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## GEMS FROM THOMAS BROOKS

God looks that we should spread His gracious promises before Him, as Hezekiah did Sennacherib's letter (Isa. 37. 14).

Paul, who learned his theology among the angels, and who had the Holy Ghost for his immediate teacher, tells us plainly that "he knew but in part" (1 Cor. 13. 9-11)

When the world frowns most, then God smiles most; when the world puts its iron chains upon the saints' legs, then God puts His golden chains about the saints' necks; when the world puts a bitter cup into one hand, then the Lord puts a cup of consolation into the other hand; when the world cries out, "Crucify them, crucify them," then commonly they hear that sweet voice from heaven, "These are My beloved ones, in whom I am well pleased."

Prayer is nothing but the turning of a man's inside outward before the Lord. The very soul of prayer lies in the pouring out of a man's soul into the bosom of God.

This little word Father, says Luther, lispeth forth in prayer by a child of God, exceeds the eloquence of Demosthenes, Cicero, and all other famed orators in the world.

Ah, friends! Did you but love private prayer as well as you love the world, and delight in private prayer as much as you delight in the world, and were your hearts as much set upon closet prayer as they are set upon the world, you would never say you could not pray.

It is not so much from lack of ability to pray in secret that you do not pray in secret, as it is from lack of a will, a heart to pray in secret.

Princes lock up with their own hands in secret their most precious and costly jewels; and so does (jod His: "For the Lord hat chosen Jacob unto Himself and Israel for His peculiar treasure," or for His secret gem (Psa. 135. 4).

Scripture condemns all those that put off secret prayer till they are moved to it by the Spirit; for by this sad delusion many have been kept from secret prayer many weeks, many months; oh, that I might not say, many years! Though it be a very fit season to pray when the Spirit moves us to pray, yet it is not the only season to pray (Isa. 62. 1; Psa. 123. 1,2; Gal. 4. 6).

Though all the sons of Jacob returned laden from Egypt with corn and money in their sacks, yet only Benjamin had the silver cup in the mouth of his sack. So though the men of the world have their com and their money, etc., yet it is only God's Benjamins that have the silver cup, the grace cup, the cup of blessing, as the apostle calls it, for their portion (1 Cor. 10. 16).

Private prayer is so far from being a hindrance to a man's business, that it is the way of ways to bring down a blessing from heaven upon a man's business.

O sirs! Did Christ spend whole nights in private prayer for the salvation of your souls; and will you think it much to redeem an hour's time from your natural rest to seek and to serve Him in a corner, and to make sure the things of your everlasting peace?

One sigh and groan from a broken heart is better pleasing to God than all human eloquence.

Though God seldom comes at our time, yet He never fails to come at His own time: "He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. 10. 37). The mercies of God are not styled the swift, but the "sure mercies of David."

An idle life and an holy heart are far enough asunder. By doing nothing, says the heathen man, men learn to do evil things. It is easy slipping out of an idle life into an evil and wicked life; yes, an idle life is of itself evil, for man was made to be active, not to be idle.

Idleness is the hour of temptation, and an idle person is the devil's tennis-ball, tossed by him at his pleasure.

And therefore shun sloth and idleness as you would shun a lion in the way, or poison in your meat, or coals in your bosom, or else you will never find time to wait upon God in your closets,

There cannot be a surer nor a greater character of a hypocrite than to make a great deal of stir about little things in religion, and in the meanwhile neglect the great and main things in religion.

I never knew any man hot and zealous about circumstantial, about the little things of religion, that was ever famous for closet prayer.

O that men would once learn to be contentedly ignorant, where God would not have them knowing! O that men were once so humble, as to account it no disparagement to them to acknowledge some depths in God, and in the blessed Scripture, which their shallow reason cannot fathom!

Christ, when He was on earth, very frequently, severely and sharply condemned curious inquirers, as is evident by John 21. 22 and Acts 1. 6, 7, and the great reason why our Saviour did so frequently check this humour of curiosity was because the great indulgers of it were too frequent neglecters of the more great, necessary and important points of religion.

The devil knows lie is no loser, and the curious soul but a very little gainer, if he can but persuade him to spend most of his precious time in studying and poring over

the most dark, mysterious and hidden things of God. He who affects to read the Revelation of John more than his plain epistles, or Daniel's prophecies more than David's Psalms, and is more busy about reconciling difficult Scriptures than he is about mortifying lusts, or that is set more upon vain speculations than upon things that make most for edification, he is not the man that is cut out for closet prayer.

Many have so much to do on earth that they have no time to look up to heaven. As much earth puts out the fire, so much worldly business puts out the fire of heavenly affections.

Many drive so great a trade in their shops that their private trade to heaven is quite laid by.

There is no cloud, nor curtain, nor moment of darkness, that can stand between the eyes of God and the ways of men.

Some may further object and say, God is very well acquainted with all our desires, necessities, straits, trials; and there is no moving of Him to bestow any favours upon us which He does not intend to bestow upon us, whether we pray in our closets or no; and therefore to what purpose do you press secret prayer so hard upon us?

Many a man had never found the way to his closet if God by bodily illnesses had not turned him out of his shop, his trade, his business, his all. etc.

O, do not take up in [be satisfied with] your closet prayers, or tears, or joys. or enlargements; but labour and long to enjoy that inward and close fellowship with God in your closets, as may leave such a choice and sweet savour of God, both upon your hearts and lives, as others may be forced to say. Surely these have been with Jesus (Acts 4. 13).

## News of the Fellowship

We were once again thankful for the ministry we received during August in the absence of our Pastor. We were ably served by Rev. R. B. Higham on the 3rd, Rev. D. P. Morris on the 17th and Rev. Alun McNabb on the 24th. Following the Lord's Day evening service on the 7th of September, we enjoyed an after church fellowship together. We practiced the following hymns: 114 "All hail the power of Jesus' Name" to the tune Diadem; 511 "I need Thee, precious Jesus" to the tune Wilton Square; 736 the very familiar metrical version of Psalm 23 to Orlington where we repeat the third line (the women first). We also practiced 479 and 279. It is good to familiarise ourselves with these and other hymns and their tunes - all from Christian Hymns published 1977.

On Thursday evening the 23rd of October we received our bi-annual visit from Mr Chris Richards of the Protestant Alliance. He brought to us a Power point presentation of the life and ministry of Martin Luther, the great reformer. Raised in the Roman Catholic Church, he came to see, by God's grace, the great doctrine of justification by faith alone. By faith we receive the righteousness of Jesus Christ which is the sole ground of our acceptance with God. Mr Richards fielded questions at the end and we closed by singing one of Luther's hymns, 360 "A safe stronghold our God is still". He then had to make a long journey home to the midlands to be in his office for the commencement of the next day. We were heartened to see the school room full with a number of friends also coming from neighbouring churches.

On the Lord's Day 26th October Pastor preached at Clarboston Road near Haverfordwest. We were once again

blessed under the ministry of our former pastor Rev. Higham.

The pastor was away from Monday 2nd November until late Thursday evening 6th preaching at the Suffolk branch of the Sovereign Grace Union (Monday) and at the Essex branch of the Bible Spreading Union (Thursday).

On Friday 7th November we held our annual youth bonfire night evening and fireworks. This year it was held at the manse. A goodly number of children attended, some with their parents. Ample refreshments were provided. An epilogue was given in the school room at the close. We are thankful for all who helped and especially to Dr M. Munday who organised the fire and fireworks. Photographs of the evening can be seen in the school room.

On the Lord's Day 9th November we held another after church fellowship. This time we heard a report of the work in mainland Italy from our brother pastor Antonio De Noia. He serves the Lord in a small town called Peschici. He told us about his conversion and the way the Lord graciously dealt with his wife and members of his family. He would value prayer for his wife who is struggling with illness and for his three brothers who are not believers.

We continue to remember the sick. We are thankful for the way the Lord has undertaken for Pam and Lyn Hopkins. We continue to uphold Mary Turner and are thankful for her's and Betti Rowland's return to the services. We are also mindful of Avril Eddwards. Much prayer continues to be offered at our prayer meeting for Padrig Johnson. Mr John Redford (a deacon at Margam Road) has thankfully returned home after a spell in hospital. Mr Ken Stockley also continues to make good progress.

To: Rev. Pfeiffer, and Brothers & Sisters in Christ at Peniel Green

21st November 2008

The year 2008 began with the usual feelings of anticipation & joy at the prospect of doing planned things etc., plus the sadness of what had passed, wishing we had achieved more in 2007 and kept our walk with God more as He would have wanted.

However, the new year was upon us and a health problem needed sorting. After visits to various doctors and surfing the Internet medical sites I realised that 2008 was to be a year when I would need my God more than ever.

Little did I know the bad news that we would receive come July. My dear husband had a terminal illness! What could I do to help him knowing that my illness would prevent me caring for him through his. I belonged to God and knew I could turn to Him in prayer, I could pray for the both of us. I had not reckoned on the loyalty of my brothers and sisters at Peniel Green, by the time our respective treatments were under way many prayers had been said. Thank you my lovely friends, and thank you God for hearing and answering them. I put my trust in Him and he delivered. Praise God.

Yesterday Lyn was given the news that his illness is stable and the doctors are very pleased with him. I know what is around the corner but God has used Lyn's illness to open his heart and to seek his Saviour. Alleluia.

Last Sunday brought much joy to my heart, now I know we will not be parted for long when we leave this earth. "Eternal life through salvation" - you can't beat it, try it. If you do not yet know Jesus as Saviour, go to Him humbly and seek until you find Him. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.

A special thank you to Rev. Pfeiffer for his constant care.

We are yours in Christ Jesus

Pam and Lyn Hopkins

## Church Historical Trip

On Friday the 29th of August the church's historical trip was held once again. Mr Edward Williams arranged the trip for us and we were blessed with a day of fellowship, of history and an opportunity to visit parts which some hadn't seen before. The weather was fine and the Pembrokeshire scenery didn't disappoint us. We visited three places



being Llanddowror, Picton Castle and Woodstock village to end the day.

The first stop was at a small but famous hamlet in the middle of Carmarthenshire: Llanddowror. The village has become synonymous with the Rev. Griffith Jones 1683-1761, for most of its history is associated with this man. Mr Higham spoke to us in detail on this great man who influenced the lives of many in Wales and in England too. It is clear that he has been forgotten in modern-day society even though he greatly influenced the Wales we live in now. Mr Higham opened by referring to the poll that took place in the past year regarding the 'greatest Welsh person' in our history and present time. It is clear that our society are blind even towards history and cultural matters for sadly the men and women that topped the rankings were none other but Tom Jones, Catherine Zeta Jones and Aneurin Bevan.

It is sad that people regard an actress who played in a few 'Zorro' films to be greater than William Morgan, Rowlands, Harris, William Williams and of course Griffith Jones Llanddowror. Men that did not only influence our religion and revival in our great land: but men that shaped the Wales we live in now within literature, culture and life itself. Such a man was Griffith Jones. He was known as the 'morning star' of the revival; for God ignited the flame in this man, in order to begin his work in Wales.



I will give you a brief history of this key character that shaped education and religion all over Wales and prepared the way for the Lord in this land. His early life is unclear but we know that he was born in 1683 and that his parents were devout Christians. He was a clever, serious and a well-read boy but unfortunately he lacked physical strength and was also an asthmatic. He had a good education, but before his schooling spent some time as a carpenter and shepherd. On the hills he had a dream of Heaven and Hell (Many of these great men seemed to be saved or called in dreams.) After finishing school he was ordained as a priest and preached for a while in the Laugharne area. As soon as he preached he attracted a great number and it was certain that God was using this young man. In 1716 he was ordained at Llanddowror where he remained till the end of his life. During his time he managed to be-friend many rich and powerful people. Such as Sir John Phillips of Picton Castle and Madam Bevan. These people were used by God to aid Griffith both



### The Phillip's coat of arms

many have died here without Christ as their Saviour." For the remainder of his time it is certain that his greatest work was that of the Circulating Schools. He formed these schools in order to "literate an illiterate nation". He was used to prepare the soil for the great revival. It meant that people would be able to read God's word whilst listening to it being preached. The figures were outstanding. Out of 400,000 people of Wales, in a few years, 200,000 of those could now read. Harris visited Llandowror many times; Rowlands and Williams regarded him as a patriarch. One interesting fact is that Sir John Phillips actually paid for the education of a certain young man, called George Whitefield. After 45 years of hard ministry his health failed and his friend Madam Bevan cared for him. In 1761 he passed away and his last words were: "Blessed be God for his Grace." Thousands attended his funeral. It is certain that he was a greater Welshman than Aneurin Bevan and Tom Jones. He is



### Madam Bevan

financially and by introducing him to a larger audience that he might be used to the best of his ability.

He had planned to go to South India as a missionary but fortunately he realised: "so

buried within the walls of Llandowror Church where there is also a plaque to Madam Bevan and Sir John Phillips his friend. The Vicar then gave a few words and we headed to the bus for our next destination.

After a short trip in the bus we arrived in time for lunch in Picton Castle. The road towards the castle was like the road to Berlin with potholes like those at the Somme! Yet we were glad to reach the castle and its beautiful grounds. We walked together towards the restaurant and arrived after passing a giant rhubarb plant on the way. We were greeted by an eccentric Italian who ran about preparing the food. The food was good and fresh



although some of the ladies were nearly bombarded by an army of stinging wasps attracted by the sweet vinegar that was served.

We had a chance then to explore the grounds or take a visit of the historical castle. This of course was the home of Griffith Jones's friend Sir John Phillips and Griffith would have visited the castle on many an occasion. The castle has a hoard of history and the tour was quite a good one. We were introduced to all the rooms including the circular library, which had been formed from the old tower. The tour was fascinating and the family of the castle lives on although the castle now is in the care of a trust. Some of the children (including me) went about the maze, which was quite tricky, in spite of it's thin appearance. The grounds were very beautiful and housed a number of exotic species of plants. We all had a chance to

visit the shop before heading on towards the last, but not the least of destinations.

This was at Wystog or Woodstock. A jolly, bearded fellow who scared me due to his appearance greeted us. Yet he was a nice man and we had a warm welcome by the Welsh folk of the church. The Rev William Owen spoke to us on the church building more than the man we really wanted to hear more about. However, I will give you a short history of the great man who built that church. He was born in 1716 and the only thing we know of his early life is his conversion in his twenties. He was converted under Rev Howell Harris and was ordained in 1739. As he was disliked in the first church meaning he had to preach in the open air. But after a while he became renowned for his work and he was known as the ‘Apostle of Pembrokeshire.’ In 1751 he built the chapel at Woodstock where the first communion was taken outside the Church of England by none other than the Rev George Whitefield. He also built Newchapel due to the distance some of his congregation had to travel. All of the great ministers preached here and at Newchapel and there was considerable blessing here in the years to come. His ministry was needed in Pembrokeshire and God used this man as one of the great leaders of the Methodist movement. Unfortunately, Howell Davies died in 1770. On his grave is written:

“Accomplished now is all my strife,  
My happy soul is gone,  
I left the pains of mortal life,  
A glorious prize I won!”

It is certain that this man gave his life to God and struggled in a time when the Methodists were looked down upon. He was disliked by many yet God used him in a unique manner. Not only was he the

architect of those two churches; but the architect of the establishing of the Methodist revival in Pembrokeshire. Through him God brought the West to its knees along with other counties with their different ministers. He was among the greatest preachers of his age and is as highly renowned as Pant y Celyn, Rowland and others that I have mentioned.

The congregation made us a lovely tea and we were very thankful to them for their effort. We were more than full on our journey home. The day went well and we had a blessed time by hearing of the great men and women that have shaped the land we live in now. Let us pray that God will come again and raise men like the ones mentioned to lead our land in another great revival. We all enjoyed the day and we thank Mr Edward Williams for organising the trip, and to Mr Higham for his talk in Llanddowror.

Nathan Munday

**THE DIRECTION OF**  
**EVANGELISM**

**DEPARTING FROM THE**  
**FATHERS**

Psalm 44<sup>1-3,9-10,14,24</sup>

*1 We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old. 2 How thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedst them; how thou didst afflict the people, and cast them out. 3 For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them. 9 But thou hast cast off, and put us to shame; and goest not forth with our armies. 10 Thou makest us to turn back from the enemy: and they which hate us spoil for themselves. 14 Thou makest us a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people. 23 Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? arise, cast us not off for ever. 24 Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our affliction and our oppression? 25 For our soul is bowed down to the dust: our belly cleaveth unto the earth. 26 Arise for our help, and redeem us for thy mercies' sake.*

Verses 1-3 – The psalmist thinks back to the time when religion flourished in Israel. Verses 9-10, 14 – when religion was on the decline in Israel.

Verses 23-26 – a cry by God's people for help.

Those verses and the divisions basically sum up what I have to say tonight. There's nothing new here. I think we all basically know that there was a time in our land when religion flourished here in Wales, and then we see now the great decline, and then the remedy. It's simple and yet so hard. We have to cry to God for help.

I think it would be appropriate to begin this important subject with a verse from Scripture, and I cannot think of a better one than Jeremiah 6<sup>16</sup>: 'Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where *is* the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls...'

When Jeremiah the prophet brought those words, Israel – that is God's chosen people – had strayed far away from God and the truth, and sin and wickedness were rampant throughout the land. And there were so many conflicting influences in their religion. In the midst of this unhappy situation, Jeremiah was called by God to preach a message of judgment upon Israel. It would seem that he faced an impossible task. There were additional factors which complicated the religious problem. There were other prophets in the land, prophets not called by God, who preached a message of peace, peace, when there was no peace. In contrast to Jeremiah's God-given message upon the sinful nation, these other prophets or preachers were popular because their message did not disturb nor convict the people. And isn't this always the case? The preacher who preaches a smooth, undisturbing message will find a ready reception amongst the people, compared to those men who are brave enough to rouse a nation from her complacency and inertia and her sin. I fear that what is happening in our land these

days, is similar to the days of the prophet Jeremiah. This dual testimony of conflicting of messages between Jeremiah and the false prophets, caused bewilderment and perplexity amongst the people. And there were many in Israel in those days who were standing as it were at the crossroads, and were uncertain which path to take. And don't you think that this is true of many Christians in our churches today? There is confusion and there is bewilderment everywhere. Generally there seems to be a rejection of the old kind of Christian testimony, and an embracing of a new modern 'with-it' form of Christianity and those who preach separation from the world, and the need for holiness are shunned by many today.

Naturally there are many other contributing factors to add to this confusion: our lifestyle is considerably different from that of our forefathers. The pace of life, even a hundred years ago, was much slower than it is today; we live in an age of speed and bustle, and ceaseless movement; our lives are filled with every kind of clever technological gadgets, that dominate our lives, and surely must hinder the individual to stop still for a moment and examine the state of his soul. And because of all the noise around us and all the hundred-and-one distractions, many cannot hear the still small voice of God. How appropriate are the hymn-writer's words: 'All the world's distracting voices, All the enticing tones of ill.'

The witness of the church as a whole for the great truths that our forefathers preached, have been diluted, they have become indecisive, uncertain and hesitant. We hear of no authoritative ring from the pulpit these days, and we have a people who generally claim to be Christian, yet the lives and lifestyle and actions show no fruits of true repentance and show little

marks of godliness and holiness. One man rightly described the church today, "that the church of God is almost dying of broadmindedness". In most evangelical churches today, for a person to say he's become a Christian, they no longer question the authenticity of it, and the person is welcomed with open arms into the fellowship, for conversions today are so few and far between, and standards have certainly lowered since the times of our forefathers.

I'd like to show you an example of this. During the eighteenth century Revival, we've all heard of the great preachers of Wales: Daniel Rowlands, David Jones who were two very great preachers in Wales. These men preached for quite a considerable time to congregations before they themselves realised that they were not really converted. David Jones confessed in his diary that it was under the guidance of a godly Dr Read of Caldicot that he experienced the grace of God in his heart. These are his words: 'I had many hearers before experiencing the power of the Gospel in my own heart.' You see, in those days the climate of opinion amongst evangelicals was that they looked for a deep change in an individual, and for a period of time professing converts who joined the Calvinistic Methodists societies were observed very carefully and closely by the leaders and preachers, until they were convinced that that person had been regenerated and saved.

Let me give you one or two examples from the diary of a Cardiganshire exhorter. He writes these words about the ones under his charge: 'Mary Lloyd is seeking the Lord in earnest. Jenkin Jones under temptation; he's dark and dry in spirit. Sarah Williams testified in coming out of the furnace. Jane Jones enjoys peace with God and is going forward happily, leaning

on her Beloved.’ Now I’m not particularly advocating a return to such a strict system as those societies, but what it does show clearly is that in those days of revival, Christianity was a very very serious business, and not something to be played about with as is done so much today. And the question needs to be asked: How serious are we about our own walk in Christ? These leaders or exhorters as they were known, looked for a radical change in the life of a convert before they were fully accepted into the church. Now when we observe the lives of many professing Christians today, it seems to be a very different story. What were the true marks of true conversion, even 50 years ago, have been completely removed from that sort of conversion today. The accepted norm among new converts was a complete severance from the worldly activities such as dances, discos, cinemas, alcohol. In his book ‘Knowing the Times’, Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones made this very searching comment; he’s talking about two Christian student movements, one was the Student Christian Movement, and the other was the evangelical one, the IVF; and this is what he says: ‘I remember in my first contact with SCM, the students of that movement used to describe those who belonged to the IVF – the Inter Varsity Fellowship – in these terms: ‘Ah, they are people who don’t go to the cinema, they don’t drink alcohol, and they don’t smoke.’ And Lloyd-Jones made this disturbing observation: ‘I don’t think they would say that of our Christian Unions today.’ And may I remind you that those words were spoken 30 years ago. I wonder how things have worsened even by today in our IVF Christian Unions.

The observance of the Sabbath was much stricter among the believers in the days of our forefathers. Even in those days

those non-attending church-goers outwardly at least observed the Sabbath day, and in many of the farms in Wales, no work whatsoever was done on the Lord’s day, only the milking of cows. All food was prepared on Saturday night and no dishes were washed on a Sunday. I used to live in Merionethshire and I used to go out preaching every Sunday – this would be in the 1970s – and some of the deacons would tell me that in some of the remote farms in the area, that, if a clock stopped on a Sunday, they would not correct it until the Monday. And that was only 40 years ago.

The big cry today is to be modern. Youth are placed on pedestals, and anything that is old is shunned. Nowhere is it so true than in the Christian church today. Maurice Roberts very rightly says: ‘The beliefs and practices of the fathers, however excellent, are often in such days as ours referred to with scorn, as mere tradition.’ He then goes on to say: ‘The robes of their fathers’ traditions are too big for the pygmy generation that follows, and must therefore be cut down to a miniature to strive to meet their stature would be too much like hard work for a Christianity that half loves the worldly mammon. Only one course is therefore open for such men to follow. They must sneer at everything that belongs to the past, and so shrink their fathers’ religion down to their own size.’

Of course, not all that is old is good, or even right. Not all that is old is better, either. For example, error is old; it’s as old as man himself. What Jeremiah says in this verse was that among the old paths, the good way was to be found. ‘Thus saith the LORD: Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where *is* the good way...’

What then is this way that is good? We can find that answer again in the Bible; it is the old way that Isaiah spoke of, in those

wonderful words in chapter 35<sup>8</sup>: ‘An highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those, the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.’ I wonder how many of us have even found this way. It is the way of true Christian living that has released a person from the bondage of this world, and the love of pleasure, and the love of money, and the love of ambition, and the love of materialism, and enables him to breathe the fresh air of holiness, and no longer walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Many of our forefathers found this way that Isaiah and Jeremiah spoke of, and were consequently blest richly in their eyes. When you look at the New Testament church and the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Revival of the eighteenth century, and contrast them with the churches of our land today, what an amazing difference there is. The church in the times of our fathers was very conscious of its glory and responsibility, and the idea of people belonging to the church just to come on a Sunday to sit down and fold their arms as it were to listen to a sermon would be quite foreign to them.

What then should a true and honest and sincere Christian seek to do?

Primarily, of course, we need to search the Scriptures more earnestly, for it is the Bible that is our map and it will guide us through this sin-sick world. I wonder how many Christian books are read by evangelicals today? During revival times in Wales, there was a tremendous thirst for reading, and the printing presses were working full-out, publishing and printing biographies of missionaries, sermons, books concerning the history of the church, and so forth. What a wealth of Christian books we have today, but they remain unsought and unread by so many, apart

from a few. I can recall when God privileged us here with a touch from His sceptre, when we had a measure of blessing in the 1980s, the bookstall was an area of great activity and interest to the members. And if I remember rightly, about seven or eight thousand pounds worth of books were sold annually in this church.

Now unless I’m greatly mistaken, I also detect less and less interest today in a question of revival, and in some quarters of the evangelical church, believe it or not, even an antagonism to the very idea of it. In the secular world there is also an increase amongst some historians to criticise it, and to criticise the supernatural and divine aspects of religious awakening in our country. They would say that our forefathers over-exaggerated events. Such historians are known as revisionists. Many of these historians, of course, have not experienced personal conversion, and are therefore incapable of understanding the very work of the Holy Spirit. So what they cannot understand, they cannot accept, and so they brush it all aside as mere emotionalism. Even in the eighteenth century you had similar critics of the manifestation of God at work under Whitefield, Wesley and Rowland and others, and they mockingly called it ‘enthusiasm’. In our day in the evangelical scene there are men who can only accept the progress of God’s Word in the daily means of grace, whereas revival allows an intervention of God over and above the daily means of grace. In other words, revival is God suddenly stepping in and doing more in one day than in what men can do in centuries. Pentecost was the blueprint for all subsequent revivals. Some while after Pentecost, Paul was to see a tremendous revival at Ephesus. His epistle to the Ephesians is full of superlatives

describing the spiritual blessings that the Christians experienced in that church.

Revival is an experience in the life of a church, when the Holy Spirit does an unusual work. It is basically a reviving of us, the believers. You cannot revive something that has no life in it. So "revival", says Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones, "is by definition, first of all an enlivening and quickening and the awakening of a lethargic and sleeping church. Suddenly the power of the Spirit comes upon the people. They are humbled; they are convicted of their lethargy, and of sin and worldliness. In times of true spiritual revival, many will feel that they never really were Christians before, but that it was merely head knowledge that they had in the way of salvation." Now what is the result of all this? New power comes into the preaching of the Word of God by the minister; there is a quickening in a prayer meeting and people who never came to the prayer meeting before suddenly appear. Then people are drawn into the church and are converted. Surely this is God stepping in, doing an extraordinary work at a particular time. All this has become something belonging to the distant past, and outside the experience of so many of us today. When things deteriorated in the days of our forefathers, they instinctively turned to God, and pleaded for an awakening, as we saw in the psalm. Today, however, when we see a church struggling, our reaction is to organise campaigns, conferences and intensify house-to-house distribution of tracts. You know if we are honest, all this is a far cry from what God desires from us. And in a strange way, without realising it, we seem to hinder the work of the Holy Spirit in revival. Dr Lloyd-Jones again has a very helpful chapter on this whole question on why so many of the reformed religion have lost

interest in this very question. That's the first chapter in his book 'Knowing the Times'. Wales in the past been a very privileged little country, because God has visited His people not once but many times. But today we have as a people been sucked into the vortex of the world. John Elias was a very great preacher in north Wales in the nineteenth century, and he was one of the giants of the pulpit. He wrote at the beginning of the nineteenth century during the period of revival. Listen to these words on how different things were then: 'It is a dark night in the church. The depth of winter when she's sleeping are nearly ready to die, and the Lord is hiding His face in the ordinances, and when only a few are crying out for His appearance, and those scarcely audible in their call. It is still more awful if while they sleep they should think themselves awake, and imagine that they see the sun at midnight. Yea, the darkness of night I say is upon her, and she is slumbering having lost the presence of the Lord, and so unhappy so as not to know the loss she has sustained.' What a tragedy! They hadn't realised that they had even lost God in the ordinances.

Well, what would be his comment on the church today? If anything shows our need of a visitation from God, it is surely at this present time. It is of course easy to sit back and bemoan the present situation and day-dream of the glorious days in times of great revival, but we are children of the present, and we must face the challenge of today. How important are Isaiah's words in his prophecy, chapter 62 verse 6: 'I have set watchmen upon the walls of Jerusalem which shall never hold their peace day nor night. Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence and give him no rest until he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.' Wonderful words! The

concern of the Old Testament prophets was always the spiritual state of the church. They were not so much concerned about the enemies around, and she had many; no, the burden of these men was the church for they remembered her former glory. Now do we have the same concern for the spiritual state of the church today? The trouble today is that so many of us are more concerned about our own personal problems and difficulties rather than the church. And you and I must somehow catch the vision of how the church should be. There is no excuse for us, and you can see it in the Bible in the book of Acts, virtually a handful of people with burning zeal for God. I urge you to read the accounts of all the great visitations in the history of the church, especially in Wales here. Go back 200 years; acquaint yourselves with the exploits of Whitefield, Rowlands and Harris who preached with such unction and such power and effect. Mighty things happened in those days, and one can only put it down to the supernatural and the divine.

Now if you really sympathise with what I have said this evening, I would suggest that if you do nothing else, that you read the account of the Beddgelert Revival of 1817. It is written by Dr Eryl Davies in the Evangelical Movement Press. Most thinking Christians agree that that revival was probably one of the most intense visitations Wales has ever experienced. One can truly say that glory filled the sky and filled the nation. Unlike our forefathers, we have never experienced true revival. However as some of you know, God did draw near to this place here in the 1980s, and I asked my son-in-law Max if I could quote from his article which he wrote some time ago. This is how he described the effect of what he saw here:

‘People often talk about times when they feel very alive. I am marching on the hills. Sometimes on the hills you do get a day which is pretty unforgettable. You start early in the morning and you are low in the clouds, and it’s a bit drizzly, it’s a bit grey and dank, and suddenly you see the sun start to filter from the clouds, and it looks as if you’re going to climb out of them, and you reach a place where you can come out of the cloud. It is crisp; it is colder, and the clouds are spread out below you. You’re kicking up the dew with your feet. It is absolutely still, and you feel very much alive. I think that as a church in the 1980s we in Peniel Green came out of the clouds for a little while. I think that I felt as alive in the mid 1980s as I have ever done. I was spiritually alive, physically alive. And that is what I saw in other people too, when I came here from Kent. I saw the light that you see in a people that are fully alive, and not half dead. The challenges is that we have really got to seek God again, because, obviously, in God’s economy, that was only a very slight touch of God’s hand to see those people converted. We must pray that God might visit our church again.’

As I read that, I just pondered from my own point of view as I was the minister here, and as a postscript I would just like to add one or two things that will always remain in my mind what happened here in those two or three years in the 1980s that I can remember. One thing that really struck me was that there was a great feeling of joy and happiness here. It was quite wonderful amongst many of the believers in this church. And I believe that visiting preachers felt this too, and they would tell me how easy it was to teach in Peniel Green. Amongst many of the new converts there was a keen thirst for God’s Word, and I arranged an extra meeting on

Thursday nights. Well, those Thursday night meetings were quite memorable, and I'm sure quite a number here remember them. Well over forty would squeeze into that house. Indeed it was like a new church growing within the old church, and many were the converts in those meetings. You never knew what was going to happen next, from Thursday to Thursday.

Some incidents occurred at that time which were beyond human explanation, and it was then that I could understand those words in the book of the Acts: 'signs and wonders'. The prayer meeting became an important focal point of the church at that time. We used to meet in the vestry behind in those days, and sometimes the vestry was so full that it worried me really, because if something happened – fire or something – we would never have been able to get out, because the chairs were backed right down the church here on some occasions. There was one occasion – I remember well – it was difficult to close a prayer meeting at 10pm. In the end I had to close it. And on some occasions a great silence would suddenly descend on the prayer meeting which lasted for quite a few minutes, and all felt that it was a 'holy' silence. And then someone would break out in prayer, and it was usually someone who had never prayed before. We need to pray that God would give that same touch again that we might know that we received at one time in this church, and that God might once more be glorified in our lives and in this church and the like-minded churches for His Name's sake. Amen

## **AN EXTRACT FROM AN ESSAY ENTITLED 'OUR SECULAR PROSPERITY'**

**By Robert L. Dabney  
(1820-1898)**

Is not this the first occasion within the memory of man when the temporal prosperity of the people was so great and so general that even complaining politicians were compelled to admit it? Christians are enjoying their full share in these blessings, if blessings they are. They are in the foremost rank of every lawful business and of every material comfort and luxury. Besides this, the church is free among us in a sense in which it never enjoyed freedom before. Not only has it the fullest religious liberty secured by law, but it enjoys the apparent respect of the press, of the government, and of the masses. Surely, 'Religion walks in silver slippers'. Such a combination of secular advantages was never possessed before by Christians.

Now, we have pointed out these facts to lead the mind of ministers and private Christians to the inquiry: Is this a spiritually safe state? Has the church ever been able to stand such temporal prosperity without being poisoned by it? Let us get the answer to this question from history and from human nature. The past answers that there has not been a single instance in which the spiritual health of the church has survived a season of high temporal prosperity. She has survived the sword and the fire. Like the burning bush, persecutions have not consumed her. The power of kings and commonwealths and the gates of hell have not been able to prevail against her; but never, in a single

case, has she failed to succumb before the miasma of temporal ease and plenty

Looking to man's nature, we shall see some of the reasons for this. It ought not to be true, but it is true, that it is man's mean spirited disposition to feel less gratitude as the favours he receives are multiplied. Try it, my brother, with any neighbour you have. Send him a quarter of mutton as a present this week and he will return you his hearty thanks; but send him one every week for three months and then omit two weeks, and he will feel as if, on those two weeks, you had robbed him of a right! It will be well if he does not tell you so. Now, we treat God in the same thankless way. The frequency and the multiplication of mercies necessarily makes the reception of them a habit; and habitual incidents make less and less impression the longer the habit is maintained. So that the multitude of our blessings, instead of begetting proportionate gratitude, deadens our sense of obligation. Here, then, we have this result, that sluggish, thankless indifference to God's love and benevolence which naturally grows out of continued prosperity.

It is very obvious that the indulgence and the rewarding of worldly desires will cultivate those desires. Gain will stimulate the desire of gain. Continued success will weaken the sense of dependence on providence, and the too-prosperous Christian will 'sacrifice to his drag and burn incense to his net'. And when the money is made, how shall it be spent? Why, of course, in living, dressing, building more expensively. Thus comes in luxury, with its enervation, its self indulgence, its pride, its impatience of wholesome toil, its sensual desires, and spiritually dies as surely as the lamp goes out in the mephitic air of the cavern.

But here is the most fatal consideration of all: that the danger arising from temporal ease and plenty is one which leads the Christian away from his fountain of strength, the mercy seat, just in degree as the danger becomes more imminent. The spiritual life of a Christian or a church is like the roots of the sturdy oak, which grow more tough by the storm, because then they grasp more tightly the crevices of the rock. It is like the refined gold, which must be purified from its dross in the furnace of fire. It is like the strength and hardihood of the soldier, which are formed by exposure and battle. Let the Christian be persecuted, troubled, or afflicted, and his trial, by casting down his heart, brings it to the footstool of grace in humble prayer and there he finds a strength which rises elastic and indomitable under every oppression, because it is the strength of divine omnipotence. Hence it is that the Christian only grows by reproach and affliction, and the fire of persecution has often been the most prosperous element for the church. That which crushes down, at the same time brings into contact with the source of might and life. But alas ! when the forgetful Christian is most endangered by pride, fullness of bread, worldliness and sensuality, then he is farthest from prayer. When Hercules wrestled with the giant Antaeus, son of the earth, he was baffled by finding that his antagonist rose from every fall with renewed strength, so that the more he was subdued, the more unconquerable he became. But at last Hercules perceived that it was because Antaeus, as often as he fell upon the bosom of his mother, received new vigour from the contact; and the god of strength, lifting him up in his mighty arms, so that he could no longer touch his mother earth, crushed him to death in his embrace. So wrestles this mighty and insidious prosperity. So

wrestles Satan now with the church, which he has found by other means unconquerable. Since the church has risen with immortal vigour, as often as she has been pressed down upon the bosom of her Saviour, and driven out of her pride and self-dependence by affliction, he now lifts her aloft into carnal abundance, security, and haughtiness, in order that, having separated her from the string of her strength, he may choke her to death in his treacherous embrace.

In a word, the whole is made up of its parts; the spirituality of the church consists of the spirituality of its individual members. But let any Christian view his own life, and see how nearly his whole spiritual progress has been made in the seasons of trial. It is by their private afflictions chiefly that individuals grow in grace. Is it not in the sick bed, in the chamber of bereavement, by the dying beds, and beside the fresh graves of those they love, that their steps heavenwards are chiefly taken?

Is it then, an exaggerated statement, that a time like the present is one of more danger than the time of oppression and persecution? We verily believe that, splendid as is the grace which carries the martyr to the stake, and sustains him in his baptism of fire, glorious as is the display of Divine power, in a church down-trodden but indomitable, persecuted but not consumed; the grace which would carry a church through such a season of continued prosperity and carnal ease as we are now experiencing, without a decay of spirituality, would be still more mighty. Should not every Christian gird himself against the danger, with a spirit more earnest, cautious, and prayerful than if he were counting the cost for a final warfare with persecution? We utter a most deliberate and sorrowful conviction when

we say, that unless we bestir ourselves with a wise alarm and diligence, utterly unlike our present conduct, and entirely above any to which any previous church has ever been able to attain in the like case, this present ease will be our ruin, and future history will date the 'decline and fall' of American Christianity from our generation. And alas where is the voice loud enough to pierce the ear benumbed with the worldly abundance, and to rouse the sleepy, self-indulgent soul of the church, lapped in the folds of this intoxicating ease, to more than the awakened energy and hardihood and prayerfulness of a martyr communion?

Can we flatter ourselves that we shall be an exception to all previous history? We fear not. Humanly speaking, our history must be this; either to sink deeper and deeper into formalism, worldliness, heresy and immorality till our light shall go out in a night which shall have no morning, like that of the seven churches of Asia; or else, to be lashed back to the throne of grace and to spirituality by the loss of our abused abundance and religious liberties, by social calamities and political oppressions, till we are purified and restored, and fitted to take our place as one of the millennial churches.

## The Sum and Substance of All Theology

Unpublished Notes of a Sermon  
Intended for Reading on Lord's-Day,  
April 17th, 1892,  
Delivered by  
C. H. SPURGEON,  
Delivered at Bethesda Chapel, Swansea  
On June 25th, 1861.  
From Sword and Trowel

*Note: On Tuesday, June 25th, 1861, the beloved C. H. Spurgeon visited Swansea. The day was wet, so the services could not be held in the open-air; and, as no building in the town was large enough to hold the vast concourses of people who had come from all parts to hear the renowned preacher, he consented to deliver two discourses in the morning; first at Bethesda, and then at Trinity Chapel. At each place he preached for an hour and a quarter. The weather cleared up during the day; so, in the evening, Mr. Spurgeon addressed an immense gathering of people in the open-air.—T.W.M. FORWARDED BY PASTOR T. W. MED-HURST, CARDIFF.*

"All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out."—John 6:37.

What a difference there is between the words of Christ, and those of all mere men! Most men speak many words, yet say but little; Christ speaks few words, yet says very much. In modern books, you may read scores of pages, and scarcely come across a new thought; but when Christ speaks, every syllable seems to tell. He hits the nail on the head each

time He lifts the hammer of His Word. The Words of Christ are like ingots of solid gold; we preachers too often beat out the gold so thin, that whole acres of it would scarcely be worth a farthing. The Words of Christ are always to be distinguished from those of His creatures, not only for their absolute truthfulness, but also for their profound fulness of matter. In all His language He is "full of grace and truth." Look at the text before us. Here we have, in two small sentences, the sum and substance of all theology. The great questions which have divided the Church in all ages, the apparently contradictory doctrines which have set one minister of Christ against his fellow, are here revealed so simply and plainly, "that he may run that readeth" (Habakkuk ii.2). Even a child may understand the Words of Christ, though perhaps the loftiest human intellect cannot fathom the mystery hidden therein.

Take the first sentence of my text: "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me." What a weighty sentence! Here we have taught us what is called, in the present day, "High Calvinistic doctrine"—the purpose of God; the certainty that God's purpose will stand; the invincibility of God's will; and the absolute assurance that Christ "shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied."

Look at the second sentence of my text: "And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Here we have the richness, the fulness, the unlimited extent of the power of Christ to save those who put their trust in Him. Here is a text upon which one might preach a thousand sermons. We might take these two

sentences as a life-long text, and never exhaust the theme.

Mark, too, how our Lord Jesus Christ gives us the whole truth. We have many ministers who can preach well upon the first sentence: "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me." Just set them going upon Election, or everlasting covenant engagements, and they will be earnest and eloquent, for they are fond of dwelling upon these points, and a well-instructed child of God can hear them with delight and profit. Such preachers are often the fathers of the Church, and the very pillars thereof; but, unfortunately, many of these excellent brethren cannot preach so well upon the second sentence of my text: "And him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." When they get to that truth, they are half afraid of it; they hesitate to preach what they consider to be a too open salvation. They cannot give the gospel invitation as freely as they find it in the Word of God. They do not deny it, yet they stutter and stammer sadly, when they get upon this theme.

Then, on the other hand, we have a large number of good ministers who can preach on this second clause of the text, but they cannot preach on the first clause. How fluent is their language as they tell out the freeness of salvation! Here they are much at home in their preaching; but, we are sorry to be compelled to say that, very often, they are not much at home when they come to doctrinal matters, and they would find it rather a difficult matter to preach fluently on the first sentence of my text. They would, if they attempted to preach from it, endeavour to cut out of it all that savours of Divine Sovereignty.

They do not preach the whole "truth" which "is in Jesus."

Why is it that some of us do not see both sides of God's revealed truth? We persist in closing one eye; we will not see all that may be seen if we open both our eyes; and, sometimes, we get angry with a brother because he can see a little more than we do. I think our text is very much like a stereoscopic picture, for it presents two views of the truth. Both views are correct, for they are both photographed by the same light. How can we bring these two truths together? We get the stereoscope of the scripture, and looking with both eyes, the two pictures melt into one. God has given us, in His Word, the two pictures of divine truth; but we have not all got the stereoscope properly adjusted to make them melt into one. When we get to heaven, we shall see how all God's truth harmonizes. If we cannot make these two parts of truth harmonize now, at any rate we must not dare to blot out one of them, for God has given them both.

Now, as God shall help me this morning, I want to expand both sentences of my text with equal fidelity and plainness. I shall not expect to please some of you while speaking on the first sentence, and I shall not be surprised if I fail to please others of you when I come to the second sentence; but, in either case, it will be a small matter to me if I have an easy conscience because I have proclaimed what I believe to be the whole truth of God. I am sure you will be willing to give a patient hearing to that which you may not fully receive, if you believe it to be declared in all honesty. Reject what I say, if it be not true, but if it be the Word of God, receive it; and, be

it known unto you that it is at your peril if you dare to reject the truthful Word of the glad tidings of God.

I. I will begin with the first sentence of the text: "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me." We have here, first, **THE FIRM FOUNDATION UPON WHICH OUR SALVATION RESTS.**

It rests, you perceive, not on something which man does, but on something which God the Father does. The Father gives certain persons to His Son, and the Son says, "All that the Father giveth Me Shall come to Me." I take it that the meaning of the text is this,—that, if any do come to Jesus Christ, it is those whom the Father gave to Christ. And the reason why they come,—if we search to the very bottom of things,—is, that the Father puts it into their hearts to come. The reason why one man is saved, and another man is lost, is to be found in God; not in anything which the saved man did, or did not do; not in anything which he felt, or did not feel; but in something altogether irrespective of himself, even in the sovereign grace of God. In the day of God's power, the saved are made willing to give their souls to Jesus. The language of Scripture must explain this point. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 12, 13). "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy" (Romans ix. 16). If you want to see the fount of grace, you must go to the everlasting God; even as, if you want to know why that river runs in this direction, and not in that, you

must trace it up to its source. In the case of every soul that is now in heaven, it was the will of God that drew it thither. In the case of every spirit that is on its way to glory now, unto God and unto Him alone must be the honour of its salvation; for He it is who makes one "differ from another" (1 Cor. iv. 7).

I do not care to argue upon this point, except I put it thus: If any say, "It is man himself who makes the difference," I reply, "You are involving yourself in a great dilemma; if man himself makes the difference, then mark—man himself must have the glory." Now, I am certain you do not mean to give man the glory of his own salvation; you would not have men throw up their caps in heaven, and shout, "Unto ourselves be the glory, for we, ourselves, were the hinge and turning point of our own salvation." No, you would have all the saved cast their crowns at the feet of Jesus, and give to Him alone all the honour and all the glory. This, however, cannot be, unless, in that critical point, that diamond hinge upon which man's salvation shall turn, God shall have the control, and not the will of man. You know that those who do not believe this truth as a matter of doctrine, do believe it in their hearts as a matter of experience.

I was preaching, not very long ago, at a place in Derbyshire, to a congregation, nearly all of whom were Methodists, and as I preached, they were crying out, "Hallelujah! Glory! Bless the Lord!" They were full of excitement, until I went on to say in my sermon, "This brings me to the doctrine of Election." There was no crying out of "Glory!" and "Hallelujah!" then. Instead, there was a great deal of shaking of the head, and a sort of

telegraphing round the place, as though something dreadful was coming. Now, I thought, I must have their attention again, so I said, "You all believe in the doctrine of Election?" "No, we don't, lad," said one. "Yes, you do, and I am going to preach it to you, and make you cry 'Hallelujah!' over it." I am certain they mistrusted my power to do that; so, turning a moment from the subject, I said, "Is there any difference between you and the ungodly world?" "Ay! Ay! Ay!" "Is there any difference between you and the drunkard, the harlot, the blasphemer?" "Ay! Ay! Ay!" Ay! there was a difference indeed. "Well, now," I said, "there is a great difference; who made it, then?" for, whoever made the difference, should have the glory of it. "Did you make the difference?" "No, lad," said one; and the rest all seemed to join in the chorus. "Who made the difference, then? Why, the Lord did it; and did you think it wrong for Him to make a difference between you and other men?" "No, no," they quickly said. "Very well, then; if it was not wrong for God to make the difference, it was not wrong for Him to purpose to make it, and that is the doctrine of Election." Then they cried, "Hallelujah!" as I said they would.

The doctrine of Election is God's purposing in His heart that He would make some men better than other men; that He would give to some men more grace than to other men; that some should come out and receive the mercy; that others, left to their own free will, should reject it; that some should gladly accept the invitations of mercy, while others, of their own accord, stubbornly refuse the mercy to which the whole world of mankind is invited. All men, by nature,

refuse the invitations of the gospel. God, in the sovereignty of His grace, makes a difference by secretly inclining the hearts of some men, by the power of His Holy Spirit, to partake of His everlasting mercy in Christ Jesus. I am certain that, whether we are Calvinists or Arminians, if our hearts are right with God, we shall all adoringly testify: "We love Him, because He first loved us." If that be not Election, I know not what it is.

II. Now, in the second place, note THE CERTAINTY OF THE ETERNAL SALVATION OF ALL WHO WERE GIVEN TO JESUS; "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me."

This is eternally settled, and so settled that it cannot be altered by either man or devil. All whose names are written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, all whom God the Father designed to save when He gave up His well-beloved Son to die upon the cross of Calvary, shall in time be drawn by the Holy Spirit, and shall surely come to Christ, and be kept by the Spirit, through the precious blood of Christ, and be folded for ever with His sheep, on the hill-tops of glory.

Mark! "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me." Not one of those whom the Father hath given to Jesus shall perish. If any were lost, the text would have to read: "Almost all," or, "All but one;" but it positively says "All," without any exception; even though one may have been, in his unregenerate state, the very chief of sinners. Yet even that chosen one, that given one, shall come to Jesus; and when he has come, he shall be held by that strong love that at first chose him, and he shall never be let go, but shall be held fast, even unto the end. Miss

Much-afraid, and Mrs. Despondency, and Mr. Feeble-mind, shall as certainly come to the arms of Christ, as Mr. Great-heart, and Mr. Faithful, and Mr. Valiant-for-Truth. If one jewel were lost from Christ's crown, then Christ's crown would not be all-glorious. If one member of the body of Christ were to perish, Christ's body would not be complete. If one of those who are one with Christ should miss his way to eternal life, Christ would not be a perfect Christ.

"All that the Father giveth Me Shall come to Me." "But suppose they will not come?" I cannot suppose any such thing, for He says they "shall come." They shall be made willing in the day of God's power. God knows how to make a passage through the heart of man; and though man is a free agent, yet God can incline him, willingly, to come to Jesus. There are many sentences even in Wesley's hymn-book which contain this truth. If God took away freedom from man, and then saved him, it would be but a small miracle. For God to leave man free to come to Jesus, and yet to so move him as to make him come, is a divinely-wrought miracle indeed. If we were for a moment to admit that man's will could be more than a match for God's will, do you not see where we should be landed? Who made man? God! Who made God? Shall we lift up man to the sovereign throne of Deity? Who shall be master, and have his way, God or man? The will of God, that says they "shall come", knows how to make them come.

"But suppose it should be one of those who are living in the interior of Africa, and he does not hear the gospel; what then?" He shall hear the gospel; either he shall come to the gospel, or the gospel

shall go to him. Even if no minister should go to such a chosen one, he would have the gospel specially revealed to him rather than that the promise of the Almighty God should be broken.

"But suppose there should be one of God's chosen who has become so bad that there is no hope for him? He never attends a place of worship; never listens to the gospel; the voice of the preacher never reaches him; he has grown hardened in his sin, like steel that has been seven times annealed in the fire; what then?" That man shall be arrested by God's grace, and that obdurate, hard-hearted one shall be made to see the mercy of God; the tears shall stream down his cheeks, and he shall be made willing to receive Jesus as Saviour. I think that, as God could bend my will, and bring me to Christ, He can bring anybody.

"Why was I made to hear His voice,  
And enter while there's room;  
When thousands make a wretched choice,  
And rather starve than come?"

"'Twas the same love the spread the feast,  
That sweetly forced me in;  
Else I had still refused to taste,  
And perish'd in my sin."

Yes, "sweetly forced me in;"—there is no other word that can so accurately describe my case. Oh, how long Jesus Christ stood at the door of my heart, and knocked, and knocked, and knocked in vain! I asked: "Why should I leave the pleasures of this world?" Yet still He knocked, and there was music in every sound of His pleading voice; but I said, "Nay, let Him go elsewhere." And

though, through the window, I could see His thorn-crowned head, and the tears standing in His eyes, and the prints of the nails in His hands, as He stood and knocked, and said, "Open to Me," yet I heeded Him not. Then He sent my mother to me, and she pleaded, "let the Saviour in, Charlie;" and I replied, in action, though not in words, "Nay, I love thee, my mother; but I do not love Christ, thy Saviour." Then came the black hours of sickness; but in effect I said, "Nay, I fear not sickness, nor death itself; I will still defy my Maker." But it happened, one day, that He graciously put in His hand by the hole of the door, and I moved toward Him, and then I opened the door, and cried, "Come in! Come in!" Alas! alas! He was gone; and for five long years I stood, with tears in mine eyes, and I sought Him weeping, but I found Him not. I cried after Him, but He answered me not. I said, "Whither is He gone? Oh, that I had never rejected Him? Oh, that He would but come again!" Surely the angels must then have said, "A great change has come over that youth; he would not let Christ in when He knocked, but now he wants Christ to come." And when He did come, do you think my soul rejected Him? Nay, nay; but I fell down at His feet, crying, "Come in! Come in! thou Blessed Saviour. I have waited for Thy salvation, O my God!"

There is no living soul beyond the reach of hope, no chosen one whom Christ cannot bring up even from the very gates of hell. He can bare His arm, put out His hand, and pluck the brand "out of the fire" (Zechariah iii.2). In a horrible pit, in the miry clay, His jewels have been hidden; but down from the throne of light He can come, and

thrusting in His arm of mercy, He can pull them out, and cause them to glitter in His crown for ever. Let it be settled in our hearts, as a matter of fact, that what God has purposed to do, He will surely accomplish.

I need not dwell longer upon this point, because I think I have really brought out the essence of this first sentence of my text: "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me." Permit me just to remark, before I pass on, that I am sometimes sad on account of the alarm that some Christians seem to have concerning this precious and glorious doctrine. We have, in the Baptist denomination,—I am sorry to have to say it,—many ministers, excellent brethren, who, while they believe this doctrine, yet never preach it. On the other hand, we have some ministers, excellent brethren, who never preach anything else. They have a kind of barrel-organ that only plays five tunes, and they are always repeating them. It is either Election, Predestination, Particular Redemption, Effectual Calling, Final Perseverance, or something of that kind; it is always the same note. But we have also a great many others who never preach concerning these doctrines, though they admit they are doctrines taught in Sacred Scripture. The reason for their silence is, because they say these truths are not suitable to be preached from the pulpit. I hold such an utterance as that to be very wicked. Is the doctrine here—in this Bible? If it is, as God hath taught it, so are we to teach it. "But," they say, "not in a mixed assembly." Where can you find an unmixed assembly? God has sent the Bible into a mixed world, and the gospel is to be preached in "all the world", and

"to every creature." "Yes," they say, "preach the gospel, but not these special truths of the gospel; because, if you preach these doctrines, the people will become Antinomians and Hyper-Calvinists." Not so; the reason why people become Hyper-Calvinists and Antinomians, is because some, who profess to be Calvinists, often keep back part of the truth, and do not, as Paul did, "declare all the counsel of God"; they select certain parts of Scripture, where their own particular views are taught, and pass by other aspects of God's truth. Such preachers as John Newton, and in later times, your own Christmas Evans, were men who preached the whole truth of God; they kept back nothing that God has revealed; and, as the result of their preaching, Antinomianism could not find a foot-hold anywhere. We should have each doctrine of Scripture in its proper place, and preach it fully; and if we want to have a genuine revival of religion, we must preach these doctrines of Jehovah's sovereign grace again and again. Do not tell me they will not bring revivals. There was but one revival that I have ever heard of, apart from Calvinistic doctrine, and that was the one in which Wesley took so great a part; but then George Whitefield was there also to preach the whole Word of God. When people are getting sleepy, if you want to arouse and wake them up thoroughly, preach the doctrine of Divine Sovereignty to them; for that will do it right speedily.

III. I shall now turn very briefly to the second sentence of my text: "And him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out."

"Now," says somebody, "he is going to knock down all that he has been

building up." Well, I would rather be inconsistent with myself than with my Master; but I dare not alter this second sentence, and I have no desire to alter it. Let it stand as it is, all its glorious simplicity:—

"HIM THAT COMETH TO ME I WILL IN NO WISE CAST OUT."

Let the whole world come, still this promise is big enough to embrace them all in its arms. There is no mistake here, the wrong man cannot come. If any sinner come to Christ, he is sure to be the right one. Mark, too, as there is no limitation in the person coming, so there is no limitation in the manner of the coming. Says one, "Suppose I come the wrong way?" You cannot come the wrong way; it is written, "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him." "No man can come unto Me, except it were given unto him of My Father" (John vi.44,65). If, then, you come to Christ in any way, you are drawn of the Father, and He cannot draw the wrong way. If you come to Christ at all, the power and will to come have been given you of the Father. If you come to Christ, He will in no wise cast you out; for no possible or conceivable reason will Jesus ever cast out any sinner who comes to Him. There is no reason in hell, or on earth, or in heaven, why Jesus should cast out the soul that comes to Him. If Satan, the foul accuser of the brethren, brings reasons why the coming sinner should not be received, Jesus will "cast down" the accuser, but He will not "cast out" the sinner. "Come unto Me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give your rest," is still His invitation and His promise, too.

Let us suppose a case by the way of illustration. Here is a man in Swansea,—ragged, dirty, coal-begrimed,—who has received a message from Her Most Gracious Majesty, Queen Victoria. It reads in this wise: "You are hereby commanded to come, just as you are, to our palace at Windsor, to receive great and special favours at our hand. You will stay away at your peril." The man reads the message, and at first scarcely understands it; so he thinks, "I must wash and prepare myself." Then, he re-reads the royal summons, and the words arrest him: "Come just as your are." So he starts, and tells the people in the train where he is going, and they laugh at him. At length he arrives at Windsor Castle; there he is stopped by the guard, and questioned. He explains why he has come, and shows the Queen's message; and he is allowed to pass. He next meets with a gentlemen in waiting, who, after some explanations and expressions of astonishment, allows him to enter the ante-room. When there, our friend becomes frightened on account of his begrimed and ragged appearance; he is half inclined to rush from the place with fear, when he remembers the works of the royal command: "Stay away at your peril." Presently, the Queen herself appears, and tells him how glad she is that he has come just as he was. She says she purposes that he shall be suitably clothed, and be made one of the princes of her court. She adds, "I told you to come as you were. It seemed to be a strange command to you, but I am glad you have obeyed, and so come."

I do think this is what Jesus Christ says to every creature under heaven. The gospel invitation runs thus: "Come,

come, come to Christ, just as you are." "But, let me feel more." No, come just as you are. "But let me get home to my own room, and let me pray." No, no, come to Christ just as you are. As you are, trust in Jesus, and He will save you. Oh, do dare to trust Him! If anybody shall ask, "Who are you?" answer, "I am nobody." If anyone objects, "You are such a filthy sinner," reply, "Yes, 'tis true, so I am; but He Himself told me to come." If anyone shall say, "You are not fit to come," say, "I know I am not fit; but He told me to come." Therefore,—

"Come, ye sinners, poor and wretched,  
Weak and wounded, sick and sore;  
Jesus ready stands to save you,  
Full of pity join'd with power;  
He is able,  
He is willing; doubt no more.  
"Let not conscience make you linger,  
Nor of fitness fondly dream;  
All the fitness He requireth,  
Is to feel you need of Him:  
This He gives you;  
'Tis the Spirit's rising beam."

Sinner, trust in Jesus: and if thou dost perish trusting in Jesus, I will perish with thee. I will make my bed in hell, side by side with thee, sinner, if thou canst perish trusting in Christ, and thou shalt lie there, and taunt me to all eternity for having taught thee falsely, if we perish. But that can never be; those who trust in Jesus shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of His hand. Come to Jesus, and He will in no wise cast thee out.

May the Lord bless the words I have spoken! Though hastily suggested to my mind, and feebly delivered to you, the Lord bless them, for Christ's sake! Amen.

## Diary

### Lord's Days:

December

7th	–	Pastor	–	Communion - p.m
14th	–	Rev. Robert Cordle, Bedfordshire		
21st	–	Pastor	–	Communion -a.m
28th	–	Pastor		

January

5th	–	Pastor	–	Communion - p.m
12th	–	Pastor		
19th	–	Pastor	–	Communion - a.m
26th	–	Pastor		

February

2nd	–	Pastor	–	Communion - p.m
9th	–	Pastor		
16th	–	Pastor	–	Communion - a.m
23rd	–	Pastor		
30th	–	Pastor		

### Dates to note:

Calendar distribution mid/late December

Lord's Day 14th December, 3.15 pm Open Sunday School Carol Service with Tea to follow - All are welcome

Lord's Day 21st December, After Church Fellowship

25th December, Christmas Morning Service, 10.00 am

Please note Prayer Meetings to be held on Tuesday 23rd December & Tuesday 30th December

### Pastor's engagements:

Lord's Day 14th December - Preaching - Wattisham

### Forward Announcements:

Bible League Preaching Rally, Friday 16th June, 7:30pm, Rev. J. P. Thackway, Holywell, North Wales

