

CONTENTS

Letter from the Pastor	2
Fellowship News	4
Ordination of New Church Officers	5
Salisbury Reformed Seminary Open Day	7
Hudson Taylor Ministries	13
The Doctrine of Justification	14
Calvin on the Edge of Eternity	17
John Knox versus Mary Queen of Scots	20
Paper to Light a Man's Pipe	23
The Conversion of a Great Sinner	23
The Dream which Brought a Man to Christ	25
Lovest Thou Me	27

LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

*“Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink:
but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full”
(2 John 12)*

The apostle John wrote the above words to a believer whom he calls “the elect lady and her children” (verse 1). This could be a godly woman, together with her family. Or more probably the phrase refers to a local church somewhere. This is fitting because the church is set forth as the beloved bride of Christ in the Song of Solomon. And spiritual children are the fruit of the ministry of the Word and the blessing of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 6:13).

Whoever the recipients of the letter were, John’s affection was clear, and he felt the limitation of being at a distance. He had to “write with paper and ink” but he longed for the physical presence: “face to face.”

Looking back to 2020 and the days of the Coronavirus lockdown, this was how it seemed for us. While that lasted, the necessary distance, and even isolation, brought a strange and unnatural situation as we were unable to be with our church family.

As believers, we count being with each other “face to face” important and precious. Not only John, but Paul longed to have this immediate fellowship with all those at Rome (Romans 1:10,11). And Charles Wesley puts it well,

And are we yet alive,
And see each other's face?
Glory and thanks to Jesus give
For His redeeming grace!

Sometimes we use modern technology to help when the “face to face” is not possible. Zoom prayer-meetings, FaceTime and WhatsApp video calls get us closer. And, of course, the livestream and YouTube when necessary. There is an electronic “face to face” that is nearer the real thing than ever earlier generations knew.

We are thankful for these near equivalents, but must confess that only the physical “face to face” means that our “joy” is “full.” This is simple testimony to how much being physically together means to us. Paul toward the end of his Romans letter expressed it this way: “Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey ... if first I be somewhat filled with your company” (15:24). The phrase “with you company” is literally (as in the margin) “with you.” It was not just their presence but the saints themselves that would mean so much to Paul. May it ever be the case with us.

What particularly endears fellow-Christians to us?

1. They remind us of the Saviour. The measure of their Christlikeness shows us something of the One we love (Romans 8:29; Acts 4:13).

2. Their good conversation. “The lips of the righteous feed many” (Proverbs 10:21). We can learn much even from the casual talk of spiritual friends. Sometimes a verse of scripture quoted or a comment about providence stays with us and nourishes our faith.

3. Their sympathy and support. We “bear one another’s burdens” (Galatians 6:2) as we share our problems and trials. It helps just to talk about them with those who feel for us and pray for us. We do not always have solutions, but the listening ear and fellow feeling mean so much.

However, we know that one Face need never be out of our sight. Our gracious God in Christ has promised this: “My presence (literally, ‘face’) shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest” (Exodus 33:14). Let us endeavour to live as in His sight and, by faith, remember He is always toward us in favour and kindness. And let us be even more thankful that the lockdown is in the past, and that we can now regularly see each other “face to face.”

With Christian love,
John Thackway

FELLOWSHIP NEWS

Daniel Tribe

It is with great sadness that we report the death of our dear sister in Christ, Hope Rutherford. Hope was called home to be with her Lord in the early hours of the Lord's Day 21st May. We are grateful to God that one of our members, Heather Thick, was with her throughout that night.

By God's grace, Hope had been a most faithful member of Emmanuel Church for many years. She came into membership in 1975 after she was baptised upon profession of faith. In fact, Hope was amongst the first to be baptised in the church baptistry, which had been newly installed a few months prior (the church building, being an old Methodist church, didn't have its own baptistry). Over the years Hope served the Lord in various ways in the church. She wrote the 'News of the Fellowship' for the Messenger magazine and would prepare the Table for the Lord's Supper week by week. In 2017, she moved to Milford House Care Home, where she remained until the Lord called her to Himself.

While we mourn and do miss her, we are greatly comforted in the knowledge that she is "absent from the body" and "present with the Lord." (2 Cor. 5:8). We continue to pray very much for her family. God willing, Hope's funeral will have taken place at Emmanuel Church on Friday 30th June.

On Saturday 13th May, our friends at Crosslanes Chapel, Ibsley, held their Anniversary Service. Pastor Dewi Higham, from Tabernacle Cardiff, preached for them and we trust it was a most encouraging and God-honouring weekend. We very much value the fellowship, love and support that we share with Pastor Aaron Lewis and all the dear members at Crosslanes. We continue to pray that the Lord will richly bless and prosper them for His own glory's sake.

On 20th May, we gathered for the ordination of new church officers. We gave thanks to God for gifting and calling Keith Grewcock and Tom Wheatley to the Eldership; and Nathaniel Bravery, Jonny Bristow, and Nicholas Tribe to the Diaconate.

We were pleased to welcome to our pulpit Timothy Nelson, on the 28th May. Mr Nelson had lectured very ably at the Salisbury Reformed Seminary's Open Day the day before, and we were greatly blessed under his ministry and enjoyed renewed fellowship with him.

On a very hot Saturday afternoon (10th June) We gathered in the field belonging to Crosslanes Chapel, Ibsley, for our annual Church Picnic. We give thanks to the Lord for such occasions to fellowship together and enjoy one another's company.

WORDS OF THANKS

I would like to express my sincere thanks on behalf of myself and my family, for all the prayers, words of kindness and sympathy and for all the cards of condolence that were sent to me, from so many members in Emmanuel after the death of my Father. It was so very much appreciated and so comforting to know that so many people were remembering us at such a difficult time. I would also like to thank those members who also attended my Father's funeral. It was a great comfort to myself, to know that you were there.

"He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." (Psalm 147:3)

Thank you.

Jill Thistlethwaite

ORDINATION OF NEW CHURCH OFFICERS

Daniel Tribe

In Colossians 1v18, the apostle Paul tells us that the Lord Jesus Christ is "...the head of the body, the church...", and it does us much good to remember that the Church belongs to Him. The Church, visible and invisible, universal and local is the possession of the Redeemer. He loves the church, and has shown that great love by giving Himself for it (Eph. 5 v25). He promises to be present in the church by His Spirit (Matt. 18 v20). We have the comforting assurance that He will build His church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail

against it (Matt. 16 v18). Indeed, the church exists, chiefly, for the purpose of glorifying the Triune God (Eph. 3:21).

It naturally follows then, that if the church is to glorify God, it is vital for each local church to be ordered and governed according to His revealed will. And so, we find in Scripture the warrant for Elders and Deacons: men who are gifted and called of God to come alongside the Pastor and, under Christ, seek to lead the church in a way that is biblical and pleasing to the Lord.

Desiring to following the Bible pattern here at Emmanuel, we prayerfully began to seek the Lord's will regarding the appointment of new elders and deacons. Following a period of much prayer and helpful teaching from our Pastor, we gathered together on Saturday 20th May, with hearts full of praise to the Lord, to mark the ordination of men to the Eldership and Diaconate.

On that joyful occasion, Keith Grewcock and Tom Wheatley were appointed as Elders; and Nathaniel Bravery, Jonny Bristow, and Nicholas Tribe were appointed as Deacons.

Our Pastor briefly showed the scriptural warrant for ruling elders and deacons and, after the laying on of hands and prayer, he preached from 1 Thessalonians 5 vv12-13. From these verses we noted that the church officers are appointed from the membership ("among you" v12); that they have the care of our souls ("are over you"); that they are to spend and be spent for the Lord and His people ("which labour among you"); that they are to deal lovingly and faithfully with the Lord's people ("admonish you"); and that they are graciously enabled to faithfully serve through their fellowship with Christ ("in the Lord").

Turning to consider the members of the church we saw that we are to know the officers ("know them"), that is, we are to know them with friendship and unity in Christ, to know how to encourage them and prayerfully support them; and, as members, we are to think well of them ("esteem them very highly in love"). Concluding, our Pastor showed that if all these things are right, then there will be unity and peace in the church ("And be at peace among yourselves").

Giving thanks to God for those who have served faithfully as Elders and Deacons in the past, we continue to pray for Keith, Tom, Nathaniel, Jonny, and Nicholas, that the Lord will wonderfully enable them to serve their Master faithfully and well in the months and years to come.

SALISBURY REFORMED SEMINARY OPEN DAY

On Saturday, 27 May, we were pleased to hold another Open Day, welcoming about 50 friends, from near and far, who came to hear of the Seminary's progress and of our need for prayer and support in these days.

The day began at 8.30am with John Saunders giving a very helpful overview of the book of Malachi, the last book in the Old Testament. The historical setting was noticed: after the decree of Cyrus in 538 BC, allowing the Jews to return to their home-land, there were three successive returns from the land of Israel's exile: the first was in 537, led by Zerubbabel, prince of Judah (Ezra 1:8); the second, in 458 BC, was led by Ezra, the scribe (Ezra 7-10); and the third, in 444 BC, was led by Nehemiah, 'cup-bearer' to the Persian King (Neh. 1-2). Malachi ministered in the time of Nehemiah, supporting his work of reform. Mr. Saunders took account of the prophet's message which concerned Israel's sin, God's great love, and the need for the true and pure worship of God. Special emphasis was given to the prophet's description of the faithful remnant of God-fearers who met together and spoke one to another, the Lord taking special account of this, and owning them as His own peculiar people (Mal. 3:16-18).

Malcolm Watts, Principal, then spoke of *The Seminary Ethos*: that is, its spirit and distinctives. Taking the two words – 'Reformed Seminary' – he considered first the word 'Seminary', which, according to the Dictionary, means 'a place of education, especially for prospective ministers'. He therefore began with emphasis upon 'teaching'.

Teaching

Scripture gives prominence to teaching: as, for example, in the case of the Twelve Disciples (Mk. 3:13,14), and also with respect to others (Acts 20:20,21; 2 Tim. 2:12). Important points were made:

(i) God teaches outwardly by His written Word (2 Tim. 3:16,17) and inwardly by the Holy Spirit (Jn. 15:26, 27; 16:13,14; Eph. 1:16-18), the latter often accompanying the former (1 Cor. 2:3,4; 1 Thess. 1:5). It is a singular blessing to be 'taught of the Lord' (Isa. 54:13; Jn. 6:45; Eph. 4:20,21);

(ii) This is a secret ministry, affecting the heart (Lk. 24:32; Acts 16:14; Phil. 2:12,13). The Spirit powerfully impresses the Word upon the heart and truth is effectually communicated (2 Cor. 3:3; Heb. 8:10,11). No-one teaches like Him (Job 27:11; 36:22; Isa. 8:11);

(iii) By this means, we are not only taught the various doctrines contained in Scripture, but we are enabled to understand them, discerning profound truth (Lk. 24:44,45; 2 Cor. 4:6; 1 Jn. 5:20);

(iv) This teaching is persuasive and convincing, bringing strong assurance to the heart (Col. 2:1,2; 1 Thess. 1:5);

(v) It succeeds where other attempts have failed, making known to men the deep things of God (Job 34:32);

(vi) Hereby, remarkable insights are afforded, and these have a blessed and sanctifying effect upon our souls (Eph. 3:1-4; Job 42:5; Ps. 94:19; Lk. 24:32; 2 Cor. 3:18);

(vii) Thus taught, true doctrine is engraved upon our hearts; and, so long as we live, we never forget what we have been taught, and we can certainly never, ever, deny it (Ps. 119:98; Jer. 31:33; 1 Jn. 2:27).

Our desire in the Seminary is that men attending will be divinely taught in order to know the Truth of God's Word and that they will tenaciously hold on to it

throughout their ministries, that many may be enriched by their spiritual and heart-felt preaching.

Mr. Watts then proceeded to deal with the other word, identifying the doctrine taught:

Reformed

At the beginning of the Reformation, the term was practically synonymous with 'Protestant'; then it came to refer to 'Calvinists', as distinguished from 'Lutherans'; and, then, finally, it came to be applied to 'English Puritans' which laid stress on heart-religion, emphasised the doctrine of grace, developed covenant theology, sought further church reformation (in worship, government, and practice), and strove to evidence genuine piety in biblical, godly, and holy living. The three great 17th century Confessions provide us with an accurate, detailed statement of what it is to be 'Puritan' or 'Reformed'.

It is in this last sense that I use the term in these remarks.

What then are the leading features of the 'Reformed Faith'?

(i) The belief that the Bible, in all its parts, and in its entirety, is God's written Word: inspired, infallible, and inerrant, without any admixture of error (Jn.10:34-36; 17:17; 2 Tim. 3:15-17). 'The Scriptures have never erred' (Martin Luther). 'We owe to the Scripture the same reverence which we owe to God, because it has proceeded from Him alone, and has nothing of man mixed with it' (John Calvin).

(ii) The Bible is recognized for what it is: the recorded oracles and utterances of the Most High; and therefore it holds a special place in our hearts, in our lives, and in our worship (Ps. 138:2; Ps.119:72, 97,105).

(iii) We own the sovereignty, holiness, and glory of God, evidencing a reverential fear of Him (Ps. 2:10,11; 86:11; Prov. 1:7). 'The Calvinist is the man who has seen God...in His glory.' (Benjamin B. Warfield).

(iv) In recognition of our sin and His holiness, we feel an absolute need for God's grace (His undeserved love and kindness). Hence, we greatly value the Doctrines of Grace - or historic, evangelical Calvinism (Rom. 11:5,6; Eph. 2:8,9; 2 Tim. 1:9).

(v) At the heart of God's relationship with men lies a gracious covenant. This was the eternal arrangement made within the Godhead whereby God promised His friendship and salvation to elect sinners upon the basis of Christ's vicarious work, in life and in death (Zech. 6:13; Gal. 3:17; Eph. 3:11; Heb. 12:24). This became 'a distinguishing feature of the Reformed tradition' (Prof. John Murray).

(vi) Heart-experience of divine, saving grace is regarded as vital, since from this proceeds the great change within and a life of profound gratitude, lived according to His Word and for His great glory (Col. 1:3-6; Titus 3:4-8; 1 Pet. 5:10,11).

(vii) This naturally develops into a concern for those still lost in sin and unbelief; and Reformed doctrine, leading to Reformed practice, involving His people in the work of telling others the 'good news' of a full and free salvation through faith in Jesus Christ (Isa. 61:1-3; Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; 5:18-20; 1 Thess.1:8).

(viii) Since we owe everything to the Lord, we devote and consecrate ourselves to Him (Rom. 14:17-19; 2 Cor. 5:14,15; Phil. 1:21). Calvin's emblem was a hand holding out a heart to God; and his motto was, "My heart as having been offered up, I present in sacrifice unto the Lord."

(ix) Such dedication produces a life of godliness and holiness, to which we have been called (Eph. 4:24; 1 Tim. 4:7,8; 6:11,12; Heb. 12:14; 1 Pet. 1:15, 16).

(x) In life and in death, we cherish the hope of everlasting life in heaven, where, at last, we shall see God and enjoy Him for ever (Jn. 17:24; 1 Jn. 3:1-3; Rev. 22:3,4).

These are the truths of the Reformed Faith to which the Seminary, its Trustees, and its Lecturers, are committed, and we are resolved, through God's enabling grace, to teach these truths for as long as we have life and breath.

Shortly before he died, on 1 January, 1937, Dr Gresham Machen spoke to a friend and said, "Isn't the Reformed Faith grand?" We believe that it is, and we are persuaded that nothing compares to it.

Later in the day, Dewi Higham, Registrar at the Seminary, dealt very helpfully with some practicalities. What follows is a report of what he said:

Since the launch of the Seminary in 2018, six students have graduated and three are, by now, installed in churches. Three young men have enrolled this year and we pray that many others will follow.

In brief, the course lasts three years and operates with a rolling programme, meaning all three intakes will study together and attend the same lectures. The course comprises ten weekends (Friday and Saturday) and two full weeks (Monday to Friday). The course is so designed to accommodate men who are working and all at a modest yearly fee of £750. Bursaries are also available for those who need financial assistance. This means we are reliant on, and very thankful for, those who financially support the Seminary.

There are five subjects, each led by one of the trustees. The five subjects being Biblical Studies, Church History, Preaching, Pastoral Ministry and Systematic Theology. We are much indebted to the leading of our Principal, Malcolm Watts, who sets the tone for the Seminary.

The main lecturers are the trustees, all of whom are pastors or retired pastors. The emphasis is very much 'pastors training men to be pastors', with a sense of 'brotherhood' and 'fraternity' in the cause. It is worth mentioning the effort and dedication of the trustees, who travel many times a year to Salisbury, without which the Seminary could not function.

We make much of heart-religion or experiential Calvinism. The ethos could be expressed in the emblem of the Calvinistic Methodists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which was an open Bible with the Dove hovering over. It testified of a generation who were soundly biblical and at the same time acquainted with the deep things of God. Such an emphasis is both our ethos and aspiration.

Our guest preacher for this Open Day was Rev. Timothy Nelson from Belfast, in Northern Ireland. He delivered two sermons, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon.

The first was based on Acts 18:24-28 and concerned the man known as Apollos of Alexandria. Mr Nelson entitled his sermon 'The Portrait of a Preacher' and high-lighted three things about Apollos: 1) his testimony; 2) his training; and 3) his task.

His testimony: Apollos was well-versed in the Scriptures, because he had been taught and greatly influenced by John the Baptist, and, he was also 'fervent in spirit', speaking ably and boldly in the synagogue.

His training: knowing only the teaching of the Baptist, his understanding was somewhat limited. While he knew something of Christ the Saviour, apparently he had not heard of His death, resurrection, and ascension, neither had he heard of the Coming of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. Sadly, on account of this, his knowledge was deficient and incomplete; but Aquilla and Priscilla, a godly Christian couple, after hearing him speak, realized his need, and sought privately to help him. Apollos responded well to this, greatly benefiting from their ministry to him (Acts 18:26).

His task: afterwards, Apollos had it in his heart to visit Achaia, and the city of Corinth. He was therefore sent forth, with appropriate commendation (v. 27) and his preaching proved to be a blessing to many in those parts.

All this was helpfully applied to us, and particularly to the work of the Seminary, expressing the hope that we shall see many taught here, and sent forth to be the means of strengthening Christ's Church elsewhere.

Mr. Nelson's second sermon was preached from Zechariah 4:10, with special emphasis upon the words, "Who hath despised the day of small things?" He observed here:

- 1) *a truthful description* – the "day" or "times";
- 2) *a typical reaction* – "despising" the work; and
- 3) *a timely obligation* - the challenge is *not* to despise the day of small things.

Again, the ministry was true to God's Word, eminently practical, and very warmly delivered to us. We are truly grateful to our dear friend for his preaching which was very much appreciated by all present.

Thus ended a memorable Open Day.

HUDSON TAYLOR MINISTRIES

Keith Grewcock

The latest edition of the Hudson Taylor Ministries' magazine reminded us of the ongoing difficulties facing Christians in China. The trend of clamping down on churches and religious online content continues. The international community needs to know about these ominous trends as China rises higher and higher on the global stage.

On a practical front HTM have been able to help those in the northern Provinces near Siberia with a food distribution program. Often the elderly are left behind to endure the very harsh winters while those fitter and younger can head elsewhere for better paid work. Nearly 100 families received flour, rice, and cooking oil which we are told was received with much gladness.

Online theological training materials are in high demand and good progress has been made in this area but they also intend to expand its mission field

territory to some of the most densely populated, yet spiritually dark places of the world. This includes West Bengal (India), Bangladesh and Nepal. West Bengal, and its capital Calcutta is perhaps more familiar to us as we think of William Carey, often called ‘the father of modern missions.’ Perhaps more about him another time but when you look at the vastness of the task, the opposition from government, the oppression of the church, it was encouraging to read that the work still goes forward, although in need of much prayer and support.

“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.” (2 Cor. 3:5)

THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION

The doctrine of Justification was the major banner of the protestant Reformation from its inception. Martin Luther (1483-1546) spoke of it as “the article” upon which “rests all that we teach and practise against the pope, the devil, and the world.”

We affirm that “justification is a judicial act of God in which he declares, on the basis of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, that all the claims of the law are satisfied with respect to the sinner.”

The method of justification is by “imputation”. In common usage to “impute” means to “reckon” or “regard”, but the Scriptures use the word in a stronger sense, of judicially reckoning righteousness to one’s account as the basis of his justification.

The justification of sinners is “by imputing Christ’s *active obedience* unto the whole law, and *passive obedience* in His death for their whole and sole righteousness.” By His obedience Christ met two conditions necessary for our justification:

A) Our first need was for the removal of our guilt. By His passive obedience, Christ suffered the fullness of the curse and penalty due unto us, and thereby

provided the basis for the removal of our guilt (Isa. 53:5,6; Gal. 3:10; 2 Cor. 5:21).

B) God's law, however, not only has penal sanctions, but also positive demands. Therefore, we were in need of a positive righteousness, if any of us were to be accepted by God. Our Substitute must not only endure the penalty due to us but also fulfil all the demands required of us.

So we needed not only a passive but also an active obedience. Christ met this need by His perfect obedience to all the precepts of the law and all the particular requirements of the will of the Father for Him (Jn. 6:38; Gal. 4:4,5; Phil. 2:8). Thus He did more than deliver us from hell; he also merited and purchased heaven for us (Rom. 5:1,2, 15-21; 6:23).

The sins of believers were imputed to Christ at the cross (Isa. 53:6; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; 1 Pet. 2:24) and the righteousness and obedience of Christ is imputed to all who believe (Rom. 4:6, 22-25; 5:19; 2 Cor. 5:21).

The faith by which we are justified is described as "receiving and resting on", and its essential object is "(Christ) and His righteousness." Saving faith involves "receiving" Christ (Jn. 1:12; 12:48; Col. 2:6). For this reason it has been aptly called the "hand" that receives Christ, because it *receives* and *appropriates* Christ as He is freely offered to sinners. This faith also involves "resting on" Christ, because it must also include the element of *trust*. In true saving faith, the sinner abandons all human resources and *rests* on Christ alone for his salvation (Rom. 9:33; 10:11; Eph. 1:13; 1 Pet. 2:6).

On April 8, 1516, Martin Luther wrote to George Spenclein, asking him whether his soul, "*tired of its own righteousness, (was) learning to be revived by and to trust in the righteousness of Christ.*"

Luther then pointed his friend to a "sweet exchange": "*My dear brother, learn Christ and Him crucified. Learn to pray to Him and, despairing of yourself, say: 'Thou, Lord Jesus, art my righteousness, but I am thy sin. Thou hast taken upon Thyself what Thou wast not and hast given to me what I was not. You will find peace only in Him and only when you despair of yourself and your own*

works. Besides you will learn from Him that just as He has received you, so *He has made your sins His own and has made His righteousness yours.*”

Whether in life or death, what greater comfort could there be?

[Heber Carlos De Campos Jr., *Doctrine in Development*; Rob Ventura, *A New Exposition of The London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689*; Martin Luther, *Letters of Spiritual Counsel*]

1. Fountain of never-ceasing grace,
Thy saints' exhaustless theme,
Great object of immortal praise,
Essentially supreme;
We bless Thee for the glorious fruits
Thine incarnation gives;
The righteousness which grace *imputes*,
And faith alone *receives*.

4. In Him we have a righteousness,
By God Himself approved;
Our rock, our sure foundation this,
Which never can be moved.
Our ransom by His death He paid,
For all His people given,
The law He perfectly obeyed,
That they might enter heaven.

2. Whom heaven's angelic host adores,
Was slaughtered for our sin;
The *guilt*, O Lord, was wholly ours,
The *punishment* was Thine:
Our God in flesh, to set us free,
Was manifested here;
And meekly bore our sins, that we
His righteousness might wear.

5. As all, when *Adam* sinned alone,
In his transgression died,
So by the righteousness of One,
Are sinners justified:
We to Thy merit, precious Lord,
With humblest joy, submit,
Again to paradise restored,
In *Thee* alone complete.

3. *Imputatively* guilty then
Our substitute was made,
That we the blessings might obtain
For which His blood was shed:
Himself He offered on the cross,
Our sorrows to remove;
And all He *suffered* was for us,
And all He did was love.

6. Our souls His watchful love retrieves,
Nor lets them go astray;
His righteousness to us He gives,
And takes our sins away.
We claim salvation in His right,
Adopted and forgiven;
His merit is our robe of light,
His death the gate of heaven.

Augustus Montague Toplady (1740-78)

CALVIN ON THE EDGE OF ETERNITY

“It was not the head but the heart which made him a theologian, and it is not the head but the heart which he primarily addresses in his theology.” B.B. Warfield, John Calvin: The Man and His Work (1909)

The great Reformer John Calvin died on this day in history, May 27th, 1564, in Geneva, Switzerland. He was only 54 years old; although he had suffered many maladies, yet had he accomplished so much in his lifetime to effect Reformation in the areas of worship, theology and civil government; in Geneva, Europe and even across the Atlantic, in sending missionaries to Roman Catholic France and to the New World; and inspiring settlers who risked all to follow them.

We recall his final days as told by some authors who admired this great man.

Thomas Cary Johnson, *John Calvin and the Genevan Reformation* (1900), p. 87:

He preached for the last time on the 6th of February, 1564; he was carried to church and partook of the communion for the last time on the 2nd of April, in which he acknowledged his own unworthiness and his trust in God's free election of grace and the abounding merits of Christ; he was visited by the four syndics (officials) and the whole Little Council of the republic on the 27th of April, and addressed them as a father, thanking them for their devotion, begging pardon for his gusts of temper, and exhorting them to preserve in Geneva the pure doctrine and government of the gospel; he made a similar address to all the ministers of Geneva on the 28th and took an affectionate leave of them; he had these ministers to dine in his house on the 19th of May, was himself carried to the table, ate a little with them and tried to converse, but growing weary had to be taken to his chamber, leaving with the words, 'This wall will not hinder my being present with you in spirit, though absent in the body.' [William] Farel (in his eightieth year) walked all the way to Geneva from Neuchatel to take leave of the man whom he had compelled to work in Geneva, and whose glorious career he had watched without the least shadow of envy.

With the precious Word of God, which he had done so much to make plain to his own and all subsequent ages, in his heart and on his tongue, he died on the 27th of May, 1564.

Thomas Smyth, *Calvin and His Enemies: A Memoir of the Life, Character, and Principles of Calvin* (1856), pp. 77-82, elaborates on the story of the “last act” in Calvin’s life.

Let us, then, before we take our leave, draw near, and contemplate the last act in the drama of this great and good man's life.

Methinks I see that emaciated frame, that sunken cheek, and that bright, ethereal eye, as Calvin lay upon his study-couch. He heeds not the agonies of his frame, his vigorous mind rising in its power as the outward man perished in decay. The nearer he approached his end, the more energetically did he ply his unremitting studies. In his severest pains he would raise his eyes to heaven and say, “How long, Lord!” and then resume his efforts. When urged to allow himself repose, he would say, ‘What! would you that when the Lord comes he should surprise me in idleness?’ Some of his most important and laboured commentaries were therefore finished during this last year.

On the 10th of March, his brother ministers coming to him, with a kind and cheerful countenance he warmly thanked them for all their kindness, and hoped to meet them at their regular Assembly for the last time, when he thought the Lord would probably take him to himself. On the 27th, he caused himself to be carried to the senate-house, and being supported by his friends, he walked into the hall, when, uncovering his head, he returned thanks for all the kindness they had shown him, especially during his sickness. With a faltering voice, he then added, ‘I think I have entered this house for the last time,’ and, mid flowing tears, took his leave. On the 2nd of April, he was carried to the church, where he received the sacrament at the hands of Theodore Beza, joining in the praise with such an expression of joy in his countenance, as attracted the notice of the congregation.

Having made his will on the 27th of this month, he sent to inform the syndics and the members of the senate that he desired once more to address them in

their hall, whither he wished to be carried the next day. They sent him word that they would wait on him, which they accordingly did, the next day, coming to him from the senate-house. After mutual salutations, he proceeded to address them very solemnly for some time, and having prayed for them, shook hands with each of them, who were bathed in tears and parted from him as from a common parent.

The following day, April 28th, according to his desire, all the ministers in the jurisdiction of Geneva came to him, whom he also addressed: 'I avow,' he said, 'that I have lived united with you, brethren, in the strictest bonds of true and sincere affection, and I take my leave of you with the same feelings. If you have at any time found me harsh or peevish under my affliction, I entreat your forgiveness.' Having shook hands we took leave of him, says Beza, 'with sad hearts and by no means with dry eyes.'

'The remainder of his days,' as Beza informs us, 'Calvin passed in almost perpetual prayer. His voice was interrupted by the difficulty of his respiration; but his eyes (which to the last retained their brilliancy), uplifted to heaven, and the expression of his countenance, showed the fervour of his supplications. His doors,' Beza proceeds to say, 'must have stood open day and night, if all had been admitted who, from sentiments of duty and affection, wished to see him, but as he could not speak to them, he requested they would testify their regard by praying for him, rather than by troubling themselves about seeing him. Often, also, though he ever showed himself glad to receive me, he intimated a scruple respecting the interruption thus given to my employments; so thrifty was he of time which ought to be spent in the service of the Church.'

On the 19th of May, being the day the ministers assembled, and when they were accustomed to take a meal together, Calvin requested that they should sup in the hall of his house. Being seated, he was with much difficulty carried into the hall. 'I have come, my brethren,' said he, 'to sit with you, for the last time, at this table.' But before long, he said, 'I must be carried to my bed;' adding, as he looked around upon them with a serene and pleasant countenance, 'these walls will not prevent my union with you in spirit, although my body be absent.' He never afterwards left his bed.

On the 27th of May, about eight o'clock in the evening, the symptoms of dissolution came suddenly on. In the full possession of his reason, he continued to speak, until, without a struggle or a gasp, his lungs ceased to play, and this great luminary of the Reformation set, with the setting sun, to rise again in the firmament of heaven. The dark shadows of mourning settled upon the city. It was with the whole people a night of lamentation and tears. All could bewail their loss; the city her best citizen, the church her renovator and guide, the college her founder, the cause of reform its ablest champion, and every family a friend and comforter.

It was necessary to exclude the crowds of visitors who came to behold his remains, lest the occasion might be misrepresented. At two o'clock in the afternoon of the Sabbath, his body, enclosed in a wooden coffin, and followed by the syndics, senators, pastors, professors, together with almost the whole city, weeping as they went, was carried to the common burying ground, without pomp. According to his request, no monument was erected to his memory; a plain stone, without any inscription, being all that covered the remains of Calvin.

Such was Calvin in his life and in his death. The place of his burial is unknown, but where is his fame unheard?

And thus a great man lived and died, although unwilling to have his earthly remains become a shrine, yet leaving a legacy that many still cherish.

The Log College Press

JOHN KNOX VERSUS MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS

Mary Queen of Scots (1542-1587), the daughter of James V and Marie de Guise-Lorraine, became Queen of Scotland when just six days old. Brought up in France as a Roman Catholic, she was married at the age of 16 to the young dauphin of France and, when he became King in 1559, she became Queen of France as well as of Scotland. When her husband died in 1561, she returned to Scotland. The Scots at this time were mainly Protestant, strongly

disapproving of her religious views. John Knox, the great Scottish Reformer, perceiving that she was intent on restoring Roman Catholicism in Scotland and hearing that she was preparing to celebrate the Roman Mass in public, denounced her from the pulpit of St. Giles in Edinburgh, declaring, "*One mass is more fearful to me, than if ten thousand armed enemies were landed in any part of the realm, of purpose to suppress the whole religion.*"

Soon after that sermon Mary sent for Knox, to Holyrood; and the two had a long and highly charged conversation together, some extracts from which are as follows:

The Queen: "Ye have taught the people to receive another religion than their Princes can allow."

John Knox: "Right religion took neither original strength nor authority from worldly Princes, but from the eternal God alone."

The Queen: "Ye are not the Kirk that I will nourish. I will defend the Kirk of Rome, for I think it is the true Kirk of God."

John Knox: "Your will, Madame, is no reason: neither doth your thought make that Roman harlot to be the true and immaculate spouse of Jesus Christ... The Church of Rome is declined, and more than five hundred years hath declined from the purity of that religion which the apostles taught and planted."

The Queen: My conscience is not so."

John Knox: "Conscience, Madame, requires Knowledge. And I fear that right knowledge ye have none."

The Queen: "But I have both heard and read."

John Knox: "So, Madame, did the Jews that crucified Christ Jesus read both the Law and the Prophets, and heard the same interpret after their manner. Have ye heard any teach but such as the Pope and his Cardinals have allowed?"

The Queen: “Ye interpret the scriptures in one manner, and they interpret it in another: whom shall I believe? Or who shall be judge?”

John Knox: “You shall believe God, who plainly speaketh in His Word, and farther than the Word teacheth you, you shall neither believe the one nor the other. The Word of God is plain in itself; and if there appear any obscurity in one place, the Holy Ghost, who is never contrary to Himself, explains the same more clearly in other places, so that there can remain no doubt, but unto such as are obstinately ignorant.”

The Queen: “Ye are too good for me, but and if they were here that I have heard, they would answer you.”

John Knox: Madame, would to God that the learnedest papist in Europe, and he whom you would best believe, were present with Your Grace to sustain the argument, and that you would wait patiently to hear the matter, reasoned to the end! Or then, I doubt not, Madame, that you would hear the vanity of the papistical religion, and how little ground it hath in the Word of God.”

And, with this, the Queen was called to dinner....

Later, writing to Sir William Cecil, 7 October, 1561, John Knox said, “The Queen neither is, neither shall be of our opinion; and, in very deed, her whole proceedings do declare that the Cardinals lessons are so deeply printed in her heart, that the substance and the quality are likely to perish together. I would be glad to be deceived, but I fear I shall not be. In communication with her I espied such craft as I have not found in any age.”

The time came when the Scottish nobles forced Mary to abdicate. She escaped and fled to England, seeking protection from Queen Elizabeth. She was kept under house-arrest, but, in 1587, she was executed, charged with involvement in Roman Catholic plots aimed at murdering Elizabeth and restoring Roman Catholicism to England.

PAPER TO LIGHT A MAN'S PIPE

In 1855, a colporteur with New Testaments, came to Toulon, while the soldiers were embarking for the Crimea. He offered one of the Testaments to a soldier, who asked him what book it might be. "The Word of God" was the answer. "Let me have it, then", said the man. But when he had received it, he added, laughing, "Now it will do very well to light my pipe." The colporteur felt sorry he had so bestowed the treasure; but he said to himself, "Well, as I have given it, it must go."

In the month of March, 1856, that same colporteur found himself in the centre of France; he sought a lodging at an inn, where he found the people who kept it in great distress, having just lost their son. The poor mother explained that her son had gone to the Crimea, and returned, though only to die of his wounds. "But I have such consolation", she said; "he was so peaceful and happy, and he brought comfort to me and his father." "How was this?" asked the colporteur. "Oh", said she, "he found all his comfort in one little book which he had always with him."

The colporteur begged to see the book, and they brought him a copy of the New Testament, of which the first fifteen or twenty pages had been torn out; but on the inside of the cover was written, "Received at Toulon (with the date), despised – neglected – read – believed – and found salvation." The place and date were recognised by the colporteur, and thus he reaped the seed he had sown.

Dr. Merle d'Aubigne

THE CONVERSION OF A GREAT SINNER

Called to preach at Lady Huntingdon's chapel, at the beginning of the service, a tradesman entered, heard, and lived.

Six years later, he came into the vestry, at Bristol Tabernacle, after partaking of the Lord's Supper with five hundred souls; and he related the following facts: "Dear sir", he began, "you do not know me, but I know you. Six years since I

belonged to the 'Hell-fire Club', at Reading, in Berkshire. We always endeavoured to coin a new oath for the evening, and the chairman decided who had the pre-eminence. As I was walking from home on my way to the Club, I was asking myself what sin I had not committed, so that I could commit it before I went to bed, and what new oath I should swear.

Passing on, I saw a light in the street, and heard your voice from the pulpit. I paused, and then decided to press on, thinking I would return after the Club meeting. Second thoughts prevailed, and I went into the chapel, fearing that, on my return, the service would be over, and I should have no fun. I entered, and you repeated your text: "*All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whoso speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whoso speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.*" (Matthew 12:31,32)

"You described the nature of the sin – a scornful rejection of the Spirit as the only revealer of Christ and His great salvation; and you gave the reason for it being unpardonable – because if the Gospel and the Saviour are rejected, there is no hope of forgiveness, neither now or in the eternal future. But then you stressed that those who had not committed that sin, their sins were all pardonable.

"Instead of going to the Club, I went home, entered my bedroom, locked myself in, fell upon my knees, thanked God I was out of hell, and that it was possible I might escape it for ever. All my sins were pardonable; this was good news indeed, especially after a full persuasion that hell would be my portion, and that upon my death I would know the worst. I read, prayed, heard the Gospel, looked by faith to Christ, and soon enjoyed pardon, peace, and liberty of access to God. I now enjoy precious communion with Christ and His Church, and in me

"Jehovah here resolved to show
What His almighty grace can do.
Hallelujah!"

Memoirs of the Late Rev. John Cooke of Maidenhead

THE DREAM WHICH BROUGHT A MAN TO CHRIST

John Hardoak was born in Yarmouth, and brought up to a seafaring life. He passed through many hardships in youth, and had many hair-breadth escapes with his life; but hardiness and recklessness continued to mark him. He had no fear of God in his heart.

An event at length occurred which seemed somewhat to subdue and soften his spirit. A frigate to which he belonged, was one day blown to pieces by the exploding of her powder magazine while lying in harbour and preparing for a new voyage. Most of the crew were killed, but, remarkably, he was unhurt. Still even this awful occurrence produced no saving impression upon him. It led him to dread powder, but not to fear evil. Accordingly, he was found before long a deserter in the streets of Hamburg, incurring debts, and stealthily starting for England, leaving all his debts unpaid.

But he had not been long in London before he had an extraordinary dream, and experienced the mighty change which the whole of his after-life so strikingly manifested, and unmistakably and beautifully evinced.

The dream was as follows: "He thought he saw", says his biographer, "that the Day of Judgment had come. He saw the Judge seated at a table, with a desk before Him. On the one side of Him was Satan, standing before a door; and on the other was a bright angel, standing also before another door. John knew in his dream that Satan's door was the door to hell, and the angel's, the door to heaven.

The trial of the crew of the exploded frigate commenced. Each name was called in the order in which it stood in the ship's books, and in every instance the person after judgment was handed over to Satan, who opened the door at his back, thrust in the condemned man, closed the door upon him, and John saw him no more.

The process went on until the Judge came to the name which stood before John's in the books. John expected to be now called, but his name was passed over, and the one which stood next after him was called.

The trial was at length completed, every one of the crew had been shut up in hell, and John Hardoak was left standing alone. Unable to bear the terrible suspense any longer, he walked up to the Judge, and he said, "Am I wanted now?" Whereupon the Judge, gazing upon the inquirer with a look which shook his inmost soul, replied: "No, not now; but repent, or you will soon be here."

The horror with which the awful tones of that voice affected John Hardoak awoke him. He found himself bathed in perspiration, unable to shake off the dreadful impression which had thus been made upon him.

His mind was deeply distressed; his sins stared him in the face; and now, like so many others, John strove to mend his own heart, and recommend himself to God's notice by a reformation in his dissolute life. He tried to make himself a more respectable person for God to deal with, hoping thus to obtain the salvation of his soul. But he tried in vain. Just at this time of crisis, he remembered his unsettled lodging bill at Hamburg; and he saw no prospect of paying that score. He felt that salvation by the deeds of the law – the law which says, among other things, 'Thou shalt not steal', was, so far as he was concerned an everlasting impossibility. It was this particular precept, 'Thou shalt not steal', which smote John's self-righteousness.

While in this state of mind, John began to attend a place of worship – something which he had not done from his boyhood. He was as ignorant as a heathen. The first time he went to the house of God he fell asleep, and he dreamed he was in a public-house, and awoke himself by hitting his hand with tremendous blow against the pew in front of him, whilst raising a glass of beer, as he thought, to his mouth. But God had mercy upon this wretched, godless mariner, and brought him at last to see that it is the blood of Christ that cleanseth from all sin. That word "cleanseth" is a sacrificial term (Leviticus 16:30), showing that through Christ's work done for us, our guilt can be annulled and our sins can be put away judicially before God. This he came to believe; and he placed all his trust in the Lord Jesus, who died for sinners, that they might go at last, not to hell, but to heaven, where they shall be for ever with Him.

John Hardoak was a striking illustration of the sovereignty of God in the communication of His grace. I scarcely ever looked upon him without thinking of our Lord's solemn words: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight." (Matthew 11:25,26)

Fleming's Remarkable Conversions

LOVEST THOU ME

Edward Payson (1783-1827)

"Lovest thou me... Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee." (John 21:16)

Portland, December 10, 1810

My dearest Mother,

Since my return, it has pleased my adorable Saviour, in His sovereign mercy, to give me clearer and more transporting views of Himself, than I have ever before enjoyed; and I have no leisure of thoughts to bestow on anything else.

He has brought me up out of the horrible pit, where I have so long been sinking, and put a new song in my mouth; and Oh! that all creation would join with me in singing His praises.

I have sometimes heard of spells and charms to excite love; and have wished for them, when a boy, that I might cause others to love me. But how much more do I now wish for some charm, which would lead men to love the Saviour! What would I now give for the power to make sinners love Him; for the faculty of describing his beauties and glories, in such a manner as to excite warmer affections towards Him in the hearts of Christians.

Could I paint a true likeness of Him, methinks I should rejoice to hold it up to the view and admiration of all creation, and be hid behind it for ever. It would be heaven enough to hear Him praised and adored, though no one should know or care about insignificant me. But I cannot paint Him; I cannot describe

Him; I cannot make others love Him; nay, I cannot love Him a thousandth part so much as I ought myself to love Him.

I faint, I sink under the weight of infinite, insupportable obligations. Oh, for an angel's tongue! Oh, for the tongues of ten thousand angels, to sound His praises! I would fain do something for Him, but I can do nothing; I cannot even attempt to do anything without His grace, and the more I am enabled to do in His service, so much the more is the load of obligation increased. Oh, that God, who alone is able, would glorify His Son! This, at present, is all my salvation, and all my desire, that Christ may be glorified. For this reason, I long and pray for a revival. I long that the blessed Jesus should receive some more suitable returns, for His wondrous love to our ruined race.

We are hoping that this will be the case here. I hope the church begins to awake, and pray more earnestly than ever, and we shall yet see hundreds here praising the ever-blessed Redeemer. It seems of no consequence what becomes of sinners. Comparatively speaking. But, Oh, it is of infinite consequence that Christ should be glorified.

My dearest mother, do strive to love Him more than ever. Do strive to make others love Him. Oh, if it was not for a hope of doing something for His glory, how could we be content to live a single hour absent from His presence above...

Oh, how little zeal, how little love, have I manifested. How madly have I misimproved my time and talents. How wretchedly have I neglected the all-important work to which I am called! How ungratefully have I requited the best of Saviours! How often have I called His love and faithfulness in question, at the very time He was taking the best possible measure to promote my happiness. And now He returns to humble me, and shame me for my folly and ingratitude. Oh, I know not how to bear this astonishing, overwhelming goodness. Methinks I could bear His anger, but His love cuts me to the heart... Oh, that for the remainder of my life, I could hear of nothing, think of nothing, speak of nothing, but the wonders of His person, His character, and His redeeming love.