

# HYPER- EVANGELISM

By

JOHN  
KENNEDY

## CONTENTS

Page		
1	Hyper-Evangelism	<i>J. Kennedy</i>
22	The False Convert Detected	<i>T. Shepard</i>
32	Truth's Defenders Vindicated	<i>J. Kennedy</i>
33	The Sovereign Book Club	

## HYPER - EVANGELISM 'ANOTHER GOSPEL,' THOUGH A MIGHTY POWER

*A Review of the Recent Religious Movement in Scotland*

JOHN KENNEDY, D.D. OF DINGWALL.

John Kennedy was one of the foremost evangelical leaders in Scotland in the last century. He was a contemporary and close friend of C. H. Spurgeon, and was known by some as "the Spurgeon of the North." This review is of D. L. Moody's campaigns.

When a movement is in progress in our land, during which many are awakened to thought and feeling as to eternal things, who were utterly unthinking and insensate before, when thousands think that they have lately believed in Christ, and with the joy of assurance profess that they have found Him, when from the church are seen issuing many, who have enlisted as recruits, in a crusade against the ungodliness and unbelief of the world, when so many, who have a high position and commanding influence in the church, declare that it is a gracious work of God by which these results have been produced, and when many more, believing this, are exceeding glad and abound in thanksgiving, sad, yea, strained to breaking, must be the heart of one, who seeks the glory of God and the salvation of souls, if he cannot share in the prevalent hopefulness and joy. Being one of those, to whom the present movement has hitherto yielded more grief than gladness, I feel constrained to tell why I am a mourner and apart.

### PRELIMINARY REMARKS

1. Those who, ere the movement had been developed into its abiding fruits, hastened to declare it to be a gracious work of God, must have laid claim to inspiration; and only if that claim is good can their judging be allowable. It may be legitimate to form an *unfavourable* judgment, even at the outset of a religious awakening, if the means employed in producing it are such as the Lord cannot be expected to bless; but a *favourable* verdict at that stage, no man, not a prophet, has any right to pronounce. Only He who "trieth the hearts and reins" can then judge. He allows His disciples to try to know men only by their fruits (Matt. vii. 20). Not at the outset, and not by the immediate results, but by the fruits produced after trial, does He allow them to form a favourable judgment regarding a religious movement (John viii. 31). It is not enough to justify such a verdict, that souls are anxious, that anxious souls attain to a faith that is assured, and to a joy that is exceeding, and that a change of conduct and zealous service are for a season the result. All this was, once and again, under the ministry of Jesus Himself, without any lasting and saving result; and men are sadly forgetful and madly bold, who in the face of such a fact venture to trace

similar appearances at once to a gracious work of God (John vi. viii., xii).

2. One is not compelled to affirm that a religious movement is not a work of grace, if he refrains from saying that it is. This is a position into which some men, more zealous than discerning, seek to drive those who do not share their own blind sanguineness. I am not to judge, at the outset, except of the means employed, and if these are unscriptural, I am forbidden to expect a good result (Isa. viii. 20). If the means employed and the agents are unexceptionable, I can legitimately form no decided opinion of the work, till its fruits are in due time developed.

3. There is no necessity for regarding it as the great Deceiver's work, if it is considered not to be a gracious work of God. There are impressions, which are not saving, produced by Divine influence in connection with the gospel (Heb. vi. 4-6). The temporary impressions produced by the preaching of Christ are instances of this. But that Satan can produce counterfeit, as surely as the Lord can make real, converts, I firmly believe. And when he is at work, as "an angel of light," he best succeeds when men blindly accept, instead of wisely testing, the results. There is, surely some reason to fear that his hand is on the agents as well as on the subjects of the work, when neither are careful to apply the test of truth (John iii. 20, 21 ; 1 John iv. 1).

4. If I regard with little hopefulness a movement over which so many are chanting songs of joy, till all Christendom bends its ear to the voice of gladness that thrills from our land, my saying so will suffice to make some men decry me as opposed to a revival of the work of the Lord. To this I lay my account. If the Lord knows that I am not, I feel not very anxious as to the judgment of men. But which of us incurs the greatest responsibility, you, who proclaim this movement to be a work of grace, or I, who cannot say that I as yet do so regard it? You commit the credit of true religion to cases which have not been proved—you point the attention of the ungodly to individuals whom you declare to be converts, and you call on them to judge of godliness by these; you tell those, who are suddenly impressed, that they have been born again, when you know not whether they were or not; you tell the Church to count on a great accession to her strength, when, so far as you know, only traitors may be added to her ranks; you say, with the voice of thanksgiving to God, that He has done a work which you cannot know that He will acknowledge to be His. Yours, at any rate, is a tremendous responsibility. And if your estimate is false—and you cannot as yet prove it to be true—how fearful the results must be! You will have hardened in ungodliness an unbelieving world; you will have flattered into delusive security precious perishing souls; you will have cheated the Church by inducing her to form a false

estimate of her strength; and you will have dishonoured God by ascribing to Him work which His hand had never wrought. I merely refrain from judging anything "before the time." What I judge now, I am required to judge. I form an opinion, as one bound to "try the spirits" of the doctrines and modes of service which are the means of advancing the movement. If I do so fairly, I am so far free from blame. If my estimate is proved to be false as well as unfavourable, I am guilty, and if I formed it under the influence of prejudice, I am very guilty; I suffer in the lack of the hope and gladness by which the hearts of others are so greatly stirred; and I incur a woe, if, under the influence of a biassed opinion of the work, I refuse to take part in it, though called to do so by the Lord (Judges v. 23).

5. Of the means employed in promoting such a work, one is bound to judge. I am not to be blinded by dazzling results. A worthy end does not sanctify all the means that may be used in attaining it, nor does a seemingly good result justify all the means employed in producing it. Many seem to think that if they choose to call a religious movement a work of grace, no fault should be found with any instrumentality employed in advancing it. All must be right, they think, if the result is to be regarded as a revival of the work of God. To censure any doctrine preached or any mode of worship practised, seems to them to be opposition to the good work, and to tend to mar its progress. They may be of the same opinion, as to the impropriety of some of the means which are employed, with those who do not refrain from condemning them, but for the work's sake they tolerate them. As if the Lord's work could receive aid from aught that was unscriptural! An enemy's hand is surely here. May it not be, that under cover such as this, the deceiver is introducing into the creed and worship of the Church what shall be stately obstructive to a real work of grace? Some there are who have this fear. It were well if all were careful lest this should be the result of acquiescence in unscriptural teaching and practices.

6. Some ministers, who took part with hesitation in the movement, justify their having done so by declaring their object to have been to check irregular tendencies, and to shape the development of the work. And what has been the issue of their prudence? They merely serve to swell the volume, while utterly powerless to control the force, of the current. Hundreds of ministers have I seen, sitting as disciples at the feet of one, whose teaching only showed his ignorance even of "the principles of the doctrine of Christ"; who, to their face, called the churches, which they represented, "first-class mobs"; was organising before their eyes an association, for religious objects, outside the churches, which may yet prove as troublesome as the naked forces of the world; was casting ridicule on their old forms of worship, which

they were sworn to uphold ; and was proposing to convert prayer-meetings into occasions of religious amusement, a change which he certainly did not ask them to approve, without giving them a specimen, which excited the laughter of thousands, and gave to themselves a sensation of merry-making in the house of the Lord.

7. I carefully refrain from forming an estimate of the results of this work, as these are to be found in individual cases. I confine myself to the general character of the movement, in so far as that is determined by the more prominent teaching under which it has advanced, and in connection with its bearing on the religious condition of the country. I most persistently continue to hope that good has been done ; for even were I persuaded that Satan was busy in forging counterfeits, I cannot conceive what would induce him to do so, unless he was provoked by a genuine work of grace which he was anxious to discredit and to mar.

There are two reasons why I cannot regard the present religious movement hopefully. 1. Because the doctrine which is the means of impression seems to me to be "another gospel," though a mighty influence. Hyper-Evangelism I call it, because of the loud professions of evangelism made by those who preach it ; and because it is just an extreme application of some truths, to the neglect of others which are equally important parts of the great system of evangelic doctrine. 2. Because unscriptural practices are resorted to in order to advance the movement.

#### HYPER-EVANGELISM "ANOTHER GOSPEL."

In forming an estimate of the doctrine that was mainly effective in advancing the movement, I had sufficient materials at hand. I heard the leading teacher repeatedly, and I perused with care published specimens of his addresses. I have before me as I write what appears to me amply to justify all that I venture to affirm. Those who were present to hear, will recollect enough to enable them to judge of the correctness of my account of the kind of instruction by which such marked and frequent impressions were produced.

My objection, to the teaching to which I refer, is, that it ignores the supreme end of the gospel which is the manifestation of the Divine glory ; and misrepresents it as merely unfolding a scheme of salvation adapted to man's convenience. It drops the first note of the angel's song, in which the gospel is described as "glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." This objection has grown and has been confirmed in my mind, by considering, 1. That no pains are taken to present the character and claims of God as Lawgiver and Judge, and no indication given of a desire to bring souls, in self-condemnation, to "accept the punishment of their iniquity." 2. That it ignores the sovereignty and power of God in the dispensation of His grace.

3. That it affords no help to discover, in the light of the doctrine of the cross, how God is glorified in the salvation of the sinner that believeth in Jesus. 4. That it offers no precaution against tendencies to antinomianism on the part of those who profess to have believed.

I. *No pains are taken to present the character and claims of God as Lawgiver and Judge, and no indication given of a desire to bring souls in self-condemnation, to accept the punishment of their iniquity.*

The law of God has its place in the book, and its use in the work of God. "By the law is the knowledge of sin" ; and the Spirit, who convinces of sin, uses it in that department of His work. A due regard to the glory of God demands that it be so used. Sinners are not to be saved on a misunderstanding as to what they are, and as to what they merit. They must know Him against whom they have sinned. They must know what is justly due to Him from them as His creatures. They must be made acquainted with their iniquity as well as guilt, as sinners. And through the coming of the commandment sin must "revive" in their consciousness, so that they know that their are desperately wicked, as surely as that their persons are condemned to die. *Without this they can have no conception of gospel grace.* Any hope attained to without this, can only be based on a misunderstanding, and must involve dishonour to God. God is not to be conceived of as one who has to study man's convenience only, instead of supremely consulting His own glory. It should be an aim of preaching, therefore, to bring sinners to plead guilty before God ; to feel themselves, in excuseless guilt, shut up to the sovereign mercy of Him against whom they have sinned. The attainment of this may be the result of a moment's working of the power of God, or it may be reached only after a protracted process ; but to this all must come who are reconciled to God.

True, it cannot be expected that the operation of the applied law, on an unrenewed soul, can ever bring him to submit to God's claims as a Lawgiver, or to His terms as a Saviour. Subjection of the will to the law, is as impossible as submission to "the righteousness of God," on the part of an unregenerate sinner.

And this is one reason why this is not insisted on in ultra-evangelic teaching. To insist on God's claims—to consider what is due to God in the personal transaction between the sinner and Him as to peace—would bring the moral as well as the legal difficulty into view, and thus the necessity of the new birth would have to be faced as well as that of atonement. The latter cannot be passed over by any who profess to preach the gospel at all, though in the teaching referred to it is most perfunctorily dealt with ; but the former, as shutting up souls to repentance, to which only the renewed can attain, is most persistently ignored.

And this is done professedly in the interests of gospel grace. To require men to consider the claims of God as Lawgiver and Judge, in order that they may feel themselves shut up to His mercy as Sovereign, seems to such teachers to be raising an obstruction between sinners and the grace of the gospel. It seems hard to them that man's convenience should be interfered with by the claims of God. A call to repentance, therefore, never issues from their trumpet. In their view, there is no place for repentance either before or after conversion. A vague brief sense of danger is all that is required at the outset; and converts are taught that, once they have believed, they are not to remember and mourn for their sins. "Why raise up your sins again, to think of and to confess them?" their leading teacher said to them; "for were they not disposed of nearly two thousand years ago? Just believe this, and go home, and sing, and dance." It is no wonder, then, that they decry as not evangelical the preaching that does not ignore repentance. But they forget that, on the same ground, they might bring this charge against the Word of God itself; and not only against the Book of Exodus, but against the Epistle to the Romans as well, the writer of which had not learned how to bring men to know the grace of the gospel, except by bringing them first to know God and His law, their sin and its demerit, and their hearts and their desperate wickedness. What a strange delusion men labour under who imagine that what is essential to any right appreciation of the grace of God and to an intelligent submission to it, must be dispensed with, in order to guard the freeness of the gospel! By a "free gospel" they can only intend to indicate a gospel that suits a sinner's disposition, instead of being adapted to his state, that dispenses with all humbling of the soul before God, and of which man, unaided, can make use. Verily, for the defence of such a gospel, repentance must be excluded.

The favourite doctrine of sudden conversion is practically a complete evasion of the necessity of repentance. Suddenness is regarded as the rule, and not the exception, in order to get rid of any process preliminary to faith. And on what ground do they establish this rule? Merely on the instances of sudden conversion recorded in Scripture. True, there are cases not a few of sudden conversion recorded in Scripture, and there have been such instances since the Book of God was sealed. There was a wise and gracious design in making them thus marked at the outset. They were intended, by their extraordinary suddenness, to show to all ages the wondrous power of God. But was their suddenness designed to indicate the rule of God's acting in all ages? This it will be as difficult to establish, as that the miraculous circumstances attending some of them were intended to be perpetual. The work of conversion includes what we might expect to find detailed in a process. There can be no faith in

Christ without some sense of sin, some knowledge of Christ, such as never was possessed before, and willingness, resulting from renewal, to receive Him as a Saviour from sin. If a hearty intelligent turning to God in Christ be the result of conversion, it is utterly unwarrantable to expect that, as a rule, conversion shall be sudden. Indeed, the suddenness is rather a ground of suspicion than a reason for concluding that the work is God's. The teaching of Christ, in the parable of the sower, warrants this suspicion. They who are represented as suddenly receiving the word with joy are those who, in time of temptation, fall away. Suddenness and superficiality are there associated, and with both ephemerality. In the experience of some, whose conversion was sudden, there was, as in the case of the Apostle of the Gentiles, an after-process, intended to prepare them for useful service in the church. And is it not the fact, that those, who were most remarkable, in latter times, for their godliness and their usefulness, were the subjects of a detailed and extended process, before attaining to "peace and joy in believing?"

The extremely unguarded use of the statement, that it is through faith, and not through feeling, salvation is attained, tends to the same effect. True, there is a danger of hampering oneself by the idea that, unless there is a certain state of conscious feeling, an effort to believe is vain. There is a danger, too, of substituting feeling for faith, and of resting on a certain experience, instead of on what is objectively presented in the Word, as a ground of hope. All earnest souls are apt, at a certain stage, to search for the warrant of faith in their own state of feeling, rather than in the written Word. True, reception of Christ is the immediate duty of all who hear the gospel; and nought can excuse their not doing so. But is it not extremely dangerous even to appear to say that faith is the opposite of feeling? Does not faith itself express a state of feeling? Is it not an exercise of the heart as well as of the understanding? Those who so thoroughly separate faith and feeling, are led to regard faith as merely the assent of the understanding to certain statements regarding the way of salvation. And is it not the practice of some evangelists to press men to believe certain propositions, while telling them that their state of feeling is to be made no account of, that they are just to receive these as true, and that, if they do so, they are to regard that belief as faith, and at once to conclude that they are saved because they have so believed. It seems to be imagined that, in order to have in faith the opposite of works, it is necessary to reduce it to mere belief. But in reality this is but to place it on the same footing with works. Faith, as mere belief, is considered to be something within the power of all; and, by reducing it to a minimum of effort, both as to time and action, it is made to appear to be something different from protracted self-righteous labour. *But it is only different as an easier thing*

for men to do. Never can faith be truly seen to be opposed to works, till it is considered as indicating a state of feeling—till it is seen to be a “believing with the heart” ; for it is only when it is regarded as a hearty reception of Christ Himself as “all in all,” that salvation through faith can be recognised as salvation by grace. To some minds the facility and the suddenness seem essential to the graciousness of faith. They reduce it to mere belief, that men may appear able to do it, and it must be done at once, that there may be no room for repentance, and that it may appear to be something else than a work. *But there never was more legal doctrine delivered, than that of those, who urge men to mere belief, in order to salvation.*

II. *It ignores the sovereignty and power of God in the dispensation of His grace.* This omission is usually justified on the ground, that references to these are apt to be abused or to give needless offence. If men are to be told that salvation is entirely at the disposal of God’s sovereign will, and that sinners are so utterly lost that only the working of God’s power can move them, either to will or to do, what is required by the claims of the law and by the call of the gospel, then the result will be, that some will be offended and go away, other fold their hands and sleep, and others still sink down into despair. Am I therefore to refrain from proclaiming Jehovah as King? Am I to be silenced by fear of the result of telling, that it is His right to regulate, by His own sovereign will, His own work of grace? Am I not rather very specially called to announce His sovereignty in connection with salvation? In no other sphere does he appear more gloriously kingly than in this. Did not the Divine preacher make the sovereignty of God the theme of His very first sermon, though His hearers were thereby so incensed, that only by a miracle could He preserve His life from their fury? (Luke iv.). And did He not, in all His preaching, ascribe salvation to the sovereign will of the Father who sent Him?

Men, anxious to secure a certain result, and determined to produce it, do not like to think of a controlling will, to whose sovereign behests they must submit, and of the necessity of almighty power being at work, whose action must be regulated by another will than theirs. Certain processes must lead to certain results. This selfish earnestness, this proud resolve to make a manageable business of conversion-work, is intolerant of any recognition of the sovereignty of God. “Go to the street,” said the great American evangelist, to a group of young ladies, who were seated before him, “and lay your hand on the shoulder of every drunkard you meet, and tell him that God loves him, and that Christ died for him; and if you do so, I see no reason why there should be an unconverted drunkard in Edinburgh for forty-eight hours.”

There is of course frequent reference to the Spirit, and an acknowledgment of the necessity of His work, but there is, after

all, very little allowed to Him to do; and bustling men feel and act as if somehow His power was under their control. There is a prevalent notion, only in a few utterances assuming definite shape, that there is a pervading gracious presence of the Holy Spirit, requiring only, in order to its effective influence, a certain state of feeling and a certain amount of effort. There is prayer, but many who engage in it look around them for an overflowing, rather than upward for an outpouring, of the Spirit of promise. There is prayer, but it is rather to constitute a ground of hope, than the result of reaching that which is set before us in the gospel. Faith in the efficacy of prayer is far more common than faith in the Hearer of prayer. *Prayer, in order to produce expectation, may seem to be followed by an answer, when the susceptibility, caused by the hopefulness it engendered, accounts for all the result.*

It is true, that it is quite as unwarrantable, to expect the outpouring of the Spirit, without prayer for His coming, as it is to hope for His coming because this has been asked. There is a call and encouragement to ask, and those who ask in faith shall never ask in vain; but the asking is under the sovereign control of God as surely as the giving. I believe, too, that men professing to ask for the coming of the Comforter, may really be asking something else, and may, in answer to their cry, be receiving as a judgment what they regard as a mercy. It is also true that, to pray for the Spirit’s coming, and not to employ, in all earnestness, the means which He has been wont to acknowledge and to use, is nothing short of presumption. To wait for His coming is not to be idle till He comes. But it is also true, that those, who are blindly craving some excitement, may be preparing instruments to be used by some other power than that of the Spirit of the Lord. The prayers and the efforts, the asking and the preparation, may correspond, but the one may be directed towards something else than that which is presented in the promise of the Lord, and the other adapted for another hand than that by which the promise is fulfilled. It is true, besides, that the withholding of the Spirit, in His gracious influences, is a token of the Lord’s anger provoked by iniquity, but it is terrible to think of an impenitent people, regarding as a gracious work of God that which is really not so, that, under covert of an imagined mercy, they may remain at ease in their sins, and congratulate themselves on having been favoured by the Lord, without having to part with their idols.

In the present movement, at any rate, there seems to be little that is allowed of work to the Spirit of the Lord. In the prominent teaching, there is no exposure of the total depravity and the utter spiritual impotence of souls “dead in trespasses and sins.” To face this reality in the light of God’s word, would be to discover the necessity of the Almighty agency of the Holy Ghost. This cannot be endured. But another reason must be assigned for

avoiding the doctrine of total depravity. To preach it is decried as treating men as inert matter, to be wrought upon, but never to be active. This must not be preached to sinners, it is said, lest they fold their hands and sleep. They are intelligent and responsible beings, and must be differently dealt with. And how do you propose to treat them? *Are you to hide from them what they must know, ere they can ever act as intelligent beings in dealing with their souls' condition?* Are you to set them to work, as if they were what they are not? Is this your way of urging them to act as becomes responsible beings? You would hoodwink their understandings, and misdirect the movements to which their sense of responsibility urges them! But you hide the true state of things from yourselves as well as from them. You do so that you may have hope of success. You have no faith in the Spirit as God. You cannot bear, therefore, to discover that there is a great work for Him to do; and you cannot endure to feel dependent on His love, for you cannot trust in it as the love of God; and if you think of it as Divine, you know that you must also think of it as sovereign. And you would fain account the work to be done as not too much for your own power of persuasion; for you are ambitious of having it to do yourselves, as well as hopeless of having it done by the Lord. And yet, forsooth, you are the men who have faith, and those who differ from you are the dupes of unbelief. Yes, you are men of faith, but yours is faith in men. The man who can cry in faith for life, with a valley of dry bones before him, is the man who has faith in God.

Sometimes, an address may be heard, in which the necessity of regeneration is very strongly urged, but this is sure to be followed by some statement that blunts the edge of all that was said before. After some strong sayings about the necessity of regeneration, in one of the leader's addresses, the question was put, "How is this change to be attained?" And the speaker answered the question by saying, "You believe, and then you are regenerated"; and in confirmation, he referred to John i, 12, forgetting the verse which follows! Faith regenerates! If it does so, as the act of a living soul, then the soul could not have been dead in sins. If it was, whence came the life put forth in believing? If that regenerating faith was the act of a dead soul, then a dead man, by his own act, brings himself alive! The same teacher said on another occasion, "God would not call men to believe, unless they had the power to do so." I would like to hear his answer to the question, Can natural men "love God with all their heart, and soul, and mind, and strength," who yet are required by God to do so? And how would he expound the words, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are *spiritually discerned*"; and the words of Jesus, "No man can come unto me, except the Father who hath sent me, draw him."

There is a faith which can be exercised without the gracious aid of the Holy Ghost, but it cannot be the faith that is "to the saving of the soul." That is expressly declared to be "of the operation of God," and to require for its production "the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead." *That faith stakes the eternal all of an immortal being, who is a lost sinner, on the truth of Divine testimony.* Can one do so who does not regard the testimony as Divine? Can one so regard it who does not realise that God is, and that He speaks in that testimony to him? Can a dead soul thus believe? As well expect a sense of your presence, and a response to your words, from the bones that lie mouldering in the grave, beside which you stand and speak. True, there may be a persuasion of the truth, arising from its correspondence to the dictates of conscience, and because of evidence which has led to a rational conviction of its divinity; for in the grave, in which lie the spiritually dead, there is still intellectual life and a moral faculty that may occasionally be very active. But this is something very different from the faith in God, which is the gift of God. *That faith, too, respects the person of Christ.* It does so, not merely as looking to the historical personage who appears in the inspired record, nearly two thousand years apart, in the hazy past from us, who has left a gospel and a salvation with us, with which, apart from His person, we can deal by faith. It not only realises Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ and the Son of God, but it apprehends Him as a living present Saviour in the testimony of God regarding Him. It actually receives Him as He is actually presented by God. It embraces Himself in order to finding all in Him. It is not merely belief in testimony, it is also trust in the person who is presented therein. It is the homage of confidence in and submission to the Son of God as Jesus the Christ of God. *That faith, besides, implies unreserved dependence on the grace of God.* It is not merely taking advantage of a convenient ground of hope. It is an acknowledgment, at the footstall of the Divine throne, of being justly condemned and of being utterly helpless,—It is the acceptance of salvation from the hands of the Sovereign in order "to the praise of His grace." *That faith is, moreover, the cordial reception of Christ in order to salvation from all sin.* It is not the mere appropriation of the boon of deliverance from death. This is all that is desired by those, who allow themselves to be hurried vaguely to believe in the love of God, and the substitutionary death of Jesus. *True faith is the act of a soul who, up to that hour, was a lover of sin and an enemy to holiness, but who now cordially receives the Saviour in order to the destruction of what he loved, and to the attainment of what he hated before.* Can a man thus believe who has not been regenerated by the Holy Ghost? And why hide from sinners that they cannot? Surely this cannot be wisely done

in order to make gospel grace more manifest. Which knows best about the grace of the gospel, the man who thinks he is saved by grace through a faith which he owes to himself alone, or the man who has also learned that the faith, through which he is saved, is not of himself, but "is the gift of God"? Did Jesus hide this in His preaching from His hearers? Did He do so in His first sermon (Luke iv.)? Did He do so in His first recorded dealing with an inquirer (John iii.)? Did He not openly proclaim this in His great gospel sermon addressed to a multitude by the sea of Galilee (John vi.)? It was while preaching that sermon He said, "No man can come unto me except the Father, which hath sent me, draw Him."

It does raise one's indignation to hear some men speak of what would conserve, to the Spirit of God, His place and His work, as a mere obscuration of the grace of the gospel, and a fettering of souls in bondage. But it grieves one's heart to know that this is tolerated, and even approved of, by some who ought to be more zealous, for the grace and glory of the Lord, than to be able to endure it.

III. *No care is taken to show, in the light of the doctrine of the cross, how God is glorified in the salvation of a sinner.* The designed overliness with which the doctrine of sin is stated, necessarily leads to this. The omission of any definite unfolding of the law's claims, and of any distinct tracing of the sinner's relation to it and to God—the lack of all that would raise the question, "How can God be just in justifying the ungodly?"—leaves the anxious in such a state of mind and feeling, that all they require, to satisfy them, is to discover that they have a convenient warrant to hope. Neither teacher nor disciple seems to desiderate aught besides the assurance, that salvation can be reached through faith. The gospel seems convenient for man, and that suffices. How salvation is to the praise of God's glory the one is not careful to show, the other is not anxious to know. To any unprejudiced observer, this must have appeared a marked feature of revival teaching.

True, much use is made of Christ's substitutionary death. But it is usually referred to only as disposing of sin, so that it no longer endangers him, who believes that Christ died for him—who accepts Christ as his substitute. This use of the doctrine of substitution has been very frequent and very effective. Christ, as the substitute of sinners, is declared to be the object of faith. But it is His substitution rather than Himself. To believe in the substitution is what produces the peace. This serves to remove the sense of danger. There is no direct dealing with the person who was the substitute. There is no appreciation of the merit of His sacrifice, because of the Divine glory of Him by whom it was offered. Faith, in the convenient arrangement for deliverance

from danger, is substituted for trust in the Person who glorified God on the earth, and "in whom" alone we can "have redemption through His blood." The blood of Jesus was referred to, and there was an oft-repeated "Bible-reading" on the subject of "the blood"; but what approximation to any right idea regarding it could there be in the mind, and what but misleading in the teaching, of one who could say, "Jesus left His blood on earth to cleanse you, but He brought His flesh and bones to heaven."

Souls who have a vague sense of danger, excited by the sensational, instead of an intelligent conviction of sin, produced by the light and power of applied truth, are quite ready to be satisfied with such teaching as this. To these, such doctrine will bring all the peace they are anxious to obtain. But what is the value of that peace? It is no more than the quiet of a dead soul, from whom has been removed an unintelligent sense of danger. A true sense of peace with God there cannot be, unless a sinner, assured that God was glorified by Him who died on the cross, can, with reverence of His glorious name, approach Him in the right of the crucified and exalted Jesus, having hope of acceptance in His sight. To this he cannot attain till, in the light of the Son's glory, he appreciates the merit of Jesus' blood, comes to Christ Himself to appropriate His blood in Him, approaches through Him to God, and receives, by the application of the promise of peace, a persuasion of acceptance, in faith, from the throne.

Where there is no wounding, there can be no healing, of conscience. The doctrine, that can do neither, can only do deceiver's work. A sinner, having peace without knowing, or caring to know, how the law, which he has transgressed, hath been magnified, how the justice, that demanded his death, hath been satisfied, how the name of God, which was by him dishonoured, has by Christ been glorified, and how what availed for these ends can be a ground of hope to him, in the presence of the God with whom he hath to do, may have enjoyment, may be zealous, may be active, but cannot have "a good hope through grace."

IV. *No precaution is offered against a tendency to anti-nomianism in those who profess to have believed.* Yea, this tendency must be fostered by the teaching given to them. If the law of God has not its own place accorded to it, in connection with the sinner's natural relation to God, and in order to conviction of sin, it is not likely to get it at a later stage. The man, who is disposed to think of his sin, as a great calamity, rather than as a heinous crime, is not likely either to reverence God or to respect His law. To his view, salvation is something which it would not be fair to withhold from him, rather than a gracious gift which a sovereign God is glorified in bestowing. The government under which he ventures to claim his salvation presents nothing venerable to his mind. He thinks of an easy reign of mercy, under which he



can be as imperious as if his own will were law. In his altered position, it is easy for him to ignore the law of God. He never had to face it; and, if he has faith without life, there is nothing in him to incline him to do so now. Not having respect to the standard of God's law, it is easy for him to imagine that he is without sin. He is taught that now he has nothing to do with confession of sin, because his sins were long ago disposed of, and that he should not now remember them. As for "the corruption of his whole nature," it never was a trouble to him, and is less likely to be so now than before, since a delusive peace has drugged his soul to sleep. Antinomianism leading, in the first instance, to perfectionism, must be the result of the teaching under which he has been trained. In his leader's prayers he never hears any confession of sin, and he is apt to think that, if he follows him, he must be right. True, he is urged to work; and there is no service, however high, which, during his noviciate, he is not directed to attempt. The work which he is disposed to choose, and the first work he is instructed to engage in, is to preach to others what he himself has found. Meetings are multiplied that he may attend them, and crowds are gathered that he may address them. The excitement of his first impressions is thus to be kept up by the bustle of evangelistic service. And what kind of being is he likely to become under such training as this? A molluscous, flabby creature, without pith or symmetry, breathing freely only in the heated air of meetings, craving to be pampered with vapid sentiment, and so puffed up by foolish flattery, as to be in a state of chronic flatulency, requiring relief in frequent bursts of hymn-singing, in spouting addresses as void of Scripture truth as of common sense, and in belching flippant questions in the face of all he meets. Self-examination he discards as a torture only meant for slaves, humility and watchfulness as troublesome virtues which the wise will eschew, secret communions with God as a relic of less enlightened and less busy times, and the quiet habitual discharge of home duties, in the fear of God, as a tame routine for legalists.

The doctrine of assurance, which is preached, tends to the same effect. Assurance is regarded as the direct result of faith, or as essential to its exercise. A consciousness of faith is of itself deemed a sufficient ground of assurance. There is no place at all allowed to an attestation of faith by works. True, faith does often rise into assurance as to the sufficiency of Christ, as its object, and of the Word of God, as its warrant. There is a hope arising from the consciousness of this faith, as well as a hope occasioned by it exercise. But there is also a place reserved by God for the hope arising from the attestation of faith by works. And the Lord calls the believer to examine himself, as to the fruits which his faith produceth, in order to ascertain that his faith is genuine, and that therefore Christ is already his. "Faith

without works is dead." Where there is a careful disallowing of self-examination, there is sufficient proof of the law being ignored, as the authoritative rule of the Christian's life. Suggestions, to this exercise, are not unfrequently decried as temptations of Satan, or as necessarily the result of backsliding. And why so? Because it is imagined, that a man is not required to prove himself to be a genuine believer, by doing the will of Christ, in obedience to His law. And yet it will be on the ground of works, as evidence of true faith, that Christ Himself, on His great white throne, will justify the verdict which proclaims them blessed, who are heirs of the kingdom, prepared by His Father.

A religion without reverence and without contrition, can alone be fostered under such teaching as this. But now, as surely as of old, "Thus saith the Lord," "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." Now, as of old, the heirs of the "kingdom which cannot be moved," "serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear"; and only in that measure can they taste "the peace of God," and "rejoice with unspeakable and full of glory."

#### HYPER-EVANGELISM, A MIGHTY POWER.

I make no attempt to trace, to its source, the influence exerted in producing the marked effects resulting from the present religious movement. I confine my attention to the advantage, afforded by the state of feeling, which preceded that movement, and to certain elements of power in the means employed to advance it.

It was preceded by a very prevalent desire for a change. All classes of religious society seemed to be stirred by a wistful longing for something to break up the dead monotony, of which all were wearying. Some were actuated by genuine spiritual feeling. They felt that tokens of the Lord's absence abounded; and turning to the Lord they cried for the manifestation of His power and glory. Others, strangers to stated spiritual enjoyment in the means of grace, were longing for some change—some excitement to lift them out of their dullness—and for some bustle in which they might take their share of service. Others, still, who knew no happiness in the house of God, and had no desire for His presence, would fain that something new were introduced into the mode of service which they felt so jading. The excitement of a revival would be to them a relief. "Special services" they strongly craved. Prayer for a revival was called for; and many were ready to take part in the meetings convened for that purpose. These meetings resulted in the hope of an answer. Though but few truly appreciated what was needed, and really dealt with God, we cannot but hope that something was done by the Lord in answer to their cry. But many there were who merely craved a change—something to relieve them of the tedium of a routine, in which they found no enjoyment, because they were estranged from God—and who joined,

in asking this, with those who were asking something better. These were the persons disposed to make much of their prayers, and who found it easy to hope just because they had chosen to ask; and they may have received, though not in mercy, what they sought. The expectation of a change, at any rate, was general. There was an opening up of men's minds to an expected influence. This tended to affect even the Gallios who "cared for none of those things." A revival was talked of, prayed for, and expected, and thus a general susceptibility of impression was produced. Prayer meetings, fostering the desire and expectation of a change, were in all places the pioneers of the movement. Those who heard that a revival had taken place elsewhere, sought that it might reach their own locality. Many blindly asked for what was done in other places, instead of seeking the fulfilment of the Lord's promise.

In course of time, musical practisings were added to prayer meetings, as preparation for a revival! From both the addresses and the music much was expected, when evangelistic deputies arrived.

What the effect would have been, had the awakened expectancy been left to be operated on by the stated ministrations of the sanctuary, or by extraordinary efforts, that introduced no departure from the usual mode of worship, no one can tell; but I cannot refrain from expressing my persuasion, that the result would have been a healthier one than that which new appliances developed.

But on this wakeful state of mind, was brought to bear, a system of doctrine, that ignored those aspects of the truth, which are most offensive to "the natural man," and that, while offering something that seemed plausible to an unenlightened conscience, seemed to conserve the old heart's imagined independence of the sovereign and almighty grace of God, and by ignoring repentance preserved to it its idols. The gospel, modified to suit the taste of unrenewed men, was welcome. The recommendations of it, given by men of influence, tended to put down suspicion, and to induce the public to receive it as "the gospel of the grace of God." *The new style of teaching made it seem such an easy thing to be a Christian.* To find oneself easily persuaded to believe what was presented as the gospel, and to think that by this faith salvation was secured, and that all cause of anxiety was for ever gone, gave a new and pleasing sensation, which thousands were willing to share.

And once the movement had begun it could command an indefinite supply of agents. All who say they were converted are set to work. Any one, who can tongue it deftly, can take a part,—he requires neither knowledge nor experience. The excitement is kept up by the bustle of public service. No fear is felt of lifting up novices "lest they fall into the condemnation of the devil." That feeling may have been suitable in Paul's day, but

it has now ceased to be so regarded. But there is a fear of converts ceasing to seem to be so, if they are not kept busy in religious service. A proselytising bustle must therefore be the outcome of their faith. There is an utter avoidance of *testing* work on the part of their instructors; but *attesting* work enough is done. They have at once been proclaimed Christians in their own hearing, and in the presence of thousands; and those, who presume to tell them this, are quite ready to join with themselves in thinking that they are fit for any service that they may choose to try. A season apart, to be alone with God, a solemn time for careful counting of the cost, has from Christ the double recommendation of His example and of His precept, but is desired neither by nor for these so-called converts.

To these advantages for effect were added various devices, which, though quite unscriptural, or rather, because they were so, were fraught with impressing power.

#### UNSCRIPTURAL DEVICES.

1. Excessive hymn-singing is one of these. The singing of uninspired hymns even in moderation, as a part of public worship, no one can prove to be scriptural; but the excess and the misdirection of the singing in this movement were irrational as well. Singing ought to be to the Lord; for singing is worship. But singing the gospel to men has taken the place of singing praise to God. This, at any rate, is something new—that indeed is its only recommendation—and when the singing is also good, its melody combines with its novelty to make an impression. The singing produced an effect. Many professed to have been converted by the hymns.

2. The use of instrumental music was an additional novelty, pleasing to the kind of feeling that finds pleasure in a concert. To introduce what is so gratifying there, into the service of the house of God, is to make the latter palatable to those to whom spiritual worship is an offence. The organ sounds effectively touch chords which nothing else would thrill. To Scottish Presbyterians it was something new; but as their spiritual guides did not object to it, why should they? Tided thus, by their pastors, over all difficulties, which their scruples might occasion, they found it pleasant to enjoy the new sensation. They could be at the concert and in church at the same time. They could get at once something for conscience and something for the flesh.

And yet it is not difficult to prove that the use of instrumental music, in the worship of God, is unscriptural, and that therefore all, who have subscribed the Confession of Faith, are under solemn vow against it. There was a thorough change, in the mode of worship, effected by the revolution, which introduced the New Testament dispensation. So thorough is this change, that no part of the old ritual can be a precedent to us. For all parts of the

service of the house of God there must be New Testament precept or example. No one will pretend that for instrumental music, in the worship of God, there is any authority in New Testament Scripture. "The fruit of the lips," issuing from hearts that make "melody to the Lord," is the only form of praise it sanctions. The Church of Rome claims a right to introduce into the worship of God any innovation it lists; the Church of England allows what is not expressly forbidden in Scripture; but Scotch Presbyterians are bound, by the Confession of Faith, to disallow all that is not appointed in Scripture. (Conf. chap. xxi.) How those, who allow the use of instrumental music, in our Assembly Hall, can reconcile their doing so with their ordination vows, I cannot even conjecture.

It may seem strange, but it is quite as true as it is strange, that those who are ready to plead that principles and doctrine, inculcated under the former dispensation, are no longer entitled to our acceptance, unless re-delivered with New Testament sanctions, are just the parties who are also ready to go back to Old Testament antecedents in the mode of worship. What is eternally true is treated as if it were temporary, and that which has "vanished away" is regarded as perpetual. But if the ancient mode, of conducting the service of praise, furnishes an example for all times, on the self-same ground you are entitled to choose what you list out of the ceremonies of Old Testament worship. The altar and the sacrifice may be defended as surely as the organ.

"But we use the organ only as an aid," it is said. "It is right that we should do our best in serving the Lord; and if the vocal music is improved by the instrumental accompaniment, then surely the organ may be used." On the same ground you might argue for the use of crucifixes and pictures, and for all the paraphernalia of the Popish ritual. "These," you might say, "make an impression on minds that would not otherwise be at all affected. They vividly present before worshippers the scenes described in Scripture, and if, as aids, they serve to do so, they surely cannot be wrong." To this, there are three replies, equally good against the argument for instrumental music. 1. They are not prescribed in New Testament Scripture, and therefore they must not be introduced into New Testament worship. 2. They are incongruous with the spirituality of the New Testament dispensation. 3. These additions but help to excite a state of feeling which militates against, instead of aiding, that which is produced by the word. An organ may make an impression, but what is it but such as may be made more thoroughly at the opera? It may help to regulate the singing, but does God require this improvement? And whence arises the taste for it? It cannot be from the desire to make the praise more fervent and spiritual, for it only tends to take attention away from the heart, whose melody the Lord requires. It is the craving for pleasurable æsthetics, for the gratification of mere carnal feeling, that desires the thrill of organ sounds, to touch

pleasingly the heart, that yields no response to what is spiritual. If the argument, against the use of the organ, in the service of praise, is good, it is, at least, equally so against its use in the service of preaching. If anything did "vanish away," it surely is the use of all such accessories in connection with the exhibition of Christ to men.

3. The novelty of the "inquiry room" was another effective aid in advancing this movement. It is declared to be desirable to come into close personal contact with the hearers of the gospel immediately after a sermon, in order to ascertain their state of feeling, to deepen impressions that may have been made, and to give a helping hand to the anxious. Such is the plea for "the inquiry room." In order that it may be supplied, hearers are strongly urged, after a sensational address, to take the position of converts or inquirers. They are pressed and hurried to a public confession. Strange means are resorted to, in order to commit them, by an open avowal of a certain state of feeling. But what right has any individual, not authorised by a Church of Christ, to do so.—to insist on a public confession on the part of any one? Even the Church can admit to public confession only after trial. And the admission must be in connection with the dispensation of the appointed sealing ordinances. But here is a stranger, who never saw their faces before, hurrying people, whom a sensational address has excited, to make public profession of faith, thus associating them, without possibility of trial, with the Christians of the locality, and involving the credit of religion in their future conduct before the world. This, surely, is both unwise and presumptuous. How unlike this to the Divine Teacher's way! When a crowd of seemingly anxious souls gathered around Him, instead of urging them to confession, He tested them by searching doctrine, and the result was, that instead of crowding an inquiry room, they "went away and walked no more with Him." I feel persuaded that if an excited crowd, at a revival meeting, were to be addressed as were the multitude at the Sea of Galilee, the conductor would put the speaker down, denounce him for casting a gloom over the meeting, and give him no other opportunity of dealing with inquirers.

Why are men so anxious to keep the awakened in their own hands? They, at any rate, seem to act as if conversion was all their own work. They began it, and they seem determined to finish it. If it is at all out of their hand, they seem to think that it will come to nothing. They must at once, and on the spot get these inquirers persuaded to believe, and get them also to say that they do. They may fall to pieces if they are not braced round by a band of profession. Their names or numbers must, ere the night passes, be added to the roll of converts. They are gathered into the inquiry room, to act in a scene, that looks more like a part of a stageplay, than aught more serious and solemn.

Oh, what trifling with souls goes on in these inquiry rooms, as class after class is dealt with in rude haste, very often by teachers who never "knew the grace of God in truth!" The inquiry room may be effective in securing a hasty profession of faith, but it is not an institution which the Church of Christ should adopt or countenance.

4. Even prayer-meetings are converted into factories of sensation. Brief prayers and brief addresses to the stroke of hammer, or the toll of bell, silent prayers, hymns, which often contain a considerable amount of nonsense, and occasionally of something worse, sung to the strains of an organ, and a chance to address or prayer given to any one who chooses to rise and speak,—such are the arrangements of the new prayer-meeting. The *silent prayer*, what is it? It is secret prayer, and therefore ought to be prayer in secret. It must be *secret*, just because it is *silent*. And where is it engaged in? In the closet? No; it was Christ who directed it to be there. There are other leaders now, and they direct that it should be in open assembly. Christ would have men, when they pray secretly, to enter their closet and shut the door. Now it must be done so that those who do it "may be seen of men." And this device, so directly opposed to the mind of Christ, is lauded as if nothing could be better. And it is becoming the habit now of worshippers as they enter the house of God. They assume, before the eyes of hundreds, the attitude of prayer, to do, in the public assembly, what Christ directed to be done in the closet. If they intend this as a public confession of their sin, in neglecting prayer in their closet, such confession would not be at all uncalled for, if duly made. They who forget to do it where Christ required it to be done, are the persons most likely to do it where it can only be a bit of will-worship and formality.

The device of "open meetings," what of it? It is simply ceasing to take care that, in the worship of God, "all things be done decently and in order"; and giving the place to those who have conceit and tongue, and nought beside, which ought to be filled by those who in honour prefer others to themselves, and who seek grace to "serve with reverence and godly fear."

I have had to endure the trial of watching over a darling child, during her dying hours. Spasm, succeeding spasm, was the only movement indicating life, each one, as it came, shattering the frame which it convulsed, and thus wearing out its strength. While the spasms lasted I knew there still was life, but I also knew that these must soon end in death. There was life, but it was dying, and the convulsions of life soon ended in the stillness of death. But after the double pain came the ecstasy of a resurrection hope, and my heart could sing beside the grave, that covered for a season my dead out of sight. With still greater grief, should I look on my Church, in a spasmodic state, subject

to convulsions, which only indicate that her life is departing, the result of revivals gut up by men. It will be a sad day for our country, if the men, who luxuriate in the excitement of man-made revivals, shall with their one-sided views of truth, which have ever been the germs of serious errors, their lack of spiritual discernment, and their superficial experience, become the leaders of religious thought, and the conductors of religious movements. Already they have advanced as many, as inclined to follow them, far in the way to Arminianism in doctrine, and to Plymouthism in service. They may be successful in galvanising, by a succession of sensational shocks, a multitude of dead, till they seem to be alive, and they raise them from their crypts, to take a place amidst the living in the house of the Lord; but far better would it be to leave the dead in the place of the dead, and to prophesy to them there, till the living God Himself shall quicken them. For death will soon resume its sway. Stillness will follow the temporary bustle, and the quiet will be more painful than the stir. But to whatever extent this may be realised in the future of the Church in Scotland, our country shall yet share, in common with all lands, in the great spiritual resurrection that will be the morning work of that day of glory, during which "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth," and "all nations shall be blessed in Messiah, and shall call Him blessed." Meantime, were it not for the hope of this, it would be impossible to endure to think of the present, and of the immediate future, of the cause of true religion in our land. The dead, oh, how dead! the living, oh, how undiscerning! And if there continue to be progress in the direction, in which present religious activity is moving, a negative theology will soon supplant our Confession of Faith, the good old ways of worship will be forsaken for unscriptural inventions, and the tinsel of a superficial religiousness will take the place of genuine godliness.

\* \* \*

"When a fire is kindled in a city we do not say coldly, 'Yonder is a great fire, I pray God it will do no harm.' In times of public defection we are not to preach tame lectures of contemplative divinity, or fight with ghosts of antiquated errors, but to oppose with all earnestness the growing evils of the world, whatever it may cost us." If men valued truth as they do their goods and their houses they would not regard error with such cool contentment. The cant of the present day is, 'Charity, Charity.' As if it were not the truest charity to grow indignant with that which ruins souls. It is not uncharitable to warn men against poisonous adulterations of their food, or invasions of their rights; and surely it cannot be more uncharitable to put them upon their guard against that which will poison or rob their souls. Lukewarmness of love to truth is the real evil to be deprecated in these times. We have new doctrines among us, full of practical mischief, and against these there is need to cry out lest they gain so great a head that both church and state should be set on fire. Lord, arouse thy watchmen, and bid them arouse all thy saints, for the times are full of danger!"

C. H. SPURGEON. 1883.

## THE FALSE CONVERT DETECTED

EXTRACTS FROM THOMAS SHEPARD (1605 - 1649).

'*Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*' Matt. 7: 14. '*They have healed also the hurt of the daughter, of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.*' Jerem. 6: 14.

Look to all ages, and we shall find but a handful saved. As soon as ever the Lord began to keep house, and there were but two families in it, there was a bloody Cain living, and a good Abel slain. And as the world increased in number, so in wickedness, Gen. 6: 12. It is said, *All flesh had corrupted their ways*, and amongst so many thousand men not one righteous but *Noah*, and his family; and yet in the Ark there crept in a cursed Ham. Afterwards, as Abraham's posterity increased, so we see their sin abounded. When his posterity was in Egypt, where, one would think, if ever men were good, now it would appear, being so heavily afflicted by Pharaoh, being by so many miracles miraculously delivered by the hand of Moses, yet most of these *God was wrath* with, Heb. 3: 11, and only two of them, Caleb and Joshua, went into Canaan, a type of Heaven. Look into Solomon's time: what glorious times! what great profession was there then! Yet after his death *ten tribes* fell to the odious sin of Idolatry. Look farther into Isaiah's time, when there were multitudes of sacrifices and prayers, Isa. 1: 11. Yet then there was but a *remnant*, nay, a very little *remnant*, that should be saved. And look to the time of Christ's coming in the flesh (for I pick out the best time of all), when one would think by such sermons he preached, such miracles he wrought, such a life as he led, all the Jews would have entertained him; yet it is said, *He came unto his own, and they received him not.* John 1: 11. In the Apostle's time many indeed were converted, but few comparatively; and amongst the best churches were many bad, Philip. 3: 18; Rev. 3: 4. And presently after the Apostles time *Many grievous wolves came in and devoured the sheep*, Acts 20: 29.

Even amongst them that have the means of grace, but few shall be saved. It's a strange speech of Chrysostom in his fourth sermon to the people of Antioch, where he was much beloved, and did much good; 'How many do you think,' he says, 'shall be saved in this city? It will be an hard speech to you, but I will speak it; though here be so many thousands of you, yet there cannot be found an hundred that shall be saved, and I doubt of them too.' It may be sometimes amongst ninety-nine in a parish, Christ sends a minister to call some *one* lost sheep among them, Luke 15. Three grounds were bad where the seed was sown, and only one ground good, Matt. 13. The number of them that shall be saved is very small, Luke 13: 24. . . . This ministers exhortation to all confident people, that think they believe, and say they doubt

not but to be saved; and hence do not much fear death. Oh, learn to suspect and fear your estate, and fear it so much that thou cannot be quiet until thou hast got some assurance thou shalt be saved. A confident opinion rages amongst divers sorts of people whom the Devil never troubles, because he is sure of them already, and therefore cries peace in their ears, whose conscience never troubles them, because it has shut its eyes: and hence they sleep, and sleeping dream that God is merciful unto them, and will be so; yet never see they are deceived, until they awake with the flames of Hell about their ears: and the world troubles them not, because they are friends to it, and so enemies to God. And ministers never trouble them, for they have none such as are fit for that work near them. And their friends never trouble them, because they are afraid to displease them. This one truth well thought on may damp thine heart. It may be there are better in Hell than thyself that art so confident; and therefore tell me what thou hast to say for thyself, that thou shalt be saved?

Thou wilt say probably, first, 'I have left my sins I once lived in, and am now no drunkard, no swearer, no liar, etc.'—I answer; thou mayest be washed from thy mire (the pollution of the world), and yet be a swine in God's account, 2 Pet. 2: 20. Thou mayest live a blameless, innocent, honest life, and yet be a miserable creature still, Philip. 3: 6.

'But I pray, and that often.'—This thou mayest do, and yet never be saved, Isa. 1: 11. '*To what purpose is your multitude of sacrifices?*' Thou mayest pray with much affection, yet be a thousand miles off from being saved, Prov. 1: 28.

'But I hear the Word of God, and like the best preachers.'—This thou mayest do too, and yet never be saved. Nay, thou mayest so hear, as to receive much *joy*, and comfort in hearing, nay, to believe and catch hold on Christ, and say and think he is thine, and yet not be saved, as the stony ground did, Matt. 13, who heard the word with *joy*, and for a *season* believed.

'I read the Scriptures often.'—This you may do too, and yet never be saved; as the Pharisees, who were so perfect in reading the Bible, that Christ needed only to say, 'It hath been said of old times,' for they knew the text and place well enough without intimation.

'But I am grieved and sorrowful, and repent for my sins past.'—Judas did thus, Matt. 27: 3, he repents himself with a legal repentance for fear of Hell, and with a natural sorrow for dealing so unkindly with Christ. True humiliation is ever accompanied with hearty reformation.

'I have very many good *desires* and *endeavours* to get to Heaven.'—These thou and thousands may have, and yet miss of Heaven, Luke 13: 24.

These things thou may verily think of thyself, and yet be deceived, and damned at last. '*There is a way that seemeth*

*right to a man, but the end thereof is the way of death,* Prov. 14: 12. Thou mayest go fairly, and live so honestly, that all the best Christians about thee may think well of thee, and never suspect thee; and so mayest pass through the world, and die with a deluded comfort, and never know thou art counterfeit, till the Lord brings thee to thy strict and last examination, and so thou receivest that dreadful sentence, *Go ye cursed*. So it was with the five foolish virgins, that were never discovered by the wise, nor by themselves, until the gate of grace was shut upon them, Matt. 25. If thou hast therefore no better evidences to shew for thyself, that thine estate is good, than these, I will not give a pin's point for all thy flattering false hopes of being saved: but it may be thou hast never yet come so far as this pitch; and if not, Lord! what will become of thee? Suspect thyself much, and when in this shipwreck of souls thou seest so many thousands sink, cry out and conclude, It's a wonder of wonders, and a thousand to one, if ever thou comest safe to shore.

There are four strait gates which everyone must pass through before he can enter into Heaven.

1. There is the strait gate of *Humiliation*. God saves none, but first he humbles them. Now it is hard to pass through the gates and flames of Hell; hard to mourn not for one sin, but all sins, and not for a season, but all a man's life-time. Oh, it is hard for a man to suffer himself to be loaden with sin, and pressed to death for sin, so as never to love sin more. It is easy to drop a tear or two, and be sermon-sick: but to have a heart rent *for* sin and *from* sin, this is true humiliation, and this is hard. If God broke David's bones for his adultery, and the angels backs for their pride; the Lord, if ever he saves thee, will break thine heart too.

2. The strait gate of *Faith*, Eph. 1: 19. It's an easy matter to presume, but hard to believe in Christ. It is easy for man that was never humbled to believe and say, 'Tis *but believing*; but it is an hard matter for a man humbled, when he sees all his sins in order before him, and crying out against him, and God frowning upon him, now to call God Father. Judas had rather be hanged than believe.

3. The strait gate of *Repentance*. It is an easy matter for a man to confess himself to be a sinner, and to cry God forgiveness until next time: but to have a bitter sorrow, and to turn from all sin, and to return to God, and all the ways of God, which is true repentance; this is hard.

4. The strait gate of *Opposition of Devils, the World, and a man's own Self*, who knock a man down when he begins to look towards Christ and Heaven.

Hence learn, that every easy way to Heaven is a false way, although ministers should preach it out of their pulpits, and angels should publish it out of Heaven. There are easy ways to Heaven (as men think), which all lead to Hell.

## SOME COMMON CAUSES WHY SO MANY, BEING MISTAKEN IN THEIR HOPE OF SALVATION, ARE ETERNALLY RUINED

### I. *Error in the Understanding.*

(1). The mind being ignorant of the height and excellency of true grace, imagines within itself such a measure of common grace to be true grace, which the soul easily having attained unto, conceives it is in the estate of grace, and so deceives itself miserably, Rom. 10: 3. (By common grace is meant the possession of certain marks, such as are referred to in Heb. 6; Matt. 12: 43; 2 Pet. 2: 20, etc., which fall short of the true effects which always accompany regeneration). The mind comes to this position thus: The mind is haunted and pursued with troublesome fears of Hell, Conscience tells him he hath sinned, and the Law tells him he shall die, and Death appears and tells him he must shortly meet with him; and if he be taken away in his sins, then comes a black day of reckoning, where no creature can comfort him. Hence, he says, Lord, keep my soul from these miseries; he desires peace and ease, and to hear such sermons, and read such books, as may best satisfy him concerning the least measure of grace: for, sin only troubling him, grace only can comfort him soundly. And so grace, which is meat and drink to an holy heart, is but medicine to this kind of men, to ease them of their fears and troubles. Hereupon, being ignorant of the height of *true grace*, he fancies to himself such a measure of common grace to be true grace. As, if he feels himself ignorant of that which troubles him: so much knowledge will I then get, he says. If some soul sins in his practice trouble him, these he will cast away, and so reforms. If omission of good duties molests him, he will hear better, and pray oftener. And now he is quieted.

When he has attained unto this pitch of his own, he thinks himself a young beginner, and a good one too. And now if he be pressed to get into the estate of grace, his answer is, *That is not to be done now, he thanks God; that care is past*. The truth is, Beloved, 'tis too high for him; all his grace coming by his own working, not by God Almighty's power. For the Lord's sake take heed of this deceit. True grace (I tell you), is a rare pearl, a glorious sun clouded from the eyes of all but them that have it, Rev. 2: 17, a strange, admirable, almighty work of God upon the soul, which no created power can produce: as far different, in the least measure of it, from the highest degree of common grace, as a Devil is from an Angel.

(2). In judging some trouble of mind, some light sorrows for sin, to be true repentance; and so thinking they do repent, hope they shall be saved. Nay, it may be they will fast, and humble, and afflict their souls voluntarily for sin, Isa. 58: 3, and hereupon

when they hear that all that sin shall die, they grant this is true indeed, except a man repent ; and so they think *they have done already*. This is true, at what time soever a sinner repents, the Lord will blot out his iniquity : but this repentance is not when a man is troubled somewhat in mind for sin, but when he comes to mourn for sin *as his greatest evil* ; and that not for some sins, but all sins, little and great ; and that not for a time but always, like a spring, never dry, but ever running all a man's life time.

(3). In judging the striving of conscience against sin to be the striving of the flesh against the spirit, and hence they think being thus compounded of flesh and spirit, they are regenerate, and in no worse estate than the children of God themselves. So many among us know they should be better, and strive that they may grow better, but through the power of sin cannot ; conscience tells them they must not sin, their hearts and lusts say they must sin ; and here forsooth is flesh and spirit. Oh no, here is conscience and lust only together ; which striving Herod, Balaam, Pilate, or the vilest reprobate in the world may have. Know therefore that the striving of the spirit against the flesh is against sin *because it is sin* ; but the striving of thy conscience against sin, is only against sin because it is a troubling or a damning sin.

(4). In judging of the sincerity of the heart by some good affection in the heart. Hence many a deluded soul reasons the case out thus with himself : Either I must be a prophane man, or an hypocrite, or an upright man. Not prophane, for I am not given to drinking, swearing ; nor hypocrite, for I hate these outward shews, I cannot endure to appear better without than I am within : Therefore I am upright. Why ? Oh, because my heart is good ; my affections and desires within are better than my life without, I know mine own heart, and the heart is all God desires. And thus they fool themselves, Prov. 28 : 26. This is one of the greatest causes and grounds of mistake amongst men : they are not able to put a difference between good desires, and strong affections that arise from the love of Jesus Christ. Self-love will make a man seek his own good and safety : hence it will pull a man out of his bed betimes in the morning, and call him up to pray ; it will make him tug hard for pardon, for Christ, for mercy. But the love of Christ makes a man desire Christ and his honour for *himself*, and all other things for Christ.

(5). In judging of God's love to them, by aiming sometimes at the glory of God. Is this possible, that a man should aim at God's glory, and yet perish ? Yes, and ordinarily too, 2 Kings 10 : 18. But here's the difference, though a wicked man may make God's glory in some particular things his end, yet he never makes it *in his general practice his utmost and last end*. A subtle heart may

forsake all the world, as Judas did, may bind himself to all the duties God requires outwardly at his hands, and so do good works ; but what's his last end ? It's that he might gain respect or place, or that Christ may have some part of the glory, and he another. There's many seek the honour of Christ, but do you seek his honour *only* : Is it your last end, where you rest and seek no more but *that* ? Observe this rule ; If you are more grieved for the eclipse of thine own honour, or for thine own losses, than for the loss of God's honour ; it is an evident sign thou desirest it not in the prime and chiefest place. Sin troubled Paul more than all the plagues and miseries of the world. Indeed, if thy name be dashed with disgrace, and thy will be crossed, thy heart is grieved and disquieted : but the Lord may lose his honour daily by thine own sins, and those that be round about thee, but not a tear, nor a sigh, nor a groan to behold such a spectacle. As sure as the Lord lives, thou seekest not the Lord's honour as thy greatest good.

(6). In judging the power of sin to be but *infirmity*. For if any thing troubles an unregenerate man, and makes him call his estate into question, it is sin, either in the being, or power of it. Now sin in the being ought not, must not make a man question his estate, because the best have that left in them that will humble them, and make them live by Faith : therefore the power of sin only can justly thus trouble a man. (Which power reigns only in the unregenerate). Now if a man do judge of this to be only but *infirmity*, which the best are compassed about with, he cannot but think himself well. And if this error be settled in one that lives in no one known sin, it is very difficult to remove : for, let the minister denounce the terror of God against them, they are never stirred ; why ? Because they think, *Here's for you that live in sin* ; but as for themselves, although they have sins, yet they strive against them, and so cannot leave them ; for, say they, *we must have sins so long as we live here*. Now mark it, there's no surer sign of a man under the dominion of his sins than this, that is, not to be greatly troubled for sin (for they may be little troubled) because they cannot overcome sin. I deny not but the *best* do sin daily : yet this is the disposition of Paul, and every child of God, he mourns not the less, but the more for sin. This is the great difference between a reigning sin and a sin of infirmity. A sin of infirmity is such a sin as a man would, but cannot, part with ; and hence he mourns the more for it : a reigning sin is such a sin as a man by virtue of his conscience would sometimes part with, but cannot ; and hence mourns the less for it, and gives way to it. Now for the Lord's sake take heed of this deceit ; for I tell you, those sins you cannot part with, if you groan not day and night under them (saying, O Lord, help me, for I am weary of myself), will certainly undo you. You say, you cannot but *speak idly*, and *think vainly*, and *do ill*, as all do sometimes : I tell you, those sins

shall be everlasting chains to hold you fast in the power of the Devil.

And thus much of the understanding's corruption, whereby men are commonly deluded.

## II. Carnal Security, or False Peace.

Now this false peace is begot in the heart by these three means:—

(1). *By Satan.* Luke 11: 21. 'When the strong man keepeth the Palace, his goods are in peace': that is, when Satan armed with abundance of carnal reasonings possesses men's souls, they are at peace. As masters give their servants peace, even so the Devil.

*a.* By removing those sins which trouble the conscience: for a man may live in a sin, and yet never be troubled for that sin; for sin against the light of conscience only troubles the conscience. Mark the plot of the Devil: he will not suffer a man to live in any sin against conscience, whereby he should be troubled; and so the poor deluded man himself goes up and down, not doubting but he shall be saved; why? because their conscience (they thank God) is clear, and they know of no one sin they live in.

*b.* By giving the soul *liberty* to recreate itself in any sinful course, wherein the eye of conscience may not be pricked and wounded. To be pent up all the day long in doing God's work, *watching, praying, fighting* against every sin, this is a burden, this is too strict: and because they cannot endure it, they think the Lord looks not for it at their hands. Now Satan gives men liberty to think thus; and this liberty begets peace, and this peace makes them think well of themselves, 2 Pet. 2: 19. There are many rotten professors in these days that walk loosely, and take too much liberty in their speeches, liberty in their thoughts, liberty in their desires, in their pastimes, and that sometimes under a pretence of Christian liberty. Oh, this liberty that the Devil gives, and the world takes, besots most men with a foolish opinion that all is well with them.

*c.* By giving the soul cessation sometimes from the act of sin: hence they are hardly persuaded that they live in sin, because they cease sometimes from the act of sin. Oh! Satan will not always set men at his work. For if a man should never pray, never have good thoughts, never keep any Sabbath; if a man should always speak idly, and never a good word drop from him; a man's conscience would never be quiet, but shaking him up for what he does: but by giving him respite from sinning for a time, Satan gets stronger possession afterward, as Matt. 12: 43.

*d.* By giving the soul fair promises of heaven and eternal life, and fastening them upon the heart. Most men are confident their *estate is good*. Why? Oh! Satan bewitches them: for as he told Eve by the serpent, *she should not die*; so he insinuates his persuasions to the soul.

(2). *By False Teachers*, partly by their loose examples, partly by their flattering doctrines, and their large charity, dawbing everyone up for honest and religious people; and if they be but a little troubled, applying comfort presently, and so healing them that should be wounded. They say commonly, Thou hast sinned, but comfort thyself, despair not, Christ has suffered; and thus skin over the wound, and let it fester within for want of cutting it deeper. I say therefore, because they want a faithful watchman to cry Fire, Fire, in that sleepy estate of sin and darkness, wherein they lie, therefore whole towns, parishes, generations of men are burnt up, and perish miserably, Lam. 2: 14.

(3). *By a False Spirit*, this is a third cause that begets a false peace. As there is a true Spirit, *that witnesses to our spirits that we are the sons of God*, Rom. 8: 16, so there is a false spirit, just like the true one, witnessing that they are the sons of God, 1 John 4: 1. We are bid to *try the spirits*: Now if these spirits were not like God's true Spirit what need trial? What need one try whether dirt be gold, which are so unlike each other? And this spirit I take to be set down, Matt. 24: 23. Mark this comparison. First, the Spirit of God humbles the soul: so before men have the witness of the *false spirit*, they are mightily cast down and dejected in spirit; and hereupon they pray for ease, and purpose to lead new lives. Secondly, the Spirit of God in the Gospel reveals Jesus Christ and his willingness to save: so the false spirit discovers Christ's excellency, and willingness to receive him. It fares with this soul as with surveyors of lands, that take an exact compass of other men's grounds, of which they shall never enjoy a foot. So did Balaam, Num. 24: 5, 9. This false spirit sheweth them the glory of heaven and God's people. Hereupon the soul comes to be affected, and to taste the goodness and sweetness of Jesus Christ, as those did, Heb. 6. The soul being comforted after it was wounded, now calls God *my God*, and Christ *my sweet Saviour*: and now it doubts not but it shall be saved, Hos. 8: 2, 3, and *yet remains a deluded miserable creature still*. But here mark the difference between the witness of each spirit. The false spirit makes a man believe he is in the state of grace, and shall be saved, because he has tasted Christ, and so has been comforted, and that abundantly: But the true spirit persuades a man his estate is good and safe, because he has not only tasted but *bought* this Christ; as the wise merchant in the Gospel who not only found *the pearl*, but sells away all to buy it. So a child of God tasting a little of God, and a little of Christ, at his first conversion, although he tastes not all the sweetness that is in God, yet he forsakes all for God, for Christ, and so takes them lawfully as his own. Again, the false spirit having given a man comfort and peace, suffers a man to rest in that estate: but the true Spirit having made the soul taste the love of the Lord, stirs up the soul to do and work mightily for the Lord.



### III. Carnal Confidence.

Whereby men attempt to save themselves by their own duties and performances.

The paths to hell are but two. The first is the path of *Sin*, which is a dirty way. Secondly, the path of *Duties*, which (rested in) is but a cleaner way. But I think thou wilt object, 'No true Christian man hopes to be saved by his good works and duties, but only by the mercy of God, and merits of Christ.' I answer, it is one thing to trust to be saved by duties, another thing to *rest* in duties. A man rests in duties, when he is of this opinion that only Christ can save him, but in his practice he goes about to save himself . . . But because it is hard to know when a man rests in duties, and few men find themselves guilty of this sin, which ruins so many, I will shew some signs of a man's resting in duties.

(1) Those that never came to be sensible of their *poverty* and *utter emptiness* of all good rest in duties. Now did you ever feel thyself in this manner poor? viz. I am as ignorant as any beast, as vile as any Devil: Oh Lord, what sin and rebellion lurks in my heart! I once thought at least my heart and desires were good, but now I feel no spiritual life. Oh dead heart! I am the poorest, vilest, blindest creature that ever lived. If thou dost not thus feel thyself poor, thou never came *out of thy duties*; for when the Lord brings any man to Christ he brings him *empty*. (2) Those that gain no *Evangelical righteousness by duties* rest in *duties*; I say, Evangelical righteousness, that is, more prizing of acquaintance with, desire after, loving and delighting in union with the Lord Jesus Christ. Now Jesus Christ is a Christian's gain, Philip. 1: 21. and hence a child of God asks himself after sermon, after prayer, after sacraments, *What have I gained of Christ? Have I got more knowledge of Christ, more admiring of the Lord Jesus?* A carnal heart, that rests in his duties, asks only what he has done, as the Pharisee, 'I fast twice a week, I give alms,' and the like; and thinks verily he shall be saved, because he *prays*, and because he *reforms*, and because he *sorrows* for his sins, that is *not* because of the gaining of Christ in a duty, but because of his naked performance of the duty. (3) Those that see little of their vile hearts in performing duties rest in their duties: for if a man be brought nearer to Christ, and to the light, by duties, he will spy out more moats; for the more a man participates of Christ, his health and life, the more he feels the vileness and sickness of sin. As Paul, when he *rested in duties* before his conversion, before that the Law had humbled him, '*he was alive*,' Rom. 7, that is, he thought himself a sound man because his duties covered his sins, like fig leaves. Therefore ask thine own heart, if it be troubled sometimes for sin, and if after thy praying and sorrowing thou dost grow well, and think thyself safe, and feel not thyself more vile: If it be thus, I tell thee, thy duties be but fig-leaves to cover thy nakedness, and the Lord will unmask thee one day.

### IV. Presumption, or False Faith.

This is the last and most dangerous rock that these times are split upon. When men see an insufficiency in all duties to help them, and themselves unworthy of mercy, they make a bridge of their own to carry them to Christ. I mean, they look not for faith wrought by an omnipotent power, which the eternal Spirit of the Lord Jesus must *work* in them; but they content themselves with a faith of their own *forging* and *framing*: and hence they think and believe that Christ is their *sweet Saviour*, and so doubt not but they are safe, when there is no such matter. All men are of this opinion, that *there is no salvation but by the merits of Jesus Christ*; and because they hold fast this opinion, therefore they think they hold fast Jesus Christ in the hand of faith, and so perish hanging on their own fancy and shadow. Some others catch hold of Christ before they come to feel the want of faith and ability to believe, and catching hold on him (like dust on a man's coat, whom God will shake off), now they say, they thank God they have got comfort by this means, and though God killeth them, yet they will trust unto him, Micah 3: 11. This hope damns thousands.

Faith is '*a precious faith*,' 2 Pet. 1: 2. Precious things cost much, and we set them at a high rate: if thy faith be so, it has cost thee many a prayer, many a sob, many a tear. But ask most men how they came by their faith in Christ, the say, very easily. When the lion sleeps, a man may lie and sleep, by it; but when it awakens, wo to that man: so while God is silent and patient, thou mayest befool thyself with thinking thou dost trust unto God; but wo to thee when the Lord appears in his wrath! Many of you trust to Christ, as the apricock-tree, that leans against the wall, but its fast rooted in the earth: so you lean upon Christ for salvation, but you are rooted in the world, rooted in your pride still. Wo to you if you perish in this estate, God will hew you down as fuel for his wrath. This therefore I proclaim from the God of heaven—

(1). You that never felt yourselves as unable to believe as a dead man to raise himself, you have as yet no faith at all.

(2). You that would get faith, first must feel your inability to believe: and fetch not this slip out of thine own garden; it must come down from Heaven to thy soul, if ever thou partakest thereof.

\* \* \*

"*He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.*" (Isa. 53: 11). Christ will infallibly, and without miscarrying, obtain the end of his death. What was the end of his death? The salvation of all such as belong to the election of grace. Christ died not at uncertainties, nor laid down his life at a venture, that some might be saved if they would; but intention is fixed. He laid down his life 'for his sheep,' John x, 17; 'for his church,' Eph. v, 26; 'for his people,' Matt. i, 21. These expressions are exclusive; these, and not all . . . —T. Manton.

## TRUTH'S DEFENDERS VINDICATED

JOHN KENNEDY.

In times such as ours it is easy to seem a bigot, if one keeps a firm hold of truth, and is careful to have the seal of Heaven on his hope. No Christian can be true and faithful now-a-days on whose brow the world shall not brand the name of bigot. But let him bear it. It is a mark of honour, though intended to be a brand of shame. It proves him to be an associate of the men of whom the world was not worthy, but who, under the world's lash, did more for the world's good than all besides. The world ever *suffers* by the men it *honours*. The men of *mercy* to it are the men it *hates*. Ah, these old Covenanters of our native land were stern bigots in their day. It was well for Scotland that they were. They could part with their lives, but they could not sell the truth. They would yield all for conscience, but they would yield nought to despots. They could bear to suffer and to die, but they were afraid to sin. It was this bigotry which won its liberty for their native land. The legacy bequeathed to it by these men of faith, whose only home was off the mountain cavern, and to whom the snow was off the only winding-sheet which wrapped their bodies when they had given their lives for Christ, was a richer boon than all ever given to it by the kings who occupied its throne, and by all men of title and of wealth who owned its acres. Oh yes, they were bigots these, in the judgment of scoffing sceptics and of ruthless persecutors, and not all the piles they could kindle could burn their bigotry out of them.

And these were stern bigots, too, according to the world's estimate, who headed the crusade against Antichrist, when, at the era of the Reformation, a fire from Heaven had kindled in their hearts the love of truth. It was by unflinching resolution, induced by living faith, these men overcame in the times of stern trial in which they unfurled their banner in the name of God. A pliant Melancthon would have bartered the gospel for peace—the stern courage of a Luther was needed to prevent the sacrifice. In every age, from the beginning, when the cause of truth emerged triumphant from the din and dust of controversy, the victory was won by a band of bigots who were sworn to its defence.

There is need now of the men whom the world calls bigots. Men of grasp less firm and of love less fervent will do little for the cause of truth and for the best interests of humanity. Other men than these will even barter their own eternal prospects for the honour which comes from men and for the ease which is won by compromise. How many such as these there are, even in the Churches, and even there in the van, who boast of a charity which is indiscriminate in its regards, of a sentiment that refuses the form which the truth imposes, and who have learned from the worldling his scorn of all seriousness, his contempt for all scrupulousness of conscience, and his sneers at the religion which is sustained by intercourse with Heaven! These have their followers. A widespread movement has begun away from vital religion, fixed beliefs, and holy living. The Churches are moving with the current. The time may be fast approaching when the one alternative shall be living faith or open scepticism. A tide which few seem careful to resist is bearing us on to such a crisis. How the result may tell on Churches, communities, and individuals we cannot forecast, nor can we attempt to conjecture without sadness of feeling. But an assured victory is the destiny of the cause of truth. Till the hour of its triumph shall come, all who have linked their interests to the chariot of the gospel shall find themselves a diminishing band as they advance, their loneliness of feeling deepening as former friendships wane into neglect, coldness is changed into scorn, and contempt passes into bitter enmity; and they can follow the cause of truth only amidst the scoffs of unbelievers and the shafts of persecutors.

But let no lover of the truth—let none whose eye ever rested on the hope of the gospel—turn craven-hearted back from trial. To fall in the cause of truth is but to rise in the kingdom of glory. To be trampled under foot till crushed dead by the heel of persecution is but to have the prison broken open, that the ransomed spirit may pass from bondage to a throne. And in his saddest hour let not the sufferer for truth refuse the joy which glimpses of prophetic light bring to his heart as they break through the clouds of present trial. His King shall triumph in His cause on earth, and His friends shall share His glory. All nations shall touch His sceptre. The old strongholds of unbelief shall be levelled in the dust. Iniquity shall hide its face ashamed. Truth, as revealed from Heaven, shall receive universal homage, and be glorious in the halo of its blissful triumphs before the eyes of all.

\* \* \*

*Thomas Manton (1620-1677). Commentary on James. pp.452 20/-.*

In Manton's best style. An exhaustive work . . . Few such books are written now. Manton needs no praise from us. Whatever he does is done in a style worthy of a chief among theologians.—*C. H. Spurgeon.*

If anyone wants to buy a good specimen of a Puritan divine, my advice unhesitatingly is, "Let him buy Manton." As a writer Manton's chief excellence consists in the ease, perspicuousness, and clearness of his style. He sees his subject clearly, expresses himself clearly, and seldom fails in making you see clearly what he means. As a theologian I regard Manton as a divine of singularly well-balanced, well-proportioned, and scriptural views. He lived in a day when vague, indistinct, and indefinite statements of doctrine were not tolerated. The Christian Church was not regarded by any school as a kind of Pantheon, in which a man might believe and teach anything, everything, or nothing, so long as he was a clever and earnest man. Such views were reserved for our modern times. In the seventeenth century, every divine who would achieve a reputation and obtain influence, was obliged to hold distinct and sharply-cut opinions. A vague, colourless, boneless, undogmatic Christianity, supplying no clear comfort in life, and no clear hope in death, was a Christianity which found favour with none. Now, Manton was a Calvinist in his theology. He held the very doctrine which is so admirably set forth in the Seventeenth Article of the Church of England. He held the same views which were held by nine-tenths of the English Reformers, and four-fifths of all the leading divines of the Church of England down to the accession of James I. He was only one among hundreds of good men in England who all taught these truths.

As an expositor of Scripture, I regard Manton with unmingled admiration. Here, at any rate, he is "*facile princeps*" among the divines of the Puritan school. The end of all preaching is to bring men under the influence of God's Word; and nothing seems so likely to make men understand and value the Word as lectures in which the Word is explained. It was so in Chrysostom's days; it ought to be so again . . . The readers of Manton's works will find in them a very large supply of expository sermons. In all these they will find every verse and every sentence explained, expounded, and enforced, plainly, clearly, and usefully, and far more fully than in most commentaries. The value of these expository sermons is very great indeed. For my own part, I am painfully struck with the general neglect with which these expository works of Manton's

have been treated of late. Modern commentators who are very familiar with German commentaries seem hardly to know of the existence of Manton's expositions . . . I rejoice to think that now at length these valuable works are about to become accessible to the general public. They have been too long buried, and it is high time they should be brought to light.

We have fallen upon evil days both for thinking and reading. Sermons which contain thought and matter are increasingly rare. The inexpressible shallowness, thinness, and superficiality of many popular sermons in this day is something lamentable and appalling. Readers of real books appear to become fewer every year. Newspapers, and magazines, and periodicals seem to absorb the whole reading powers of the rising generation. What it will all end in God only knows. The prospect before us is sorrowful and humiliating. In days like these, I am thankful that the publishers of Manton's works have boldly come forward to offer some real literary gold to the reading public. I earnestly trust that they will meet the success which they deserve.—*J. C. Ryle, 1870.*

*Absolute Predestination by Jerome Zanchius (1516-1590). pp. 150. 6s. 6d.*

No book can be more calculated to revive the spirit which animated the Reformers than this one, and never was the republication of this book more needed. Zanchius was one of the foremost Continental Reformers; he was a close friend of several of the leading English Reformers, and his writings were deeply studied and valued by the English Puritans. "His clear insight into the truths of the gospel is wonderful," writes Toplady. "He was thoroughly experienced in the divine life of the soul, and a happy subject of that internal kingdom of God which lies in righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. This enabled him to sustain that impetus of opposition which he almost constantly met with. In him were happily centred all the meek benevolence of charity, and all the adamantine firmness of intrepidity; qualities, alas! not constantly united in men of orthodoxy and learning." Matthew Poole, the famous English Puritan, terms him "A divine of the first class."

This work of Zanchius, translated by Toplady, gives the clearest, strongest, and most Scriptural presentation of the doctrine of predestination that we have seen, and we judge it to be the privilege and duty of every believer who is concerned to see the truth revived in these times to buy and read it. Toplady's words of 200 years ago are very applicable to the present—"Time has been, when Arianism was more generally predominant throughout the Christian Church, than even Arminianism is at present. The whole world, says history, wondered, to see itself become Arian. It was Athanasius against all the world, and all the world against Athanasius . . . Blessed be God, the doctrines of grace are again beginning to lift up their heads amongst us; a sign, it is to be hoped, that the Holy Spirit hath not quite forsaken us, and that our redemption from the prevailing errors of the day draweth nigh. Now, if ever, is the time for all who love our Church and nation in sincerity to lend a helping hand to the ark, and contribute, though ever so little, to its return."