



**PASTORAL
COUNSEL**

George Rose

PASTORAL
COUNSEL

MONTHLY CIRCULAR
FROM

Tamworth Rd. Strict Baptist Chapel,
CROYDON.

PASTOR - MR. GEORGE ROSE.

Time of Services:

Lord's Day: Morning 11; Evening 6.30.

Thursday: Preaching Service, 7.15. Monday: Prayer Meeting, 7.15.

Application for Sitings may be made to the Deacons after any service.

"O send out Thy light
and Thy truth."—
Psa. xlii. 3.



"I am the Way, the
Truth, and the Life."
—*Jno. xiv. 6.*

"Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy Word is truth."—*Jno. xvii. 17.*

No. 4.

MID-DECEMBER, 1933.

PASTOR'S MESSAGE.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS.

MY dear Friends,—At this season of the year it is usual to express one's good wishes to friends, desiring for them that which is considered to be for their good. I would wish that you may all be favoured of God with that which He sees is good for you, both for body and soul.

Especially, I could desire that the subject of the Incarnation of God's well-beloved Son, His meritorious, vicarious life, triumphant death, and justifying resurrection should be the matter of the meditation of all to whom He is precious.

Those who have families will, as is usual at this holiday season, find much to occupy their mind and time in providing entertainment for the younger generation and friends; and it is a good thing when families are favoured not only with health, but also with love one to another.

It is my earnest hope that one and all of my adult friends may be favoured with that which only the Spirit can give—seasons when the mind is detached from all that which perishes with its using, and is set on that which endureth for ever.

The birth of Jesus was the beginning of the manifestation of the mystery of godliness: "God manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. iii. 16),

**An Example of the Monthly Circulars from which
the Articles in this Book are taken**

PASTORAL
COUNSEL

George Rose

2015
Gospel Standard Trust Publications
12(b) Roundwood Lane
Harpenden, Hertfordshire
AL5 3BZ

ISBN 978 1 897837 53 5

© J North,
Tamworth Road Strict Baptist Chapel, Croydon
& Gospel Standard Trust Publications

Managed and Manufactured by:
Jellyfish Solutions Ltd.

Contents

Preface	7
Salt and Light	15
Practical Godliness	17
Christians and the Nation	19
Dependence	20
Consistency before Men	23
Things Secret and Revealed	25
The Mystery of Godliness.....	28
An All-important Question: What Think Ye of Christ?	30
Religion in Practice	33
The Two Advents	36
The Grace of Liberty (2 Cor. 8:7).....	39
Daily Blessings.....	40
The Way of Destruction and the Way of Life	43
The Christian Attitude in a National Difficulty	46
God's Sovereignty and Man's Accountability	48
Thoughts on Lord's Day Observance.....	51
The Doctrine of the Eternal Sonship of Christ	54
National Mercies	56
Asking Aright.....	58
The Two Great Questions.....	61
The Importance of Eternity	63
Walking before God.....	66
Profitable Forethought.....	69
The Christian's Holiday.....	71
Degeneration in Religion	73
Conformed or Transformed	75
The Safe Refuge	77

Pastoral Desires and Prayers	80
Godliness in the Home	82
“If God be for us, who can be against us?”	84
Influence	86
Be Still	88
The Safe Way	90
Jesus Christ and Cæsar Augustus	93
Infidelity Versus Faith.....	96
Divine Government	98
The Certainty of Scripture Fulfilment	100
Peace	103
The Unique Character of Jesus Christ.....	104
Some Unspeakable Things.....	107
Light, the Emblem of God.....	109
Places of Refuge.....	112
The Unchanging Word in a Changing World.....	113
Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life	116
Truth and Error	119
Immoveable Things.....	120
“The Will of God”	123
Reverence for God	125
The Munitions of God	128
The Sufficiency of Scripture.....	130
Glory, Peace and Goodwill	133
The Need of Prayer	136
Things Which Cannot Be Shaken	138
“The Shadow of the Almighty” (Psalm 91:1)	139
Preservation, Provision, Prospect (Isaiah 33:16,17)	143

Preface

The contents of this book first appeared as the Pastor's Message in the 'Monthly Circular' issued by the Tamworth Road Strict Baptist Chapel, Croydon when Mr George Rose was the pastor. The first issue appeared in mid-September 1933.

Many of the monthly messages written by Mr Rose reflect the tumultuous times in which he ministered. The clouds of the Second World War gathered over Europe whilst he ministered at Tamworth Road Chapel, war being finally declared in 1939. His belief in the sovereignty of God and his unshakable confidence in the providential mercies of the God of all grace continued throughout this period of political instability. He continued his ministry in Croydon until, in the providence of God, he moved to take the oversight of Garstang Strict Baptist Chapel, Kirkland, Nateby, Lancashire in January 1941.

He was a man who had a pastor's heart. He ministered to his people, not only from the pulpit, but in his monthly message. He speaks of the pastoral burden he had for his people, his pastoral visitations to members of his church and congregation:

I am sure some have felt that I ought to visit you more than I do; and there are a few things I would like to point out to prevent possible misunderstandings.

1. My time for visiting is limited. I have five days in the week when I have to preach or take meetings. This also involves much travelling, as I often have to preach at places far distant from Croydon. The reason I go away is because many places have no pastor, and in some cases only irregular preaching.

Pastoral Counsel

2. I have much correspondence from friends. My extensive labours bring me into contact with many people who write to me about matters that affect them, and they expect me to take an interest in their affairs, though living at a distance, not realizing the many other things that claim my time and attention.

3. The number to be visited. When it is considered that nearly all our seating capacity of 300 is taken by regular seat-holders, it will appear that if I could give two whole days each week to visiting, it would take a long time to see all. I wish, as your pastor, to take a personal and prayerful interest in your providential matters, your health, and especially the all-important concern of your soul's welfare. I desire that my visits shall be for edification, as I do not want to spend the time in gossip or listening to things that are not consistent with the Word and fear of God.

4. I enjoy visiting because it allows me the opportunity of listening to you. At the services I speak to you, as enabled, but in the home you can talk to me. When Jesus is the centre of the conversation, it is refreshing to my own soul to listen to what is spoken by those whom the Lord is leading and teaching. Also it gives you an opportunity to tell me of the exercises, desires, trials, and blessings that you are experiencing. In the home we meet more on a level; we are each human, and have our own failings or infirmities, and can then talk to each other freely, as before the Lord, who "knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are dust" (Psa. 103:14).

5. The sick must come first on the visiting list. Because of their condition, they cannot come to the services, and they require the visit of the minister at that time, especially if the illness is of a serious nature. The things of God are needed, when the things of earth are losing their hold; then is the time when they realise, as the affliction is sanctified, that only Christ

Preface

and His salvation can do them good. Also, it is often the time that, being drawn away from the busy scenes of life, there is more leisure for soul examination and meditation on eternal things; and when a visitor calls, whose object is to enquire sympathetically after the one afflicted and to speak to them of soul matters, the visit is welcomed, and when profitable, remembered gratefully ...

6. Friends in serious trouble should be visited. I do earnestly ask friends, who may be walking in a path of trouble, to let me know, if it is a trouble that is right to lay open before the eyes of another. I should be glad if you would speak to me. A word of counsel, sympathy, and prayer may relieve the mind. I wish in all things, where possible, "to weep with them that weep, and rejoice with them that rejoice."

It is my prayer that the God of all grace will enable me in love, faithfulness and vigilance to watch for your souls, as one that must give account. To those who can come to the services, I hope the Spirit will lead me to minister to them in the means of grace, if I have not time to visit them in their homes.

He was also a man of prayer, desiring to pray *for* and desiring the prayers *of* his people, as the following extract from his monthly message of November, 1935 testifies.

The important subject of prayer has been much upon my mind, and I have thought, if the Lord will grant His blessing, it would be profitable to draw your earnest attention to it. There is no divine life without prayer. One says, "Prayer is the Christian's vital breath." When the Holy Spirit gives us to feel our need of mercy, and grants "pure affections and wills to do what He requires," pouring out the spirit of prayer and the grace of supplications, and watching unto prayer, it is well.

Pastoral Counsel

Prayer is a privilege. It is a favour bestowed upon the unworthy, and a condescension on the part of God “Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth” (Psa. 113:6). For those who feel their need, there is a Throne of Grace provided, and an interceding High Priest: “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:15,16).

Prayer deals with all our needs, whether for the body or the soul, providence or grace, for ourselves or others for whom we should pray,

Prayer moves the hand that moves the world,
And brings salvation down.

And God is “able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.” May He grant us a true sense of our need, and the spirit of prayer.

I desire to pray for you, and I want to watch for your souls, as one that must give account. My prayer is: “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him” (Eph. 1:17). Subject to God’s will, I pray for the young, that God will bless His holy Word which they read and hear expounded in the Sunday School, the Bible Classes, and the preaching, and that the Holy Spirit will prepare their hearts to receive it, so that it may spring up and bring forth fruit. I pray that the vanities and vain pursuits of worldly things may not choke the Word of God, but that they may be able to say, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee” (Psa. 119:11). I pray also that they in their early life may know the Lord as Samuel, David, Daniel and others did, and that they may have His

Preface

blessing that maketh rich, and to which no sorrow is added.

I pray that the Holy Spirit will quicken into spiritual life any who do not know themselves and God, those who have no concern as to how they stand before God, or where they will spend eternity; and that they may be dealt with as the three thousand were on the day of Pentecost: “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:37, 38).

I pray for those who are seeking the Lord, who as yet have not had a revelation that Jesus is theirs; who long to have a word spoken home to their heart to assure their conscience of their part in the Redeemer’s blood. I pray that the Lord will give them patience to wait for the vision, though it tarry; and to plead the promise at the Throne of Grace: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matt. 6:7).

I pray for each, as far as I know your cases, that the Lord will grant you that which is good in His sight, that He will sanctify His will to you, and make all things work together for your good.

Now I would ask you to pray for me. “Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified” (2 Thess. 3:1). I earnestly desire this, and that there may be a gracious spirit of prayer among us, that God will clothe the ministry with power, and that we may speak and hear it, as the Word of God, not as the word of man. Pray “for me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel, for which I am an

Pastoral Counsel

ambassador in bonds; that I might speak boldly as I ought to speak" (Eph. 6:19, 20).

Pray for the hearing ear. This is essential, and is God's gift. Repeatedly Jesus said, after His preaching and teaching: "He that hath an ear, let him hear." How much is heard by the outward ear and lost, and brings no lasting profit. Nothing is so important as the Word of God, yet how many things there are to crowd it out – carnality and unbelief, the world, the flesh, and Satan; and how we need the Word of God to be made to us spirit and life, that we might "know the things that are freely given to us of God."

Pray that you may be doers of the Word. Pray for enlargement of heart, for more love to Christ, for more conformity to His image. "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1). A gracious walk glorifies God; may God's honour be much to you. Those of you who fear God, remember whose name you bear. Seek grace to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts; seek to follow in the steps of Jesus, that men may take knowledge of you, that you have been with Him.

Pray that you may esteem each other better than yourselves. Seek to be humble, and willing to render any service you can to the poorest of God's people. Follow the example of Jesus, when He washed the disciples' feet. Watch against self-exaltation, or anything that feeds pride. Only grace can enable us to deny ourselves, and to follow Him who "made himself of no reputation," but took upon him the form of a servant.

With such a burden for both the ministry and his people upon his heart, one can only imagine the union that was established between pastor and people, and the

Preface

blessing that attended his ministry at Tamworth Road. Indeed, he was to write to his people in December 1940 just prior to his leaving them for Garstang:

The God of all grace has been my sufficiency in the eighteen years of my Pastorate. He has confirmed His Word by signs following, and a measure of prosperity has been the outcome. Many have been added to the Church, love and union have been enjoyed: and, I trust, blessing has been felt by many in their secret exercises between God and their souls. This is only fully known by the gracious Author of all blessing.

His ministry was to continue at Garstang until he retired from the pastorate. He continued an itinerant ministry until his death at the great age of 92 on 5th March, 1965.

Describing Mr Rose's ministry at his funeral at Hanover Chapel, Tunbridge Wells, Mr C A Wood said that:

His ministry was a faithful ministry; he warned his hearers... It was a fearless ministry. At times he stood before those who could not receive the Word, but denounced it... It was a feeding ministry. The Lord's dear people fed under the ministry, for there was milk for babes and strong meat for them that are of full age (Heb. 5:14). It was a fruitful ministry, manifested in the day in which he lived, the word being confirmed with signs following, to encourage him in his labours.

We send these short meditations on and pastoral counsel from God's Word with the hope that they will be made a blessing to the Lord's living family and that by them "he being dead yet speaketh" (Heb. 11:4). A few minor editorial corrections and alterations have been made to the originals. Omissions have been made of

Pastoral Counsel

those events that are particularly dated and refer to events leading up to the outbreak of the Second World War and the first years of that war. We have on no occasion altered the sense of what Mr Rose wrote. It just remains for me to thank the librarian of the Gospel Standard Strict Baptist Library for bringing these Monthly Messages to my attention, and also allowing their publication from the copies in their possession.

Thanks are also due to the former pastor of Tamworth Road, the late Mr C A Wood, and the deacons of that chapel for their agreement to the publication of this book.

There must be other material available written by Mr Rose which has not yet come to light. We would be grateful to have sight of such material with a view to its being preserved and made useful to the Church of God.

James E North
Totton
Hants
July, 2010

Salt and Light

It does not need me to emphasise the fact that we are living in an evil day, because this is manifest on every hand. It is as if men are determined to cast God's cords from them (Psa. 2:3); and thus God's Word is being fulfilled at the present time, as it describes the futile rebellion of man against his Maker. This is a matter of grief to all those who fear the Lord, as they notice, in this country, which has been favoured by God above the other nations of the earth, the absence of an acknowledgment of Him by those who occupy high positions in the land. The holding of business conferences, and the opening of cinemas, on the Lord's Day; the amalgamation of religion with worldly practices; the increasing world problems, national and international, with the fear on every hand concerning the future; the withdrawing of the Spirit of God in His power and blessing, and the consequent weakness and lack of spirituality among God's people; and last, but not least, the evil of our own hearts, and the little fruit we bear to the Lord's honour and glory – all these things proclaim with no uncertain sound that we are living in the "last days," and show that the time is drawing near of which Jesus spake: "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8).

But there will always be, even in the most evil times, a "remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. 11:5). *Are we among them?* Jesus said to his disciples, "Ye are the salt of the earth. ... Ye are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:13,14). The grace of God and His fear are like salt; they are pure in His eyes, because they are the work of the Holy Spirit. Salt acts secretly, but beneficially. The grace and fear of God act according to the spirit and precepts of the gospel. Jesus said, "The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke

Pastoral Counsel

9:56), and grace in His followers will seek the good of their fellow-creatures.

Grace makes its possessors loyal subjects. The Apostle Paul says, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving thanks be made for all men: for kings, and for all that are in authority" (1 Tim. 2:1,2). We can do this principally by seeking unto God that He will show mercy to us, and to our monarch, our rulers, and our nation; and that He will turn us once more unto Him, that nationally we may break off our sins, to the end that it may be for the lengthening of our tranquillity (cf. Dan. 4:27).

The grace of God, when in exercise, will enable those who possess it to obey the exhortations of Jesus: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). God has said, "Ye are my witnesses." There is much difference between gracious separation and Pharisaic isolation. It is not "to be seen of men," but to "glorify God in our body and in our spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:20). Gracious separation by the Lord's people is God's witness to an ungodly world. All true witnessing is in humility, realizing that it is "by the grace of God" we are what we are. Those who are now "light in the Lord" were once as others: "And such were some of you" (1 Cor. 6:11). Godly practice may bring persecution, as Jesus said, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you" (John 15:18); but may the Lord give us grace to follow Him, who hath left us "an example that we should follow in his steps" (1 Pet. 2:21). He has said of such, "They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels" (Mal. 3:17).

It is my prayerful concern that in you the words of the Apostle Paul may be fulfilled: "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him" (Col. 2:6).

Practical Godliness

As we know, all things here below are mutable and changing, unlike God and His truth which can never change. His people now receive “a kingdom which can never be removed;” therefore they are exhorted to “have grace whereby they may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire” (Heb. 12:28,29).

As your Pastor, I am very concerned for your spiritual good, and pray for you continually, that your daily life may be becoming the gospel that you hear preached. If we hear and do not, we are like the man and the house he built on the sand, which will not stand in the hour of trial, and the solemn ordeal of death. God graciously forbid that the Word that we read and hear should be our condemnation at the last judgment. May He give us grace to “hear, and fear, and do.”

The word particularly upon my mind is: “But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:32).

By nature we are more concerned about time than eternity, and consider what is pleasing to us more than what is glorifying to God; but regeneration reverses this attitude, and brings those who are born again to know God and His Son, Jesus Christ.

Our great need is for grace to crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts, to come out from the world that lieth in the Wicked One, and live unto God. Like Moses, may we have grace to choose “rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season” (Heb. 11:25). This path is not easy to the flesh, but

Pastoral Counsel

those enabled to walk in it will find there is much sweetness in it, when they can obey in love.

Take His easy yoke, and wear it;
Love will make obedience sweet.

Humble dependence on the Holy Spirit is essential to walk rightly, with a desire that God may be glorified in our bodies and spirits, which are His. Consider Jesus for example and guidance, who has said that where He is, His servants shall be. This will enable us to walk in the Spirit, so that we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. Although our natural propensities will always strive to gain the ascendancy, yet through prayer, and looking to the Lord for grace, we shall be enabled to hold on our way.

In everything may we ask ourselves, “Is this right before God?” and refrain from anything upon which we cannot ask His blessing. Seek for grace not to “grieve the Holy Spirit,” whereby His people are “sealed unto the day of redemption.” (Eph. 4:30)

Let us avoid worldly company when our duty does not take us into it; and when we *must* be in it, pray for grace to be kept from the evil. Rather may we seek the company of those whom we know to be gracious, and whose conversation is to edification.

Forsake not the means of grace, and may we come prayerfully, desiring that the Lord will grant His presence and blessing.

As the Lord gives us grace to seek first His kingdom, He will certainly add all needful temporal good; for “no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly” (Psa. 84:11). Though we may walk in a path of providential trial, the Lord will cause all to work for our good, and He will give sustaining grace; and in the end we shall prove that we have been led by “the right way, that we may go to a city of habitation” (Psa. 107:7).

Christians and the Nation

The fear of the Lord, implanted in the heart by the Holy Spirit, gives *true* uprightness, and will teach what is acceptable before God and what is the right attitude to adopt unto all men. It will teach its possessors that they are “by nature children of wrath, even as others;” it will forbid them to boast; and they will mourn over their own shortcomings and their heart sins before the Lord, whom alone they desire to love and serve.

They, by grace, are separated from those who are “fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind,” “for the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world” (Titus 2:11,12).

The fear of the Lord, directed by His Word, will teach them to pray, intercede and give thanks for our rulers, and all who are in authority (1 Tim. 2:11,12). It will make them law-abiding citizens and loyal subjects in all things, when the laws of the earthly monarch do not conflict with the Word of God. This influence will make them honest in their secular affairs, it will be their desire to render to all men their dues, and to realise that all must be done unto the Lord; that He may be honoured in their lives, not causing His name and truth to be evil spoken of, nor giving the adversaries of truth cause for reproach.

Those who truly fear the Lord are sincerely desirous of the welfare of the nation of which they form a part; rejoicing in its prosperity and grieving for its adversity. They wish to see the rulers, and all who are in authority, acknowledge God by seeking His guidance in the high matters of state; because He has said, “Them that honour

Pastoral Counsel

me, I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed” (1 Sam 2:30).

They would rejoice to see that those who are in high positions in the churches were *true* leaders, and were taught the way of God in truth; but they grieve that so many leaders of the National Church, and leaders of the Nonconformist bodies, seem to be ignorant of the first rudiments of divine teaching, holding as doctrines the commandments of men; that the greater number of the people love to have it so; that rulers, leaning on their own wisdom, instead of looking to the King of Nations, hold important meetings on the Lord’s Day; that church leaders sanction Sunday “pleasures,” and teach that parts of the Word of God are “myth and legend;” and that Romanism has so deeply permeated the Anglican Church – these things cause those who are taught of God to fear for the nation. The opening of cinemas on Sunday, and the inordinate love of pleasure everywhere in evidence, causes all who love God to grieve that His Day is so dishonoured and His Word disregarded; for being taught by Him, they know that “righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people” (Prov. 14:34).

True Christians conscientiously conduct their daily business, wishing well to their fellow-men, and grieving for them when they see them pursuing a course which is contrary to the laws of God, and their best interest both for time and eternity. Subject to the Lord’s will, they pray for all men from the highest possible motive; the fear of the Lord.

Dependence

The word that is laid upon my mind is ‘dependence’: 1. Creature dependence, and 2. Gracious dependence.

Dependence

1. All creatures are by nature dependent on their beneficent Creator, and all nations are dependent upon God. No advance of knowledge can make men to be independent of His providence, and His goodness in this respect is an evidence of His Godhead: "Nevertheless He left not Himself without a witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:17). After the flood, God mercifully promised that he would no more smite every living thing by a flood, saying, "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease" (Gen. 8:23). During the thousands of years that have elapsed since that promise, God has fulfilled His Word notwithstanding the wickedness of men. It is owing to His faithfulness that we have our daily provision; not for our goodness, but in spite of our sin, and those who know themselves feel that the Lord has not dealt with them after their sins, but has been merciful to them.

God is sovereign in government, and makes men know that they have limitations that they cannot pass; and at times He makes His power known, that they may know they are but men, and that the heavens do rule (cf. Dan. 4:26). Drought proclaims man's dependence upon his Creator; it is a rebuke and a rod for all the hard speeches against the weather which may be heard on every hand, especially concerning rainy times. Also God visits and marks with His displeasure the wanton destruction of His providential bounties. Year by year immense quantities of the finest foods are destroyed because of so-called overproduction. Thus God punishes. "He sealet up the hand of every man; that all men may know His work."

When people acknowledge God in creation it is well, and I am glad that there are many who do so, and honour their Creator and Provider; they rightly enjoy the good things of this life, and are willing to help their less

Pastoral Counsel

favoured fellow-men. All right acknowledgment of God will bring its reward in this life.

2. Gracious dependence is on a much higher plane than natural dependence; it includes the lesser, but goes much farther in knowledge and fruit. It is deeper, and rises higher. It springs from the grace of God in the heart; and those who possess this, desire to know God, not only in providence, but as their heavenly Father, and to receive out of the fulness that it has pleased Him should dwell in Jesus Christ.

Those who know their dependence in this way are taught by the Holy Spirit. They feel with David, "My times are in thy hand" (Psa. 31:15); and, when grace is in exercise, are thankful that it is so. They also feel their dependence upon the Lord for the continuance of their health, and preservation from harm and evil, as the Psalmist so clearly sets forth in Psalm 91, and are led to seek that God will put His "hedge" about them (cf. Job 1:10).

Principally they feel their need of, and dependence upon, the Spirit of God to give them a right sense of sin, that repentance that needeth not to be repented of, and to reveal their interest in Christ, and seal them heirs of heaven. This need is beyond anything beside, and they have to learn, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing" (John 6:63).

They want also love shed abroad in their heart, that will enable them to delight in dependence and its great privilege, as one writes:

O Lord, I would delight in Thee,
And on Thy care depend,
To Thee in every trouble flee,
My best, my only Friend.

Dependence

May the Lord bless you with His light and grace, that you may not be ignorant of Him, or of your dependence upon Him; that may God “supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19).

Consistency before Men

I do desire that both you and I may walk in the truth, as well as profess it with our lips, for if we do not, we give the adversaries of truth occasion for reproach, stumble the young or weak believer, and grieve the Lord’s people who are gracious. “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6) was Paul’s first enquiry after he was stopped on the way to Damascus, and it should be a great concern of all who fear God to “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called” (Eph. 4:1). There is no merit in a gracious walk, neither is it possible except by the help of the Holy Spirit; but there is blessedness in it, and the honour that cometh from God attending so doing, for He has said, “Them that honour me, I will honour; and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed” (1 Sam. 2:30); and Jesus said that the Father would give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. May there be a desire, springing from the love of God in our hearts, that we should show forth His praise “who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Pet. 2:9). One man said, “The conduct of those who profess to believe in Jesus is the only Bible some men ever read.” Though this standard is not an infallible one, yet the profession of Christ’s name should be evidenced in a consistent life before the world; and though the world that lieth in the wicked one cannot love the Lord’s people, yet if those who know the truth walk in the precepts of the gospel, they by their well-doing “put to silence the ignorance of foolish men” (1 Pet. 2:15).

Consistency is desirable, not only in easy paths, but under all circumstances, even when these are trying.

Pastoral Counsel

Daniel's life is a wonderful instance of consistency in very trying circumstances, as is also that of Shadrach and his two companions. What was right before God was pursued by them, whether in prosperity or adversity; and God, though He permitted their love and loyalty to Him to be so sharply tried, owned them and delivered them. They were not loyal to God's ways because they knew they would be delivered, for they said, "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image thou hast set up" (Dan. 3:17,18).

Christians should consider that the glory of God is the most important thing in their lives: "that they should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them;" (2 Cor. 5:15) and, when in the world, to seek to walk in wisdom toward them that are without Christ; and, as much as lieth in them, to live peaceably with all men, but not to the denying of the truth or shunning the cross of Christ. To "live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world" (Titus 2:12) the Christian is taught by "the grace of God that hath appeared to all men."

Personally, I have always found that, if enabled by grace to walk in the precepts of the gospel, and not have any fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather to reprove them, chiefly by a godly walk, not rendering evil for evil, but contrariwise blessing, this has done more to silence those who hate the truth than anything else, and the approbation of God in the conscience has been very strengthening.

What need there is to pray for strength in the inward man that we may be able to deny ourselves, take up our cross daily, and follow Jesus, who ever did that which pleased His Father! And what need there is of the

Consistency before Men

crucifying of the old man of sin and the mortifying of the deeds of the flesh!

When men of the world see a professed Christian walking in accordance with the precepts of the Bible, their arguments against it are rebutted, if not silenced; and their conscience, if not their conduct, is enlisted on its side. The sincere Christian, who walks humbly with his God in all the relations of life, does more to recommend his religion, and to enforce it upon the attention of men, than the most eloquent advocate by all his elaborate arguments or powerful persuasions on its behalf. May the Lord give us grace “to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly” with our God.

Things Secret and Revealed

Humility should ever be the attitude of the creature before the Creator, with respect to His Word, His will and His dealings with all his creatures. Reverence is due to God from all who are the work of His hands. It is a mercy to be saved from presuming where God has placed a prohibition. When God placed Adam in Eden, He gave the man all that was good for him to know or have, but God commanded: “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2:16,17). All the unhappiness and death ever known, or that will be known in time and eternity, arises from man wilfully breaking through the hedge that God placed round the tree.

May the Holy Spirit enable us to heed God’s warnings. He is just in what He is pleased to prohibit or to hide from us, and it is for our good to reverently observe His will, either in His Word, or dealings with ourselves or others.

Pastoral Counsel

What is good for us to know, God will reveal in His own time and way.

Divine sovereignty is God's prerogative, and He is just, even when He does not give an account of His matters unto any. None can fight against God and prosper, and many have found that He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, "What doest Thou?" (Dan. 4:35).

What God is pleased to reveal to us, either in His Word or in His dealings with us, belongs to us and to our children who fear God. The doctrines of grace are very clearly revealed in the Scriptures. The three persons in the Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – are spoken of distinctly, solemnly, graciously; Their unity in the work of salvation. We have a four-fold aspect of the life and work of Jesus in the Gospels. In Matthew, He is set forth as King; in Mark, as the Father's servant; in Luke, as the Son of man; and in John, as the Eternal Son of God.

The Epistles are a gracious explanation of the Person, work and teaching of Jesus Christ, chiefly for the edification of the people of God, both as to faith and practice.

All that is essential to salvation is most plainly revealed and expressed in the simplest language, and is suited to the weakest mental capacity of those who are born again of the Spirit, but their spiritual meaning and grace are hidden from the wise and prudent of this world, and revealed unto babes (Matt. 11:25).

Prophecy is partly revealed and partly secret. It has pleased God to hide many things from man, even from His people. When the disciples asked Jesus before His ascension, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" He said unto them, "It is not for you to know the times and seasons which the Father hath put

Things Secret and Revealed

in his own power” (Acts 1:6,7). Prophecy fulfilled and prophecy being fulfilled are revealed by the fulfilment, and that is one infallible key.

God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.

The explanation of prophecy in the New Testament is the sure guide to its meaning in the Old Testament; this we may rely on, because the explanation is as equally inspired as the prediction by the prophet. Repeatedly we read in the New Testament, “That it might be fulfilled that was spoken by the prophet.” It is good to read and study prophecy, but not to be dogmatic in our interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy; Scripture is best interpreted by Scripture. What is not yet fulfilled is for us to read, and seek that we may wait for God to interpret in His own time what is recorded.

The second coming of Jesus is definitely promised, and has been the hope of the Church in all ages. Watchfulness is enjoined on all believers; and Jesus said that those servants are blessed whom, when He cometh, He shall find so watching.

He gave them two predictions which should be fulfilled before His second coming: “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matt. 24:14); “And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled” (Luke 21:24); but the day and hour of His coming are kept secret.

The great point with God’s people should be to watch for His coming, and to seek that the Lord may prepare us for that great day. May the Lord grant us grace to reverence His secret will, and also to enable us to receive and walk according to His revealed will. As much as is good for us to know is revealed in His Word and in His

Pastoral Counsel

dealings with us; and where God is silent, may He keep us from presuming.

When contemplating such truths as His sovereignty, judgments in the earth, and the solemnities of eternity, may we heed the words of Dr. Watts:

But oh, my soul, if truths so bright
Should dazzle and confound thy sight,
Yet still His written Word obey,
And wait the great decisive day.

The Mystery of Godliness

It is well for us to meditate afresh upon “the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh,” (1 Tim. 3:16) from whom arises all hope of heaven, and salvation from “the wrath of God, which is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men” (Rom.1:18).

The “mystery of godliness” does not lie in it being obscure and uncertain, but in that it contains depths and heights that no created intelligence can fully explore; for even angelic minds cannot probe its profundities. That which is essential to salvation is always clearly revealed in the Word of God; for certainly, to know God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent is eternal life.

The incarnation of God’s Eternal Son is clearly revealed throughout the Old Testament, especially in Isaiah 9:6: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” His birth was more wonderful than that of any other. Faith believes, but reason cannot understand, how He was born free from sin, yet capable of being “made sin” (in the sense of imputation); capable of the greatest suffering,

The Mystery of Godliness

yet never offending; having almighty power, yet crucified through weakness.

The birth of Jesus Christ was made known by God through the angel of the Lord to Joseph and Mary, and the manner of it was clearly known to them before it came to pass. When He was born in Bethlehem, it was according to the prophecy of Micah: “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah (the little), though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2).

Angels from heaven heralded His birth, making it known to the shepherds, and telling them the “good news” which should be unto all people, that in the city of David was born a Saviour which was Christ the Lord. The wise men perceived His star appearing in the East, to guide them, that they might worship Him and give unto Him their gifts.

The life and death of Jesus Christ was vicarious – or in the place of – all those who through grace are brought to believe on Him. He obeyed the law, that He might give to His people His righteousness, because He ever observed the law. His imputed righteousness is the righteousness of God, which is “unto all and upon all them that believe.” His obedience gave honour to the law because His humanity was in union with His Deity, in one glorious person Emmanuel.

His death was for others, as He says in John 10, where He speaks of Himself as the good shepherd laying down His life for the sheep, to give them eternal life.

It is a great mystery that He, being pure and undefiled and separate from sinners, should die. That He was spotless, and that He died, was very clearly revealed: but He was the only sinless Person that has ever died. None other have had the power to take up their life again after

Pastoral Counsel

death. The mightiest conquerors have all had to bow to death, but Jesus conquered in the act of dying; as Dr Watts writes:

I sing my Saviour's wondrous death,
He conquered when He fell;
'Tis finished, said His dying breath,
And shook the gates of hell.

Through that wondrous and glorious victory over sin and death, life and immortality are brought to light; and when a precious Jesus is revealed by the Holy Spirit, then we see Him as God's Eternal Son, as recorded in John 1:1-18.

May it be our chief desire to see Jesus, to know Him, and be found in Him, and desire to live a godly and sober life. God grant that we may also walk in the fear of God.

An All-important Question: What Think Ye of Christ?

The above important question has been much on my mind, and I have felt I would like to write a few lines upon it, as it vitally effects every individual that has heard the name of Christ. The answer given to the question shows the state and condition of the person answering. The whole of the second Psalm speaks of the exaltation of Christ to the throne of universal dominion. Newton aptly writes:

“What think you of Christ?” is the test
To try both your state and your scheme;
You cannot be right in the rest
Unless you think rightly of Him.

An All-important Question: What Think Ye of Christ

Time is carrying us all on to eternity, and earthly things occupy much of our thought and care: "What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" (Matt. 6:31). This is natural to us, but the weightier matters of eternity, and how we stand before God, are with many very little, if at all, thought upon; and yet all must appear before Him, to whom God has given all power, both in heaven and earth (Matt. 28:18). How stands the case with us? May the Lord "so teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Psa. 90:12).

The revelation of Christ in His Person, work, power and glory is the principal theme of the Bible, whether in type and prophecy in the Old Testament, or the clearer revelation in the New Testament of His work of salvation from the curse of God's holy law, from Satan's dominion, and the power of death and the grave. This salvation is unto God, holiness and heaven, for all those who believe upon Jesus Christ. Righteous condemnation is also revealed in the Scriptures upon all those who "love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil" (John 3:18,19).

To many Christ is a "root out of a dry ground," and "He is despised and rejected of men" (Isa. 53:2,3); but those who believe upon Him can say, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" (Isa. 53:4). Where Satan, as a strong man armed, keepeth the palace, he blinds the eyes of those under his power, that they cannot see the beauty of Christ; and where the love of sin and its pleasure reign, they fancy they have liberty, and yet they are in bondage, and in the end must prove to their eternal undoing that "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23).

When Pilate brought forth Jesus before the multitude, and said unto them "Behold the Man!" they cried out, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him! His blood be upon us and on our children." This was a most solemn cry. The

Pastoral Counsel

unhappiness of the carnal mind is that it is enmity against God and His Christ. It says, "We will not have this man to reign over us." The latter part of the first chapter of Proverbs sets forth the solemn condition of those who hate knowledge, and do not choose the fear of the Lord.

On the other hand, how blessed is the lot of those who are made wise unto salvation, and who see in Christ all things to be desired both for time and for eternity! All those who esteem Christ Jesus, and long to receive out of His fulness of grace and mercy, are blessed now and for ever. Their blessed state is described in many parts of the Word of God.

Jesus asked His disciples, "But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood have not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 16:15-17).

Our view of Christ shows our position. If we see no beauty in Him, and have no desire for Him, then it is clear we have no manifested union with Him. Joseph Hart says:

Out of Christ, almighty power
Can do nothing but devour.

But if to us He is the "one thing needful," and we can say, "He is the chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely," then we have union with Him.

Despising Christ arises from our carnal mind, which is death. Esteeming Christ, longing for Christ, and rejoicing in Christ, is from the new birth, and the gracious leading and revelation of the Holy Spirit. There is no real, abiding pleasure to be found in the pleasures of the world, because they are marred with sin; but there is real

An All-important Question: What Think Ye of Christ
pleasure to be found in Christ, because He is a pure and perennial source of happiness.

Joy is a fruit that will not grow
In nature's barren soil;
All we can boast, till Christ we know,
Is vanity and toil.

But where the Lord has planted grace,
And made His mercy known,
There fruits of endless joy and peace
Are found, and there alone.

Satan tempts multitudes to believe that happiness is only to be found in earthly pleasure; or, in the case of those who are religious but not born again, that they must depend upon what they do themselves; and in both cases there is no right estimation of Christ. But the Word of God plainly says, "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

May the Lord save us from ourselves, and by the Holy Spirit give us right thoughts about Christ, for "in him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4); and may it be our greatest desire to know Christ, love and serve Him here; and then be with and like Him in heaven for ever.

Religion in Practice

May we all be given sincerity to weigh over prayerfully, before God who sees the heart, the words of Jesus at the conclusion of His Sermon on the Mount; for there He very solemnly and plainly says that, if we only hear, but do not practice, we are like a man who built his house upon the sand, and that irretrievable ruin will be the result. Self-examination, in the light of God's Word, is very