

## CONTENTS

<a href="#"><u>“For Christ’s Sake”</u></a>	2
<a href="#"><u>Fellowship News</u></a>	3
<a href="#"><u>Salisbury Conference 2018 Report</u></a>	3
<a href="#"><u>“Come Home!”</u></a>	6
<a href="#"><u>Salisbury Reformed Seminary Study Week Report</u></a>	8
<a href="#"><u>The Lord’s Supper – Part 5</u></a>	22
<a href="#"><u>Epilogue</u></a>	31

## “FOR CHRIST’S SAKE”

At the close of a battle, a young man was found dying. A soldier stopped to give him assistance and comfort; and as he moistened his lips and made his headrest easier, the dying man said, “My father is a man of great wealth in Detroit, and if I have strength I will write him a note and he will repay you for this kindness.”

Summoning all his strength, he wrote as follows on a piece of paper: “Dear father, the bearer of this letter made my last moments easier and helped me to die. Receive him and help him for Charlie’s sake.”

At last, the war ended, and the soldier, in tattered and dirty garments, sought out the man’s father in Detroit. On account of his appearance, the father refused to see him at first, “but”, said the stranger, “I have a note for you in which you will be interested.” He then handed him the soiled piece of paper.

When the father’s eyes fell upon the name of his son, all was instantly changed. He threw his arms around the soldier, and drew him close to him, and then, deeply moved, he put at his disposal all his wealth, to meet all his needs at that time and in the future.

It was the name that made the difference.

In our poor and filthy state, we cannot expect acceptance and favour with God; but God’s dear Son is the One through whom we can approach Him; and although, in and of ourselves, we have no hope of God’s kindness and goodness, yet “for Christ’s sake” – on account of His worth, sacrifice, and intercession – the Lord God is pleased to receive and bless us, supplying every spiritual and eternal need.

According to the Gospel, if ever we are to be saved, it will only be “for Christ’s sake.” What exactly does Scripture say? “God *for Christ’s sake* hath forgiven you.” (Ephesians 4:32)

## **FELLOWSHIP NEWS**

Evangelistic efforts have continued throughout the summer, with monthly door-to-door visitation, Open Air services (the last this year was on 6 October), Care Home services (two each month), and Ladies' Coffee Mornings (on the first Wednesday of each month, when up to 6 ladies have come who do not normally attend the church). The Senior Endeavourer Camp was held from 10 – 14 August, at a new venue in North Devon. We were very pleased to hear of blessing on this Camp.

A Fellowship Tea was held on Saturday, 1 September, in Glebe Hall, Winterbourne Earls, and it was attended by over 60 of us, including some church members' children. One of our members spoke on this occasion, reminding us of the need for Christian fellowship.

Rev John Keddie, our Conference Speaker, ministered on the Sabbath 30 September, taking his texts, in the morning from Luke 24:32 - "Knowing the Risen Lord", and in the evening from 2 Chronicles 7:12-15 - "Blessing on God's terms." At the After Church meeting, Mr Keddie told us about Magnus Anderson, his great-great-great grandfather, who, served on the Isle of Orkney as a "Catechist" (using the well-known much-loved Fisher's Catechism) – "an admirable body of divinity"). This dear man did an amazing work there in his day, and many people were converted under his teaching. This was an instructive and edifying end to a very blessed Sabbath day.

## **SALISBURY CONFERENCE 2018**

### **Richard Ward**

We were deeply indebted to Rev John Keddie, who, at very short notice, graciously accepted the invitation to be the Guest Speaker at this year's Conference. Mr Keddie, with his wide and thorough knowledge of the history of the Church, spoke to inform us of God's former works in reforming the Church, the historic and significant formulation of the Doctrines of Grace, the working of the Holy Spirit in spiritual awakening after a period of great

unfaithfulness and decline, and the ardent zeal and heroic faithfulness of those who stood for Christ in a time of dreadful persecution.

In his first address on the Friday evening, Mr Keddie gave us many interesting examples from the life and ministry of John Knox to illustrate the truth of Knox's famous statement to Mary Queen of Scots, "As touching nature I am a worm of this earth and yet a subject of this Commonwealth, but as touching the office wherein it has pleased God to place me, I am a watchman both over the realm and over the Kirk of God. For that reason, I am bound in conscience to blow the trumpet publicly."

Knox never feared the face of man, but exalted the Lord Jesus Christ as King, as Head, as Saviour, and as Redeemer; setting forth Christ in all His power and glory throughout the land of Scotland. Today the church needs leaders of like integrity and power, and members who are utterly devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Synod of Dort has been widely recognized as the greatest of all the ecclesiastical assemblies ever held by the Reformed churches, and on the Saturday morning, Mr Keddie gave a detailed description of the controversy which led up to it and the clear statements which resulted from it (including, of course, the five points of Calvinism).

Christians should be encouraged by these principles which:

- i. preserve us from undue levity or irreverence in the life of faith and in the worship of God;
- ii. are a bulwark against a mere man-centred religion;
- iii. instil confidence in God for whom nothing is impossible;
- iv. affirm that prayer to the sovereign God of grace will be effective;
- v. assure the success of the gospel and our evangelism;
- vi. tells us that God controls and orders all events, so that His Will is done in Heaven and upon Earth; and
- vii. gives the glory for our salvation to God and to Him alone.

In the afternoon, Mr Keddie considered two of the most remarkable post-reformation revivals in Scottish church history.

The first was in a General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1596. John Davison had been deeply troubled by the decline into formality in the Church and also by the corruptions he saw in the Church and in the State. With some support, he brought a proposal for universal repentance which would have hurt and offended many in that assembly. He catalogued many gross sins both of commission and omission. No-one was spared. Remarkably, this straight talking resulted in a day of humiliation. Ministers and elders covenanted with God to discharge their ministry with more care and reverence, as they were convicted by the inward, powerful working of the Holy Spirit.

The second notable revival took place in 1630 at a Communion Season in the Kirk of Shotts. Several eminent ministers were present at that communion, including David Dickson and Robert Bruce; also present was John Livingston who, although not yet ordained, had a reputation as a powerful preacher. On the Monday, the minister appointed to preach was unable to fulfil that responsibility, and Livingston was asked to take his place. After some initial reluctance, he preached to the people on the words of Ezekiel 36:25-26. What followed was supernatural – “a strange unusual motion of the hearers” – a heaven-sent revival of God’s Holy Spirit. That day, under the divine blessing, 500 souls experienced a thorough and saving change.

There are a good number of books recording the faith and exploits of individual Covenanters, but Mr Keddie’s final address focused on the period of the Covenanting struggles (1638-1688). After explaining the issues and policies which led up to these struggles, Mr Keddie showed how inspiring was their example in standing resolutely and firmly for Christ, even under threat of suffering and death.

We have much to learn from the Covenanters’ response to an overbearing government which desires to impose standards opposed to the rule of Christ.

- i. Those who adhered to Covenanter principles were prepared to stand for Christ, truth and righteousness whatever the cost.

- ii. They sought first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.
- iii. They were prepared to endure hardship as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.
- iv. They were supremely motivated by the headship of Christ over the church and the nations.
- v. They believed in a faith and in a Saviour to die for.
- vi. They learned that what they stood for would be hated by the unbelieving and corrupt world.
- vii. They passed on to the next generation a great testimony to the Gospel.

God give us grace to follow these Covenanters in their noble faith.

The whole weekend proved a great blessing to all who attended.

## **“COME HOME!”**

J. Wilbur Chapman, the evangelist, used to tell the story of a wilful girl who ran away from her widowed mother. Eventually she went to the big city where she fell into very bad company and followed a very immoral way of life. Her mother loved her dearly in spite of her great waywardness, but she had no idea how to get in touch with her to invite her back home.

When Mr Chapman heard of this situation, he had a number of large placards made, with the grey-haired mother's picture on them. Beneath each picture, two words were written in bold red ink - "Come Home!"

He then journeyed to the city and placed these placards in public houses, gambling casinos, and places of ill-repute, in the hope that the prodigal daughter would see one of them. And she did. In one of those places, known for its gross indecency and impurity, the poor girl saw the picture of her sad mother, and when she read the words, "Come Home!", she knew they were written for her.

With a heavy but grateful heart, she travelled back to her home, where her dear mother, overjoyed to see her, broke down in flow of tears, and welcomed her, first into her arms, and then into her home. The girl was full of sorrow and regret, and her words, uttered from a broken and remorseful heart, struggled to convey what she inwardly and painfully felt. She begged her mother to forgive her. Her bitter cries were heard and answered. The mother at once forgave her for everything, assuring her of continued love and affection, a place once again in the family, and all the comforts and privileges of a beautiful home.

Amazing love is in the heart of God: such love as longs for wayward sinners to turn away from a life of sin; and, in sincere penitence, to seek reconciliation, forgiveness and peace. To that end, He has sent out the Gospel which shows that He loves sinners so much that He gave His only begotten Son to die for them. God in Christ calls us through the Gospel and our Saviour's crimson blood has written the invitation – "Come Home!"

Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling -  
Calling for you and for me;  
See on the portals He's waiting and watching -  
Watching for you and for me!

*Come home, come home!  
Ye who are weary, come home!  
Earnestly, tenderly Jesus is calling,  
Calling, O sinner, come home!*

Why should we tarry when Jesus is pleading –  
Pleading for you and for me?  
Why should we linger and heed not His mercies –  
Mercies for you and for me?

Time is now fleeting, the moments are passing –  
Passing from you and from me;  
Shadows are gathering, death-beds are coming –  
Coming for you and for me!

O for the wonderful love He has promised -  
Promised for you and for me!  
Though we have sinned, He has mercy and pardon -  
Pardon for you and for me!

## **SALISBURY REFORMED SEMINARY**

### **Week of Studies, 10-14 September**

#### **The Origin and Nature of Man**

##### **[3 Lectures – *Malcolm Watts*]**

In previous lectures we considered the Genesis account of the creation of the universe – a work accomplished in six literal 24-hour days. These lectures touched on the Creation of Man since reference is made to that in Genesis 1:26-28.

The *first* lecture returned to that account, to note the words, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...” The use of the plural here is not an example of the plural of majesty – a linguistic style unknown among monarchs in the ancient East (Gen. 41:15; Dan 6:26; Ezra 1:2). Nor is it a reference intimating the inclusion of angels who were created, it appears, on the first day of that week (see Gen. 1:1; 2:1 – “the heavens...and all the host of them” cf. Lk. 2:13,14) – because this is a call to create, the prerogative of God alone (Acts 4:24; Rev. 4:11); And it is not a figurative allusion to the dust of the ground – an interpretation described by Dr John Gill as “wretchedly stupid.” The words are rather to be understood as referring to the Persons within the Godhead, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (as in Gen. 3:22; 11:7; and Isa. 8, and further in Jn 3:11; 14:23 and 17:21); the form of the expression conveys the idea of counsel and agreement.

Furthermore, the words which follow, “in our image, after our likeness” clearly teach that man was made very different from other creatures: he was granted a soul; he is a rational being; he has a moral sense; and he is inherently religious, recognising the existence of his Creator, worshiping and serving Him. His likeness to God lies in the fact that he is a spiritual being (cf. Jn. 4:24), he has personality (cf. Exod. 3:14), he is social (able and desirous of

communicating with others, Gen. 2:18), he is a free agent (cf. Dan 6:35), he has innate knowledge, righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10), he is made immortal (cf. 1 Tim. 1:17), and, through God's goodness, he enjoys true blessedness (cf. 1 Tim. 1:11; 6:17).

The *second* lecture gave attention to the later account of man's creation in Genesis 2:7 which is followed by woman's creation in Genesis 2:18-23. This is not, as liberal scholars maintain, a different and conflicting account, but rather a more detailed account of how God made man.

It was pointed out that, like the earlier chapter (Gen. 1), this account has none of the characteristics of poetry or fable: it is written in prose, just like later historical narratives (e.g. 1 & 2 Chron.) and contains words connected with geographical places and areas (e.g. Pison, Havilah, Cush etc.). Even more to the point is the fact that New Testament writers allude to these creation chapters no less than 165 times (e.g. Matthew 19:3-9; Lk. 3:38; 1 Tim. 2:13 etc.). What we have in Genesis 2 is the creation of Adam, the first man, and the formation of Eve, the first woman. There was no primitive pre-Adamic race, neither was there some evolving precursor or harbinger to Adam. Adam was "the first man" (1 Cor. 15:47); Eve was "the mother of all living" (Gen 3:20); before Adam was made "there was not a man to till the ground" (2:5); men and nations have all proceeded from "one blood", that is one original source (Acts 17:26); hence, genealogies begin with "Adam" (1 Chron. 1:1; Lk. 3:23-28); as descended from him, men everywhere are "sons of Adam" (Ps. 62:9 – "men of low degree", literally "sons of Adam"; Prov. 8:4 – "sons of man", again literally, "sons of Adam"); and sin and death are said to have entered the world by this "one", or "one man", - "Adam" (Rom. 5:12,15,17). From Genesis 2:7, we also learn that man is bipartite, consisting of two parts: "a soul" or, "a spirit", and "a body" (See Job 32:8; Eccl. 12:7; Matt. 10:28; 1 Cor. 2:11; 6:20).

The *third* lecture focussed upon man's soul. The following points were made: (1) The soul is God's immediate creation (Isa. 57:6; Zech. 12:1); (2) It is spiritual in essence, not material, therefore often simply called "spirit" (Lk. 1:46-47; 1 Cor. 7:34); (3) Being the real person, or the real "you", great care should be taken of it (Deut. 4:9; Matt. 16:26); (4) It is a personal entity, possessing intellect (Ps. 139:14), emotion (1 Sam. 1:10), and will (Ps. 77:2); (5) This

distinguished men from other creatures (Gen. 2:7; Job 32:8); (6) It is by far the most important part of us, the Bible so often referring to us as “souls” (Gen. 46:26; Acts 27:37); (7) God Himself knows the value of a soul and has concern for it (Num. 16:23; Isa. 57:15-16; 55:3); (8) The soul is capable of being forgiven and saved (1 Pet. 1:9,22; Heb. 10:39); (9) It will survive death, continuing to exist in a conscious state (Eccl. 12:7; 2 Cor. 5:8); (10) The soul is immortal: it can never die (Matt. 22:32).

The soul must be entrusted to Christ who alone is able to save and to keep it (2 Tim.1:12b).

## **Interpreting Prophecy**

### **[2 Lectures – Neil Pfeiffer]**

At the beginning of these lectures, we considered our Lord’s division of the OT Scriptures from Luke 24:44 “the law of Moses... the prophets... and the psalms.” “The law of Moses” included the Pentateuch, or the first five books of the OT; “the prophets” comprised the main historical books (excepting Ruth) as far as the end of 2 Kings (all being written by prophets) as well as those books now commonly called the prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel etc. with the exception of Daniel); and “the Psalms”, the most highly prized of the books often referred to as “the writings” (the other books of the canonical Scriptures).

Under the section denominated “the prophets”, it is often the way to distinguish the books by mentioning “the Earlier Prophets” (Joshua, Judges, and so on) and “the Later Prophets” (Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the others), and these “Later prophets” are usually subdivided into Major and Minor Prophets. The latter especially were set in their historical contexts.

The first mention of a “prophet” was with respect to Abraham (Gen 20:7), but, according to John Brown, the term came to be used in a more restricted sense. Moses became a ‘standard of comparison for all future prophets, and all fundamental, classic features of a prophet are found in him. Such knew a specific call; felt the special presence of God, and received the divine Word and they were responsible for delivering it faithfully.

Consideration was then given to the comments of John Brown of Edinburgh on Hebrews 1:1, on the way the prophets communicated the word of prophecy: for example, by 'typical representations and emblematical actions.'

We also considered how the Word came to them as spokesmen of the Covenant; and, in delivering their messages, it was observed how often encouragement was given to the godly remnant while condemnation was pronounced upon those who only appeared to be God's people (e.g. Ezek. 9:4).

One thing is crystal clear from a study of their several writings: there was only one way of salvation and only one Church of God in every age.

Some principles of interpretation were then stated:

1. A question which needs to be asked is, what did the prophecy mean for the original audience?
2. In order to understand the prophecies, we need to see how OT prophecies are dealt with in the NT.
3. It needs to be borne in mind that some of them are of a conditional nature (e.g. Jer. 18:7-10).
4. The Prophets, especially the Former prophets, interpret history.
5. Often there is more than one fulfilment and there may be multiple fulfilments.
6. Christ is to be found in the prophetic writings (Lk. 24:27,44; Jn. 5:39; Acts 10:43) and therefore we need to look for Him (1 Pet. 1:3-12).
7. Our aim must be so to perceive the truth that our hearts will be warmed and drawn out to Him whom our souls love (Lk. 24:32; 1 Pet. 1:8).

## **The Biblical Practice of Evangelism, Preaching, and Church Planting [2 Lectures – *Richard Clarke*]**

Timothy was exhorted to do the work of an evangelist in the local church. Other men, too, were preachers – heralds and witnesses - particularly with reference to compassion, content and persuasion, addressing the sinners' hearts, minds and wills. At this point, emphasis was given to the need for specific and regular evangelistic preaching. Attention was then given to the Biblical practice of

evangelism, taking the Saviour's words, 'I will build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it' (Matthew 16:18) and to His words in the parable of the servant summoning guests to the Great Supper, 'Come, for all things are now ready' (Luke 14:17). The House was to be filled! (v23). The method - compelling invitation! So with Philip and Nathanael (John 1:45,46). Labourers are to be sent into the harvest (Matthew 9:37,38).

However, there are pointed references to local churches: A city set on a hill (Matthew 5:14); the Pillar and Ground (support) of the Truth (1 Timothy 3:15); 'sounding out the Word of God' (1 Thessalonians 1:8), also note the references in Revelation 2 & 3 and those in the book of Acts 9:31, 13:1, 14:23 and 15:41. Christ incarnate had a body in which He would preach, invite and serve, and now that He has ascended into heaven, He has another 'body' on the earth - His 'church', which benefits both believers and unbelievers. Profitable discussion followed.

The second lecture considered local churches in the New Testament and how each had been planted. The need for 'order' 'to be established at the outset and the apostle's 'restlessness' that it be so (Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5) and his desire to visit Rome and to strengthen the church there.

Where church planter(s) are sent out by the local church, direction from the Holy Spirit is essential, even though the apostle was already commissioned (Acts 13:1-3). It was thought good in the sight of all the brethren. There is sometimes need for 'numbers' (e.g. an apostolic band): hence, Paul waited in Athens for Silas and Timothy, who had been left in Berea (Acts 17:15).

Attention was then given to the need for a constitution, services, and meetings, and finally the need for outreach departments.

We closed with encouragements from Christ's promised presence: Matthew 28, 'I am with you always', and Mark 16 - 'the Lord working with them'.

The Scripture says: "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with

rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him” (Psalm 126:6). Fruitfulness – to some degree – is graciously assured.

## **Reformed Worship**

### **[3 lectures – *Malcolm Watts*]**

“Worship” was defined as approaching God recognising His absolute worth. Our English word, in fact, is derived from an Anglo-Saxon word “worth-ship.” A common Hebrew word for “worship” denotes “a bowing down” (as in Gen.24:26 and Exod. 4:31). It corresponds to the Greek word which has the same basic thought: to show reverence or homage, by kneeling or prostrating oneself before God.”

*The Nature of Pure Worship:* Under this heading, it was pointed out that, according to Scripture, it is the nature of God which gives rise to worship (Ps. 29:2). It follows that God must reveal Himself to us, through His Word and by His Spirit if appropriate, God-honouring, worship is to be rendered to Him (Exod. 20:24; 1 Cor. 2:9,10). Worship will then be the right and proper response to God (1 Chron. 16:29). Essentially, this will be from the heart or soul (Ps. 51:6; Jn. 4:24), but it will be expressed through the body (in attendance, posture, gesture etc.) (Rom. 12:1; 1 Cor. 6:20). Worship will involve people making their approach to God, with offerings expressive of devotion and gratitude (1 Chron 16:29 cf. Exod. 23:15; 34:20; Deut. 16:16). God is pleased to be wherever His people gather (Exod. 20:24; Ps. 65:1,2); and there He commands His blessing (Ps. 133:1-3).

*The Standard of Pure Worship:* In his Tract, “*The Necessity of Reforming the Church*”, John Calvin wrote: “We may not adopt any device which seems fit to ourselves, but look to the injunctions of Him who alone is entitled to prescribe... God disapproves of all modes of worship not expressly sanctioned by His Word.”

God is the sovereign Lord who claims the right to appoint His own worship (Exod. 20:4,5); and this He has done in His written and infallible Word (Deut. 4:1,2; 12:32), both for the Old Testament Church (Exod. 25:9,40; 1 Chron. 28:11,12,18,19; Heb. 8:5) and for the New Testament Church (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 7:7,8). As the Law reminds us, it is not for man to appoint the way of God’s

worship: it is for God to ordain and direct it, according to His Word – “Thou shalt not make unto thee...” - as Henry Ainsworth comments of these last words, “to wit, without commandment from God.”

*The Importance of Pure Worship:* Pure worship is important for many reasons, including the fact that only such worship is beautiful in God’s eyes (Ps. 29:2) and acceptable to Him (Mk. 7:7,8). Pure worship glorifies God (Eph. 3:21).

The second lecture focussed on *The Regulative Principle*, which G.I. Williamson defined as follows: “*It is proper to worship God only as He wills, and this means only in ways that He has commanded, instituted or prescribed in His Word.*” This is, without doubt, the biblical doctrine; and at the time of the Reformation it became “the guiding principle of Calvinistic Churches” and later became “the foundation of all Puritanism.”

The opposing view, called *The Normative Principle*, is stated as follows: “*The church may introduce and practice anything in worship, providing it is not forbidden in God’s Word.*” This is certainly not what the Scriptures teach. Furthermore, it is vague and therefore weak; and it never will produce a true reformation of the Church.

A brief historical survey showed that whereas Martin Luther, great man as he was, adhered to the Normative Principle, Ulric Zwingli, in German Switzerland, and John Calvin in French Switzerland, both firmly and faithfully adhered to the biblical Regulative Principle.

The relevant Scriptures were then considered, such as: 2 Chron. 8:13, 29:25,30; Ezra 3:2; Jer. 19:5; cf. Lev. 10:1; 1 Chron 15:13; 2 Chron. 30:5,18; Jer. 7:31, 19:5; Matt. 28:20; Mk. 7:7,8; Jn. 4:24; 1 Cor. 4:1, 11:16,34 – “All order consists in the due observation of rule.” John Owen; Col. 2:23 – “will worship is “worship not enjoined by God but springing out of man’s own ingenuity” John Eadie; 2 Thess. 2:15.

It is a divine and scriptural institution which gives the institution efficacy, and therefore only as we observe biblically sanctioned ordinances can we expect real blessing from heaven.

The third lecture began by listing the elements of worship authorised by Scripture: *praise* (1 Cor. 14:26; Eph. 5:18-20), *prayer* (Matt. 6:9-13 – “*Our Father...*”, 1 Tim. 2:1), *reading* (Col. 4:16; 1 Tim. 4:13) “We think it most expedient that the Scriptures be read in order – that is, that some one book of the Old or New Testament be begun and orderly read to the end...” (*The First Book of Discipline, 1560*), *preaching* (Acts 20:7; 2 Tim. 4:2), *benediction, or blessing* (2 Cor. 13:14 cf. Ps. 133:3) “The minister pronounceth one of these blessings Num. 6, 2 Cor. 13” (*John Calvin*), and, of course, the two sacraments of *baptism* (Matt. 28:19,20; Acts 2:41; Eph. 4:5) and the *Lord’s Supper* (Matt. 26:26-30; Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-26).

The point was made that there should be “a godly order” in Reformed Worship (Num. 9:3; Ezek. 43:11; 1 Cor. 14:33,40; Col. 2:5); and, in order to secure this, certain basic principles must be borne in mind:

1) Worship should be *God-orientated*, appropriate to His revealed glory (Ps. 29:1,2,9; 99:9). 2) In any service, *Scripture must occupy a primary and dominant place* – historically, the main worship service has been called “the Word of God service (Ps. 138:2; Isa. 42:21). 3) *The order should reflect God’s gracious dealings with His people* (Ps. 92:4,5; 106:2) – the call to worship takes us back to creation and our chief end to glorify God; the prayer of confession acknowledges the Fall and man’s sinful state by nature; the Word read and preached bear witness to God’s revelation of redemption in His Son; and the singing of praise is the response of grateful hearts. 4) *There should be a progressive movement into the divine presence* – a drawing near to God (Ps 24:7; 43:3; Heb. 10:22). 5) *Due account should be taken of a blessed covenantal relationship* – God speaking to us in His Word and His people then speaking to Him in prayer and praise (Exod. 4:3,4; Zech. 13:9).

Bearing these things in mind, a godly order would be as follows:

1. *A solemn call to worship* (Neh. 9:5; Ps. 100:4)
2. *Prayer of humble confession* (Ps. 24:3,4; 26:6; Heb. 10:22)
3. Our response to God’s call. “We begin with the confession of our sins...” (John Calvin)
4. *Sung praise* (Ps. 95:2; 1 Cor. 14:26), rejoicing in view of divine mercy

5. *Old Testament reading* (Deut. 31:11,12; Acts 13:15) “It is convenient that ordinarily one chapter of each Testament be read at each meeting” - Directory for the Public Worship of God (1645)
6. *Main prayer* (Matt. 21:13; 1 Tim. 2:1,2) “Quickened and stirred by the reading... it follows that we must pray for the salvation of me” (John Calvin)
7. *New Testament reading* (Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:27) A natural order: first the Old Testament and then the New
8. *Sung praise* (Eph. 5:17-19; James 5:13) A response to the Gospel in the New Testament
9. *The sermon* (Lk. 4:16; Acts 13:15,16)
10. *Prayer* – “Of Prayer after Sermon: The sermon being ended, the minister is to give thanks... (and) to pray... To turn the chief...heads of the sermon into some few petitions; and to pray that it will abide in the heart, and bring forth fruit.” The Directory (1645)
11. Sung praise (Matt. 26:30) – “Like as your assemblies ought to begin with confession and invocation of God’s Holy Spirit, so would I that they never finish without thanksgiving” (John Knox)
12. *Benediction, or Blessing* (Num. 6:2-27; 2 Cor. 13:14, 2:21 cf. Lk 24:50, 55). God has the final word; and it is a promise of blessing to His people as they are about to depart

## **Hermeneutics: Interpreting Narrative and interpreting New Testament Epistles**

### **[2 lectures – Simon Green]**

*Interpreting Narrative:* Having established some foundational principles of biblical interpretation in previous lectures, we moved on to consider specific literary genres found within the Scriptures and their particular hermeneutical considerations. The first of these that we dealt with was narrative, the single biggest literary type within the Bible. It was noted that these are not ordinary human stories; they are given to reveal divine truth and therefore call for an appropriate response. Furthermore, the author selects only the information necessary for his presentation of a particular point of truth, and consequently many details are omitted. This, and the fact that truth is set forth indirectly, requires careful reading and reflection to arrive at the true message of any narrative section.

Having laid out the field of narrative interpretation, some more technical points were addressed. This wasn't for the purpose of being academic, but to help slow the reader down, in order that as much of the text's information is gathered as possible. Some of these points included identifying the author, actual reader, and the implied reader (who the narrative was originally intended for), as well as drawing out features of setting, plot, character, and narrative technique. Consideration was also given to help the students properly structure biblical narrative, which apart from helping with interpretation, often also leads to establishing solid exegetical sermon points.

After looking at an example from Genesis 22 together, a number of dangers were highlighted when interpreting narrative before concluding with final pointers. It is hoped that this lecture will help the students, not only derive more data from narrative passages familiar to them but will also enable them to unlock the meaning of passages where the events are clear, but the theological message less so.

Interpreting NT Epistles: In contrast to narrative, the section in our Bibles designated 'Epistles' is much denser in truth content and differs in the way that truth is communicated, which therefore affects the hermeneutical process. Epistles are primarily concerned with unpacking the person and accomplishments of Jesus Christ and then bringing application to the readers. Accordingly, indicative verbs tend to dominate the early parts of an epistle, with imperatives and subjunctives coming to the fore in the latter parts.

A little time was given to considering the rhetorical background of the Pauline epistles where it was observed that, although Paul rejected the rules of rhetoric in his preaching (1 Cor. 2:1-5), he did employ them to a certain extent in his writings. Some examples would be forensic rhetoric where he makes accusation or provides a defence (see Galatians 1, 2 Corinthians); deliberative rhetoric which aims to exhort or dissuade (Ephesians 4-6); or epideictic rhetoric where Paul affirms through praise or blame (e.g. Philippians). Following this, the literary features of the epistles were delineated including opening and closing statements, turns of phrase, liturgical elements, and quotations/allusions.

Attention then was given to the historical context of epistles and how that shapes the content and mood of each letter. Structure is a key element in the epistles and, accordingly, the main structural features and their indicators were then covered. A case study of 1 Peter 1:1-12 was looked at, particularly for the benefit of logically structuring an epistolary passage, before concluding directions were given.

## **The Covenant of Works**

### **[2 lectures – *Malcolm Watts*]**

A covenant is a bond or commitment, involving some kind of stipulation or condition and a statement of promise. According to Reformed theology, God entered into a covenant with Adam (before the Fall), wherein, on the basis of perfect obedience, He promised life in all its fulness and blessedness. This is commonly referred to as the Covenant of Works and the details of it are set down in Genesis 2:16,17.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism, in answer to Question 12, states; “When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil upon the pain of death.”

In support of this statement and the doctrine based upon it, we note that:

1. In this arrangement with Adam, the essential parts of a covenant are all present, making it what a covenant is – a conditional promise. There are parties, a condition, and a promise.
2. Certainly something was established in the garden: the Lord God “commanded” or, more literally, “commanded upon” man, the Hebrew word containing the idea of “setting up” something, or “constituting” it; and, in Psalm 111:9, there is an example of it being used with reference to a covenant – “he hath commanded his covenant...”
3. God appeared in this transaction no longer as a mere law-giver, issuing a command to one who was a subject, but rather as One promising a benefit and giving a reward (cf. “covenant of promise” Eph. 2:12).
4. As in other covenant transactions, this arrangement affected Adam’s posterity (or his descendants), making clear that he was now being

regarded as a covenant-head and representative (Rom. 5:12ff.; 1 Cor. 15:22 cf. Gen. 6:18; 17:1,2).

5. There were sacraments or tokens appended to the promise (the tree of life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil), as the bow in the sky in the Noahic covenant, and circumcision in the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 9:17).
6. When, later, this law of obedience was reissued at Sinai, along with a promise, it is specifically called a “covenant” (Deut. 4:13, 5:2; Gal. 4:24).
7. One scripture in the prophecy of Hosea appears to refer to the transaction in the Garden as a real “covenant”: “they like men [or “like Adam”] have transgressed the covenant” (Hosea 6:7). The original word here is elsewhere translated “as Adam” (see: Job 31:33).

Thereafter, we observed that there were two parties: God and Adam (who represented mankind); a condition or obligation: obedience to divine Law, tested by a positive or special law concerning a tree; a promise, implied in the threatening: namely, the promise of life – life for the body, life for the soul, and life for body and soul for ever; and the sacraments of seals were the two named trees. Tragically, as a result of Satan’s subtility, Adam sinned, forfeiting life physical, spiritual, and eternal not only for himself but also for all men and women.

## **The Fall of Man**

### **[2 lectures – *Malcolm Watts*]**

“All mankind sinned in him (Adam), and fell with him, in his first Transgression.” (Shorter Catechism, Answer to Question 16) “The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.” (Answer to Question 17).

Adam’s failure and transgression is called his “fall”, suggesting that, as a result of his sin, he did not remain where he was, but he plummeted from the high pinnacle of holiness and happiness, into the woeful state of sin, wretchedness, and ruination.

Since Adam was constituted our head and representative, when he sinned, we *all sinned in him*, and so *sin entered into the world* (Rom. 5:12, 15-18). The sinfulness of man’s state consists in his bearing the guilt of Adam’s sin (Rom.

5:18), his lack of original righteousness (Isa. 64:6; Rom. 3:10), the corruption of his whole nature (Gen. 5:3, 6:5; Ps. 51:5) and all actual transgressions proceeding from this corrupt nature (Matt. 15:19,20).

This is what theologians call Original Sin and it is the spring and source of great Misery.

First of all, we considered *The Privative Aspect of Misery* (what we have lost): the precious and blessed company of God, any claim on God as our God, God's favour and friendship, spiritual intimacy and communion with God, sharing the secrets of the heart, satisfaction and blessedness in God, and hope of eternal well-being with God (Gen. 3:8; Ps. 5:4-5, 58:3; Isa. 59:2; Eph. 2:12, 4:18)

Then, we considered *The Positive Aspect of Misery* (what we have gained): in brief, this is the wrath and curse of God, or God's sore displeasure, condemning us to great evil in this life and the next (Deut. 32:21; Ps. 7:11, 9:11; Rom. 1:18; Eph. 2:3; Heb. 10:31; Rev 6:15-17, 14:19. Deut. 27:26, 29:21,32; Matt. 25:41; Rom. 5:16,18a; Gal. 3:10).

Attention was then given to *Miseries in Life*: both outward and inward (Job 14:1; Rom. 2:14,15); *Miseries at the End of Life* (Job 18:18; 1 Cor.15:56); and *Miseries which follow after this Life* (Lk. 16:22b-24; 2 Thess. 1:7-9).

Men are in desperate need of a Saviour and there is only one appointed and available – the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **Church History**

### **[2 lectures – Roland Burrows]**

*The Venerable Bede* was born in about the year A.D. 671 near to the monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow in the north-east of England. At the age of seven it appears that he became orphaned and was entrusted by his nearest relations to the care of Abbott Benedict Biscop to be educated at the monastery. From that time, and for the rest of his life his home was the monastery.

Bede was a tireless worker and gave himself wholeheartedly to his calling. His contribution to the life of the Church at that time was great, his writings were extensive, these including many commentaries on Scripture, histories of the saints, his renowned Ecclesiastical History of Britain, (which some say was translated into Anglo-Saxon by King Alfred), his Lives of the Abbots of Wearmouth and of Jarrow, works of poetry, grammar and orthography, together with scientific works on the calculation of time, the movements of the planets, and a tide-table for the rivers and estuaries around the coast of Britain.

*This session also included detail on the Great Schism between the Eastern and Western Churches which took place in the eleventh century.* The roots of this division can be traced back several centuries before this date but came to a head when two issues brought it into collision with the Western Church. The first of these was when Pope Gregory II opposed the Byzantine Emperor Leo the Isaurian's attempt to stamp out devotion to religious icons. The second was the well-known controversy regarding the Western Church's insertion of the Filioque ('and from the Son') *clause* into the Nicene Creed. Some in the East objected to this on theological grounds, whilst others believed it should not have been done without calling a Council of the whole Church.

*A brief look was made at the pontificate of Hildebrand, or Gregory VII.* Gregory could be admired for seeking to stamp out immoral and worldly practices in the Church, but severely criticised for elevating the concept of the papacy as being supreme in power over both Church and State.

*A considerable part of this lecture was spent in recording some of the chief events of the Crusades.* An attempt was made to assess their impact both on the world of that time, and in subsequent history.

We noted that there are a wide variety of opinions in regard to these events. On the one hand they were a disgrace upon the Church and its leaders. The detrimental effects are felt to this very day, whilst the positive and no doubt unintentional results included the opening or awakening of the Western mind that had sunk at that point to a state of torpor and ignorance. They also created the middle-class, broke the power of the barons, stimulated trade, and later became a springboard for missionary activity in India and China and some say

further stimulated the activist temper which has characterised much of Western Christianity ever since.

## **Epistle to the Colossians**

### **[2 lectures – *John Thackway*]**

After an introduction, in which the epistle was compared and contrasted with Ephesians, we looked at the 'Colossian heresy'.

The first lecture covered chapters 1 and 2, more doctrinal and experiential, keeping in mind the heresy that was being rebutted. Then the second lecture went through chapters 3 and 4, which were more practical. In these, we learned about living out the Christian life, particularly in the areas of church, home and work.

# **THE LORD'S SUPPER**

## **John Willison (1680-1750)**

### **Part 5**

**Question** What are the great ends and uses of the Lord's Supper?

**Answer** 1) To keep up the solemn and lively remembrance of Christ's death, and dying love to lost sinners among men, while the world stands. 2) Solemnly to make over, apply, and seal Christ, His purchase, and all the benefits of the new covenant unto true believers. 3) That hereby we may have occasion to make public profession of our owning and receiving a crucified Jesus, as our only Saviour and Master. 4) That we may testify our thankfulness to God, for giving His Son to die for our redemption; and to the Son, for laying down His life so willingly for us. 5) That we might get a pledge and seal of our union and communion with Christ, and our faith in His promises strengthened and confirmed. 6) That we may renew and seal our covenant with God in Christ, personally ratify our baptismal vows, and solemnly bind ourselves to take God for our God, and give up ourselves to be the Lord's people, and to walk with Him in the ways of gospel obedience. 7) It is appointed as a sign and bond of believers' union and communion among themselves; their mutual love, and

fellowship, one with another. Lastly, it is designed as a spiritual meal, for strengthening the Lord's people in the inward man, for nourishing their graces, cheering their hearts, removing their fears and faintings, and giving them a pledge of heaven, and a foretaste of the eternal communion above. For all which, see Matt. 26:26-27; 1 Cor. 11:20,25,35-36; Gal. 3:1; 1 Cor. 10:16,17; Heb. 9:15,16,17.

**Q.** Is it not to be feared that many have not right views in coming to the Lord's Supper?

**A.** There is too much ground to fear that communicants' views are wrong: 1) When they come to the Lord's table to make atonement for their sins, or purchase and ensure heaven to them; as some ignorant persons think that they do by this action. 2) When they come, thinking hereby to hide or cloak some sin or wicked practice, they are presently living in. 3) When they come only to comply with the custom and fashion of the place where they live, or to prevent people's having bad thoughts of them, or some worldly inconveniences to themselves. 4) When they come to please ministers and friends, or to gain applause and a good name in the world. 5) When they come in order to qualify or put themselves in a capacity for obtaining or keeping lucrative posts or places of preferment in the world. 6) When people come to this ordinance, thinking to be converted by it, and brought into Christ.

**Q.** May not people be converted by this sacrament?

**A.** This is not a converting but a confirming ordinance in its own nature, which doth suppose that those who come to it, are converted and in Christ before. Yet we must own that this ordinance hath been the occasion of converting many thousands, by reason of the Word preached or at the dispensing of it, which God hath signally blessed to them; but though sovereign grace may do so, this is no warrant for unconverted persons to come and partake of this holy feast, which the maker of it hath not instituted for them, but for his people.

**Q.** To whom is the Lord's Supper to be administered?

**A.** Only to those that have a gospel-right to it, and gospel-preparation for it.

**Q.** Who are those who have a gospel-right to this ordinance?

**A.** There is a two-fold gospel-right: 1) An external right with respect to the church. 2) An internal right with respect to God.

**Q.** Who have an external right with respect to the church?

**A.** Those who being baptized, have a competent measure of Christian knowledge, profess their faith in Christ, and live religious and blameless lives before men. These have so far a right to this table in the sight of men, that they cannot be justly debarred from it by the office-bearers of Christ's house (Acts 8:36-38; Phil. 1:27).

**Q.** Who are those that have not this right, and are to be kept back from this Holy Table?

**A.** All who are grossly ignorant, or openly profane.

**Q.** Who are to be reckoned grossly ignorant?

**A.** All those who know not God in His nature, persons and attributes; who know not their misery by nature and the way of their recovery by Christ; who know not the nature of regeneration or conversion; nor the ends and uses of the Lord's supper.

**Q.** Why should such ignorant persons be kept back from this ordinance?

**A.** Because they are not capable to examine themselves in order to prepare for coming, nor rightly to discern the Lord's body in the sacrament when they do come; and so they would provoke God, and get no benefit by their coming, but much hurt (1 Cor. 11:28-29; 1 Tim. 5:22).

**Q.** Who are to be reckoned openly profane?

**A.** All such as live in the open and known commission of sin, and omission of duty, without repentance, or serious resolution to reform their lives.

**Q.** Why are such to be kept back?

**A.** Because such do but mock God, when they pretend to seal the covenant with him; they dishonour God and profane the ordinance, when with unholy hands, they presume to meddle with such holy things: yea, they contract the

guilt of Christ's blood, and "eat and drink judgment to themselves" (1.Cor. 11:27,29; Matt. 7:6; Num. 9:6,11).

**Q.** Are all those who have knowledge in their heads, or morality in their lives, to be thought worthy communicants?

**A.** Though such have a right to this ordinance before men; yet many such may want grace in their hearts, and so have no right before God; and consequently are unworthy communicants.

**Q.** Who are those that have an internal and true right to the Lord's Table in the sight of God?

**A.** All such as are truly in covenant with God; believe in Christ with their hearts, obey them in their lives, and make suitable preparations for this holy ordinance.

**Q.** Doth not God call and invite all the professors of Christ to come in to his Table, and consequently have they not all a right?

**A.** Very true, all professors, nay, the greatest sinners, are called to come; but surely God doth not call them to come to His table in their sins, but to come in due order, first to quit their sins, close with Christ, and then to come to His table; we are first to prepare and then come. And though many unprepared persons may have allowance from men, who know not their hearts or secret actions; yet, none but the prepared (notwithstanding the general call) have God's permission to come to His Table, or can expect benefit or welcome from Him (Isa. 55:7; Matt. 12:12).

**Q.** Why have none God's welcome to his Table but believers in Christ?

**A.** Because this is a seal of God's covenant with his people, which supposeth that it should be made, and consented to on our part beforehand, otherwise we annex the great seal of heaven to a blank; which is mocking God. So that the ordinance is instituted to confirm believers who are in the covenant, and not to convert unbelievers, and consequently none but believers have a right before God.

**Q.** Are all believers still welcome guests to his Table: or can they never be guilty of unworthy communicating?

**A.** There is more requisite to worthy communicating, than being in a good state; we must also be in a good frame; there must not only be faith in the habit, but faith in the lively acts. So that if a believer neglect to examine himself, fail in his preparation, or want grace in exercise, he communicates unworthily, yet neither this, nor any other of his sins, will bring him into condemnation, though it brings on chastisement (1 Cor. 11:28,30-32; Matt. 25:5; Rom. 8:1; Ps. 89:32).

**Q.** What is it to communicate unworthily?

**A.** It is for a man to partake in an unworthy state, an suitable frame, or with wrong views. Or, more particularly, it is for a person to approach ignorantly, without a suitable knowledge: or, to approach formally, without a suitable reverence and awe of God; or to come without due preparation, without the exercise of faith, love, repentance, spiritual hunger, thankfulness to God, covenanting with him, and resolutions against sin. Or, to come entertaining some known sin in the life, whether of omission or commission, or harbouring some secret lust in the heart, such as pride, malice, or revenge.

**Q.** Is not unworthy communicating both highly sinful and dangerous?

**A.** Yes; for, 1) The sin of it is no less than murdering the Son of God, and being accessory to the guilt of shedding his innocent blood. 2) The danger of it is both temporal chastisement and eternal damnation: for this heinous sin, God is provoked to throw the bodies of many into the grave, and the souls of many into hell (1 Cor. 11:27,29-30).

**Q.** Why should this sin be reckoned so very heinous?

**A.** For these reasons: 1) It argues a low esteem and an undervaluing of Christ, his precious blood, and redeeming love. 2) It is a solemn affront to Christ; as it is to a king, to throw his picture or great seal into a puddle. 3) It is a horrid mocking of Christ, as it is a pretence of love to Him, and hatred of sin, while in the meantime sin is hugged, and Christ despised. 4) It is a plain accession to the guilt of the Jews and Romans, who imbrued their hands in Christ's blood; for he is reckoned accessory to a murder who consents to it, aids or abets the murderers, and of this unworthy communicants are guilty.

**Q.** Is not the guilt of unworthy communicants in some respect more heinous than that of the Jews?

**A.** Yes; for the Jews when they pierced Christ and shed His blood, did it ignorantly; they did it to one they reckoned a criminal and blasphemer; they did it to Him when he was in the form of a servant, in a state of humiliation. But unworthy communicants do this wittingly against Him, they own Him to be their innocent Saviour, now gloriously exalted at the right hand of God; and at a time when He is displaying His love and making a rich feast to them; which makes the crime horrid and monstrous. Which consideration should make us all tremble, and cry with David, Ps. 51:4. "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God."

**Q.** Who are those that may be reckoned worthy communicants?

**A.** Those who are in a worthy state, viz. a state of grace; and who have a worthy frame of spirit, viz. the lively exercise of grace; and who have worthy views and designs, viz. to show forth Christ's death, and renew their covenant with God.

**Q.** Are there any worthy communicants in a legal sense?

**A.** No; for the best saint hath no worth or merit before God; he hath nothing in himself to found his claim or plea for any of these good things which God bestows in the sacrament. There are still many sins and imperfections in the best, so that after we have done all, we must acknowledge ourselves to be most unworthy and "unprofitable servants" (Gen. 32:10; Lk. 17:10).

**Q.** What is meant then by the worthiness which some communicants are said to have?

**A.** Nothing, but a gospel suitableness and meetness of our souls' state and frame, to this holy ordinance; for worthiness is often taken in this sense in scripture (Matt. 22:8; Lk. 3:8; Col. 1:10; Rev 3:4).

**Q.** Is perfect holiness, a strong faith, or a very great measure of knowledge in religion, or sensible joy and comfort at the Lord's Table, essentially necessary to worthily communicating?

**A.** No; for they may be worthy communicants in a gospel sense, graciously owned and accepted of God, who yet may have many sins and doubts, much darkness and confusion: but where there is any measure of true faith in Christ, though weak, the Lord marks not iniquity, but looks on the soul as white, through the imputed righteousness of Christ (Num. 23:21; Ps. 130: 3-4).

**Q.** What is it then to communicate worthily? And wherein lies the nature of this work and duty?

**A.** It is a complex act, and a very great work; and it lies shortly in our receiving Christ and his benefits with the hand of faith, and making particular application of them for our souls' necessities, as we receive the elements with our bodily hand, and make use of them for our bodies. Or, it is, to cast our guilty souls into the open arms of a crucified Saviour for mercy, and, in the meantime, to embrace and clasp about this bleeding high-priest, with the arms of faith, as our Saviour and Lord, saying with Thomas, "my Lord, and my God." It is a flying into his wounds for shelter, and applying his blood for pardon and cleansing. It is a taking Christ's body and blood to save us, and a giving up our souls and bodies to be saved, taught and ruled by Him. Or, in a word, to communicate worthily, is to eat and drink at Christ's Table, with a believing and thankful remembrance of His dying love, resting on His merits, mourning for sin that pierced Him, and solemnly resolving to pierce Him no more.

**Q.** What are the advantages of worthily communicating?

**A.** They are very many, and very great: hereby Christ and His benefits are received, the souls' diseases and plagues are cured, our sins and lusts weakened, and our graces strengthened and increased. Hereby the hard heart is softened, and the cold heart inflamed, the dead soul quickened, the palsied hand cured, and feeble knees strengthened. Hereby the straitened soul is enlarged, the wandering heart fixed, the creeping desires elevated, the fainting heart supported, the cloudy mind brightened, the uneasy conscience satisfied, and doubting souls resolved. Many times hath Christ made himself known to His disciples in "the breaking of bread;" herein he hath allowed them the smiles of his face, the comforts of his Spirit, and seal of their pardon, and a sight of the King in his beauty, and a Pisgah-view of Canaan. O worthy communicant, is there any meal in the world so profitable as this? A meal that proves life to

your souls, and death to your sins, a cordial to your hearts, and balm to your wounds, strength to your graces, and poison to your lusts.

**Q.** What are the disadvantages of unworthily communicating?

**A.** It draws down judicial chastisements from God upon the soul, diseases and untimely death on the body, and eternal wrath upon both. It brings on desertion from God, and the rebukes of his anger, darkness on the mind, deadness and impenitency on the heart, barrenness and leanness on the soul, decay and withering on the graces, formality and lifelessness in duties, fear, and sometimes horror on the conscience: yea, it lets loose Satan against the soul. And some of these plagues have even believers themselves smarted under, for their careless communicating (1 Cor. 11:29-30).

**Q.** What is the meaning of these words, (1 Cor. 11:29) "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." Is this sin so damnable that there is no pardon for it?

**A.** Though the sin be heinous, yet it is not unpardonable: that is not the meaning of the words: the word damnation, in the original, is *krima*, which properly signifies judgment, as well as damnation, and therefore our Assembly Divines use this word upon that subject, "They eat and drink judgment to themselves" i. e. they make themselves liable to temporal, spiritual, and eternal judgments: temporal and spiritual judgments will follow them in this world, and without a timely repentance, these will end in eternal damnation in the other. This is pardonable, as well as others, through "the blood of Christ which cleanseth from all sin." For as the virtue of this precious blood saved and cleansed many, who actually shed it at Jerusalem; so it can save and cleanse those who spill and trample it under foot in the sacrament, upon their application to it (Luke 24:46-47; Acts 2:36,38,41; 1 John 1:7).

**Q.** Doth the presence of a wicked man pollute the sacrament to worthy receivers who sit at the table with him?

**A.** No; for it is said, "he eateth and drinketh judgment to himself" only, not to another that receives with him: otherwise Christ and his apostles had been defiled by the company of Judas; for at the sacrament of the Passover he certainly was.

**Q.** Why is the guilt of this damning sin, laid upon the unworthy communicant's not discerning the Lord's body?

**A.** Because he doth not distinguish between common bread and the sacramental bread, which represents the Lord's body; but useth it with as little preparation and regard, or as carelessly, as he useth the other; which infers dreadful guilt before God.

**Q.** Where is this sacrament to be administered?

**A.** Only in the congregations and assemblies of God's people, for: 1) Christ gave it to his disciples when met together, and not to any of them apart (Matt. 26:20,26). 2) It was the practice of the primitive and apostolical churches to administer and partake of this sacrament publicly, when the congregation or church was assembled in one place; which is ratified by the apostle (1 Cor. 11:20-22). 3) Because it is one great design in this ordinance to testify the union or communion of Christians one with another (1 Cor. 10:16-17, "for we being many are one bread"). Now this union of many cannot be expressed where there are not many convened together to do it.

**Q.** Wherefore may not the sacrament be administered to the sick, or persons on a death-bed?

**A.** It ought not because of the aforesaid reasons; and also in regard of these following: 1) We have neither precept nor example for this practice in the Word of God, and so it cannot be done in faith, Rom. 14:23. 2) It derogates much from the awfulness and solemnity of this great and august ordinance, to administer it privately, and with so little deliberation and preparation, as often it is done, where this practice is allowed. 3) Few sick or dying persons are privileged with such steadiness of mind, calmness of thought, free exercise of reason, and undisturbed use of the faculties, as is necessary for a man's examining himself before he partake, and so exerting the several acts of faith, and the other graces which are requisite in partaking. And to administer the sacrament to those who are tossed with sickness, distracted with pain, or incapable of any freedom or distinctness of thought, (as most sick people are) is to profane the ordinance, and to do the sick person more harm than good. 4. This would be to symbolize with papists and idolaters in their superstitious practices, and to sanction their errors, for papists believe that the sacraments

do of themselves confer grace and that all is well, if they at last partake of this sacrament. From all which errors, idolatrous and superstitious customs, we ought to keep a due distance in obedience to God's command (Exod. 23:24; Lev. 18:3; Deut. 12:30; 1 Cor. 10:6; Rev 18:4).

**Q.** Seeing it is our indispensable duty to communicate, and that frequently; and it is so highly dangerous to communicate unworthily; what course shall we take, in order to our being worthy communicants?

**A.** We must with all earnestness seek after that gospel fitness and preparation, which God requires of those that approach to this holy ordinance.

*Concluded*

## EPILOGUE

*"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God." Philippians 3:14*

Here Paul, though in prison for his faith and looking back on what he had suffered previously for the name of Christ recognises that none of these things can earn him salvation or acceptance with God... He knows that salvation is 'through the faith of Christ'. This however was, and never is an excuse for inactivity or lethargy. We are not meant just to sit back and relax but are urged to strive, to press forward, to be bold for the Lord and His cause.

Like young David, when Goliath was challenging the armies of Israel, recalled his deliverance from the lion and bear in the past, and therefore by faith, concluded that God would now deliver him from this fearsome but heathen giant – so Paul could draw comfort from past providences. He trusted that God would continue to deliver him until his time upon this world should come to an end and believed that nothing could separate him from the love of Christ.

Paul realised that his life would come short of the mark (like an arrow falling short of its target) unless he kept striving for the things before him. He would therefore persevere, press on, by God's grace, unto the end of his life. Only then would he receive the prize. We are so apt to think in the here and now, in

the short term only. Such a stunted view means that our actions are sometimes driven by pragmatism rather than God's Word. Like Paul we should constantly keep in mind the prize, the end, our high calling and order our lives to achieve that goal.

In 1 Peter 1:4 we read that we will be given "An inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." There is no comparison between our current sufferings and the eternal prize that awaits us. Our way here may be full of trials and tribulations, as Paul's was, but there is an inheritance awaiting us that is eternal, unchanging and glorious. We need to keep our minds focussed on our end (and daily live to achieve that objective.)

*Bill Norton*