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BE CAREFUL TO WHOM YOU LISTEN

A long while ago in America a train was travelling West in the depths of winter time. It was freezing cold, snowing heavily and, owing to strong winds, there were blizzard conditions. On board there was a young woman with her baby who wanted to leave the train at a remote station along the route. Owing to the remoteness of the region one of the tasks of the guardsman was to call out the names of the stations as they approached, so the people knew when to disembark. The woman was a stranger to the country so on several occasions she went up to the guardsman and said, "Please don't forget me; I need to get off at Redrock." Repeatedly the guardsman promised he would not forget her and would certainly tell her when she had to leave the train.

As time went on, the train slowed to a stop as though coming into a station and a fellow traveller said to the woman, "This must be your stop now." With an expression of gratitude, the woman gathered together her things and hopped off the train into the dreadful storm. The train moved on again. Forty-five minutes later the guardsman came in and called out, "Passenger for Redrock! This is your station!" The other passengers explained to him that the woman had got off the last time the train stopped. The guardsman's face changed to one of shock and despair. "I promised her", he said, "that I would let her know when to get off. We only stopped earlier because of heavy snow on the track. She has gone, I fear, to her death."

Sadly this prediction proved all too accurate. Rescuers found the poor woman frozen to death. Amazingly, the baby was found alive, having been protected from the worst of the cold beneath his mother's coat.

Be careful to whom you listen! This true story reminds us of the vital importance – and it is sometimes a matter of life and death – of listening to the right person and to the correct information and instructions.

Each and every one of us is on the "journey of life." As we travel along, we need to make certain that we are listening to someone who knows, someone who is telling the truth, because there is a lot of confusion out there on a whole

range of issues, including what a person must do to be spiritually safe and to arrive one day in heaven.

It is all too easy in this confusion for people to turn to their fellow-travellers, thinking that they might know the right answer, but this can be a fatal mistake. The only one who knows and can properly answer our questions is “the Guardsman”. If only that poor woman had trusted the guardsman, rather than a fellow-passenger, she would not have perished but she would have lived.

No matter what other people say, let us soberly remember that there is only One Person to whom we should listen: it is the Lord Jesus Christ. He alone knows the truth and He alone can answer the greatest of our questions. One day, when our Lord was physically here on this earth, a heavenly voice was heard, and that voice said, “This is my beloved Son... *hear ye him.*” (Matt. 17:5)

Whatever others may say, the Lord Jesus has said, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John. 3:16)

“Passenger for heaven! This is your station!” Move now in faith, and you will make it to heaven.

FELLOWSHIP NEWS

We were very pleased to welcome James Swanson to our midweek meeting on Wednesday 9 August. James came to us representing the work of the Lord at Lefkosa Protestant Church in Northern Cyprus. He opened the meeting by reminding us of the words of the apostle Paul in his letter to the Ephesians 1:15-23, and challenging us to use this same prayer as we intercede for the believers there in Cyprus. With the use of PowerPoint we saw the faces of a number of Christians, some of whom are experiencing much pressure from Muslim relatives. We were challenged to pray that they would be enlightened in their understanding of Gospel truths, and know God's enabling power in their lives. We appreciate so much James' regular letters from Cyprus, and pray for

him and Rachel and the children as they live and minister there. We especially remember their eldest boy, who will be remaining in UK to commence his studies at university.

Our Fellowship Tea at Glebe Hall, Winterbourne Earls on 22 July, and our picnic in the field at Crosslanes Chapel on 19 August were two very happy days for both members and friends of Emmanuel. These times of informal, relaxed fellowship with one another, young and old together, are important events, affording us opportunities to a better understanding of each other's needs, and helping us to maintain "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." We are indebted, once again, to the kindness of our friends at Crosslanes for the use of their field for our picnic.

"For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." (Romans 14:8)

SENIOR ENDEAVOURER CAMP 2017

Paul Thick

As camp approached a number of thoughts troubled my mind. What if it is wet and windy when we are due to erect the tents? What if the wind is too strong for the tents? What if bad weather prevents us carrying out our planned activities? I soon realised that I had to hold these thoughts in check and lean on the Lord. It is so good to be able to report that both your prayers and my prayers were wonderfully answered with respect to these practical concerns.

We had planned one activity for the Monday but due to a large booking we had to switch to Tuesday. The Lord who sends the sun and rain saw fit that we had light showers for our walk but a bright breezy day for our cycle-ride on Tuesday. Over the years, even when a gale blew down and devastated our tents, the Lord has overruled in all things, "As for God, his way is perfect".

The main reason the Church runs a camp each year is that it provides a unique opportunity to present the Gospel over a period of 4 days in an environment in which the young people are freed from some of the normal distractions of home

and, these days, the technology and social media that forms a major part of their lives.

We meet mornings and evenings. The Morning sessions this year were based on John 20:31 and we looked at the need to believe in Jesus, the need to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the benefit of believing on Jesus as our Saviour and the implication and consequence of unbelief.

In the evenings we were firstly challenged to consider that God speaks and we are to hear and obey Him. Next we considered by contrast what man says - words that are full of himself, his abilities, his achievements - a declaration of a total rejection of God. Our third talk focussed on rejecting God and the resultant loss (in life and eternity to come) while showing that faith in God brings the greatest of gains. Finally we learned of God's gracious and unsurpassed offer to rebellious, sinful mankind through Jesus Christ and the great pity God has for those that fear Him.

On the Lord's Day, we attended the services for public worship at Whiddon Valley Evangelical Church, Barnstaple.

We were encouraged that the young people listened well throughout Camp; and please continue to pray that the Lord will give the increase in His time.

This is a canvas camp and for about 25 years we have been returning to the same field at Cherry Tree Farm Campsite. As we left this year, however, we learned that this pitch may not be available next year, so please pray that we will know the Lord's will as we consider and research options for next year.

This year there were 13 young people, 4 of whom were from non-church families, and 4 leaders. While away this year we celebrated a 12th birthday and we were pleased the young person willing to spend it on camp rather than stay home for it. The other campers brought balloons, banners and gifts to make the day special (and there was a Smartie chocolate birthday cake) – a good example of the camaraderie amongst the campers for which we are thankful to the Lord.

As far as activities go Camp follows a tried and tested routine. There is a walk (we try for a different location/route each year – this year's started at the Valley of the Rocks), an activity (we hired bikes cycling a total of 20 miles along the Tarka Trail with a lunch stop in Bideford) and a beach day (our favourite being Saunton Sands). In addition we try to fit in beach volleyball and some ice cream tasting!

We eat well while away at camp, not least because of the generous donations of foodstuffs and cakes for which we are very thankful. Breakfast is a simple meal of cereal and toast of many shades. Sunday lunch would typically be Sausages in Onion gravy, with mashed potatoes; and throughout camp, we have a varied menu. Packed lunches are self-made on days out. That said, you cannot please all the campers all of the time, and it is not unusual to learn that emergency rations of crisps and sweets have been stashed in suitcases by concerned parents!

The final day soon came and tents and equipment were packed away dry for another year (God willing).

We were granted safety in all our travels and excursions, and for all these mercies we praise and thank the LORD.

ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION SERVICES

God willing, **Simon Green's Ordination** will take place on **Saturday, 11th November, at 2 pm**. There will be a **Tea at 4 pm**.

At 5.30 pm, there will be his **Installation to the Ministry here and a Welcoming Service**.

All are warmly invited to these two services and we request the prayers of the Lord's people for this very special occasion.

SALISBURY CONFERENCE 2017

God willing, this year's **Salisbury Conference** (the twenty-first) will be held **22-24 September**. Our Guest Speaker will be **Rev. Timothy Nelson**, Minister of the Free Presbyterian Church in Ballynahinch, Northern Ireland.

As this year marks the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther nailing his "95 Theses" to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg (31 October, 1517) – an event which sparked the Reformation – the general theme of the conference will be **The Protestant Reformation**.

The titles and times of the addresses will be as follows:

Friday, 22 September, at 7.30pm:

The Reformation: An Extraordinary Work of God;

Saturday, 23 September, at 10.30am:

Great Biblical Truths Rediscovered in the Reformation;

Saturday, 23 September, at 1.00pm:

Spiritual Effects of the Reformation, Then and Now;

Saturday, 23 September, at 2.30pm:

Maintaining a Reformation Stance in the Twenty-First Century.

STAND FAST

Charles Haddon Spurgeon

Failure at a crucial moment may mar the entire outcome of a life.

A man who has enjoyed special light is made bold to follow in the way of the Lord, and is anointed to guide others therein. He rises into a place of love and esteem among the godly, and this promotes his advancement among men. What then? The temptation comes to be careful of the position he has gained,

and to do nothing to endanger it. The man, so lately a faithful man of God, compromises with worldliness, and to quiet his own conscience invents a theory by which such compromises are justified, and even commanded.

He receives the praises of "the judicious"; but he has, in truth, gone over to the enemy. The whole force of his former life now tells upon the wrong side. If the Lord loves him sell enough, he will be scourged back to his place; but if not, he will grow more and more perverse, till he becomes a ringleader among the opposers of the gospel. To avoid such an end it becomes us ever to stand fast.

WILLIAM COWPER

(1731-1800)

William Cowper (pronounced Cooper) was born in his father's rectory, in Berkhamstead, November 26, 1731. His life, sadly, was full of personal anguish. He was educated at Westminster School, articled to an attorney, and appointed a clerk in the House of Lords, but he resigned on account of severe depression. He retired to Huntingdon, lodging with Rev. and Mrs Unwin. Later he moved to Olney, in Buckinghamshire, where John Newton befriended and a greatly helped him. The Olney Hymns (1779), which he co-authored with Newton, first introduced Cowper to the world. Cowper continued to write poetry and he soon became famous. In his latter years he lived in Norfolk. He died there, in East Dereham, in the Spring of 1800.

He was converted In July 1764, as he sat in his garden reading the epistle to the Romans. When he came to chapter 3, verses 24 to 25, he was deeply impressed by these words: "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God". Later, in his own words, he relates, "Immediately I received strength to believe and the full beams of the Son of Righteousness shone upon me. I saw the sufficiency of the atonement that Christ had made, my pardon in His blood, the fullness and completeness of my justification. In a moment I believed and received the Gospel".

The Pulpit

The pulpit, therefore, (and I name it filled
with solemn awe, that bids me well beware
with what intent I touch that holy thing;)
the pulpit (when the satirist has at last,
strutting and vapping in an empty school,
spent all his force, and made no proselyte;)
I say the pulpit (in the sober use
of its legitimate, peculiar powers)
must stand acknowledged, while the world shall stand,
the most important and effectual guard,
support, and ornament of virtue's cause.
There stands the messenger of truth. There stands
the legate of the skies; his theme divine,
his office sacred, his credentials clear.
By him, the violated law speaks out
its thunders, and by him, in strains as sweet
as angels use, the gospel whispers peace.
He 'stablishes the strong, restores the weak,
reclaims the wanderer, binds the broken heart,
and, armed himself in panoply complete
of heavenly temper, furnishes with arms
bright as his own, and trains, by every rule
of holy discipline, to glorious war,
the sacramental host of God's elect.
Are all such teachers?—would to heaven all were!"

[*The Task*, Book II, "The Time-Piece," in *The Poetical Works of William Cowper*]

Old Testament Gospel

(Hebrews 4:2)

Israel in ancient days
Not only had a view
Of Sinai in a blaze,

But learn'd the Gospel too;
The types and figures were a glass,
In which thy saw a Saviour's face.

The paschal sacrifice
And blood-besprinkled door,
Seen with enlighten'd eyes,
And once applied with power,
Would teach the need of other blood,
To reconcile an angry God.

The Lamb, the Dove, set forth
His perfect innocence,
Whose blood of matchless worth
Should be the soul's defence;
For he who can for sin atone,
Must have no failings of His own.
The scape-goat on his head
The people's trespass bore,
And to the desert led,
Was to be seen no more:
In him our surety seem'd to say,
Behold, I bear your sins away." "

Dipt in his fellow's blood,
The living bird went free;
The type, well understood,
Express'd the sinner's plea;
Described a guilty soul enlarged,
And by a Saviour's death discharged.

Jesus, I love to trace,
Throughout the sacred page,
The footsteps of Thy grace,
The same in every age!
Oh, grant that I may faithful be

To clearer light vouchsafed to me!

[*The Poems of William Cowper*, edited by J.C. Bailey, page 46]

The Papacy

Hast thou admitted with a blind, fond trust
The lie that burned thy father's bones to dust;
That first adjudged them heretics, then sent
Their souls to heaven, and cursed them as they went;
The lie that Scripture strips of its disguise,
And execrates above all other lies;
The lie that claps a lock on Mercy's plan,
And gives the key to you infirm old man,
Who, once ensconced in Apostolic chair,
Is defied, and sits omniscient there;
The lie that knows no kindred, owns no friend
But him that makes its progress his chief end;
That having spilt much blood, makes that a boast,
And canonises him that sheds the most?
Away with charity that soothes a lie,
And thrusts the truth with scorn and anger by!
Shame on the candour, and the gracious smile,
Bestowed on them that light the Martyrs' pile,
While insolent disdain, in frowns expressed,
Attends the tenets that endured the test!
Grant them the rights of men, and while they cease
To vex the peace of others – grant them peace;
But trusting bigots whose false zeal has made
Treachery their duty, thou art self-betrayed!

[*The Progress of Error*, in *The Works of William Cowper*, edited by Robert Southey, pp.152,153.]

Seeking the Beloved

To those who love the Lord I speak;

Is my Beloved near?
The Bridegroom of my soul I seek,
Oh! when will He appear?

Though once a man of grief and shame,
Yet now He fills a throne,
And bears the greatest, sweetest name,
That earth or heaven have known.

Grace flies before, and love attends
His steps where'er he goes;
Though none can see Him but His friends,
And they were once his foes.

He speaks; - obedient to His call
Our warm affections move:
Did He but shine alike on all,
Then all alike would love.

Then love in every heart would reign,
And war would cease to roar;
And cruel and bloodthirsty men
Would thirst for blood no more.

Such Jesus is, and such His grace;
Oh, may He shine on you!
And tell him, when you see His face,
I long to see Him, too.

[*The Poems of William Cowper*, edited by J.C. Bailey, pp. 55,56]

THE DELIGHTS OF GOD

Malcolm H. Watts

"He delivered me, because he delighted in me." (Psalm 18:19b)

[Regrettably, the recording of the Bible Study given on 19 July 2017 failed. The following is derived from notes taken at the time by Richard and Ruth Ward, and the whole has been edited for inclusion in The Messenger]

The Bible contains a revelation of God – what we are to believe about Him. For example, the Bible tells us that God is to be understood as one God, and in three Persons. God is revealed in the scripture as a pure Spirit without sin or any blemish. He is holy (Rev. 15:4) and has numerous other perfections.

The Bible also tells us of God's inner life, those things which may not be at first apparent, "*the deep things of God*" (1 Cor. 2:10). Among these we are told things that God abhors (Deut. 32:19; Prov. 6:16-19). Here we look right into the heart of God, seeing what He detests.

If we look again into the heart of God, as it is revealed in Scripture, we will see the things in which He delights. Tonight, I want to speak about the delights of God. Through the Scripture we shall be given an insight into God's heart – what gives Him satisfaction and brings pleasure to Him.

1. God delights in His Son. Looking back to the past eternity, the Son remembers His Father's love for Him and the intimate relationship He enjoyed. "I was by him", He says, "as one brought up with him" and then He adds, "*I was daily His delight*" (Prov. 18:30).

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God (literally, face to face with God), and the Word was God" (John 1:1). See also John 1:18; 3:35; 17:24. On three occasions, God the Father declared "This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased". God the Father loved Him, however, not only as His eternal Son, but also as the appointed Mediator and Saviour (Col. 1:13; Isa. 42:1).

We should share His delight in the Lord Jesus Christ: discerning His majesty, admiring His glory, respecting His authority, honouring His pre-eminence, praising His excellence and perfection. Is He "*altogether lovely*" to you?

2. He delights in mercy. In the words of the prophet Micah, “He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he *delighteth in mercy.*” (Micah 7:18) His mercy is so very wonderful that it is His pleasure to exercise it and reveal it in all its glory. In this mercy, He does not pursue controversies with His people, but pardons them. Judgement is “*his strange work*” (Isa. 28:21). This affords hope to penitent believers who may rest assured that God will remove any and every threatening penalty and forgive all their grievous and aggravated sins. “I am merciful, saith the Lord” (Jer. 3:12) and we know from Scripture and experience that He is “*plenteous in mercy.*” (Ps. 103:8)

In that same mercy, God enables us to draw near to Him, and to approach the throne of grace. Mercy pities us, and affords us help. Mercy will be fully revealed when we are admitted to undeserved Glory. (2 Tim. 1:18; Jude 21)

3. He delights in His people. “*The Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them*” (Deut. 10:15). The truth is that God, from eternity past, loved all His people and He chose them to be His very own (2 Sam. 22:20; Isa. 62:4). On account of His Son’s undertaking of their redemption, God was able to delight in them, even though He foresaw them as sinful and hell-deserving. “*He hath made us accepted in the beloved.*” (Eph. 1:6)

Moreover, such is His favour to us and His pleasure in us, that He grants to us the great privilege of communion with Himself: and He cares for us, ever guiding us, supplying us, protecting us; and, at the last, He will be with us to comfort us and then grant us an entrance to glory.

God loves all His people. He loves them with the love of complacency, delighting to be with them; and, in that love, He is pleased to load them with His favours and blessings, especially when they gather together to worship Him. So it is written, “he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.” (Zeph. 3:17) We too should delight in their company (Ruth 1:16) and not be willingly absent whenever and wherever they meet (Heb. 10:25).

4. He delights in sincerity of heart. The Scripture says, “*Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly* (or sincerely, without any deceit or lying) *are his delight.*” (Prov. 12:22) Dr. David Thomas comments as

follows: “A man of truth is a man of God. Honesty is truth in conduct, and truth is honesty in words.”

God requires, bestows and approves godly sincerity (2 Cor. 1:12) – pure religion (James 1:27): a sound heart (Ps. 119:80) and an upright walk (Prov. 10:9). “*An Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!*” (John 1:47).

If we would ever please Him, we must seek from Him a true heart to love and serve Him. David once prayed, “*Create in me a clean heart; and renew a right spirit within me.*” (Ps. 51:10) This is essential to godliness.

5. He delights in distinguishing holiness. Remember Samuel’s words to King Saul: “*Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord?*” (1 Sam. 15:22) In God’s reckoning, no ceremonial, or ritual sacrifice, can ever replace sincere obedience. This alone is the prerequisite for pleasing service to God.

The Lord’s voice is heard, in the Song of Solomon, admiring His people’s beauty – the beauty of holiness – which He Himself has imparted to them. Once wholly corrupt in thought, word and deed, they now appear renewed and adorned with the lovely graces of the Holy Spirit. Listen to what He says to those who constitute His holy Church: “*How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights.*” (Song of Sol. 7:6) He does indeed feel admiration, but it is more than that – this is an exclamation of very great joy.

Believers are fair and pleasant to Him; and viewing them with infinite condescension, in a glory graciously granted to them, and showing a wonderful likeness to Himself, He finds them fascinatingly attractive, the source of inexpressible and everlasting pleasure.

Does the Lord rejoice in what He sees in us?

6. He delights in the spirit of prayer. “*The prayer of the upright*”, we read, “*is his delight*” (Prov. 5:8b). Invariably, we struggle in our prayer and our utterances before God seem to be very poor stammerings at best, often mere inward groanings and complaints; but perfumed by the Saviour’s merits (Eph.

5:2; Heb 4:15,16), and assisted by the indwelling Spirit (Zech. 12:10; Rom. 8:26), our prayers are acceptable to God and most pleasing to Him.; they are “*spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*” (1 Pet. 2:5)

The voice of believers at the Throne of Grace is sweet in the Lord’s ears and He bids us come and enjoy fellowship, pouring out our hearts before Him and casting our care upon Him. He gently calls us to a place near to His heart, and He says: “*Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice and thy countenance is comely.*” (Song of Sol. 2:14)

As Dr. Robinson beautifully observes, “The Saviour’s refreshment in Simon’s house (was) not the viands on the table, but the woman at His feet with her countenance wet with the tears of penitence and love. The believing prayers and loving praises of a pardoned sinner (are) sweeter to Christ than the songs of seraphim.”

It is almost too wonderful to be true, but He *loves* to hear our prayers; and therefore let us not be discouraged but rather let us hasten to our God, “the hearer of prayer.”

7. He delights in the way to heaven. “*The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way.*”(Ps.37:23) Whatever our troubles and difficulties, we keep to the narrow way, the way everlasting; and when God sees our *determination* and *perseverance*, He rejoices at the evidence of steadfast, overcoming grace. To encourage us to press on, He says, “*He that endureth to the end shall be saved.*”(Matt. 10:22; Job 17:9; John 6:66-68)

Walk on, then, looking unto Jesus in faith, until you reach your heavenly destination. At the last, every struggle will seem worth it and His smile of approval will then be yours. Do not think of going back, nor of turning aside, nor of fainting in the way. The road along which you walk is the one – the only one – that leads to God and to Glory.

So keep on keeping on. God is pleased to see you intent on finishing your course. He delights to see us holding on our way.

THE PILGRIM FATHERS

Part 2

After reaching the harbour of “New Plimoth”, on 11 December, 1620, a party of 18 armed men stepped ashore; but the group as a whole was still forced to live on the ship. Sickness was reducing the numbers left on board. Their diet was inadequate, conditions were appalling and the weather was bitterly cold. The cause appeared to be scurvy or pneumonia and by the time the first winter was over, half the settlers had died. Fifty-four Pilgrims were left, and twenty-one of them were under sixteen years of age. It was remarkable that the remaining group should have survived at all for, in addition to all their other problems, an Indian attack would have wiped them out in a single blow.

The Indians

It was the Indians who, in fact, ensured the survival of the settlers. Their first real contact was with an English speaking Indian called Samoset. It soon became obvious that he was a friend and not a foe. He introduced them to other Indians who were also friendly – especially another English speaker called Squanto, who served as a go-between and took some settlers to meet his chief, Massasoit. Squanto’s knowledge of the English language was excellent, and he had actually lived in England for some time. Without his native skills and knowledge of the country, the Pilgrims would almost certainly have perished for they would have had no crops. He showed them how to plant corn, served as interpreter and acted as guide on their foraging and trading expeditions.

In April 1621 the Mayflower was ready to return to England with her crew at half strength and no precious cargo. The pilgrims gathered on the beach to watch her sail into the Atlantic – cutting their connection with England. It is not difficult to imagine how they must have felt – with such a hard battle for survival still ahead of them and now to be stranded. However, none of the Pilgrims asked to go back. Despite all the tragedies and hardships they all remained committed to their mission.

The “Plimoth Plantation” – The Settlement Develops

The Pilgrims continued to concentrate on growing food with the help of Squanto and to learn new agricultural skills from him. He was also invaluable as a fishing and trapping expert.

On 21st April 1621 their Governor, John Carver, was suddenly struck down with sickness and within a few hours had died. William Bradford was duly elected the second Governor – a position which he held almost continuously for 35 years until his death.

The Pilgrims worked hard on the land all summer and appeared to be in a good position to survive. The plentiful fish, birds and other animals all added to the crop produce, making this seem in many ways the “promised land”.

However, by the autumn things were not looking so favourable. November 9th 1621 saw the arrival of a ship called the Fortune, increasing the number of settlers from less than 50 to 85. They came without food, supplies, equipment, bedding utensils or even clothes. In addition a letter also arrived from the Pilgrims’ investors, demanding that the Fortune return as soon as possible, full of supplies.

The Pilgrims obliged, and the settlers had to exist on half rations over the winter months so that their supplies would last.

By June 1622 two more ships arrived – the Charity and the Swan with no provisions but 60 men whom the colony was expected to feed and house temporarily, although none of them were the right sort of people to suit the Pilgrims. The fact that they never excluded the new arrivals or treated them in an inferior way or even questioned their complete right to share what they had worked so hard to achieve reveals the truly charitable nature of the Pilgrims.

The arrival of the Anne and the Little James in 1623 brought 87 new settlers – 29 of them from Leyden. Tension developed almost immediately between the recent arrivals and the original settlers. The initial period of the united and disciplined colony had come to an end. The news of the death of John Robinson in Leyden in 1625 meant that their beloved pastor would never

restore them with his serene faith, sympathy and understanding. The Pilgrims had succeeded in establishing their religious beliefs in North America, but the society which was to grow from this early beginning was to become vastly different.

On 26th October 1626 a draft agreement was worked out between the settlers and the Merchant Adventurers whereby the latter agreed to surrender all their rights in the colony and free the planters of debt for a sum of £1800 to be paid in nine yearly instalments of £200.

The Spread of Settlers

This agreement now gave the Pilgrims the impetus to organise the colony on a much firmer footing. Trade and commerce were to be conducted for the joint account to help pay the debts. All else was to be divided. Each family was to receive as many shares as it had members, including men, women, children and servants. Trade was promoted in every possible way.

In 1630, 13 ships crossed to Massachusetts Bay with 1000 settlers – three times as many as had come across to Plymouth in a decade. Over a period of time the Pilgrims reached out into distant parts of New England and established trading posts from Upper Maine to the Connecticut River. However, they made no attempt in the 1620s to establish any permanent settlements. They were both too poor and few in number to attempt any colonisation. Subsequent Puritan settlers, however, soon had a number of flourishing towns, including Salem, Charlestown and Boston. The latter was to become a centre of a far greater importance than Plymouth.

Before long the different settlements were forced to create a federation in order to work together and in 1643 the New England Confederation was created out of the four colonies of Massachusetts Bay, Connecticut, New Haven and Plymouth. It was the first union of independent colonies and led in turn to the union of the United States. It could be said that modern America grew from the Pilgrim settlement founded at Plymouth. Seeking a land where they could practise their religion in peace, the Pilgrims established the importance of personal principles from the start. They brought with them concepts such as freedom of opinion, the right to dissent, the principle of fair and open debate,

the practice of electing governments democratically and the idea of having a written document establishing the rules and regulations of government. It was a wonder that the Pilgrims survived; but, despite considerable suffering, they experienced remarkable blessings, such as finding Indian corn and being befriended by Samoset and Squanto.

The Pilgrims' Convictions and Principles

The Pilgrims had the convictions of men on a mission which united them emotionally and intellectually and gave them a common bond that each of them would have died for. As a result they had a noble sense of purpose and incredible courage.

For the Scriptures they cherished the profoundest veneration. They received them with unhesitating faith, as given by inspiration of God. They studied them as the only rule of true religion, and humbly endeavoured to conform their doctrines and lives to this only standard of faith and practice.

Their doctrines were the doctrines of the Reformation, the doctrines of Grace, the doctrines now denominated Calvinistic; and they believed them, not because they were taught by Calvin or any other man, but because they found them in the Bible. Piety was the pervading principle of their conduct and lives. It has been said, "There never was, perhaps, before seen, such a body of pious people together on the face of the earth."

No men ever cherished more sacred regard for the Sabbath than did our Pilgrim Fathers. Considering that Day to be the firmest support of religion and virtue, they observed it with great seriousness. They prepared for its approach, by a seasonable adjustment of their temporal affairs; they welcomed its arrival with joy, and spent all its hours in the public and private duties of devotion. On that day, a sacred stillness reigned in their habitations, and throughout their towns and villages. As for so-called "Holy Days" – Christmas, Easter, and the like – they utterly relinquished them, as not prescribed in Scripture and therefore the innovations of men, unwarranted and unlawful.

In their churches, they admitted none to membership but such as gave evidence of personal, saving grace; and they retained none in their communion

who lived in known disobedience to the laws of God. Membership involved a certain contract, or covenant; and, one embodied, members had the right to choose all their officers: Pastors, or Teaching Elders, responsible for teaching and administering the sacraments; Ruling Elders, helping the Pastors in overseeing and ruling; Deacons, taking care of the church treasury, for the support of the Pastor, the supply of the needy, and the propagation of the Gospel in the land and in the world.

They prized above all earthly blessings the influences of the Holy Spirit: hence, they were much in the habit of unitedly looking up to God for effusions of the Spirit. Frequent and special seasons of fasting and prayer were set apart for this purpose; and most signal were the displays of divine power and mercy which they were permitted to witness.

Their ministers were men of great learning, holiness, and gravity, which struck all men who knew them with admiration.

The people who followed these holy men into the wilderness were their spiritual children, who imbibed their spirit and sentiments, and loved and venerated them as their fathers in Christ. They feared God; and therefore felt and acted as if they had no-one else to fear. In the defence of their beliefs, they were prepared to make sacrifices, or to encounter any dangers. They were people to whom conscience and duty were everything; human threats and human punishments nothing. Faith distinguished them. When told by their friends in England, that they might perish by the way, or be cut off by famine or sword, their only reply was, "We may trust God's providence for these things. Either he will keep these evils from us, or will dispose them for our good, and enable us to bear them." An impressive spiritual-mindedness was in evidence among them. The hearts, not only of the aged, but of the youth also, were taken away from earth, and set upon heaven.

Great attention was given by them to the Biblical instruction of their children and, in private and family worship, they engaged the presence and blessing of God for their families. They adopted the maxim: "Families are the nurseries of the church and the commonwealth; ruin families and you ruin all."

They looked beyond the little circle of self-interest, to the kingdom of God and the salvation their fellow men. From the time of their settlement in the New World, they took steps for the conversion of the Indians and by 1700 there were no less than thirty Indian churches in New England, under the pastoral care of the same number of Indian ministers. The Pilgrims had, as they expressed it, “an inward zeal and great hope of propagating the kingdom of Christ to the remote ends of the earth.”

Let us cherish, in grateful recollection, the memory of the Pilgrims, for they are well entitled to our gratitude and veneration. Furthermore, let us maintain the form and spirit of their religion and follow in their footsteps the bright and shining way to heaven.

Concluded

LIVING TO PURPOSE

James Smith, Cheltenham.

“For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.” (Romans 14:7.)

I took up an old book the other day, written by one Samuel Slater, and glancing over the preface, my eye caught these words, “My desire has been to live to purpose.” I immediately felt that I had met with the production of a brother – one with whom I could sympathise. Live we do, live we must; it is not a matter of choice with us; but do we live to purpose? Is the life we are living worthy of an immortal soul? Is it becoming a probationer for eternity? What is our aim? What will be the end of our life? My soul, see to it that you live to purpose! Reader, let me exhort you to live to purpose. Live while you live. Live as you will wish you had lived when the glories of eternity are bursting upon your view.

If we would live to purpose, we must live a **life of faith**. Faith brings us to Jesus, leads us to renounce everything at the feet of Jesus, and to venture on Jesus to save us with an everlasting salvation. Faith takes the promise of God, and trusts it; the precept of Christ, and obeys it. Faith rests upon God’s Word, watches God’s providence and strives to glorify God’s name. If I have faith, I have Jesus; for faith brings the soul and Christ into union. If I have faith, I am

holy; for faith purifies the heart, works by love, and consecrates the person to God. If there is no faith there can be no good works; and if there are no good works, there is not faith; or, if there is what is called faith, it is a dead, a useless faith; for “faith without works is dead, being alone.” To live by faith, then, is to live believing God, trusting in Jesus, doing the will of God from the heart, and seeking to do good to all around us.

If we would live to purpose, we must live a **life of prayer**. Prayer is the outgoing of the soul to God, as the effect of communications of grace from God. Prayer eases the heart, relieves the mind, and animates the soul. It seeks from God, that is may employ for God. Without prayer there can be no life in the soul. Without habitual prayer there can be no spiritual health. Prayer brings God and the soul together. It opens God’s resources to supply the pleader’s needs. Prayer, as it brings us constantly into the presence of God, gradually conforms us to the moral image of God. We become Godlike. There is a resemblance to God in our spirit, object and actions. And, as it is impossible to be like God and not to live to purpose, so it is impossible to live to purpose if we are not like God. The man of faith is the man of prayer; and the man of prayer is the useful man.

If we would live to purpose, we must live a **life of activity**. We must be active for God’s glory, and active for man’s good. There is a field for everyone to cultivate – a work for each of us to do. The men of the last generation, who planted the fruit trees which now supply us, lived to some purpose; but the men who only lived to eat, drink, and dress, lived to no purpose.

Two young men, members of a Christian church, had to cross several fields to go to their place of worship; they agreed to invite every person they met, who was at all likely, to accompany them. They did so, and persevered; at length they could reckon up twenty whom they had induced to attend; ten of them were converted to God, and became members of the church. They lived so far to purpose.

A young man, whose heart was fired with the love of Christ, collected together twelve lads, and formed them into a class, to educate them on the Lord’s day. He persevered. He offered special prayer for them. In time every one of them

became hopefully converted to God. Two of them are ministers of Christ, several of them teachers of the young, and the rest continue in a profession of religion. He lived to purpose.

A Christian desired to live to purpose; he wrote a tract, printed and circulated it. He then produced a book. They spread abroad; were owned of God to the conversion of souls. They are translated into other tongues. The work goes on. The man lived to purpose.

If we really desire to live to purpose, let us seek grace from God to enable us to do so, and he will give it. Paul says, "Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear." If I give a cup of cold water, having nothing better, to a disciple because he belongs to Christ, I live to purpose, for Jesus will acknowledge and reward it. If, out of love to Jesus, I visit the sick, and point them to His precious blood; if I relieve the widow and the fatherless, trying to soothe their sorrows, and lead them to the widow's God; if I teach the young who are left uncared for and uneducated, and try to place them in the Saviour's arms, I live to purpose. So, if I make the diffusion of God's truth, and the conversion of God's enemies my great object, and follow it up with prayer and perseverance, I shall not labour in vain, or spend my life for nought. The children converted in our Sunday-schools now, will prove to the next generation that their teachers lived to purpose. The souls brought to God by the efforts of the zealous, prayerful, and persevering tract distributor, will be his witnesses that he has lived to purpose. And the souls born of God in answer to the prayers and by the efforts of the devoted minister of Christ, who has travailed in birth for them until Christ was formed in them, will rise up to testify that he has lived to purpose.

Reader, do you wish to live to purpose? If so, live *to* Jesus. Live *for* Jesus. Live *like* Jesus. He went about doing good. He pleased not Himself, but in everything sought the good of others, and His Father's glory. How can Christians endure the thought of living to no purpose?

Dying, the church scarcely misses them. Dying the world is scarcely any the worse for their removal. Dying, the Saviour has not lost a trumpeter, nor the Sunday School a teacher, nor the church an active instrument of good.

Brethren, let us arouse ourselves; let us determine, in God's strength, that we will henceforth live to some high, holy, and noble purpose. As the apostle said of himself and primitive Christians, let us so live as to say of ourselves, "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself; for if we live, we live unto the Lord; and if we die, we die unto the Lord; living therefore, or dying, we are the Lord's."

Gracious God, grant that the ruling desire of every one of our hearts may be, like that of Samuel Slater, that, when the scenes of life close upon us, when eternity opens before us – when death stands ready to usher us into Thy presence – we may be enabled honestly to say, "My desire has been to live to purpose."

EPILOGUE

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." (Jeremiah 29:11)

The Jewish nation was suffering the punishment of God for their sinful ways before they were taken captive to Babylon. The false prophets foretold that God would restore them to the land of Israel quickly and large numbers of the exiles believed them. However, Jeremiah was instructed to write and tell the exiles that the captivity would last many years, but then, in His time, the Lord would visit them and cause them to return to the promised land.

In Romans 15 v 4 we read that "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." As God's elect people, we must derive understanding of the Lord's dealings with us from the way He has acted in times past, as towards the Jews in Jeremiah's time. We are all sinful and deserving of the wrath of God; but Christ, as our substitute, has already borne the punishment for our sin. God may well chastise us, just as He chastened the Jews by sending them into captivity in Babylon. For the Jews, it was a very hard and painful lesson, and the Lord's chastisement can be hard and painful for us as well.

During such times, we may be tempted to believe the lie of the devil, or the suggestions of some “Job’s comforter”, that the Lord no longer cares for us. But the Word of God clearly shows that is not so. God knows his thoughts towards us, and they have not changed. The false prophets in Jeremiah’s time said that the exile would not last long; but they did not know God or His ways. God needed to teach the Jews the right way to live for Him and it would take time. Our sanctification will also take time – a lifetime! God’s instruction and correction of our lives may be painful at times but it will not last for ever – it will come to an end when we have learned the lessons God is teaching us. We must always remember that God’s thoughts towards us are not of evil, but of peace. That is the basis of our hope – that God always loves His elect.

Bill Norton