

"THE CHRISTIAN WALK & WARFARE"

BOOK TWO

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STUDY ONE: MAN THE CREATED

1. Man The Created And The Knowledge of God.

- (1) Creation as a whole reveals something of the Creator.
- (2) Man is uniquely made in the Creator's image.
- (3) We cannot adequately know God unless we know ourselves.

2. Man's Importance In God's Creation.

- (1) Made in God's image.
- (2) Given dominion.

3. God's Image.

- (1) Attributes of personality possessed by God.

- (2) Morality Freedom
 Responsibility

(3) Spirituality

- i. Body
- ii. Soul
- iii. Spirit

4. Moral Agents.

4 areas in which our responsibility should be exercised.

- a. Towards God
- b. Towards Others
- C. Towards Nature
- d. Towards Ourselves

5. The Shattered Image.

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STUDY TWO: MAN THE FALLEN'

We cannot know ourselves apart from knowing God.

1. What Is Man?

(1) Outlook of classical antiquity -- Man is Reason

Defies reason

Devalues the body

Man basically good

(2) Modern outlook -- Man is Machine, e.g. Darwin, Communism, B. F. Skinner.

(3) Biblical Evaluation. Genesis 2 - 3

a. Sin is unfaithfulness, 3:1, c.f. 2:16-17; 3:3

b. Sin is rebellion, I Tim. 2:14; 1 Cor. 15:21-22; Rom. 5: 12, 17, 19

c. Sin is pride, cf. Isaiah 14:14; Phil. 2:8.

2. Results Of The Fall.

Three views of human nature.

Man is well: Man is sick

(1) Man is dead: Eph. 2: 1; Gen. 2:17

Rom. 3:10-12 None is righteous

None understanding I Cor. 2:14

None seeking God, Jn. 6:44.

(3) Extent of Sin: Rom. 5:15, 17, 18, 19; 1 Cor. 15:22; Rom.3:23.

All sin because they are sinners.

The representative nature of Adam's sin is an example of God's grace for it is on the basis of that representation that God is able to save us. (Rom. 5:19.)

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STUDY THREE: MAN'S MIND IS CHANGED

NEW BIRTH REPENTANCE FAITH

John 3: 3 Matthew 8: 3

1. New Birth.

- (1) Man is dead. Eph. 2: 1; Col. 2: 13; Jn. 5: 24
The dead are blind, II Cor. 4:4
The dead are deaf, Jer. 6: 10
The dead are unclean, Prov. 20:9; Rev.21:27; Isaiah 64:6.
- (2) To be born again is to enter a relation with someone who is completely 'other'.
Ezra 9:15; Hab. 1:13; Matt.5:8; Jn. 3:6-7.
- (3) Recognising counterfeits. The new birth is a supernatural work of God in the heart of man. Jn. 3: 8; 1:13.
- (4) The new birth brings a life to be lived responsibly. I Jn. 3: 1; II Cor. 5:15; Rom. 8:29.
- (5) The new birth is the gift of a new nature to be developed for God. 11 Pet.1:4; Eph.2:2-3; Ps.40:8; Gal.5:16-17; Phil2:13.
- (6) The new birth brings a gift of new powers to be used for God. II Pet. 1:2-4.

2. Repentance

- (1) Repentance a serious demand. Ezek.14:6; 18:30; Matt.3:2; 4:17; Mk.6:12; Acts 2:38; 17:30.
- (2) Repentance involves knowledge. Matt. 21:28-29.
- (3) Repentance involves feelings. Matt. 26:33; 26:74-75.
- (4) Repentance involves decision. Lk. 15:18.
- (5) Repentance involves action. Lk. 15:20; Matt. 3:8.
- (6) The means to repentance:
 - a. The preaching of the Gospel. Matt. 12: 41; Jonah 3: 5; I Thess. 2: 9; Rom. 10:13f.
 - b. Disaster and sorrow. Ps. 78: 34; 119: 67; Ex. 9: 27.
 - c. Joy. Rom. 2: 4; 11 Pet. 3: 9.
 - d. Emptiness. Eccles. 2: 11.

3. Faith

- (1) Faith is not intangible; it is a fact. Heb. 11: 1; Titus 1: 2; Heb. 10:23 cf. Mk.5.
- (2) Three elements are involved in faith: knowledge, belief, trust.

Saving faith is not consent to a proposition, but commitment to a person.

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STUDY FOUR: MAN IS FORGIVEN

1. The Surprise of Forgiveness. Micah 7:18-19.

- (i) God's forgiveness is complete, i.e. with nothing remaining to be swept up. Isa. 1:18; 43:25; 44:22; 38:17; Jer. 31:34; Psa. 130:4; 103:11-12; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13; Matt. 1:21, etc.
- (ii) God's forgiveness is unique. 'Who is a God like Thee, pardoning iniquity'. This counters all expected or presumed forgiveness.
- (iii) The given-ness of God's forgiveness is difficult for man to believe, e.g. Mark 2:1ff, cf. Matt. 20:116.

2. Man is Responsible.

- (i) Sin has no motive. Eccles. 7: 29; Rom. 1: 21, i.e. there is no reason for it and so it is irrational and senseless. John 15:25; Luke 6: 7; Psa. 14: 1; 53: 1.
- (ii) Man's guilt is primarily objective. Rom. 3:10-12, 23, etc. He is guilty for not being what he is created to be, as well as for his acts of disobedience.
- (iii) Blame cannot be passed off. James 1: 13-15; Gen. 3:12-13. God cannot be blamed, nor Satan, nor some defect in man's being created in God's image. Man cannot blame Adam (Rom. 5:12ff), nor heredity and environment. Ezek. 18: 1-3; cf. Exod. 20: 4-6. This means God treats man with dignity and that it is a liberating thing to be able to take responsibility.

3. Man's Dilemma is Twofold.

- (1) The God of holy love cannot gratuitously forgive sin. Sin is lethal, offensive, and cannot be waived. Exod.34:7; Num.14:18; Amos 8:3; Psa.143:2; 130:3; Rom.2:6ff.
- (2) Man is weak. Rom. 5: 6; Eph. 2:1ff. His weakness stems from sin's power. Hosea 5:4; John 8:34; Rom.3:9;20; II Pet.2:19. The power of sin lies in its guilt (Heb.2:14f; I Cor.15:56; I John4:18; Rom.7:8). In this state man is confused, cannot see God as He is, is angry, polluted, under wrath and cannot understand forgiveness.

4. God Takes Responsibility To Judge Sin.

- (1) The initiative and action comes from God. John 1:29; cf. Isa.53:10; II Cor. 5:18, 21.
- (2) Forgiveness comes by that action of God which acts upon sin by damning it. Isa. 1:27; 30:18; Hab.1:13; Luke 18:13; Heb. 9: 22; 1 John 4: 10.
- (3) The man Jesus, Messiah, bears the sin. (I Peter 2:24). He becomes scapegoat (Lev. 16:21-25; Rom.15:3). The Cross is where forgiveness comes through judgement (Luke 23:34; Matt. 26: 28). This is not abstract theological manipulation, nor psychological technique, but factually Christ becomes us with our sin (II Cor.5:21), taking our curse (Gal.3:13), our death (II Cor.5:14), which is the whole Adamic humanity (Rom.6:6f).

(4) Forgiveness is primarily an objective fact. II Cor. 5:18; Rom. 5: 1; 6-10. All have been judged in the judgement born (Rom. 8:1ff; John 5: 24).

5. Man Knowing Forgiveness.

(1) Faith sees and believes it is finished. Rom. 1:16f; John 19:30.

(2) Man changes his mind. Takes responsibility (Acts 2:38; 5:30,ete.)

(3) Man receives the gift. Eph. 2: 8-10. God does not renege the gift. (Rom. 11: 29). The gift is total, and does not need supplementing.

(4) As forgiven, man now forgives. (Matt. 18:23-35).

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STUDY FIVE: MAN JUSTIFIED

"When the article of justification has fallen, everything has fallen." Luther

Justification by faith is God's answer to the most basic of all religious questions: how can I become right with God? Rom. 3:22-24, 28; 4:5; 8: 33-34.

1. Justification Is A Verdict Of Acquittal:

It is essentially a legal term. It means to declare 'not guilty'

2. Justification Does Not Mean 'To Make Righteous'.

This is to confuse justification and sanctification. Paul speaks of God as the one who 'justifies the wicked' (Rom. 4:5). See Rom. 3:20; Gal. 2:16; 3:11; Rom. 3:28; Gal. 2:16; 3:8, 24. Rom. 5:16. NB. Faith is not a kind of work. Martin Luther said that we are justified and sinners at the same time.

This does not mean that we are in the same sense, sinless and sinful. A true understanding here will keep us both humble and joyful.

3. We Cannot Earn Our Own Acquittal.

'It is God who justifies' (Rom. 8:33). See also 8:30; 1 Cor. 6:11; Gal. 2:16f. Paul specially links our justification with Christ's death and resurrection, Rom. 3: 24; 5: 9; 4: 25; Titus 3: 7.

4. The Righteousness Of God.

The righteousness of God is a new thing revealed in the Gospel, Rom. 1: 17. See also Rom. 3: 21; 5: 17. It is a righteousness 'of faith', Rom. 9: 30; 10: 6. See also Rom. 10: 3; 11 Cor. 5: 21; Phil. 3: 9. It may be closely linked with Christ, Rom. 10:3f; 1 Cor. 1: 30; 11 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9. It does not come from law, Gal. 2:21.

God's righteousness is shown in the way we are forgiven, Rom. 3:22-26; Col. 2:14.

5. Imputed Righteousness.

Righteousness reckoned apart from works, Rom. 4:6, 8, 11, 22f. Gal. 3: 6. See also 11 Cor. 5: 19; Rom. 4: 13; Gal. 5: 5; Rom. 5: 17.

NB. In salvation the guilt and power of sin are not the same thing. Justification has to do with the former, even though Christ deals with both. 'Corruption of nature may be removed by divine power but guilt never.'

Justification is forgiveness plus. it is not only a washing out of the past, marvellous as that is, but also acceptance and the gift of a righteous man's status for the future. It is final, being a decision on which God will never go back.

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STUDY SIX: MAN AND HIS RENEWAL

1. Introduction: The Promise Of Renewal

- (1) This is expressed in multiple ways: e.g. God will circumcise the hearts of His people, 'that you may live and keep His commandments' (Deut. 30:6-8). God will do a 'new thing' (Is. 43:19 cf. 48:6-8). It is the giving of a 'new heart' and a 'new spirit', (Ezek. 36:26f,) the making of a 'new covenant' (Jer. 31: 31-34), or the resurrection of a new people (Ezek. 37:1ff), and the rehabilitation of the whole creation, (Is. 65:17-18; 66:22-23, cf. Rev. 21: 1ff).
- (2) Man's renewal is in Christ: 'If any man be in Christ he is a new creation: old things have passed away, behold they have become new'. II Cor. 5: 17 cf. Gal. 6: 15; Col. 3: 10; Eph. 2: 15; 4: 24; Romans 6: 6.

Renewal is holistic: i.e. not merely an individualised interior experience. A whole new way of being, seeing, living and relating - to God, self, the creation, the brethren.

2. Renewal Comes Through Reconciliation

- (1) A renewal of relationships: II Cor. 5:15; 18-20. Dead relationships are restored in peace, (Rom. 5: 1, 10; Col. 1:20-21) God makes man at one with Himself through the cross II Cor. 5: 19-21.
- (2) Sin must be nullified by God: Jer. 13: 23; 17: 9; its habituation, power and enslavement must be broken. Freedom must be gained from the idols, world powers, and all of man's enemies. Gal. 1: 4, Mk. 7:20ff; Col. 2: 20-23; Romans 7:1-3 etc.

Reconciliation comes by forgiveness: e.g. Zacchaeus, Luke 19: 1-10. Enmity is destroyed at the cross, Eph. 2:14-17, 1 John 4:10.

3. The End Of The Old And The Coming Of The New

Before the new can come the old must be dealt with. This comes through death and resurrection with Christ. In Christ man belongs to the new creation. Romans 6 is perhaps the most clear in describing what 'once' happened in Christ.

- (1) The 'old self' belongs to the corporate old humanity: Romans 6: 6 (cf. Eph. 4: 22; Col. 3: 9). This is the 'Adamic' corporate mass of sin to which all men belonged. Rom. 5:12ff. cf. I Cor. 15:21f.
- (2) The new man is Christ: i.e. the second Adam, the new man. Romans 5:15-19; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24; 2:15. To be a new creation is to be incorporated in the new Man, Christ.

- (3) Our death with Christ took place in the cross: Romans 6: 5-11. Our death is not an ethical or mystical experience and should not be confused with the event of our baptism or conversion. In His death all died. 11 Cor. 5:14. Christ identified himself wholly with the race, in that he died to sin's, penalty and so died our death. Romans 6:7 says this acquits us from sin. cf. Gal. 2: 19-20; Col. 2:20. Therefore we are to see that we have died. Romans 6:2, 11; 7:1-3.
- (4) We were raised with Christ: Romans 6:5, 8, 11. cf. Col. 2:13.
- (5) This frees us to live: Romans 6: 11, 14; Gal. 2:20f. Man's will is changed. His attitude to God is changed. We are free to obey.
- (6) New creation in Christ: 11 Cor. 5:17. Not of ourselves, but as we are in him. We belong to the new age, the new order of things.

4. Being The New Man

- (1) Regeneration is by the Spirit: Titus 3:1-7; John 3:1-14; 1 Cor. 6: 11. The Spirit applies the work of the new man to our lives, so that our minds are changed, and we are rehabilitated as sons. By the Spirit God's law is implanted in our hearts, (Heb. 10:16).
- (2) Baptism is the pledge of this new life: Romans 6:3-4. It is not independent from the work of the cross, nor a second clause of our renewal. Baptism tells us that what took place 2,000 years ago is now applied to us.
- (3) The new man lives commensurately with what he is: Col. 3:1-4. Romans 6:1, 14. He serves in the Spirit, Romans 7:6, and having bid farewell to the old, lives by faith, Gal. 2:20.

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STUDY SEVEN: THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT

KEY SENTENCE: GALATIANS 3:2

1. The Promise Of The Spirit

- (1) The events of Pentecost are the fulness of the promise: Acts 2:38-39, 16ff, 33.
- (2) The Patriarchs were men of the Spirit promised: Gal. 3:14, 29, 4:29 cf. Gen. 20:7, 49:10.
- (3) He is the 'Spirit of the prophets: II Peter 1:20-21; 1 Peter 1: 10-12; Mic. 3: 8. In announcing the Day of the Lord the prophets declare the coming of the Kingdom of God, the reign of Messiah, the defeat of the enemies, judgement of sin, the gift of forgiveness, the renewal of God's people - all with the universal gift of the Spirit. e.g. Is. 35; 43:18ff; 44:1-5; Ezek. 36:26; 37:1-10; Joel 3:28ff. etc.
- (4) John the Baptist heralds the fulfilment: Matt. 3: 2, 11-12.

Hence the sensational response. Matt. 3: 5 and Jesus calls him the greatest of the prophets. Matt. 11:11f.

2. Jesus Embodies The Promise

- (1) All of his ministry from conception to ascension is by the Spirit: Luke 1: 35; 3:21f; 4:1f; Matt. 12: 28; John 1: 33; Acts 10: 38; Heb. 9:14; Romans 1:4; Acts 1:2.
- (2) The Spirit would be given after Jesus glorified: John 7:37-39. Hence on the night of his betrayal Jesus prepares the disciples for the Spirit's coming, (John 14: 16). He is the Spirit of truth, who leads into all the truth, indwells, enables, teaches, convicts the world, glorifies the Son and so also the Father.

3. The Day Of His Coming

- (1) Pentecost begins the era of the Spirit: i.e. the last days Acts 2:17 cf. Heb. 1: 2; 6: 5; 1 Cor. 10: 11.
- (2) This is a 'throne gift' of the reigning Messiah; Acts 2: 32 God's gift is Christ, (II Cor. 9:15) who comes to us by the Spirit. This means that the Father's moral victory in the Son, and the power of the cross and resurrection are applied to us by the Spirit. He brings the love of the cross Rom. 5:5ff, the renewing of the cross, and the power of the cross. This is the communication of the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of the Son, and made part of our lives.
- (3) The effect is an exulted people: Praising God, Acts 2:11, 47 powerful witness Acts 2: 36-37, signs and wonders, Acts 2: 43, a unified fellowship Acts 2:44-47.

4. The Given Spirit

Gal. 3: 1-5 cf. I Cor. 4: 7; Titus 3:3ff.

(1) The Spirit is not given after an initial time lapse: See Acts 15: 8-9, where (a coincidental aorist participle) cleansing and the Spirit are given in the same moment as faith cf. Acts 26: 18; 1 Peter 1:1f.

(2) By the Spirit faith sees and receives the gift: e.g. Acts 10:43-48; 11:16-17.

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STUDY EIGHT: MAN AND HIS HOLINESS

1. Holiness Is God's Intention

- (1) For man, now: I Peter 1: 15-16 has this in the context of future hope, filial obedience, discipline, and living in unity with the nature of God Himself. cf. Matt. 5:8; Heb.12:14; 1 Peter 3:11-14; Ps. 24:3-4.
- (2) For man ultimately: Eph. 1:4 cf. 5:26-27; 1 John 3:2f; Rev. 21:10, 27.
- (3) Holiness means conformity with God's will: This is expressed in the verses already given. Holy and holiness derive from a Hebrew word which means to cut or to separate. God is essentially 'the Holy One'.
Isaiah 6, 57:15 speak of God's transcendence i.e. that He is above all, separate from evil, relating to all, but not bound into creation or the subject of evil. For man, holiness means belonging to God and living consistently with this calling.

2. Holiness Is Axiomatic

- (1) Based upon the nature of God as holy: Jesus says that the Father is first 'holy'. (Matt. 6: 9 cf. John 17: 11). He is the holy creator whose every action is the expression of holy love. He cannot tamper with his holy love, rather he will pursue all that is evil and defiled in his wrath till he consumes it. (Hab. 1:13; 1 John 1: 5-7; 1 John 4:10.) God's holiness is dynamic, relational, and purposive, not religious, sterile, or moralistic, (Isaiah 5:16).
- (2) Man is made to be holy: i. e. by reason of his creation in the image of God his holiness is derived from God, not manufactured in spirituality. Therefore it is only in holiness that man can approach and relate to God. (Isaiah 6; Matt. 5:8; Heb. 12:14; Ps. 24:3-4).
- (3) Pollution is lethal to man: Isaiah 24:4-13; Mic. 2:10; Is.57:20; 64:5-6; Mark 7:20ff; Rom. 8:13; e.g. David finds his defilement excruciating, Ps. 51.

3. Holiness Is By The Purging Of The Cross

- (1) Cleansing is by destroying evil: Isaiah 4:3-4; 10:16f; 63:1; Jer. 33:5-16; Heb. 12:29; 1 John 4:10.
- (2) The Cross is holiness in action: Heb. 1:3; 9:26; 1-0:1-3, 10, 12, 14. cf. Zech. 13:1; Ezek. 36:25-27.
- (3) All sin is neutralised here: II Cor. 5:21, Jer. 33:8; 50:20.

4. The Spirit Of Holiness Brings The Gift Of Holiness

- (1) He is the Spirit of burning: Isaiah 4:2-6; 33:13f; Ps. 51:10f.
Thus in the cross all evil is burned up in the Spirit's holy fire. (Rom. 1: 4, 8: 1-4).
- (2) The Spirit washes: Ezek. 36: 26 i.e. from all of our stains I Cor. 6:11; Titus 3:3-7.
- (3) Therefore the people of God are holy: 'Saints' e.g. Rom. 1: 7 etc.; I Pet. 1: 2; 2: 9-10; 11 Thess. 2: 13; Acts 15: 8-9.

Note: Holiness is a gift, it is a status, a relationship resolved by God, not an extra work to be done by man after justification.

5. Living In Holiness

- (1) By living out the gift given: I John 3:3; 11 Peter 1:3-11.
This is the life of faith, (Romans 1: 16-17.)
- (2) Holiness is the relational action of love: Heb. 12:14-17; 1 John v1:5-7; 2:9-11; 3:10.
Such love comes from a purified heart. (I Tim. 1: 5; I Peter 1: 2 2).
- (3) It is by dependency upon the Spirit: Romans 8:13; Gal. 5:16-26.
In this way Christ is shaped in us, (Gal. 4:19).
- (4) All is progressive to a full entrance into life: I Cor. 3:10-15; 15:58; Rev. 22:4; 1 Cor. 13:12; IIPeter 1:10-11; II John 8.

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STUDY NINE: MAN AND THE LIFE OF FAITH

Galatians 2:20. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

For many evangelical Christians the life of faith is some mystical experience attained by the few 'super' Christians. We shall see that it is not some mystical experience, neither is it for the few 'super' Christians.

1. Faith Is Our Response To God's Initiative

Luke 1: 38. Mary's faith was her response to the Word of God. Through her faith earth became the visited planet.

When Jesus praised people's faith he was not praising some mystical state but usually speaking of a concrete situation by which people responded to him, e. g. Lk. 7:1-10; Mk. 5: 21-34, cf. Matt. 17: 20. How much faith did Martha need to get Lazarus back from the dead? John 11: 38-40). Faith is our decision to respond to God's Word, a decision which develops into an attitude.

1. God takes the initiative. 2. I respond. 3. I enter a relationship. Hence faith is not a feeling though it may be accompanied by feelings.

2. The Purpose And Scope Of Faith

Heb.11: 1. Faith is the, assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. The sphere of faith's operation is beyond time and space. It bridges the gap between our humanity and God. All we do is obey God. It is a link in a complex chain by which God brings His will to pass.

3. Increasing Our Faith

Strong faith is faith that continues to respond to the Word of God in the absence of outward encouragement. e.g. the hope of Christ's return. (Heb. 11:11-12; Acts 16:25). The ability not to stop obeying whatever may seem to go wrong, is strong faith.

Faith involves decisions and attitudes which are associated with the will, but faith is not will power and will power is not faith. Faith has to do with a personal relationship; it is faith in God who has spoken.

Faith is increased by

(1) Remembering trials. Remembering the difficult times and how God brought us through them, (Heb. 10: 32-35). Difficult times either make us or break us. (Job. 2: 9; cf. 13: 15).

- (2) Remembering God's Promises; Heb. 10: 35. Faith grows by feeding on the Word of God, (Rom. 10: 17). See also (Heb. 12:1) where the 'cloud of witnesses' means not so much they who look at us but we who look to them - for encouragement. The Bible contains a crowd of examples of men and women who bear witness to God's faithfulness; the prime exemplar being Christ himself, (Heb. 12: 2).
- (3) Remembering our Priority: the Christian is a one priority person, (Matt. 6: 24; 6: 33). First and foremost we are Christians before we fulfil any other roles.
- (4) Remembering God's Fatherly Chastisement: to increase our faith is the Lord's goal before ever it is ours. (I Pet. 1: 7; Heb. 12:5-11). Faith grows by discipline applied by the Father of the family. We either cooperate with this process or seek to buck it. Discipline is evidence of parental love; it is painful but purposeful, (Jas. 1:2-3) and he is personally involved, (Isaiah 63: 9).

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STUDY TEN: MAN AND THE LIFE OF HOPE

Dr. B. Hardman.

Introduction: When we state that Christ is the only hope we are presupposing that those who are not Christians have no hope, or have false hopes. Though it is important to understand this lack of hope or this existence of false hopes, our most important task is to know just what is the content of our hope in Christ. Paul describes life before conversion as a life 'separated from Christ ... having no hope and without God in the world' (Eph. 2:12). Peter tells us that we 'have been born anew to a living hope', (I Pet. 1: 3). When we announce the fallacy of human hopes we have to demonstrate the Christian hope, we have to make a defence ... for the hope that is in us', (I Pet. 3: 15). We must show what the hope in Jesus Christ produces in our lives, to articulate the way in which the hope of the Gospel judges other hopes. Faith in Christ who is the only hope will produce visible changes in life here on earth. There is a present as well as a future dimension in the hope that we are proclaiming.

We are living in an era of despair. There is a great contrast between the attitude of intellectuals at the beginning of this century and the common attitude today. At the beginning of this century many great teachers, philosophers, and historians had supreme confidence in reason, hope in progress, and a certain security that mankind was steadily progressing towards a utopia, an era of happiness and abundance. Events have taken place through the past 80 years which have destroyed this optimistic faith. The voices we hear today are pessimistic, they are groans.

Accompanying this atmosphere of gloom there is the awakening of a new religiosity which, in some of its manifestations, includes disillusion with western society and an earnest search for an answer to the deepest demands of the soul.

1. The Groaning Of Creation Rom. 8:18-25.

Paul sees around him the whole creation groaning, and he also groans, (22-24). He also has hope. Christ and the Apostles speak of the end of this age but not with the despair of contemporary pessimists, because the triumph of the Cross has touched the entire cosmos.

2. Christ The Lord Acts 2:36, 5:30-31; 10:36; 42.

(1) The paradox of hope; Acts 23: 6; 24: 15; 2 1; 26: 2-7: 23.

Christian hope does not minister to triumphalism but to service, (Phil. 2:1-11).

(2) The tension of hope; what we are and what we shall be, I John 3: 2-3; 1 Cor. 1: 26-29; 15: 42-54; 6:2; II Cor. 3:18.

3. Content Of Hope

- (1) The time before the return of Christ is the time of God's patience, (II Pet. 3: 9) and of the Spirit's presence (Matt. 28: 20; Eph. 1: 14; Rom. 8: 23).
- (2) Christ returns as Lord and Judge.. It takes up the prophetic 'day of the Lord', (II Pet. 3:1-10; Acts 17:30-31). Judgement and the love of God are complementary not contradictory. The Church lives the justice of God's Kingdom and prays for the work of the Spirit that touches hard hearts, (John 16:8-11).
- (3) Incentive to do good. Biblical eschatology (doctrine of the last things - the end times) has ethical consequences, (Acts 24: 15-16; 25; 11 Pet. 3:11-14).
- (4) Support for the daily battle. The hope of the final triumph of Christ provides a source of support for the life of glad obedience, (I Cor. 15:58).
- (5) Foretaste of a new creation. The Christian hope is also the hope of God's new creation, (II Pet. 3:11-13). A church which incarnates the lifestyle taught by the Word of God becomes a foretaste of the new creation in the world, and a sign of hope. Acts 1:6-11 shows us our task on earth in the light of our hope.

STUDY ELEVEN: MAN AND THE LIFE OF LOVE

Rev. D. Meatheringham.

1. To Love Is To Live

- (1) It is by the redemptive love of God that we live: I John 4:9-10. God's love is whole, full, holy and free. To 'live' is not to be thought of as 'religious', or merely 'inner spiritual life' but is the 'life' of relationships. John 10: 10; 17: 3; 1 John 5: 1f, 5: 20.
- (2) Therefore to live is to love: 3:10; 4:7-8, 16, 20-21. John 13:34f; 17:21; 1 John 2:9-11;
- (3) But true life is known in loving: I John 3:14. Love is the evidence that we are not existing in the sphere of death. Not to love is to remain in death. As life and love are a oneness, it is only as we love that we live out in the life of love. Luke. 18: 18-23; 9: 24; 6: 38; Matt. 5: 42; 11 Cor. 9: 6, 11 etc. Luke 19:1ff .

2. Love Is All

- (1) 'God is love' : I John 4:8,16. This means all that God is and does is love. It is the most theological thing of all so that there is nothing which God does which is not love in action. It is because God loves that He is provoked to wrath, love judges righteously, and love sacrifices to redeem what he has made.
- (2) The world is created out of love and for love: Eph. 1: 3- 7; Gen. 1: 31; Romans 1: 19; Ps. 19: 1ff; Ps. 33: 5; 119: 64. Thus the creation as a harmony can be summed up in love.
- (3) Love and man: Created in the image of God (Gen. 1: 26) man is made out of God's free love, is made for love and is designed to love. The whole of the law and the prophets are summed up in love. (Matt. 22: 34-40). This is why love is the fulfilling of the law. (Rom. 13:8-10; Gal. 5:14).
- (4) The greatest of all is love: I Cor. 13:13, i.e. it is the summum bonum.

3. All Love Is Giving

- (1) God is the luxurious giver: James 1:5,17; 1 Peter 3:7b; John 3:16; 4:10; Gal. 2:20; Rom. 8:32 etc.
- (2) It is an action and attitude of the whole person: Deut. 6:4f. This is primarily an act of the will, not of the feelings. It is that action which goes out to do another good for his own sake. Thus we love when we give., and this means the giving of ourselves. (I John 3:18; 1 Cor. 13:4-7).
- (3) There can be an imitation love: I Cor. 13:1-3. This when what we do and what we give is in place of giving ourselves.

- (4) Love does not deal in likes and dislikes, but simply loves: Rom. 5:6-10; Matt. 5:43-48. It is not discriminatory, nor does it love on condition of response, pleasantness, or potential conversion.
- (5) Love and hate: I John 3: 14 makes it clear that it is the absence of love that equals death. Such death is the equivalent of hate (I John 3: 11-13; 2: 9) therefore there is no neutral position of neither hating nor loving.

4. Love Is Obedience

- (1) Love is commanded: Matt. 22:34-40; John 13:34; 1 John 4: 21 etc. Therefore it is expected, and not beyond the realm of attainment. To obey is to love, and to love is to obey. I John 5:4, John 14:15; 11 John 6.
- (2) The redeemed can love: This is what they are redeemed for. The 'Spirit of love' (Col. 1:8; Rom. 15:13) brings the love of God, the love of Christ, and so the love of the cross into our hearts. (Romans 5:5-6). Thus we are born anew of the love of God, and 'we love because He first loved us'. (I John 4:19).
- (3) Those who know love have dissolved all their 'Buts!': Therefore we are to simply move out into love and so love.

STUDY TWELVE: MAN SHARING THE GOSPEL

Rev. D. Meatheringham.

1 Introduction

- (1) This is renewed man. Forgiven and cleansed man. The man restored to the Father and the family. This man has received the promises of God and the gift of the Spirit.
- (2) To be sharing the gospel is to be about the Father's family business, e.g. John 20:21.
- (3) Sharing the gospel is the action of evangelisation. The context of the gospel is the creation, and the gospel shared affects men and women in the wholeness of created life.
- (4) Evangelisation includes the definite content of the gospel in its noun use, and its use as a verb tells us that in such sharing the gospel works its own power.

2. Hearing The Will Of The Father

- (1) While guilt stymies us we do not hear, e.g. Isaiah 6: 6-8.
- (2) This effects how we hear the so-called 'great commission' passages of Matt. 28:18ff; Luke 24:44-49; John 20:21; Acts 1: 1-8 etc.
- (3) In each of the above passages the disciples are in the presence of the risen Lord. It is not that Jesus has to press them to go, rather it is assumed that they would be wanting to go and Jesus is instructing them what to do in their going.

3. Motivated And Empowered To Share

- (1) Acts 1: 8 tells that when the Spirit empowers they will be witnesses to the ends of the earth, i.e. it will be a spontaneous outflow of wills and lives gripped by the truth.
- (2) The following passages show the surge of life. Acts 2: 4, 6, 11; 4:19, 31, 8:4 etc.
- (3) Paul is gripped by the love of Christ II Cor. 5:14, and preaches the gospel as a free man, I Cor. 9:15-18, yet making himself the servant of all for the sake of the gospel, (I Cor. 9:19-23).
- (4) The gospel grows out of the life of the gospel itself Acts 6: 7; 12:24 cf. I Thess. 1:5-8.

4. The Gospel Is Shared By The Power Of The Gospel

- (1) The gospel of God carries its own dynamic and power. Romans 1:16-17; 1 Cor. 1:17-18, 21, 24; 2:2; 4:20; 1 Thess. 1:5;2:13;1 Peter 1:23-25 etc.
- (2) This is the prophetic word of God. Acts 1:8; 2:17f; 4:31, 33. It is the preaching of Christ, (Romans 10: 17) which is the essence of prophecy and the ministry of the Lord Christ. Rev. 19: 10 cf. I Peter 1: 10-12; 11 Peter 1:20f.

5. The Gospel Is Shared In Our Weakness And Dependency

(1) The gospel's power is not in the ingenuity or eloquence of man. (I Cor. 1:17, 25; 2:1-5.)

(2) We have the gospel treasure in earthen vessels. (II Cor. 4:6f.) By the power of the gospel we overcome the resistance of men and powers of evil. (Eph. 6:10ff; 11 Cor. 10: 3-6). This is the forgiven, new humanity in Christ.

(3) The Spirit is given for power in proclamation. John 16:8-11; Acts 1:8; 4:29-31. This is where God's power is made perfect in our weakness (II Cor - 12: 9) and the people of God overcome a world which has been stripped of its power in the cross.

STUDY THIRTEEN: JESUS, THE MAN OF OBEDIENCE

Dr. B. Hardman.

Introduction:

A major feature in the Christian teaching of reconciliation is the obedience of Christ. Many passages in the Gospels and Epistles depict or refer to Jesus' obedient response to the Father's will, e.g. John 8:29; 4:34, 5:30; 6:38; Heb. 10:7.

1. His Passive Obedience

His suffering and death.

Key passage Phil. 2:6-11, with the accent on V.8. 'He became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.' Relates back to the first Adam and Isaiah 53.

Throughout the NT the death of Christ is given in terms of God's love and in terms of Jesus' willing obedience, e.g. John 3:16; Rom. 5: 8; Eph. 5: 21; 5: 25; Gal. 2: 20.

The redemptive death was rooted in the willing obedience of Christ (Mark 8: 31; 10: 45; 2: 20; Heb. 9:14; Luke 12: 50; John 10: 17-18.)

At the cross there was the convergence of:

- a. divine love
- b. divine justice
- c. Christ's willing and sacrificial obedience
- d. man's desperate need.

The death of Christ, the supreme act of love and obedience is what has been called his passive obedience. See Rom. 3: 26; John 19: 30; Gal. 3:13-14; 11 Cor. 5:21; Col. 1:20-22; 2:14-15; Heb. 2:14-15.

2. His Active Obedience

His fulfilling of the Law

The declared purpose of Jesus included a fulfilling of all the obligations and demands of the law of Moses, Matt. 5:17-18; Rom. 5:19.

He presented before the Father a positive righteousness for all who by faith take their stand, 'in him'. (Gal. 4: 4-5).

Note the accent on the faithfulness of Jesus in the phrase, 'through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ'. Paul thought of our justification, righteousness and access before God as based upon Christ's perfect obedience during his earthly life to the will of God expressed in the law of Moses, as well as his sacrifice on the cross. Rom. 3: 22; Gal. 2:16; 3:22; Phil. 3:9; Eph. 3:12; 11 Cor. 1:20. It is his faithfulness to the will of God that is accepted and makes us righteous before the Father.

We are redeemed, uncondemned and reconciled because of Christ's passive obedience; we are possessors of a positive righteousness, justified and have access before the Father because of His active obedience.

3. His Obedience Perfected

Teaching of Hebrews: 5: 5-10; 2:10; 7:28.

The writer felt no uneasiness about portraying Christ in terms of both status (chapter 1) and process (the verses above). He learned obedience; he was made perfect, (compare Luke 2:52).

The writer is not referring to the Son's relationship to the Father and not to his moral qualities but to his redemptive capacity and work. Compare Acts 2:36; Rom. 1:4; Heb. 2:14-18; 4:14-16.

STUDY FOURTEEN: THE FREE MAN - PAUL

Dr. B. Hardman.

Introduction

- a. Paul loves 'freedom' language. See especially Rom. 6-8; 1 Cor. 7-10; Gal. 2-5.
- b. The noun is never used in the secular sense of political freedom nor in the sense of freedom to do what you like. For Paul 'freedom' is to be seen in the light of 'the glorious liberty of the children of God', Rom. 8:21. See also II Cor. 3:17; Gal. 2: 4; 5: 1. Even the verb is used exclusively for what happens or has happened through Jesus, Rom.6:18. The adjective used in the secular sense of being free and not a slave, Gal. 3: 28; Eph. 6: 8; Col. 3: 11, or being independent with regard to a law, Rom. 7:3 leads to the special idea of being free in Christ, Gal. 4:26, 31; 5: 1. The characteristic of being free is that we are slaves of Christ, (I Cor. 9:19; 7: 22).

1. What Does Freedom Mean?

1. Man is unfree, Rom. 6:20. True freedom lies in life with God (Rom. 6:22, Gal. 5:1,13.) The free man does not belong to himself; I Cor. 6:19; 9:19; Rom. 6:18,22; Gal. 5:1, 11 Cor. 5:15; 1 Cor. 3: 21, 23. This freedom releases us from powers which would separate us from God, (Rom. 8: 38; Gal. 4: 3, 9; 1 Cor. 15: 24.)

2. What Are We Freed From?

Man is subject to the powers of this age, (Eph. 6:12). Hence in Christ we are freed from such powers - sin, (Rom. 6:18-22; 8:2ff; Satan, (Eph. 6:12); law, (Rom. 7:3-6; 8:3; Gal. 2:4; 4:21-31; 5:1-13); death, (Rom. 6:20-23; 8:21). It is liberation from the old self, (Rom. 6:6; Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9).

3. The Means of Freedom

For Paul, our freedom does not lie within our own capacities. It is given to us, (Gal. 5: 1), in the event of the cross, (Gal. 3: 13) It becomes ours when we open ourselves to the gospel, (II Cor. 5:20-21; Rom. 10:14ff). The Gospel calls us to live according to the Spirit, (Rom. 8:12f; Gal. 6:8; 11 Cor. 3:17; Rom. 8:1ff; Gal. 5:18).

4. The Goal Of Freedom

Freedom can be misused, (Gal.5:13-14). We show our freedom in service of God, (I Thess.1:9) and of our fellows, (I Cor.9:19; 5:14. if we are free, we are Christ's slaves, (I Cor.7:22; Rom.1:1; Phil. 1:1) a service which can take many forms, (Gal.5:22; I Cor.9:19ff) but the decisive factor is love, (I Cor. 13).

5. Political Freedom

This present concern hardly surfaces in the NT. In the church the old distinctions which reflects the environment of the ancient world remained, (Philemon; I Cor.14:34). Yet finally these distinctions are irrelevant, (Gal. 3: 28; 1 Cor. 12:13; Col. 3: 11). For Paul and therefore for every Christian the church is the community of free men and women, (Gal. 4: 21-31).

STUDY FIFTEEN: THE FREE WOMAN

Dr. B. Hardman.

LUKE13:10-17

1. The Living Word Replaces Dead Doctrine

1. Angry because something happens.
2. Wanting a message which demands no change.
3. The Word of God is dynamic.
4. Jesus came not only to speak of the Kingdom but to bring in the Kingdom.
5. The woman bound is a denial of Jesus' presence.

See Luke 14:15-17; John 13:17; Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 2:14; Rom.8:31.

2. The Living Word Brings Spiritual Liberty

1. The bent woman a sign of spiritual impotence (Is. 52:1-2).
2. The bent woman a sign of an impotent church.
3. The woman's wholeness a sign of Christ's will for His people. 'a daughter of Abraham' yet bound'
4. The bonds that bind, I John 1: 16; Matt. 12: 22; Col. 3: 3; Matt 6: 33.
5. The freedom promised, John 8:36; Rom. 7:24-25.

3. The Living Word Releases From Dead Tradition

1. Traditions unrooted in the Word of God.
2. Breaking the chains of dead traditions, Matt. 15:6; Rev.2:11.

STUDY SIXTEEN: MEN OF THE WORD - JEREMIAH

Dr. B. Hardman.

Introduction

Among the ancient Hebrews words were thought of as having an objective existence. This was specially true of words of blessing and cursing. How much more so the words of the Lord. The prophets were servants of the Word.

1. The Word Of The Lord And Jeremiah's Awareness

1:1-2.

He does not speak of the Spirit in connection with the coming of the Word to him. He does not have any visual experience accompanying the Word. The Word comes with the immediacy of a conversation.

To hear the Word means to make a response of faith and obedience to it. The words were Jeremiah's words but did not originate with him.

2. The Word Of The Lord And Jeremiah's Authority

1:4-10.

- a. The Word of the Lord communicated its authority to the bearer of the word.
- b. The source of the authority of the Word is God.

The Word requires to be proclaimed but the prophet is a servant of the Word to the end.

3. The Word Of The Lord Demands A Response

5:13-14; 6: 10-11.

- a. The response to Jeremiah's proclamation.
- b. The Divine reaction and the prophet's reaction.

4. The Word Of The Lord In Jeremiah's Experience

15:15-16; 20:7-9.

- a. Food to the soul.
- b. A reproach to the prophet.

5. The Word Of The Lord As A Criterion Of Judgement

23: 28-32.

Discerning between the true prophet and the false.

6. The Word Of The Lord Committed To Writing

36.

7. The Word Of The Lord Communicated Within A Context Of Prayer

3 7: 3, 7, 17; 38:14, 17; 42:1-9.

8. Summary And Conclusion

STUDY SEVENTEEN: MAN AT PRAYER - DANIEL

Dr. B. Hardman.

Daniel 9:1 - 19

Introduction

'I, Daniel, was reading the scriptures and reflecting . . .' V. 2. As his mind was gripped by the written word the urge to pray was born.

1. Tension Between What God Said And What We See

Tension is the bete noire of modern life, yet in the right context we need -more tension not less. The 'reality' of the world about us 'must' be made to conform with the reality of God's Word by prayer.

2. Expecting The Lord To Be Self-Consistent

The issue is not the fulfilment of prophecy but the consistency of the Lord who gave the prophecy. Vss. 4 and 7.

3. Identifying The Rebel Man

Daniel's knowledge of God reminded him of the sins of his people. To identify with sinners involves a change in perspective beyond a change of words.

4. Our Love And God's Judgement

Prayers must be realists. We cannot pray like Daniel unless we see things as they really are.

5. Motivation For Persistent Prayer

Tension can account for the beginning of prayer but not for its continuance. Our knowledge of God's character must be such that we are 'jealous' for His honour.

6. God-Centred Prayer

Praying this way carries us beyond ourselves. Our understanding of God is the most important fact about this.

V. 19 O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! For your sake, O my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your name.

STUDY EIGHTEEN: A WOMAN AT PRAYER

Dr. B. Hardman.

Luke 18:1 - 8

God offers His praying church a part in the governing of the world. See Gen. 18:20ff; Ex. 17:11ff.

In the world the great doers seem to be the ones to get things done.

The praying church seems completely helpless in face of the adversary but she has access to the Lord who rules the world. She has influence upon the last great day and can tip the fulcrum with folded hands.

1. HOW DOES THE WIDOW PRAY?

1. The integrity with which she presents her petition. She must gain the favour of the judge. 'Pestering' God is a sign that we take Him seriously. He does not want super-piety. 'Thy will be done', must never be the first petition in our prayers. God wants us to pray to Him.
2. The widow's intensity relates to the hardness of the judge. His justice is hidden and God's concern often seems to be hidden. But the Lord loves those who take the Kingdom of heaven by force. The judge is, in actuality, what God only appears to be to our feeble faith.
3. This story of this woman is directed towards the day of judgement. Watching and waiting and praying go together. The one who prays is wide awake. Those who pray are likely to be those who are most free from the tensions of this world.

Our prayers are heard above. But are there pray-ers here below?

STUDY NINETEEN: LIFE OF WORSHIP—I

Dr. B. Hardman.

Revelation 19:1 - 16

Introduction: We are here to worship the Lord by studying His word and by submitting ourselves to His authority as He speaks to us through that Word. What ought worship here or elsewhere mean to us in our life situations? The main object of worship is not the effect it may produce upon me. The object of worship is God and His glory. What should be the result of our worship in the context of life? We should learn from the church triumphant.

Amen

Allelujah

So let it be! God's will be done. Praise Yahweh, praise the Lord most mighty.

Amen:

1. Acceptance of the Will of God:

Worship can lead us to submission which is different from a pseudopietistic submission.

Through worship we come to know that in life's crises there is one thing needful - to possess Christ. John 13:7; Matt. 26:39; 42; 16:21-23.

2. Commitment to the Purpose of God:

Amen, thy will be done - and help us to do it. The Christian faith is not all submission. Too often the church has appeared as a reactionary influence in a revolutionary world. In reality it is the gospel which is revolutionary. The will of God is not simply to be accepted. It is something to be done. Acts 17:6; 1 Chron. 16:36.

Amen, Hallelujah:

3. Joy in the Fellowship of God:

The church triumphant is eternally happy. This joy is to be reflected in the church militant, however difficult the battle. Psalm 16:11; Rom. 5:3; Col. 1:11; Ps. 137:1.

4. Assurance of the Victory of God:

This is the root of real joy. The saints have always rejoiced because of history's 'crucial' event. Christ has triumphed. He reigns. Let us believe our faith wholeheartedly.

Amen, Hallelujah

STUDY TWENTY: THE LIFE OF WORSHIP - 11

Rev. D. Meatheringham.

1 .Introduction.

What we will give attention to in this study is the life of worship as expressed by the people of God together, through the variety of modes, and the unity of means given by God through the Spirit.

2. 'With One Voice'

I That together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ' (Rom. 15:5-6).

- (1) God's ultimate purpose is the unity of his people and all things in Christ (Ephes.1:9f; 2:1122; Rev.7:9-12; 21:212-27). This will be the glorified and unified creation praising God with one voice (Hab.2:14; Psa.117:1; Isa.49:6).
- (2) Worship is personal, yet corporate. Rom.15:5-6 shows that through God's steadfastness we live in harmony with each other so that in unison and symphony, under Christ's headship, we may praise the Father.

Romans 15:1-7 gives us the pattern of love, which is seeking the good of our neighbours. In welcoming one another we cause others to praise God. This is through Christ's not pleasing himself so that we can live in accord with Christ.

Excited with the Praise of God, David wants all to join him together (Ps. 34:3, cf. Ps. 95; etc.). Acts shows us the new people of God in worship and prayer together (2:42, 4:23ff; 6:4; 12:12; 13:1f; 15:1ff ; 20: 36ff ; etc.) .

From another angle we could call this the Family addressing the Father (Ephes.2:18f; Rom.8:1417; etc.).

- (3). Together God is known in his fulness. This is seen in Eph.3:19ff which is in the context of worship, love, the Spirit, the saints, and the indwelling of Christ. If we add to this Ps. 22: 3 that God inhabits the praises of his people then we speak of an incredible richness which is a foretaste of the future glory.

3. All Under The Direction Of The Spirit.

- (1) Worship is all in/by the Spirit (see notes, 'The Way of Worship I & II')

- (2) This has been called worship 'in the magnetic field of the Holy Spirit'. See Eph. 5: 18- 20. The praise is evoked by the Spirit's revelation of God in Christ. In Ephesians the worship edifies the whole, 'addressing one another'. The worship of the Spirit gives a regard for one another. True fellowship is expressed in worship. But the melody is also directed to the Lord (see also Col.3:12-17). It is joined with thanksgiving for everything.
- (3) True worship is in the Spirit. I Cor. 14:15 speaks of praying and singing in the Spirit (cf. Jude 20; 1 Cor. 12: 4). It is to be led by the Spirit and not the flesh. It is the deliberate, willing, yet often spontaneous worship of freedom, joy and awe. See Ps. 8 1: 10; John 7:38; Acts 2:11.

4. With The Gifts Of Unity.

- (1) The variety of spiritual gifts are for the whole. Rom.12:1-13; Eph.4:1-16; 1 Cor.12:7).
- (2) 1 Cor. 14: 26 pictures the Corinthian congregation at worship: -
- (a) The church is together in one place. Unbelievers may be present (v. 23).
 - (b) Many participate with the use of their charisma.
 - (c) The gifts are regulated (vs. 28,30). But this is not in a wooden manner (vs.39,40, cf. I Thess.5:19-20). The Spirit is not whimsical in this regard.
 - (d) It has to do with edification and upbuilding of the body (vs.3-5,12,17,19,26,31). Hence tongues needs interpretation and prophecy is to be encouraged.
 - (e) It is in a climate of worship (vs. 25-26; 11: 26).

(3) The Word of God and Worship. Prophecy and tongues, as well as the hymns, etc. are the communication of God to his worshipping people. We give proper honour to God by listening attentively. This would be the praise of hearing (Isa. 66:2, James 1:22f). Those who have this ministry must be 'apt to teach' (I Tim. 3: 2; Titus 1: 9). The Word flows from the Spirit for the purpose of man's worship of God. It appears that the Word is not an appendage to worship, nor is worship merely a build-up to the preaching of the Word, but all is part of the whole worshipping community.

5. The Ordinances Or Sacraments Are A Means Of Worship.

For example, the Lord's Supper (I Cor. 11: 23-34; cf. 10: 14-22).

Again the emphasis is upon the sign and pledge of God's grace, the unity of the people of God, the thanksgiving or Eucharist, and the proclamation of the Gospel. It is a participation of the whole family in the fellowship meal.

6. Intercession - Prayer.

I Tim. 2: 1f. This has already been covered in our previous studies, on prayer, yet is an integral 'First of all', of the people of God.

7. Conclusion.

The Father joins us together through his gospel in order that we may worship him. The Spirit is given to direct and evoke our glad and joyful praise so that together we are mended, exhorted, and edified by the Word of God. Worship is both ordered, biblical, and spontaneous. It is joyous, but also serious. Such worship is a testimony to God our Lord and Redeemer.

STUDY TWENTY-ONE: THE TRUE STEWARD

Dr. B. Hardman.

Using Money

Introduction: This study is limited to stewardship in relation to money, and to the way to use money, not to the way to get money, give money or raise money. The first study will have given a much wider sweep of the whole subject of Christian Stewardship. This study applies those principles to one aspect of the whole area.

Clearly stewardship is not confined to money (I Cor. 1-2; Tit. 1: 7; Luke 12: 42; 1 Pet. 4: 9-10).

1. Biblical Idea Of Stewardship.

(1) In the Roman world and in the Old Testament (Gen. 43: 19; 44: 1ff; Isa.22:15; I Kings 16:9; Dan. 1:11).

(2) The steward's double relationship:

(i) To his master he was a slave (Lk. 12: 42); I Cor. 4: 1; 6:19-20. The Macedonians 'first gave their own selves to the Lord' (I Cor. 8:3).

(ii) To the household over which he is overseer (Lk. 12:42; Gen. 1: 28). The property he controls is never his own (Hag. 2:8).

2. Qualities Expected In A Steward.

(Lk. 12:42; 19:17; 16:8).

(1) Faithfulness (I Cor. 4:2; Num. 12:7, Lk. 16:11). The Lord looks to us to be faithful, however much or however little of this world's goods we may possess.

(2) Wisdom (Lk. 16: 8). We are to give careful thought to ensure that we are using our resources profitably and worthily of the Lord who has entrusted them to us. We also have to use our resources in the light of our Lord's return (Luke 12:43).

3. Claims on Our Money.

1. Giving (Eph. 4:28).
2. Unpaid Debts (II Kings 4:7).
3. The State (Matt. 22:21; Mark 12:17; Luke 20:25; Rom. 13:7).
4. Family (I Tim. 5:8; 5:3-4; Mark 7:10ff).

4. How To Use Wealth - What is wealth?

1. We can hoard it (Matt. 25:18; 26)
2. We can spend it all on ourselves (Lk. 15:13)
3. We can buy idleness (Lk. 12:19; 11 Thess. 3: 11).
4. We can do good (I Tim. 6:17-18).

Conclusion.

We have not had time even to mention two important aspects of this application of the principle of stewardship to money - why we should give, and how we should give. The New Testament has full and often precise direction on motivation and method. Perhaps the statement of Paul brings it all together in II Cor. 8: 9 - 'You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was wealthy for your sakes he impoverished himself.'

STUDY TWENTY-TWO: CAIN: MAN OF BONDAGE

Rev. D. Meatheringham.

Introduction.

(1) Scripture: - Genesis 4:1-17.

(2) Following the rivalry of the man and the woman in Genesis 3, this passage continues the outworking of guilt and shame. The record of the first birth is also the record of the first murder. Cain is the father of all pharisaism, while Abel's faith still speaks. It can also be seen as the story and development of two humanities.

2. Alienated Man—See vs. 12, 14, 16.

(1) Cain the Vagabond. This is summed up in verse 16. The wanderer lives in 'the land of Wandering', i.e. Nod. It could be described as 'Nowhere Land'. Banished from Eden, man is no more at home in the universe.

(2) Radical Alienation. Modern man is described as alienated, e.g. Marx. Man is estranged. The world becomes upside-down. Exploitation, greed, and the political system are named as the problems, but the analysis does not go far enough.

Cain was a defiant rebel. His estrangement with men stems from his hostility to God. To be out with the Father is to be out with the Family and into the rivalry of class, race, and sex.

Cain is alienated from the land (vs. 11-12). The 'curse' of the ground could be its meanness in production, but more likely the withdrawal of the earth's strength is linked with Cain's inability to work it purposively and satisfyingly (cf. Gen. 3:17, 8:21f, Psa. 24:1; Matt. 5:45; 1 Tim. 4:4; Rom.8:20f). Under this judgement man sees the earth morbidly and threateningly, or romantically, so that he exploits it and blames it. Here are the beginnings of dualism's fruit. The stability between man and nature is broken.

The radical nature of man's alienation is not merely the seasons, political or monetary control, religious or spiritual lack, family hereditary, etc. but the rejection of the truth (Rom. 1:18-32).

(3) Cain's Mark (v. 15). Afraid of being avenged. He fears his loneliness, yet chooses it. He wishes for family security but cannot retrace his steps. The mark is simultaneously one of protection, and a stigma. The mark of insecurity and aloneness. Yet Cain does not believe God's word and goes from his presence.

3. The Seeds Of Alienation.

(1) Cain's Image of God. The way of his sacrifice, compared with Abel's, is an outworking of Cain's view of God and his thrust for illusory autonomy (vs. 2-5, cf. Heb.11:4). The 'elder brother' sought to reinforce his qualification with God by his offering. This perfectionism seeks to be as God (Isa. 14: 14). Refuses the God of all grace and expresses itself in religious Pharisaism (Luke 15:11-32; 18:14; Matt. 20:1-16; Rom.11:35f; Gal.2:16).

- (2) Cain's Anger (v. 6). There is no fury like Pharisaical fury. Cain's fury arises from God's non-acceptance of his offering (Isa. 1:10ff).
It is the anger of things not going 'my way', which shows in the dejected face (Job 11: 15). Cain's anger found its primary source in the love of Abel and the love of God (I John 3:10-12). Cain sees God and Abel as unjust, which urges bi- sacrifice and compounds his bondage.
- (3) Cain Refuses to Own His Sin (v. 7). He did not have to be angry - he could have put it aside. 'If you do well ... ', means not good performance, or work to be accepted, but a change of disposition. His anger is irrational - 'then put it away' - for Cain's acceptance with God is not based on his score. But if Cain continues in the present direction, then he will be mastered by it (John 8:34; Rom. 6: 16; 1 Cor. 15: 56; James 1: 13-15; 1 Peter 5: 8)
- (4) Cain denies responsibility. His murder of Abel is striking at God's image (Gen. 9: 6; 1 John 5: 1). He evades God's question in verse 9 and refuses to see Abel as his brother (Rom.3:9-20, cf. Amos 8:4ff).

In his judgement, God treats man with dignity by giving him his rights, but even here Cain is filled only with abject self-pity (v. 13).

4. Compounded Alienation.

- (1) Insecure man must secure himself. Only the grace of God secures man. Cain does this through the birth of Enoch and by building the city of Enoch (v. 17).
'Enoch' means 'consecration', given because the child's birth was a pledge of renovation for his life. It also carries with it the meaning of inaugurate, initiate. The city is a new world as opposed to the home of God's creation. This is the kingdom of man's construction. Now God is to be banished from his creation by the kingdom of man (Jude 11).
- (2) The power of the world. What man builds. and the systems he devises, become more powerful than their builder. The system also is a means used by man to suppress and exploit others (Gen. 4:23; 11:1ff; Gal. 1: 4; Rev. 18).
This, then, is a compounded bondage. Alienated man may analyse his problem, but because of the radical nature of sin can only make the curse more bearable, to be bound by his own cure.

5. Conclusion: No Diabetic Sweetness.

Revolution and violence bring no healing of alienation. Nor does social restructuring of itself reconcile. Religious sentiment only compounds it by 'fogging' the issue, preventing people from facing the world and themselves. It must be a 'gospel' which re-relates man to the world. It must be holistic. It must liberate the oppressed, and guard the strong. But it must diffuse man's anger, heal his past, cool his shame, and restore him in peace to his neighbours. It must judge his actual guilt before God so that man can take responsibility and become a new creation.

Hebrews 12: 24 gives us the clue. Whilst Abel's blood cries for judgement, Jesus has borne that judgement, in the sacrifice of God's grace.

STUDY TWENTY-THREE: ABRAHAM: MAN OF VISION

Rev. B. Arthur.

Introduction.

Scripture: Acts 7:1-8; Romans 4:1-25.

All men need a vision. 'Without a vision the people cast off restraint, Prov. 29:17 Another translation says 'Where there is no vision the people run wild'. In this context vision is used to signify prophetic ministry. Abraham was a man of vision. But he was no dreamer, brilliant in conjuring up exciting ideas about how God operates. We are inundated today with good ideas, visionaries who have become an integral part of the motivational machinery of the Church.

Abraham's vision was formed by what God declared and was vindicated amid the tremors of Israel's history to be fully ripened in our Lord himself. John 8:56.

2. True Glory: True Vision

See Acts 7:2 - 'The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia ... I By this Stephen meant that God appeared unmistakably to Abraham and the impact of the revelation of His glory propelled Abraham into a hearty obedience.

(1) Vision and Revelation. Abraham like every other man could not arrive at a true vision of God's destiny apart from grace. The revelation that God was calling Abraham into the fatherhood of Messiah's people was the revelation to Abraham that God was the God of grace, (Rom. 4:1ff). The command to leave Mesopotamia (Gen. 12:1f) was not the beginning of Abraham's vision. The vision began when Abraham began to know the God who was calling him. God was concerned that the father of His nation be like Him not just listen to Him.

(2) Vision and Covenant. As we said earlier, Abraham's vision was formed by what God declared. In His covenant to Abraham God declared three things.

- (a) He would be Abraham's God and the God of Abraham's family forever. (Gen. 17: 7).
- (b) Canaan would be given to them as their land, (Gen. 17:8).
- (c) Abraham's seed would form many nations and the means by which God would bless all families on the earth, (Gen. 12: 3; 17: 5, 6).

God's sovereign power was experienced by Abraham as God kept the covenant. Abraham's faith was sustained by God's promises. (Rom. 4:18).

(3) Vision and faith. Abraham became known as the father of those who believe. (Rom. 4: 11). In that same chapter Paul shows how Abraham has always been the example to Israel that true vision related to true faith not performance. See also Heb.11:8; 17;Gal. 3:5-29.

3. The Vision Tested.

When God establishes a man it is no place for the sentimental. Abraham's vision of God and His plan was vindicated in the furnace of suffering and tension. Two experiences that highlight this are:

- (1) God is in control; without a son the covenant would fail and the vision be lost. Abraham was established in the good hope of grace when God gave Isaac to a barren woman and a man as good as dead. (Heb. 11:11f; See Gen. 18:9f, 21:1f).
- (2) Fashioned as a father on Mt. Moriah (Gen. 22:1-19). As well as testing Abraham's faith (Heb. 11:17f) that God would resurrect Isaac, Abraham was graced with a revelation of Father God on Mt. Moriah that deeply fashioned his own fathering of Israel. God was The Father who would not only raise the knife of judgment over His own Son but there would be nobody to stay His arm. The true nature of Fatherhood involves suffering - Abraham had learnt a rich truth that gave substance to his own existence and the vision ahead of Messiah.
- (3) Home yet not really: Man longs for an established 'secure' situation. Abraham came to the covenanted land yet lived in it as an alien. He was to be forced out of it by a famine and live in Egypt for years. Yet he knew that home was still ahead, truly secure - the great company of God's children. See Heb. 11: 8-10 also Gen. 12:10f.

4. The Vision Vindicated.

The promise had been clear. 'In your seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed' Gen. 12:13. In the N.T. the 'seed' is clearly the Lord, Gal. 3:15f. Our Lord makes it even more apparent that Abraham's vision culminated in his own ministry when he said, 'Abraham rejoiced to see my day; he saw it and was glad' (John 8:56). Paul refers to our Lord as, 'The blessing of Abraham' Gal. 3:14, and links it directly to receiving the promise of the Spirit through faith.

All men need a vision, a sense of destiny. We share by faith in the outworking of the vision of Abraham. The God of glory who revealed Himself to Abraham has gathered us in Christ to be forever members of, 'the city which has foundation, whose architect and builder is God'

STUDY TWENTY-FOUR: MOSES: THE MEEK MAN

Rev D. Meatheringham.

Scripture Reading: Acts 7:17-38.

The Fame Of Moses.

Deuteronomy 34:10-12 says that there was 'none like him', as a prophet and for the mighty power he demonstrated in the sight of Israel. His fame, as a leader to mould together a motly multitude into a remarkable people bound in covenant to God's Law, and his 'face to face' relationship with Yahweh paramounds him in the Scriptures.

Stephen says that Moses accomplished this by the hand of the God who appeared to him (Acts 7:35). He did this by faith and 'endured as seeing him who is invisible' (Heb. 11: 27), i.e. all in dependency upon the living God, so making Moses the meekest man on the face of the earth (Num. 12: 3).

In this study we shall see what it means to be meek, how the meek inherit the earth, what their power is, and how they overcome their enemies.

2. Egyptian Upbringing And Attempted Liberation.

(1) Moses is called by grace. Acts 7:20 (cf. Exodus 2:3, Gen. 6:8; Luke 1: 28). Hence it is by faith that Moses' parents give him to Pharaoh's daughter (Heb. 11: 23). In Egypt Moses receives all the advantages of Egyptian education and experience (Acts 7:22).

He is a man of influence and power.

(2) His abortive liberation. Acts 7: 23-29 (cf. Ex. 2:11ff). For it to come into Moses' heart to visit his Hebrew kinsmen (Acts 7: 23) it seems that he was somehow aware of his calling and sought to do some thing about it. He rejects his adopting mother and identifies with his people (Heb. 11:24-26).

From, his upbringing and sense of call, coupled with the injustice which he saw it appears that Moses took it upon himself to do God's work for him (Acts 7: 25). Moses' hope was that the Israelites might recognise that they had a friend and an ally in an influential position through whom God would give them salvation. His own people do not understand him and reject him, and his idealism is frustrated. Hence he flees in fear, yet in faith, to spend 40 years in the land of Midian as a shepherd.

3. Commissioned By The Living God.

(1) The burning bush. Exodus 3:1ff. Now 80 years old, Moses is called by the Covenant God, who reveals himself to Moses as "I AM", the living and holy God.

(2) Moses' Self Depreciation may be summed up in 'Who am I .. I Exodus 3:11, cf. 4:10. Joined with his brother Aaron, the subdued Moses goes to Pharaoh, who after the plagues and wonders sends Israel out of Egypt (Ex. 14:15).

(3) All by faith. Hebrews 11: 1; 27-29. That is, now Moses is dependent upon, and relies upon God to liberate his people. God puts Moses, own power aside, not needing it, yet choosing to use the leader of his choice.

4. Moses' Identification With His People.

- (1) Identification is an expression of meekness. Though Israel moaned and whinged, incurring God's wrath, Moses stood with them, intervening for them (Exod.32:11-14; Num.12:1-3). His authority is challenged, yet Moses does not assert himself.¹ Meekness does not mean flabbiness, nor mere easy-goingness. He takes authority, gives leadership, speaks God's word, yet without defending himself, and without aggressiveness.
- (2) He shares responsibility. Exodus 18: 17-27. In Numbers 11:10-29 Moses is at the end of his tether and God empowers the 70 elders to share the responsibility with him.

Moses' anger. Numbers 20 shows the children of Israel complaining because they have no water. Previously in Exodus 17 Moses had simply smitten the rock with his rod. Now, in frustration, angry at the people and angry at God, Moses destroys his most potent opportunity to show love (Num.20:10-12).

5. The Meek Of The Earth.

Jesus says that it is only the meek who will inherit the earth (Matt. 5:5). These are not in a world conquest by worldly powers (II Cor. 10: 1-6). Their dependency is not in the power of 'technique' or politics, but in the grace of God. Meekness is the outflow of love, the love of the Spirit, which is the love that defeated the world in the Cross (Gal.5:23; James 1: 21; 1 Peter 3: 15). It rejects the philosophy, 'Might makes right', and does not insist on its own rights, any more than Christ insisted upon his.

¹ "They are proud of the prophetic gift, which ought rather to have fostered modesty in them. But such is the depravity of human nature, that they not only abuse the gifts of God towards the brother whom they despise, but by an ungodly and sacrilegious glorification extol the gifts in such a manner as to hide the Author of the gifts". (Calvin)

STUDY TWENTY-FIVE: HANNAH: WOMAN OF PRAYER.

Rev. B. Arthur

Introduction.

Scripture: I Samuel 1 & 2

'Hannah poured out her soul before the Lord'. These words express the heart of a remarkable woman. She was fashioned by God through deep suffering and anguish to know Him and hear Him in a unique way for her generation. Her prayer and ensuing hymn of praise reveal God's way of raising up a prophetess and a prophet - her son Samuel who was to begin the succession of prophets through to Malachi.

Prayer is no slick wordy formula or methodology but the relationship between a person and the Father. Hannah's prayer highlights this, and we will do well not imitate her method but rather to be open -to the Father's way as she was.

2. Hannah and Israel.

Israel, prior to the birth of Hannah's son Samuel, was a loosely associated, often warring group of tribal clans.

During the period of the Judges Israel became more and more unstable politically, and her faith had degenerated badly.

The Philistines who had struck out spasmodically at the bordering tribes of Israel during the time of the Judges were beginning to threaten in a way that a disorganised Israel could not withstand.

Spiritually Israel's leadership was at a low ebb. Apostasy and idolatry were commonplace. The priests were notoriously sinful and insensitive to what God was saying. (Samuel 2:12).

Israel needed a prophet who would re-direct the nation to the covenant, and the Law of Moses.

The nation then was in transition in Hannah's day, moving into its new kingdom structure. The people needed to know clearly the heart of God if they were to be led by a king who ruled as God's representative.

3. Hannah and her family.

Her name comes from the Hebrew word for grace. She was one of the two wives of Elkanah, a Levite, (See I Chron. 6:1ff). They lived at Ramathaim, some twenty miles north-west of Jerusalem. Each year, as the custom was right up until the time of Christ (Luke 2:41), they went as a family to at least one of the sacrificial ceremonies.

4. Hannah's Prayer.

(1) **From the depths:** It is apparent from vs's. 3 - 10, that Hannah was suffering deeply. Some of the elements of this anguish were:

- (a) Rejection and provocation by Peninnah, Elkanah's 'fruitful' wife, v. 16. Even Elkanah's love couldn't sooth her anguish, v. 18.
- (b) Loneliness: there was a cultural shame in barrenness, which combined with Peninnah's carping provocation must have given Hannah a heart heavy with the temptation to feel alone and less than a true woman.

These emotions climaxed in their trip to Shiloh and Hannah poured out her despair to the Lord. Along with her personal depths of despair it would seem from v. 11 that Hannah understood the real despair of the nation. She cried out of her depths that her son, if given, would be returned to God and Israel as a Nazarite, one separated for God to do the work of a prophet.

We should note two features of Hannah's prayer:

- (i) She wasn't bargaining with God.
 - (ii) She wasn't praying with fatalistic desperation, e.g. 'all I can do is pray'.
- (2) **Personal intensity:** Eli mistook Hannah's intensity for drunkenness (see v. 13 and cf. with Acts 3: 13), but she insisted that she was a woman of integrity. Hannah's experience in this instance was probably similar to that spoken of by Paul in Romans 8: 26. Her suffering had brought her, as nothing else could, to cry out truly and strongly to her God. Her intensity was that of a daughter relating to her Father. The reality of this experience was the preparation for her motherhood of Samuel.
- (3) **Simple expectation:** The action of pouring out her soul to the Lord and the consequential word of promise from Eli (vs. 17) brought release to her heart, 'Her face was no longer sad', (v. 18). Her prayer was accompanied by a broken spirit not a bitter grizzle, so she knew the blessing of the gift of faith.

5. Hannah's Praise.

The fruit of Hannah's prayer was twofold:

- (i) Samuel was born and returned to the Lord by a mother full of the purpose of God in Israel and history. Note: The temptation to see Samuel as a vindication of her womanhood in front of Peninnah was clearly resisted.
- (ii) She prophesied of God's true nature (2:1- 10; should be studied carefully to see the true results of Hannah's suffering and prayer by the grace of God.) Her prophecy included a clear word about Messiah - the one who would bring true unity and strength to Israel.

STUDY TWENTY-SIX: DAVID: MAN OF GRACE

Rev. D. Meatheringham

1. Introduction.

Scripture: II Samuel 7:1-22.

- (1) The fame of David is given in a very complete account of his life as he is the subject of several books in the O.T. Coupled with this we also have David's self-expression in his poetry and songs, especially in the Psalms of David.
- (2) It has been said that David was the greatest military commander and statesman of all history. He was the architect of a nation, the ideal king to whom Israel looked back, and David became a 'type' of the true Messianic King who was to come.
- (3) The Bible gives us a realistic picture of the man. Contradictions, inconsistencies, and human headiness are not papered over. David was God's man. He knew God. David loved his Lord, and obeyed him. The God David knew was the God of grace. He gives recognition of this and praise for this in many places, and it is succinctly expressed in II Samuel 7:18.
- (4) By his spokesman God can say: 'I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my own heart, who will do my will' (cf. Acts 13: 22). This is the man of grace.

2. Grace And Preparation.

- (1) Preparation occurs in the family. Jesse was the father of eight sons; only the names of seven are known (I Sam. 16: 10-11, I Chron. 2: 13-15). David was born when his father was old - the last of a string of children. It may have been the second marriage for both of his parents, with David's brothers being step-brothers (II Sam. 17: 25). Whatever, it appears he had a strained start to life, so that when Samuel wanted to see all of Jesse's sons, Jesse didn't bother to bring David.
- (2) In the trial of boyhood David is prepared, i.e. in his actions and reactions. The shepherd is saved from the lion and the bear. By circumstances and nature he was not likely to attain to greatness. Yet the grace of God was going before, nothing is of insignificance, all is contributory. Years later David can say:

'For thou didst form my inward parts,
 thou didst knit me together in my mother's womb.
 I praise thee, for thou art fearful and wonderful.
 Wonderful are thy works!
 Thou knowest me right well;
 my frame was not hidden from thee,
 when I was being made in secret (Psa.139:13-15).

3. Grace and Calling (11 Samuel 7:8).

- (1) David is anointed by God (I Sam.16:13). Saul had sinned and failed. David was overlooked, yet God truly chose and anointed in accord with the Deuteronomic claim that he himself would choose the King.

Now in dependency upon the living God, David is given the Spirit both to know the will of God and to do it - Compare 11 Samuel 23: 2-3ff.

- (2) The giant is slain. The Lord who had delivered him from bear and lion would likewise deliver him from Goliath (I Sam. 17: 37), and this victory would not be by David's superior soldiery, but by the living God (I Sam. 17:45,47).
- (3) David does not assert his anointing. Under threat of death from a jealous Saul, David becomes a vagabond. For ten years he is an outcast. He lives with the Philistines, and as an outlaw. He does not attempt to kill God's anointed, Saul, but waits in faith for the promise of God (I Sam. 24: 4-7, 9-10, 17-20).
- (4) David is made king. First at Hebron at 37 years old (Saul has suicided, I Sam.31:4ff). David unifies the tribes of Israel, puts down rebellion, defeats Israel's enemies including the Philistines, and finally takes the fortified city of Jebus, bringing the Ark into the city of Zion, the city of God (II Sam. 5: 6-10, 6: 12-15). David sought the Lord in his ventures and hence acknowledges that all he has, he has a gift from God (II Sam. 7:8-9, 18-22).

4. Grace and Sin.

- (1) Grace and pardon for sin (e.g. Psa.24:3-6). David can hate Nabal, icon' Abiathar the priest, pretend insanity in Gath, be treacherous at Ziklag, wipe out whole villages, etc. Yet he trusts the God who pardons guilt, the God who is gracious and forgives sin (e.g. Psa. 25:6-7; 10, 11, 16-18).
- 2) Grace is not a cover for sin. It is at the height of his success that presumption imposes itself. David scorns the word of God (11 Sam. 12:14). What he does is not an uncontrollable sudden impulse. II Sam. 11 tells how David takes Uriah's wife Bathsheba, endeavours to hide his sin, and in failing that, kills Uriah. What he did 'displeased the Lord' (II Sam. 11: 27), yet it took a word from God by Nathan to convince David of his guilt (II Sam. 12:1ff). He has forgotten grace, or seen grace as a right (II Sam. 12:7- 9). He is living against the God who loves him.
- (3) David takes responsibility for his actions (11 Sam. 12:13). Rationalising his actions becomes deadly (Psa. 32: 2). David acknowledges it to the Lord who will not impute sin (Psa. 32:1, 5). It is on the grounds of God's steadfast love that David cries to be clean, acknowledging that the grace of judgement is what makes grace grace (Psa. 51). In Psalm 51 David knows that there is nothing he can offer which will make him acceptable to God: It must be his dependency upon the steadfast love of the Lord.

This is the love that triumphs over sin in the Cross (Rom. 5: 20, 6: 6-7,14). It is the love that cleanses and renews (II Sam. 12: 13), and it is the love that enables David to deal with the consequences of his sin, especially in the life of his family and between his children.

5. Grace and Hope.

The promise of David is that instead of him building God a house, God would build his own house (II Sam. 7:11-13). Psalm such as 2, 72, 110 go beyond the merely human and point to the divine Messiah. David typifies all true Kingship, he administrates the law and executes justice for the people (II Sam. 8:15). Kindness and compassion show him as a true shepherd. This obedience is purposive and buoyant. He has a heart after God's heart, and it is only as he knows the depths of grace in all his actions and sin that David is a man of grace.

Study 27—"MARY: WOMAN OF HUMILITY"

Rev. D. Meatheringham

Introduction.

- (1) Scripture: Luke 1:26-38.
- (2) There are at least two strong images of Mary the mother of our Lord that we have to clear before we can see this simple, but profoundly humble woman. (a) The cute, plastic, nativity tableau. (b) The cult which sees her more as a superwoman, with the office of 'Mediatrice of all graces'.
- (3) In Luke 1: 38 Mary shows her quiet submission to the word of God as his servant maid ready to do the will of her Master. There is nothing pretentious or spiritually ambitious here. The word she has received is that by the Holy Spirit she will be the mother of God's Son. In verse 37 Gabriel assures that this will be God's doing, literally, 'Every word of God shall not be powerless'. Mary is content to let God fulfil his word, believing that in his own way and in his own time God will do what he says.

2. God's Choice of Mary.

- (1) **The Favour of Grace** (Luke 1: 28,30). Some translations have 'Hail, Mary, full of grace,' which is a complete misunderstanding as it is interpreted to mean that Mary of herself would be the source of grace to other people. There gradually arose from this a belief in Mary's sinlessness. 'Full of grace' is correct enough if it means 'fully endowed with grace', but incorrect if meaning 'fully bestowing grace'. To be 'favoured' by God means to be chosen by him out of his grace to fulfil his purpose, e.g. Noah in Genesis 6:8 (cf. Ephes 2:8-10).
- (2) **Mary's Straightforward Response**. We find that she is 'troubled' (Luke 1: 29). Why should God be calling her? She could not understand why she had been favoured, or why God's grace had come upon her. Her question in Luke 1:34 is not that of unbelieving reason, but simply that as her betrothal to Joseph was not yet consummated in marriage, how would she bear a son?
Mary's response could have been negative. Joseph did think of divorcing her (Matt 1: 19) and the penalty for adultery was severe (Deut 22:23f). But she submits her womanhood to God. She takes all that this means, and submits to the word of revelation.
- (3) **The Word of Revelation**. The prophetic word of God had revealed that God purposed to renew his creation, defeat Satan, liberate man, and send his Messiah. Mary sees the promise in fulfilment (Luke 1:54f) that she was the woman who would bear the Son in the fulness of time (Gal 4:4).

We have our fulfilment in participating in the purpose of God.

3. Mary's Song (Luke 1:46-55).

- (1) It follows the word and grace announced, and further confirmed by the Holy Spirit prophetically given by Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-45).

- (2) Faith comes by the word, and the song is a song of faith. Mary understands what God is about, and sings of God's acts of grace. This is borne out by the affinity which Mary's song has with the Song of Hannah (I Sam 2: 1-10).
- (3) The song expresses Mary's dependency. Her humility is not inverted pride, she accepts her femininity as God-given, and simply rests in what God promises, without trying to make herself more than she is.

4. Humility and Maturity.

- (1) Jesus and His Father's Business (Luke 2:41-51). This is when Jesus is 12 years old. His parents are 'astonished' at Jesus' intercourse with the teachers. If their astonishment had been concurrent with listening to what Jesus was saying, they would have understood. Jesus brings the possessiveness of his parents to the fore in his answer in verse 49. Mary has heard the word, she has all the events surrounding Jesus' birth in her heart, there have been the prophecies of Simeon and Anna, so that with all this she should have understood that Jesus was where he should be.
- (2) Mary Reflects on God's Word and Acts (Luke 2:19,51). She is not complicated or brilliant, rather she thinks through what is happening, and by her humility is matured.
- (3) The First of Jesus' Signs (John 2:1-12). With the shortage of wine and the domestic need, Mary seems to take this as opportunity for Jesus, to demonstrate his messiahship. She knew God's stamp was upon her Son, so she used her motherly powers to precipitate the action.
 Jesus' response (v.4) is abrupt. 'Woman' is not the usual form of address for a son to a mother, in either Hebrew or Greek culture. It is impersonal. Jesus' 'hour' is not this way, nor has it yet arrived. He will not be directed by his mother. Mary cannot presume to have Jesus do what she demands. A new relationship is being established.
 Mary's response is to do what Jesus says. She is not hurt, but acts in humility and trust.
- (4) The Sword of the Cross (John 19:25-29). After the wedding Mary does not push. The sword that would pierce her life includes the distress at the Cross (Luke 2: 35). Jesus has prepared her for this so that she is to see him as not only her son. This suffering is a gift which enables Mary to enter into the reality of the Cross.

5. The Word Fulfilled (Luke 1:38).

- (1) The Handmaid of the Lord is the Servant of the Word. That is, she obeys it, ponders it, responds to it, does it, and by the word Mary is brought to maturity through each of her experiences.
- (2) Mary Prophesies. Mary, with Jesus' brothers, is in the Upper room (Acts 1: 14) . All these are filled with the Spirit (Acts 2:1ff). One of the proclaimers was Mary (Acts 2: 11), who by the Spirit bears witness to Christ (Acts 2:17). What she has seen, wondered at, pondered, and obeyed flowers out. The living water flows, it is all of God's action, and it is the 'hungry who are filled with good things' (Luke 1: 53).
- (3) Conclusion: 'Let God be True' (Rom 3:4). This means 'We confess that God is true'. Mary confessed this and saw it. God is faithful to his promise which Calvin describes as 'the primary axiom of all Christian philosophy'.

Study 28—"PETER: TRAINED TO TRIUMPH"

D. Meatheringham

Introduction.

(1) Scripture: Luke 22:31-34.

(2) Peter comes to be a leader amongst the disciples of Jesus (Matt. 10:2, 14:28f, 17:24ff, Acts 1:15 etc.) He originated from Bethsaida (John 1:44) but probably due to his profession as a fisherman, and his marriage, he is also a resident of Capernaum (Mark 1:21, 29, 1 Cor. 9:5). With his younger brother Andrew, Peter made a living from the Sea of Galilee (Matt. 4:18, Mark 1:16, Luke 5: 3 etc.). Andrew was already a disciple of John the Baptist (John 1:35ff) so that while they were not part of the religious cast, they had imbibed something of the Messianic expectancy.

2. Encounter and Beginning.

(1) Note the title of the study, and relate to the stages, crises, reactions, development etc. that occur in our coming to faith. Yet this should not be taken to mean that the call of the disciples is the pattern of apprenticeship which we must undergo in order to arrive at our own Pentecost.

(2) Andrew introduces Peter to Jesus (John 1:40-42).

Jesus characterizes Peter as one who will be unshakeable, undaunting, reliable and steady.

(3) Jesus calls Peter to fish for men (Mark 1:16-17 cf. Matt. 4:18). This response must come from the impact of Jesus' person, Peter's own expectation, and the captivating power of love.

(4) It may be that the Synoptic Gospels presuppose the account in John, so that after this second encounter Peter follows Jesus constantly throughout his travels. What is clear is that Peter is discovering what it is to "believe" in Jesus (John 2:11).

3. Revelation and Reaction.

(1) The impact of Jesus' Lordship (Luke 5:1-11). This dispels whatever casualness there was in Peter's attitude, also bringing a revelation of himself, and a re-affirmation of his calling.

(2) What flesh and blood cannot reveal (Matt. 16:13-20). Peter sees that Jesus is no mere precursor of the Messiah and reinforces his given name. Now "rock" includes all who confess Christ whilst also seeing Peter and the Church being given the authority of the keys.

(3) Yet Peter does not see the true nature of Messianic power (Matt. 16:20-23). He sees it in terms of the politics of man.

(4) Peter's inability to handle the true nature of Jesus' messiahship is also seen in the transfiguration (Luke 9:28-36). Lversion and distraction are counteracted by the Father's command that his Son be heard.

(5) Peter seems to see a truth, act on it with quick decision, only to find himself out of his depth, e.g. walking on the water (Matt. 14:28-33) or at the feet washing (John 13:6-9).

4. Trial and Rehabilitation.

- (1) Strengthened through trial (Luke 22:31-34). The "you" in verse 31 is plural and applies to the disciples. The grounds for Satan's demands which can only be granted by God are their motives, their power elitism, and other such inconsistencies (cf. Job 1:6-12, Zech. 3:1-5, Jude 9, Rev. 12:10, 13:7 etc).

Jesus assures Peter ("you" this time in verse 32 is singular) that he will be kept so that "once you have retraced your steps" he will be a source of strength to his brethren, i.e. Those who go through deep waters are able to help others (e. g. II Cor. 1:3ff)

- (2) Self-confident Peter does what he says he would never do. He refuses to be identified with Jesus (Luke 22:33-34, 54-62).
- (3) By self-sufficiency Peter fails, yet learns in his failure, and in the cross, how it is that Messiah redeems the world. He goes through the cross to know finally that it is only the cross (John 18:10-11).
- (4) Peter's restoration is outlined in John 21. Again emptyhanded, at the direction of the risen Jesus they take a large haul of fish. Eager for forgiveness, and recognising Jesus, Peter again makes a dash. Of necessity, Peter's restoration carries pain (John 21:15-19). No longer can he boast of loving Jesus more than the others. He can only cling to what he knows is true he loves Christ, and now he shall be a shepherd.

5. Suffering and Triumph.

- (1) Pentecost brings understanding and proclamation - the use of the keys (Acts 2:11, 14ff, 23, 6, 47; 4: 8, 9)
- (2) Suffering is known now as a concomitant of the way of life (Acts 5:41). Like his Lord Peter knows the difference between triumphalism and the triumph of weakness (I Peter 2:21, 1:8).
- (3) Luke 22:32. Peter was trained to triumph in the midst of his failures, by being tested, knowing that Christ sustained his faith, realising the potency of forgiveness and restoration, participating in the unique redemptive sufferings of Christ, in his dependency upon the gift of the Spirit, and in the experience of the suffering love that disarms the world.

STUDY 29: PAUL: MAN OF THE KINGDOM

Rev. D. Meatheringham

Introduction.

- (1) Scripture: Acts 20:17-35.
- (2) ‘...I have gone about preaching the Kingdom of God...’ (v.25). It has been said that the only way to really penetrate Paul as a whole human being, is through his theology. (E.g. Acts 28:23, 30-31, Rom 14:17, Acts 19: 8, cf. Gal 5: 21, Col 4: 11, 1 Cor 4: 20, 6:9f, II Thess 1: 5).

2. Saul of Tarsus.

- (1) Tarsus was his place of birth (Acts 22:3, cf. 9:11, 21:39). He was also a free Roman citizen from birth (Acts 22:28), and had the rights of a citizen of Tarsus (Acts 21:39). As a Roman citizen he had a Roman name, Paul, yet according to Jewish custom, his father gave him the name of Saul when he was circumcised, perhaps after the first king of Israel and after the tribe of Benjamin (Phil 3:5, Rom 11:1). Doubtless after his conversion he was called Saul by the Jews, while as a Roman, and missionary to the Gentiles, he was always Paul (Acts 13:9).
According to Rabbinic custom Saul learned his trade as a leather worker, so as to support himself (I Thess 2: 9, II Thess 3: 8, etc.) -
- (2) Saul was a Pharisee (Acts 23:6, cf. Phil 3:6), i.e. descended of a line of Pharisees, and was trained in Jerusalem, under the famous Gamaliel, the elder and grandson of Hillel (Acts 22:3). Saul was well tutored in the law, and was proud of his knowledge, ancestry and religious zeal (Phil 3:3-6). He also knew what the Gospel was, i.e. he knew what the Christians taught, but rejected it, and in his religious zeal set out to destroy the gospel and those who preached it (Acts 9: 1ff, II Cor 5:16, cf. I Cor 12:3, Matt 7:21).
- (3) Saul and the Kingdom. Saul was in fact fighting against the Kingdom of God by endeavouring to secure himself and so build his own kingdom, viz., the kingdom of man and of the flesh, etc. See Acts 26:14.

3. The King and Saul.

- (1) The Events on the Road to Damascus (Acts 26:12-19).

Note: - Saul was in no mood to be reasoned with, nor was he humanly responsive to the Gospel (cf. Gal 1:13-16).

- The King crossed Saul’s path and he saw that Jesus is Lord.
- It was an objective appearance of Christ.
- Saul was struck blind for 3 days.
- Saul’s calling is purposive and has to do with the Kingdom. Through the ministry of Ananias, Saul regains his sight, is filled with the Holy Spirit, and is baptised into Christ (Acts 9:17-19).
- All this brings a Christological explosion in Saul.

- (2) Saul Preaches Immediately (Acts 9:19ff). His theology has turned right way up. (There is no three years in Arabia: the three years in Galatians 1: 18 refer to his visit to Jerusalem.) Faced with certain death Saul escapes from Damascus, goes to Jerusalem to be received with suspicion, returns to Tarsus, and is called by Barnabas to assist in establishing the church in Antioch.

4. Apostle to the Gentiles (Rom 1: 3-6, 15:18ff, 16:25ff.

- (1) This is his unmistakable calling (e.g. Acts 26:17f). At Antioch, Paul ministers to a Jew/Gentile church and from here both he and Barnabas are sent off on their three missionary journeys (Acts 13:1ff).
- (2) The Gentiles respond to the Gospel (e.g. Acts 13:48, etc.). Churches of Jews and Gentiles are formed. In this work Paul sees the Gospel in its cosmic dimensions, in terms of the Kingdom, in the perspective of what God is about as King.
- (3) Paul defends the Gentile churches (Acts 15, Gal 2), i.e. from being a Jewish cultic sect.

5. Man of the Kingdom.

- (1) This is seen in his freedom to proclaim (I Cor 9:15-18). He is no volunteer He is secure in God's grace, and under that grace he obeys.
- (2) He has rejected shoddy methods (II Cor 2:17, 4:2). He is not empire building.
- (3) His message and confidence is in the Gospel, e.g. I Cor 1:17ff, 2:1-5, Rom 1:16-17, 1 Thess 1:5, etc.
- (4) His true glory is in the Cross (Gal 6:14). Not in pleasing men, or himself. He is under the King, and in the power of the King, doing the King's work, in the way of the King, as a son of the King, the King whom he addresses as 'Abba!'