader into the events of the book. The history of the Church of England in the latter part of the 19th century is set forth in a lively way through this biography. But this is no mere exercise in nostalgia; Ryle challenges us in many ways, and in the final chapter, Murray explores these challenges as they relate to the changes in the Churches over the past century, and why we should read Ryle today. There is also a useful appendix on Ryle's son, the more liberal Herbert E. Ryle, and the contrast between him and his father. All in all, an excellent book.

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THE GOSPEL OF SOVEREIGN GRACE

by **HENRY ATHERTON**

Sermons and addresses by the first Secretary of the Sovereign Grace Union
Copies are available from:

The Secretary, SGU, 43 Warwick Road, Rayleigh, Essex SS6 8PQ

East Anglia Auxiliary

May 20th, Saturday 3.00pm

Friston Baptist Church, Suffolk IP17 1PH

Speaker: Revd. David Silversides (Loughbrickland, Northern Ireland).

June 14th, Wednesday 7.30pm

Hethersett Baptist Church, Norfolk NR9 3JH

Speaker: Mr. Edward Malcolm (Reading, Berks.).

Surrey Auxiliary

March 7th, Tuesday 7PM

Colnbrook Baptist Chapel, SL3 0LY

Speaker: Dr P.C. Wilkins

Deputation Meeting

21st April, Friday 7 PM

Providence Baptist Chapel, Blunham
Bedfordshire MK44 3NH

Speaker: Pastor Chalan Hetherington

26th April, Wednesday 7PM

Bethel Strict Baptist Chapel, The Bars, Guildford GU1 4LP

Speaker: Col. D.V. Underwood

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.
