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REDEMPTION

You may have heard the story of a young boy who really enjoyed making models; and one day, during his school holiday, he decided he would love to make a sailing-boat. So, taking pencil and paper he began to draw plans for a boat, and then he began collecting some wood and gathering his tools together. It was not long before he was constructing the hull of his little yacht. Next, he made a mast and he attached the sail to it. Finally, he varnished some of it and painted other parts, and after many hours work, there before him was a very fine model.

After testing the yacht to make sure it would float, he decided that afternoon to take his rather fine model to a lake not far from where he lived. So with the breeze behind him, he carefully placed it in the water and watched with excitement as wind filled the sail and off it went towards the other side of the lake.

But tragedy struck. Halfway across the lake the bottom of the hull got caught in reeds and down it went on its side and all but disappeared from view. What a disappointment! What a loss!

Several weeks later he was walking past a shop on his way home from school and there in the shop window was his yacht for sale, at a very high price. For it was a very fine yacht. It would have been no good going into the shop and telling the shopkeeper that it was his boat and that therefore he should have it. There was only one course of action. That was to return home, collect the required amount of money, and buy it back. He had to redeem it.

This helps us to understand the Gospel. Men and women were created holy and righteous, in a perfect relationship with God, their Creator, but sin destroyed that relationship and they were all lost, just like the boy's yacht. However, in His great mercy, God sent His Son to die at Calvary, that sinners might be redeemed and the relationship restored. Redemption's blessing is known when faith is placed in Jesus Christ.

Cheering Words (Lightly Edited)

JUNIOR ENDEAVOURERS

Particular prayer is requested for the church's Junior youth work, which caters for children aged 9 to 12. In recent years numbers have been slowly declining and, after sending four children up to Seniors this holiday, the group now enters the new term with fewer than 10 on the roll. While the leaders' prayer is that the Lord will work in the hearts of the children, whether many or few, it can be hard to enthuse the remaining children to keep coming when they see numbers so low.

Please do pray that: a) the current young people will keep coming; b) that their friends and others might come along too; and c) that God might grant 'ears to hear' to these precious young souls.

Salisbury is full of many young people who are not hearing the wonderful Gospel of Jesus Christ, which alone can save and rescue them from this present evil world. Please pray for the Lord to be merciful to the youth of this city. Thank you.

Tim Tribe

THANKSGIVING SERVICE FOR GROVE HOUSE

Godwilling, this will be held on Saturday 20th May at 3.30pm. Guest preacher: Rev. Maurice Roberts (Inverness).

We warmly invite all our readers to this special service and hope that many will be able to join us in thanking God for His great goodness to us.

A tea will follow the service.



Emmanuel Church
Salisbury Conference 2017

The Protestant Reformation

Chairman: Rev. Malcolm H. Watts

Speaker: Rev. Timothy Nelson (Ballynahinch, NI.)

FRIDAY 22ND SEPTEMBER

The Reformation: An Extraordinary Work of God 7.30pm

SATURDAY 23RD SEPTEMBER

Great Biblical Truths Rediscovered in the Reformation 10.30am

Lunch - hot and cold drinks available

Spiritual Effects of the Reformation, Then & Now 1.00pm

Maintaining a Reformation Stance in the 21st Century 2.30pm

Buffet Tea

LORD'S DAY 24TH SEPTEMBER

Morning Worship Service 11.00am

Evening Worship Service 6.30pm

After Church Fellowship 8.30pm

A Lord's Day lunch will be available to all those staying for the weekend, please contact conference@salisburyemmanuel.org.uk in advance to register your interest.

May 2017

Dear Friends,

Over recent years an increasing number of reformed ministers and others have shared a common vision to see a conservative, evangelical and reformed Theological Seminary established here in the UK (see notes over the page). These descriptive terms and principles are vitally important, so that men, called by God into the ministry, might be prepared and equipped to preach and lead our churches in Biblical ways. At this present time, we believe that a Seminary based on these principles is very much needed.

When the Grove House Project commenced in Salisbury, we began to discern that the Lord was answering prayers and fulfilling hopes for the establishment of such a Seminary. In addition to meeting the car parking requirements and providing more space for Church activities, the property known as 'Grove House' - a two-storey Victorian villa (now fully restored) - had obvious potential to accommodate a future Seminary. Together with our convenient geographical location in Salisbury, it seemed to confirm that, through the Lord's good hand, our vision was being turned into a reality.

I am writing to let you know that a Steering Group of like-minded men has been appointed to oversee the establishment of a Seminary including funding, publicity, and the curriculum itself. Our intention is to provide a comprehensive course for men who evidence a clear call of God for full-time ministry, starting in September 2017. In all of this, we recognise our complete dependence on God.

In addition to prayer-support, we would appreciate knowing if you are aware of any men who are currently exercised regarding full-time ministry, for whom the proposed Seminary might provide real, spiritual and practical help.

If you can help us with the financing of this venture we would be deeply grateful. A separate bank account will be opened in due course, but at present funds are being held by Emmanuel Church on behalf of the Seminary. Details of how to make donations can be found in the attached leaflet.

We intend to make further information available on a regular basis.

Thank you for whatever support you may feel able to give. Our prayer and hope is that God, in His grace, will richly bless this venture of faith, to His own greater glory, and to the increased spiritual strength and prosperity of His Church.

With my warm Christian greetings,
Yours through free and distinguishing grace,

Malcolm H. Watts

On behalf of the Steering Committee: Roland Burrows, Christopher Buss, Richard Clarke, Simon Green, Dewi Higham, David Kay, Pooyan Mehrshahi, Neil Pfeiffer, John Saunders, John Thackway.

**DISTINCTIVES AND EMPHASES:
A SEMINARY CONSERVATIVE, EVANGELICAL AND REFORMED**

Conservative, in the sense of holding and teaching Biblical doctrine, worship, and practice: and therefore, adhering to Holy Scripture as the infallible and inerrant Word of God; maintaining reverent and structured worship and only such as is prescribed in Scripture; and cultivating holiness of heart and life after the image and likeness of God.

Evangelical, in the sense of maintaining the Biblical Gospel concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, who, as Representative and Surety, fulfilled all righteousness on the behalf of sinners: appearing in the holiness of his human nature; perfectly obeying every precept of the Moral Law as summarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments; and rendering full satisfaction for sin – the breach of that Law – by His sufferings unto death; and, thereby, providing a full and free salvation received only by faith in Him.

Reformed, in the sense of recognising the Holy Scriptures as God's Word written, without error or fault in all its teaching, the only complete, sufficient and authoritative Rule for Faith and Practice, and therefore the means by which the Church should be reformed and restored to its apostolic and primitive form. This will include Confessional Christianity: acknowledgment of the truths set forth in the Second London Baptist Confession (1689), and showing the greatest respect for the two other 17th Century Confessions upon which it was based, and with which it was so much in agreement – the Westminster Confession (1647) and the Savoy Declaration (1658). Teaching in the Seminary will reflect the Biblical doctrine of these Confessions. Central to the Scripture's revelation and the Confessions' theology is the doctrine of sovereign, free and distinguishing grace, often and commonly identified as Evangelical Calvinism, which doctrine neither eliminates nor excludes the presentation of Christ to sinners and the overtures of mercy to them, through the preaching of the Gospel. This truth will also be believed and taught.

Our vision also includes the conviction and resolve that such a Seminary should only use in teaching the Authorised (King James) Version which is still the most accurate and faithful translation of God's Word in the English Language, the underlying Texts being the Hebrew Masoretic and Greek Received Texts, the authentic and preserved Texts of Holy Scripture.

Furthermore, it has been thought imperative that there should be strong emphasis on experimental Christianity that, through the gracious ministry of the Holy Spirit, the Truth may be known and felt in the hearts of God's people. Thereby the spirit of true devotion should be cultivated, expressing itself in consecrated service to God.

We also believe that, in the Seminary's teaching, special prominence should be given to the subject of true Holy Spirit revival – God visiting His people and granting them an overwhelming sense of His presence, power, and favour. The present state of the Church shows that revival is desperately needed; and only revival will deal effectively with spiritual declension and deadness, restoring to our souls the inestimable blessing of vital, living Christianity. Those who are to minister in God's Church must be taught the true nature of revival, that it should be sought in prayer and confidently expected, until such times as once again His glory dwells in our land.



Financial Support & Further Information

I gift to Emmanuel Church (Salisbury) the sum of:

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Surname

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Email address

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Date

Your gift will remain anonymous. Please make any cheques payable to 'Emmanuel Church' and write 'Seminary' on the reverse side of the cheque so that the intended purpose may be clearly identified. Then send to the address shown below.

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Further details and how to calculate how much you are able to Gift Aid are available on our website and on request.

further information

We intend to make further information available on a regular basis via email. If you would rather not hear from us or would prefer to be updated via post please contact us using the details below.

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THE LATE PRESIDENT REAGAN ON THE AUTHORISED VERSION

The following transcript is one of Ronald Reagan's radio addresses. In this address which aired 6th September 1977, Ronald Reagan expresses his thoughts on modern Bible Versions compared with the Authorised (King James) Version.

What would you say if someone decided Shakespeare's Plays, Charles Dickens' Novels, or the Music of Beethoven could be rewritten and improved? I'll be right back. . . Writing in the journal *The Alternative*, Richard Hanser, author of *The Law & the Prophets and Jesus: What Manner of Man Is This?*, has called attention to something that is more than a little mind-boggling. It is my understanding that the Bible (both the Old & New Testaments) has been the best-selling book in the entire history of printing. Now another attempt has been made to improve it. I say "another" because there have been several fairly recent efforts to, quote, "make the Bible more readable & understandable", unquote. But as Mr. Hanser so eloquently says, "For more than three and a half centuries, its language and its images, have penetrated more deeply into the general culture of the English speaking world, and been more dearly treasured, than anything else ever put on paper."

He then quotes the irreverent H. L. Mencken, who spoke of it as purely a literary work and said it was, "probably the most beautiful piece of writing in any language." They were, of course, speaking of the *Authorised Version*, the one that came into being when the England of King James was scoured for Translators and Scholars. It was a time when the English language had reached its peak of richness & beauty.

Now we are to have the *Good News Bible* which will be in, "the natural English of everyday adult conversation." I'm sure the scholars and clergymen supervised by the American Bible Society were sincerely imbued with the thought that they were taking religion to the people with their *Good News Bible*, but I can't help feeling we should instead be taking the people to religion and lifting them with the beauty of language that has outlived the centuries.

Mr. Hanser has quoted from both the *Authorised Version* and the *Good News Bible* some well-known passages for us to compare.

A few thousand years ago Job said "How forcible are right words!" (Job 6:25). The new translators have him saying, "Honest words are convincing."

That's only for openers...

There is the passage (Eccl. 1:18), "For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow". Is it really an improvement to say instead, "The wiser you are, the more worries you have; the more you know the more it hurts"?

In the New Testament, in Matthew, we read "The voice of the one crying in the wilderness. Prepare ye the way of the Lord." (Matt. 3:3). The *Good News* version translates that, "Someone is shouting in the desert. Get the road ready." That sounds like a straw boss announcing lunch hour is over.

The hauntingly beautiful 23rd Psalm is the same in both versions for a few words, "The Lord is my shepherd" but instead of continuing, "I shall not want" we have instead, "I have everything I need."

The (so-called) Christmas story has undergone some modernising, but one can hardly call it improved. The wondrous words "Fear not: for; behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy" (Lk. 2:10) has become, "Don't be afraid! I am here with good news for you."

The sponsors of the *Good News* version boast that their Bible is as readable as the Daily Paper - and so it is, but do readers of the *Daily News* find themselves moved to wonder, "at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth"?

Mr. Hanser suggests that sadly the "tinkering & general horsing around with the sacred texts will no doubt continue" as pious drudges try to get it right. "It will not dawn on them that it has already been gotten right."

This is Ronald Reagan. Thanks for listening.

THE FIVE REFORMATION WATCHWORDS

These watchwords clearly show the difference between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism:

PROTESTANT

Sola Scriptura – Scripture alone

Sola Fide – Faith alone

Sola Gratia – Grace alone

Solus Christus – Christ alone

Soli Deo Gloria – Glory to God Alone

ROMAN CATHOLIC

Scripture and Tradition

Faith and works

Grace and merits

Christ, Mary and intercession of saints

God, saints and church hierarchy

THE HISTORY AND DOCTRINAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE REFORMATION

Dr Jack Sin

Minister of Maranatha Bible Presbyterian Church, Singapore

“It is true, no doubt, that **Protestantism, strictly viewed, is simply a principle.** It is not a policy. It is not an empire, having its fleets and armies, its officers and tribunals, wherewith to extend its dominion and make its authority to be obeyed. It is not even a Church with its hierarchies, and synods and edicts; it is simply a principle. But it is the greatest of all principles. It is a creative power. Its plastic influence is all-embracing. It penetrates into the heart and renews the individual. It goes down to the depths and, by its omnipotent but noiseless energy, vivifies and regenerates society. It thus becomes the creator of all that is true, and lovely, and great; the founder of free kingdoms, and the mother of pure churches. The globe itself it claims as a stage not too wide for the manifestation of its beneficent action; and the whole domain of terrestrial affairs it deems a sphere not too vast to fill with its spirit, and rule by its law.”

J. A. Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, Part 1, p. 2

INTRODUCTION

The date, 31st October 1517, has a special place in the history of the Christian Church. It is a lamentable fact that many Protestants today are ignorant of its doctrinal significance. Not many churches commemorate this event in their annual calendar. We do well to commemorate and recollect the spiritual lessons of this life-changing event of the 16th century. These last perilous days, with all its deceptive ploys, warrant a vigilant and knowledgeable Christendom.

Martin Luther was a key figure in the 16th Century Reformation. The biblical theology that Luther developed as a result of his personal struggles and intense searching of the Scriptures, can be summarised by three adjectives. It is firstly *evangelical*, as it is gospel-centred; secondly, *polemical* (or refutative), as it is rightly addressed (if not attacked) the baseless superstitions and traditions of the medieval church, and finally, it is *exegetical*, being developed by a careful and systematic searching of the Word of God, and a practical application of it to the lives of the people relevantly. These principles transformed the spiritual landscape of Europe, when it spread far and wide.

THE MATTER OF INDULGENCES

Among other reasons, the chief precipitating factor of the 16th Century Reformation was the matter of indulgences. This was the reason that prompted Martin Luther, a former Augustinian monk and lecturer in Wittenberg University, to write and nail the *Ninety-Five Theses* on the castle door of Wittenberg.

What is an indulgence? An indulgence is a *piece of paper* which the Roman church sold to the people for the remission of their sins. In other words, if you buy them, your sins will be forgiven, personally or by proxy, i.e., on behalf of your loved ones who may have perished and are supposed to be in purgatory. So the theory goes that Christ had given the church a treasury of merits. These merits are achieved by some saints of the past who had done more than God required of them. These merits then accrue to the church and can apply to a sinner's account (at a price, of course). The benefit of this indulgence is that the buyer will escape punishment in this life or in the next

in purgatory. One could buy them for one's departed loved ones too, so that their torment in purgatory will be either shortened or totally eradicated.

Rome had appointed a super salesman in the person of a Dominican friar named Tetzl. While peddling his wares in Germany, he came near to Wittenberg, the place where Martin Luther laboured. Luther was thoroughly disgusted with this obnoxious doctrine that is contrary to the Scriptures. His response was the famed *Ninety-Five Theses* put up on the eve of All Saints' Day, on 31st October 1517. Luther set forth the truth concerning the pardon of sins through faith in Jesus Christ alone and not of works (Rom 1:17; Eph 2:8-9). This ignited the fire of revival in Germany and later Europe.

The Reformation originated with a fundamental question: How can a sinner be made right with God? The doctrine of indulgences was the answer of the Roman church. You may pay for the pardon. You have to work and earn that righteousness. The Reformation took issue with this basic doctrine and gave a radically different but biblical answer. The response is from Romans 1:17, "*For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith*" and Romans 3:28, "*Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.*" The Reformers stood for three things among others, namely, justification by faith, the universal priesthood of believers and the sole authority and sufficiency of the Scriptures.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

Justification by faith alone is the truth that Christ Jesus accomplished, through His suffering and death on the cross, all that is necessary for salvation. He is the propitiation for our sins and he satisfied fully all the righteous demands of God. Man has no part in his redemption for Christ had paid it all. Closely related to this doctrine of justification is the doctrine of the total depravity of men. According to the Reformers like Luther, Zwingli, Calvin and Knox, man is totally depraved and had no ability at all to do good works unto his own salvation. After the fall of Adam, all men are born in sin and are dead in sin and trespasses (Eph 2:1). In 1525, Luther set forth this in his book, *The Bondage of the Will*, in response to Erasmus of Rotterdam who wrote a book, *On Free Will*. Luther maintained that an unregenerate man is a slave to sin and has no free will of his own. He is a captive prisoner and a

bondslave to the will of Satan until savingly redeemed by the Blood of Christ.

The Reformation also stood for the sovereignty of God, that God alone presided and foreordained all things that has come to pass, including salvation. In conjunction with this truth, the Reformation confessed the sovereign gracious election of God, which is commonly called the doctrine of predestination by John Calvin. In Ephesians 1:4-5, it is said, “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will.”

The doctrine of election totally demolished every human or institutional effort by the church to save men or her members. It exalts God’s sovereignty as the eternal salvation by grace alone. It sounded the death knell for indulgences and good works. This was a radical doctrine in the 16th century and it revived the controversy between Augustine and Pelagius in the 4th century. Is man capable of saving himself? Can a man do anything to save himself? According to Augustine, the answer is no; but Pelagius said otherwise. The Reformers took the side of Augustine, in the most able Reformer, John Calvin, who wrote *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* in 1536.

AUTHORITY AND SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE

The second important doctrine of the church was the sole and absolute authority and sufficiency of the canonical Scriptures. The Reformers asserted that the Bible alone, not the church, has authority over believers. This runs contrary to the teachings of the Roman church tradition, the authority of Councils and Synods of the past, of Rome and of the Apocrypha. The Reformation recognised and upheld the infallible, inerrant and inspired Word of God as the only standard and rule of faith and practice. This shook Rome who held its members captive by its anathemas, encyclicals and papal bulls.

The second aspect of the Word was its sufficiency which was affirmed by the Reformers. In other words, the Word of God alone and nothing else would govern the life of believers and the Church. The Romish Church had apocryphal writings of their Church Fathers and past edicts of Church

Councils added to the Scriptures. This was firmly attacked by the Reformers, giving Scripture as the sole and absolute ground of our faith and practice.

Before the Reformation, the church had strictly forbidden lay people to read and study the Scriptures on their own. The church would teach the Word through its priests and bishops in the services and mass. In any case, the Scriptures were in Latin and not in the vernacular language that the people could understand. So the church had the monopoly of the Word of God and the people were deprived and forfeited of this means of grace for centuries.

The Reformation broke this tradition when Luther translated the New Testament into German in 1522. Later, William Tyndale translated it into English in 1525 (the New Testament first) for England. That ended the church's long sole proprietorship of God's Word for many centuries. The ordinary ploughman could now read and understand the Holy Scriptures in his own language or the first time. The foundation and basis for our Christian faith that was hidden from God's people was now given freely to sinners and saints.

UNIVERSAL PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS

The third important doctrine was the universal priesthood of believers. This is the biblical doctrine that Christ, being our Mediator, has reconciled us to God and we do not need any human mediator (or mediatrix) to intercede for us or to present us before God on our behalf. Before the Reformation, the church had its intercessors in the form of living priests and dead canonised saints and the Virgin Mary. The Reformation demolished the teaching of auricular confession and ecclesiastical intermediaries by the scriptural teaching in Romans 5:2, *“By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”* Christ alone is sufficient and we have the privilege of direct access to the very mercy seat (1 Tim 2:2-5). What it meant essentially is the end of the confessional box and the need for an interceding priest, the host of saints and relics. All believers are priests themselves according to 1 Peter 2:9: *“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an unholy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”*

Luther was also an indefatigable prolific writer, and wrote the three great Reformation manifestos: *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, *An Appeal to Christian Nobility* and *The Liberty of a Christian Man*, which greatly influenced the people at that time. It has been estimated that he produced an average of one tract a fortnight throughout his lifetime. Luther's emphasis was on biblical teaching, catechism, writings of books and establishment of schools. The emphasis on Christian instruction in the 16th century was itself epoch-making and unprecedented, and paved the way for the greater good of universal education of the people in many other western countries later.

EFFECTS OF THE REFORMATION

What are the repercussions of the Reformation? They are enumerated below:

1. The Scripture was made available in the vernacular language of the common people.
2. Justification by faith alone led to a de-emphasis of external rituals and focused on the inner spiritual life.
3. Authority of Scripture replaces the authority of the pope and medieval traditions.
4. The Scripture alone is sufficient as the rule of faith and practice for all believers.
5. Preaching (even by lay preachers) became important and central in a worship service.
6. Monasticism as the ideal of holiness was replaced by the priesthood of all believers. Each person's calling was considered an area of Divine service.
7. The significance of the sacraments was re-evaluated, and the sacraments are now only two: baptism and the Lord's Supper.
8. The liturgy was redesigned to accord with Scripture.
9. The family began to be seen as a household of faith. Celibacy as a means of piety and good works was questioned. Martin and Katherine Luther became an example of the Protestant home.
10. The church universal is not to be ruled by one man only.

CONCLUSION

When the voice of Martin Luther thundered throughout the German empire, it found an echo in many a heart that was utterly weary of the bankrupt spiritual system of the day. The protest of these Reformers against the abuse in the church was articulated in the Augsburg Confession of 1530. The Reformation of which many had desired or yearned for, had at last come, and was manifestly the mighty work of God. The Reformation was a work of Divine grace for which we can never be sufficiently thankful. It gave to us an open Bible and restored to us the blessed doctrine of justification by faith alone. The Word of God was restored as the authoritative and sufficient rule of faith and practice for the believer. **These are precious truths that we must defend with missionary zeal.** Truth cannot be bartered for ecumenical unity and false peace no matter how desirable the latter can be (we pray for the happy union of both, truth and peace, and unity together if it is ever possible). On these, all believers must stand and not waver, and be faithful to our Lord Jesus to the very end.

MARTIN LUTHER ON JUSTIFICATION

“We are redeemed from sin, death, and the devil, and made partakers of eternal life, not by ourselves and certainly not by our works, which are less than ourselves, but by the help of Another, the only begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ.”

(Preface his Commentary on Galatians)

“They do not understand that it is in Christ alone they will be justified, and not by their own works. They who seek to be saved without Christ are the very men who do not understand God’s work in Christ...They think those dreadful works of theirs are necessary.”

(Comment on Psalm 28)

“I am not the only one or the first to say that faith alone justifies. Ambrose said it before me, and Augustine and many others; and if a man is going to read St. Paul and understand him, he will have to say the same thing and can say nothing else.”

(On Translating: An Open Letter)

“All depends on faith. He who does not believe is like one who must cross the sea, but is so timid that he does not trust the ship; and so he must remain and never be saved, because he does not embark and cross over.”

(A Treatise Concerning the Blessed Sacrament)

“Through faith in Christ, therefore, Christ’s righteousness becomes our righteousness and all that He has becomes ours; rather He Himself becomes ours.”

(A Sermon, entitled Two Kinds of Righteousness, 1519)

“If thou wilt be saved, thou mayest not seek salvation by works: for God hath sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him...Wherefore the Law doth nothing else but utter sin, terrify and humble, and by this means prepareth us to justification, and driveth us to Christ. For God hath revealed unto us by His Word, that He will be unto us a merciful Father, and without our deserts (seeing we can deserve nothing) will freely give unto us remission of sins, righteousness, and life everlasting for Christ His Son’s sake.”

(Commentary on Galatians)

“Now I should like to know whether your soul, tired of its own righteousness, is learning to be revived by and to trust in the righteousness of Christ. For in our age the temptation to presumption besets many, especially those who try with all their might to be just and good, without knowing the righteousness of God which is most bountifully and freely given us in Christ. They try to do good of themselves in order that they might stand before God clothed in their own virtues and merits. But this is impossible... Despairing of yourself, say: ‘Thou, Lord Jesus, art my righteousness, but I am thy sin. Thou has taken upon thyself what is mine (my sin), and hast given me what is thine (thy righteousness). Thou hast taken upon thyself what thou wast not (sin), and hast given me what I was not (righteousness).’... Accordingly, 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.”

(Letter to George Spenlein, a friar in an Augustinian Monastery)

THE SALISBURY MARTYRS:

**John Maundrel, William Coberley and John Spicer,
14th March 1556**

John Foxe (1517-87)

Three men were burnt at one fire in Salisbury, who in the like quarrel with the others that went before them, spared not their bodies, to bring their souls to the celestial felicity, whereof they were throughly assured in Christ Jesus by His promises, as soon as the furious flames of fire had put their bodies and souls asunder. Their names were: John Spicer, mason; William Coberley, tailor; and John Maundrel, husbandman.

First, John Maundrel, who was the son of Robert Maundrel of Rowde, in the county of Wiltshire, farmer, was from his childhood brought up in husbandry; and after he came to man's state, did abide in a village called Buchampton, in the parish of Keevil, within the county of Wiltshire aforesaid, where he had a wife and children, being of good name and fame. Which John Maundrel, after that the Scripture was translated into 'English by the faithful apostle of Engand, Wlliam Tyndale, became a diligent hearer, and a fervent embracer of God's true religion, so that he delighted in nothing so much as to hear and speak of God's Word,' never being without the New Testament about him, although he could not read himself. But when he came into any company that could read, his book was always ready, having a very good memory, so that he could recite by heart most places of the New Testament; his conversation and living being very honest and charitable, as his neighbours are able to testify.

So it was that in the days of King Henry the Eighth, at what time Dr. Trigonion and Dr. Lee did visit abbeys, the said John Maundrel was brought before Dr. Trigonion at an abbey called Edington, within the county of Wiltshire aforesaid; where he was accused that he had spoken against the holy water and holy bread, and such like ceremonies; and for the same did wear a white

sheet, bearing a candle in his hand about the market, in the town of Devizes, which is in the said county. Nevertheless, his fervency did not abate, but by God's merciful assistance he took better hold, as the sequel hereof will declare. For in the days of Queen Mary, when popery was restored again, and God's true religion put to silence, the said John Maundrel left his own house, and departed into the county of Gloucester, and into the north part of Wiltshire, wandering from one to another to such men as he knew feared God, with whom as a servant to keep their cattle he there did remain with John Bridges or some other at Kingswood; but after a time he returned to his country, and there coming to the Vyes, to a friend of his named Anthony Clee, had talk and conference with him in a garden, of returning home to his house. And when the other exhorted him by the words of Scripture, to fly from one city to another, he replying again by the words of the Apocalypse (Rev. 21) of them that be fearful, etc., said, that he needs must go home, and so did: where he, with Spicer and Coberley, used at times to resort and confer together.

At length, upon the Sunday following, they agreed together to go to the parish church called Keevil, where the said Maundrel and the other two, seeing the parishioners in the procession to follow and worship the idol there carried, advertised them to leave the same, and to return to the living God, namely speaking to one Robert Barksdale, head-man of the parish; but he took no regard to these words.

After this the vicar came into the pulpit, who there being about to read his bead-roll, and to pray for the souls in purgatory; the said John Maundrel, speaking with an audible voice, said, "That was the pope's pifold;" the other two affirming the same. After which words, by commandment of the priest, they were had to the stocks, where they remained till their service was done, and then were brought before a Justice of Peace, and so the next day carried to Salisbury all three, and presented before Bishop Capon, and W. Geoffrey being Chancellor of the Diocese; by whom they were imprisoned, and oftentimes examined of their faith in their houses, but seldom openly.

And at the last examination these were the articles which the Chancellor alleged against them, being accompanied with the Sheriff of the Shire, one master St. John, and other popish priests in the parish church of Fisherton Anger, demanding how they did believe.

They answered, "As Christian men should and ought to believe"; and first they said, they believed in God the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost, the Twelve Articles of the Creed, the Holy Scripture from the first of Genesis to the last of the Apocalypse.

But that faith the Chancellor would not allow. Wherefore he opposed them in particular Articles: first, whether that they did not believe that in the sacrament of the altar (as he termed it), after the words of consecration spoken by the priests at Mass, there remained no substance of bread nor wine, but Christ's body, flesh and blood, as He was born of the Virgin Mary? Whereunto they answered negatively, saying that the Popish Mass was abominable idolatry, and injurious to the blood of Christ; but confessing that in a faithful congregation, receiving the sacrament of Christ's body and blood, being duly ministered according to Christ's institution, Christ's body and blood are spiritually received of the faithful believer.

Also, being asked whether the Pope was Supreme Head of the Church, and Christ's Vicar on Earth; they answered negatively, saying, that the Bishop of Rome doth usurp over Emperors and Kings, being Antichrist, and God's Enemy.

The Chancellor said, "Will you have the Church without Head?" They answered, "Christ was Head of His Church, and, under Christ, the Queen's Majesty." "What," said the Chancellor, "a woman Head of the Church?" "Yes," said they, "within her Grace's dominions."

Also, whether the souls in Purgatory were delivered by the Pope's pardons, and the suffrages of the church. They said, they believed faithfully that the

blood of Christ had purged their sins, and the sins of them that were saved, unto the end of the world, so that they nothing feared the Pope's Purgatory, nor esteemed his pardons.

Also, whether images were necessary to be in the churches, as laymen's books, and saints to be prayed unto and worshipped. They answered negatively; John Maundrel adding that wooden images were good to roast a shoulder of mutton, but evil in the church, whereby idolatry was committed.

Those Articles thus answered (for their Articles were one, and their answers in manner like), the Chancellor read their condemnation, and so delivered them to the Sheriff. Then spake John Spicer, saying; "O master Sheriff, now must you be their butcher, that you may be guilty also with them of innocent blood before the Lord." This was the 23rd day of March, anno 1556; and the 24th day of the same month they were carried out of the common gaol to a place betwixt Salisbury and Wilton, where were two posts set for them to be burnt at: which men coming to the place, kneeled down, and made their prayers secretly together; and then, being disclothed to their shirts, John Maundrel spake with a loud voice, "Not for all Salisbury;" which words men judged to be an answer to the Sheriff, which offered him the Queen's Pardon if he would recant. And after that in like manner spake John Spicer, saying, "This is the joyfullest day that ever I saw." Thus were they three burnt at two stakes; where most constantly they gave their bodies to the fire, and their souls to the Lord, for testimony of His Truth.

As touching William Coberley, this moreover is to be noted, that his wife also, called Alice, being apprehended, was in the keeper's house the same time detained, while her husband was in prison: where the keeper's wife, named Agnes Penicote, had secretly heated a key fire-hot. So speaking to Alice Coberley, (she asked her) to fetch the key in all haste. The said Alice went with speed to bring the key, and so, taking up the key in haste, did piteously burn her hand. Whereupon she, crying out at the sudden burning of hand, "Ah! thou drab," quoth the other, "thou that canst not abide the burning of

the key, how wilt thou be able to abide burning thy whole body?" and so she (Alice Coberley) afterward revoked (i.e. recanted).

But to return again to the story of Coberley, who, being somewhat learned, and being at the stake, was somewhat long a-burning as the wind stood: After his body was scorched with the fire, and his left arm drawn and taken from him by the violence of the fire, the flesh being burnt to the white bone, at length he stooped over the chain, and with the right hand, being somewhat starkened, knocked upon his breast softly, the blood and matter issuing out of his mouth. Afterward, when they all thought he had been dead, suddenly he rose right up with his body again. And thus much concerning these three Salisbury martyrs.

A MILE'S WALK

*I walked a mile with pleasure; she chatted all the way,
But I was none the wiser for all she had to say.
I walked a mile with sorrow, never a word said she,
But, oh, the things I learned that day, when sorrow walked with me.*

SHIRRA OF KIRKALDY

Rev. Robert Shirra of Kirkcaldy (1724–1803) studied divinity under Rev. Ebenezer Erskine, and in May 1749, he was licensed by the Glasgow Presbytery to preach the Gospel as a Probationer. Just a few weeks after being licensed he was invited by the Associate Congregation of Linktown, Kirkaldy, to become their Minister. He was eventually ordained at Kirkaldy on 28th August, 1750, and installed as Pastor there. In 1798 he removed to Stirling where he died after a short illness, in the 80th year of his age.

He was a popular preacher in his day, marked by many peculiarities which, however, did not mar his influence, nor prevent him from being a faithful minister of the Word. From his ministrations, the common people derived

much good.

At Kinghorn, as at the other ferries on the Forth, over two hundred and fifty years ago, it was the practice of the boatmen whose turn it was to sail, to call the passengers, by shouting from one end of the town to the other, "The boat, ahoy! – to Leith, ahoy!"

Mr. Shirra was preaching from the tent of the Associate Congregation at Kinghorn on a fast-day, and observing Ian Tam Gallawa, the Skipper, with several boatmen and passengers, in the bustle of passing down to Pettycur, he paused in his discourse, and addressed them as follows, with an energy and seriousness peculiar to himself – "Boatmen, ahoy!" The boatmen and passengers instantly stopped to listen.

He proceeded – "Boatmen, you cry, 'The boat ahoy! to Leith, ahoy!' We cry, 'Salvation, ahoy!' – to Heaven, ahoy!' You sail under Skipper Gallawa there; we sail under Jesus Christ. We have Christ for our Skipper, the Holy Spirit for our Pilot, and God Himself at the helm. Your boat, let me tell you, is but a fir deal from Norway; the keel of our boat was laid at Bethlehem, built in Judea, rigged in Jerusalem, launched in Calvary. We have the cross of Christ for a helm, a cedar of Lebanon for a mast, and the redemption of mankind for freight.

Your voyage under an earthly Skipper, short as it is, may end in shipwreck or disaster; but our voyage, long as it may be, with Christ for our Skipper, will end in everlasting joy, and glory unspeakable. Slip away now, for time and tide will not wait;' but mind what I've said to you – Do not swear, nor take the holy Name of God in vain, as ye are wont to do, and I'll pray for you."

In such lowly phrase and with such persuasiveness did this earnest man commend the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. In doing so, he not infrequently evoked a smile, but the state of mind produced was in many cases like the opening of the earth to receive the seed of the kingdom.

EPILOGUE

“Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not” Luke 22 vv. 31-32.

Just after the institution of the Lord’s Supper Christ speaks to Peter and warns him of the danger of a satanic attack that he would soon suffer. The devil is constantly seeking opportunities to assault Christ’s disciples and to destroy their faith. In the book of Job, we read that he is “going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.” Job 1 v 7. We therefore must be constantly on our guard against such attacks, relying constantly on the Lord for strength to overcome.

We learn that Christ knew in advance what Satan planned to do. Our Saviour still knows exactly how Satan plans to attack the Lord’s people and places limits upon his wicked actions, thus preventing us from having our faith destroyed.

In addition to circumscribing Satan’s actions, Christ prays for us! What a wonder is this! He is our great High Priest in heaven, ever interceding on our behalf. He did not pray that Peter would not be tempted, but that he would be kept and his faith would not fail. Christ prays for our perseverance in faith, our sanctification in holiness, our deliverance from unnecessary harm and danger, and that we will be glorified when we die (or Christ comes again). His prayers are always heard by God the Father and answered. We must take comfort that in our trials, nothing happens to us outside of God’s will, that we are being strengthened by the prayers of our Lord and Saviour and that, improbable though it may seem at the time, we will surely be delivered through His prayers.

Satan has studied the human heart for thousands of years and knows its strengths and weaknesses. Although his attacks can be severe, they are bound by God’s decree so that they can never destroy us. Christ is praying for us even at times when we feel unable to pray for ourselves. Our Lord will help us to overcome these assaults and cause us, through them, to grow in grace, love and holiness.

Bill Norton