

## ***Sovereign Grace Union: Doctrinal Basis***

### ***The Holy Scriptures***

The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as originally given, as the inspired and infallible and inerrant Word of God, and as the sole, supreme, and all-sufficient authority in every matter of Christian faith and practice.

### ***The Trinity***

One living and true God, Sovereign in creation, providence and redemption, subsisting in three Persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – the same in substance, and equal in power and glory.

### ***The Lord Jesus Christ***

The Eternal Sonship and the essential, absolute, and eternal Deity, and true and sinless humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ; His virgin birth, death, and burial; His physical resurrection and ascension into heaven, and His coming again in power and glory.

### ***The Holy Spirit***

The Personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit, through Whom the sinner is born again to saving repentance and faith, and by Whom the saints are sanctified through the truth.

### ***The Fall of Man***

The fall of mankind in Adam, by which they have totally lost their original righteousness and holiness, and have come under the righteous condemnation of God.

### ***Unconditional Election***

The personal and unconditional election in Christ of a multitude which no man can number unto everlasting salvation, out of God's pure grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works in them.

### ***Particular Redemption***

The personal and eternal redemption from all sin and the penal consequence thereof, of all God's elect, by the substitutionary sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### ***Effectual Calling***

The effectual calling of all the elect by the irresistible grace of God.

### ***Justification***

The justification of sinners by faith alone, through the atoning death and resurrection and imputed righteousness of Christ.

### ***Final Perseverance***

The final perseverance in the state of grace of all those who have been elected by the Father, redeemed by the Son, and regenerated by the Holy Spirit, so that they shall never perish but have eternal life.

*In reference to the above, consult the XXXIX Articles of the Church of England, the Westminster Confession, the Savoy Declaration and the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith.*

## *Editorial*

As far back as 1936 Dr J. Gresham Machen spoke of Great Britain as being in grave danger. That danger, he perceived, threatened not from an enemy's war machine, but from within ourselves. It was the danger of losing that "transcendent principle of right to which all the peoples of the world are subject"; namely, liberty under the law of God. For centuries, he reminded us, there was "a large remnant in the British people that had a firm and well-grounded belief in their obligation to the law of God." Yet today, he continued, "there are hosts of people who do not believe that there is a law of God." Furthermore, those who do are fewer in number and less influential in national life than ever before. Hence his fear of tyranny and decadence filling the void.

Is the situation hopeless? he then asked. "I answer, certainly it is hopeless. Absolutely hopeless. . . . But, you see, there is One who can do hopeless things. That is the Spirit of the living God." That Spirit, he concluded, "has not lost His power. In His own good time . . . He will convict men of sin; He will break down men's pride; He will melt their stony hearts. Then He will lead them to the Saviour of their souls."

Were Dr Machen here today, he would be horrified at the extent to which his fears have been realized. Yet the One whose law we have cast aside has already warned us: "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee [the Church of God] shall perish." (Isa 60.12) "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face." (Hos 5.15) Therefore, "give glory to the LORD your God, before He cause darkness." (Jer 13.16) Our only remedy is national repentance. "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." (2 Chron 7.14) May we seek grace to take Him at His word, and give Him no rest, until He returns to us in mercy, and reveals His glory to all nations.

## *The Priest*

*by J.C. Ryle*

[In view of the widespread efforts in our day to call ministers “priests,” some claiming falsely that ‘priest’ is nothing more than a contraction of ‘presbyter,’ the following edited paper is a timely warning to all, both those who are duped into believing this pernicious error and those who care for the uniqueness of the Priesthood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Ed.]

“We have a Great High Priest.”  
(Hebrews 4.14)

He who wishes to have comfort in religion must have a priest. We are all such sinful, corrupt creatures that we are unfit by ourselves to have anything to do with God. And God is so holy a Being that He cannot bear that which is evil, and so high a Being that His majesty makes us afraid. We are so fallen and defective and guilty that we naturally shrink from God, and dare not speak to Him or look Him in the face. We need an almighty Friend between us. We need a Mediator and Advocate, able, willing, loving, commissioned, tried, proved and ready to help us. Have we a Priest?

The Christian religion provides the very thing that man’s soul and conscience require. It is the glory of God’s Word that it reveals to man the very Friend and Mediator that he needs - the God-Man Christ Jesus. It tells us of the very Priest that meets our needs - even Jesus the Son of God.

It will clear our way and throw light on the matter if I ask three questions and try to supply answers to them.

- 1. Where is Jesus Christ now?**
- 2. What is Jesus Christ doing now?**
- 3. What is Jesus Christ going to do?**

## 1. Where is Jesus Christ now?

Where is Jesus Christ *as God*? This is not the question I wish to consider. As God He is everywhere. He fills heaven and earth.

But where is Christ *as Man*? This is the point. Where is the body that was born of the Virgin Mary? Where is the head that was crowned with thorns? Where are the hands that were nailed to the cross, and the feet that walked by the Sea of Galilee?

I answer, in the words of Scripture: “He has entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” (Heb 9.24)

Let us mark this well. Christ, as Man, is *in heaven, and not in the grave*. Ancient Jews and modern Infidels profess to believe that the bones of Jesus of Nazareth are still lying, like the remains of any other man, in some Middle Eastern grave. But the resurrection of Christ is a great, unanswerable, undeniable fact.

Once more let us mark this point. Christ, as Man, is *in heaven, and not on the communion table*. He is not present at the Lord’s Supper under the form of bread and wine, as the Roman Catholics and some Anglicans say. The consecrated bread is not the body of Christ, and the consecrated wine is not the blood of Christ. Those elements are the emblem of something *absent*, and not of something *present*. “The sacramental bread and wine remain still in their very natural substance, and therefore may not be adored (for that were idolatry to be abhorred of all faithful Christians); and the natural body and blood of our Saviour Christ are in heaven and not here, it being against the truth of Christ’s natural body to be at one time in more places than one.” (*Prayer Book Rubric at the end of the Communion Service*)

Let these things sink down into our hearts. It is a point of vast importance to see clearly where Christ’s natural body and blood are. Let us not be moved for a moment by the Infidel, who sneers at miracles, and tries to persuade us that a religion based on miracles cannot be true. Jesus Christ staked the truth of His Messiahship on His resurrection, and told the Jews not to believe Him if He did not

rise from the dead. The Man Christ Jesus is in heaven, and not on earth.

Let us not be moved by the Roman Catholic, whose favourite doctrine is that Christ's body and blood are "really present" in the bread and wine of the Mass.

He who overthrows the doctrine of Christ's real, true and proper humanity is no friend to the Gospel, any more than he who denies His deity. Tell me that my Lord is not really Man, and you rob me of a half of my soul's comfort. Tell me that His body can be on earth and in heaven at the same time, and you tell me that He is not a Man. Let us resist this mischievous doctrine. Christ, as Man, is in heaven, and in heaven alone.

So much for the first question. Christ is in heaven, and not in the grave. Christ is in heaven, and not in the bread and wine at the Lord's Supper. Christ is in heaven, alive, and not dead. For ever let us glory in His atoning death. But never let us forget that He was raised again for our justification. His life in heaven is as important to us as His death on the cross. (Rom 5.10)

## **2. What is Jesus Christ doing now?**

Christ is now carrying on in heaven the work of a Priest that He began on earth. As a Priest He offered up His body and soul as a sacrifice for sin on the cross, and made a complete atonement for us with His own blood. As a Priest He ascended up on high, passed within the veil and entered into the presence of God. As a Priest He is now sitting at the right hand of God; and what He began actively on earth He is carrying on actively in heaven.

How does Christ exercise His priestly office?

(a) Christ, as our Priest, is *ever presenting the merits of His sacrifice for us before God*. He has no need to repeat that sacrifice. "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." (Heb 10.14) The atonement made on the cross for us is kept continually in remembrance by the appearance of Him who made it. Twenty-seven

times the visions of heaven in Revelation describe Christ as “the Lamb.” Twice they call Him “the Lamb slain.” Twice they speak of “His blood.” The Priest who offered the sacrifice is always in heaven: the sacrifice is never forgotten in heaven: and so they who trust in it are always acceptable in heaven.

(b) Christ, as our Priest, is *ever interceding for us in heaven*. It is written: “He is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.” (Heb 7.25) When Paul asks: “Who is he that condemneth?” one reason he gives why there is no condemnation for believers is the fact that “Christ maketh intercession for us.” (Rom 8.34) Our Lord prayed for His people (John 17) and for Peter (Luke 22.32). Our Great High Priest knows how to intercede.

(c) Christ, as our Priest, *presents the names of His people continually before His Father*. The names of the tribes of Israel on the ornaments of the Jewish high priest’s head and shoulders were figures of the names of Christians whom Christ represents in heaven. He “appears in the presence of God for us.” (Heb 9.24) He acts as the Representative of His people. Through Him they are known and thought of in heaven long before they go there. Their interests and safety are secured by their Head in heaven.

(d) Christ, as our Priest, *presents the prayers and services of His people before God*. This is a great mystery, but one that is full of consolation. It is hard to understand how any word or deed of sinful creatures like us can ever come into the presence of God. But the Priesthood of Christ explains all. Placed in His hands and endorsed by Him, our prayers, like bank cheques duly signed, obtain a value which they have not in themselves. A young Christian once said to an old one: “My prayers are so poor and weak that I cannot think they are of any use.” The old Christian replied with deep wisdom: “Only place them in Christ’s hands, and He makes them look so different in heaven that you would hardly recognize them.” Prayers that are worth

nothing in themselves are effectual when offered through Christ, for the sake of Christ, and through the mediation of Christ.

(e) Christ, as our Priest in heaven, is *ever doing the work of a Friend, a Protector, a Counsellor and Advocate, on behalf of His people*. Christ is ever watching over the interests of His people, and providing a continual supply of all they need. “He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps.” (Psa 121.4) “We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous” (1 John 2.1) - to hear the daily confessions of His saints and grant them daily absolution, to sympathize with them in all their troubles, guide them in their perplexities, strengthen them for their duties, preserve them in their temptations - all this is part of Christ’s Priestly office. “Seeing then that we have a Great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, . . . let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Heb 4.14,16)

(f) Finally, Christ, as our Priest in heaven, is *continually doing the work of a Receiver of sinners, and a Mediator between God and man*. Our Heavenly Priest is the person to whom labouring and heavy-laden souls ought always to be directed when they lack pardon and rest. He who feels the burden of sin on his conscience and wants it taken away ought to be told that there is One appointed by the Father for this very purpose, and that the first step he must take is to go to Him. The power of absolving every sinner who comes to Him is one grand part of Christ’s Priestly office. (John 17.3; Acts 5.31).

This is how Christ exercises the work of a Priest in heaven. I feel deeply that I have only touched the surface of it. Yet I do believe that no case is too hard for Him, and no sinner is too bad to be saved. His tenderness and sympathy, His longsuffering and patience, His wisdom, faithfulness and readiness to help, can never be known except by those who know them by experience, and even they know very little of their extent.

Let us thank God daily that Christ is doing the work of a Priest for us in heaven. Christ's Priesthood is the secret of daily comfort. Christ's Priesthood is the great secret of a saint's perseverance to the end. Left to ourselves we could not possibly get safely home. But thanks be to God, the Priesthood of Christ secures our safety.

Let us ever beware of any doctrine that interferes with the Priesthood of Christ. Any system of religion which teaches that we need other mediators beside Jesus, other priests beside Jesus, other intercessors beside Jesus, is unscriptural and dangerous to men's souls. What greater folly can be conceived than to flee to the Virgin Mary or the saints, or to put our souls in the hands of clergymen and ministers, when we have such a Priest as Jesus Christ in heaven? What can a woman who herself needed a Saviour (Luke 1.47) do for the souls of others? What single example have we in all the New Testament of anyone using a minister as a priest? This modern system, which is not satisfied with Christ's Priesthood, bears the mark of its origin on its face. It is from beneath, and not from above. "There is no office of Christ," says John Owen, "that Satan labours so hard to obscure and overthrow as His priestly one." Forever let us stand fast on this point. That Christ is carrying on the office of Priest in heaven is the crown and glory of Christian theology.

### **3. What is Jesus Christ going to do?**

I will answer that question in the words of Scripture: "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." (Heb 9.28) "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." (Acts 1.11)

The world has not done with Jesus Christ. The wicked, and worldly, and unbelieving, and skeptical, who flatter themselves that Christianity is worn out and dying away, will find themselves fearfully mistaken one day. The philosophers and admirers of science, falsely so called, who

talk of “modern progress” and “free thought” and sneer at “obsolete creeds,” will have their eyes rudely opened. That same Jesus, of whom they speak so lightly now, will appear to their confusion. Every eye shall see Him, and every knee shall bow before Him, and every tongue that has spoken against Him shall be silenced for ever. The Great High Priest shall come forth from within the veil and sit on His throne as King.

He will come, not spiritually and figuratively, but really, literally, truly and in the body, as He came the first time. But His presence will be very different from that which is now ignorantly talked of by the Church and the World.

He will not come in weakness and humiliation. He shall come “in the clouds of heaven” with power and great glory. He shall come attended by thousands of ministering angels, and with all the majesty of the King of kings. Before His face this universe will be shaken to its very centre. The Great High Priest shall return in power to reign!

For what purpose will He come? He will come to set up His throne of judgment, and to wind up the affairs of this sin-laden and bankrupt world. He will come to raise the dead and change the living. He will come to reckon with His professing churches, and to punish with everlasting destruction the impenitent, the unbelieving and the ungodly. They will find to their cost that there is such a thing as “the wrath of the Lamb.” He will come to bless and reward His own believing people, to gather them into one happy home, to wipe away all their tears and to give them a crown of glory that fadeth not away. (Rev 6.16)

When will He come? We do not know. “Of that day and hour knoweth no man: no, not the angels in heaven.” (Matt 24.36) The time is wisely withheld from us so that we may be kept in a watchful frame of mind.

Let us lean our souls on Christ’s Second Coming, as well as on His dying and interceding. When the governments of the world are reeling

and tottering, when the air is filled with wars and revolutions, when the nations are heaving up and down with unrest, when faith is faint and love is cold, and the best churches seem to be running to seed and decay, when men's hearts are failing them for fear in looking for the things coming on the earth, let us fix our eyes steadily on the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. That Great High Priest who died for us and intercedes for us will never forget His people or allow one lamb of His flock to perish. Let us look *back* to the cross. Let us look *up* to the right hand of God. Let us look *forward* to His promised return. "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." (Heb 10.37)

**Let us wind up our subject with a few words of application.**

1. First, have we a priest, and is that Priest Christ? We may be sure that if we have a religion without a priest, or with any priest except Christ, we are in awful danger. We are still unforgiven, unfit to die, unprepared to meet God. If we die without Christ as our Priest, we shall awake to find we had better never been born. It is not enough to talk of "God" and "mercy" and "providence" and "trying all we can" and "saying our prayers" and "going to church or chapel" and being a "member" here or there. This will never save us. We need Christ as our Priest, or we shall never be saved. Is Christ your Priest?

2. If Christ is our Priest, let us go to Him regularly and keep back nothing from Him. It is a sad fact that many believers enjoy the Gospel far less than they should, for lack of boldness in going to Christ as their Priest. They go mourning to heaven, poring over their infirmities and sins. They think only of the death of Christ, and not of His life. They think of His finished work on the cross, but forget His Priestly intercession. If this is our case, let us change our plan. Let us think of Christ as our loving Friend, to whom we may go morning, noon and night, every day. "Cast thy burden on the Lord, and He will sustain thee." (Psa 55.22) Let us live the life of faith on the Son of God, and hold communion with Him continually.

3. If Christ is our Priest, let us beware of ever giving His office to another. Let no man deceive us into supposing that we need any clergyman, or minister, or priest, of any church on earth, to be our spiritual director and soul's confessor.

This warning is greatly needed in our day. One of the most mischievous delusions of this age is the widespread attempt to teach the benefit of private confession to a priest.

Where is the Scriptural warrant for this? Nowhere! Not a single case can be shown in the New Testament where anyone confessed sin in private to a priest, or was privately absolved.

Where is the man who is really fit to be an habitual hearer of confessions? Nowhere! Such a man would need perfect knowledge, and to know that the person confessing is telling the truth. Such a man would need to be able to remain undamaged by hearing secret sins confessed. Such a man would need to use such knowledge rightly, and always to feel rightly towards those who confess. Such a man would need to possess full authority to pardon all the sins he hears confessed, and to set the conscience of the confessing person entirely free. There is only one such person, and that one is Christ Jesus the Lord.

Where is the wisdom of ignoring the lessons of history and experience? If there is one fact in Church History that is clearly established, it is that the confessional has led to floods of wickedness and immorality. I challenge anyone to deny this. He who wishes to re-introduce the practice of private confession into the Church of England is seeking to bring back among us a fountain of the worst kind of sins.

Where is the sense or reason of going to an earthly confessor when we may go to the best of all priests, the commissioned and appointed Priest, the perfect Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus? When His ear is deaf, and His heart is cold, and His hand is

feeble, and His power is exhausted, and His sympathy is gone, then, and not till then, it will be time to turn to earthly priests and earthly confessionals. We may be sure that nothing deepens our spiritual life which interposes anything between our souls and Christ. Ministers are useful only insofar as they promote communion between Jesus Christ and our souls. But the moment a minister begins to stand between our soul and Christ, even in the slightest degree, he becomes an enemy and not a friend to our peace.

Once more I repeat my warning. No priest but Christ! No confessor but Christ! No absolver but Christ! No spiritual director but Christ! No putting our conscience in the power of anyone but Christ!

Lastly, if Christ is our Priest, let us live always like men who look for His Second Coming. Let us live like men who long to see their Saviour face to face. Let us live like men who are found ready at any moment to be ushered into His immediate presence. Happy is the Christian who lives the life of faith in Christ dying, interceding and coming again! There is a crown laid up for who love His appearing. (2 Tim 4.8) Let us give diligence that this crown may be ours.

## **THE PRESBYTERIAN STANDARD**

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It contains a variety of items of a Reformed and Presbyterian nature. We believe this magazine to be of help and encouragement to many of the Lord's people.

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***Some Reformation Theologians:  
Martin Bucer (1491-1551)***  
by  
***Philip H. Eveson***

While the name of Martin Luther is rightly given a place of honour within Protestantism, Martin Bucer's contribution to the Protestant Reformation deserves to be better known. He stands next to Luther, Zwingli and Calvin, but unlike these men, he left behind no followers who bore his name. For four centuries he was ignored and misunderstood. It has only been during the course of the 20th century that the scholarly world has begun to consider in more detail the work, theology and influence of this first generation Reformation leader. Though regarded as a controversial figure in his own day, he was, nevertheless, esteemed as an honoured leader of the Protestant cause. John Calvin described him as 'that most excellent minister of Christ'. His great learning and godliness were much appreciated in England so that Hugh Latimer desired to embrace him 'as Simeon did Christ.'

**Survey of his life**

*Early Years*

Bucer (or Butzer) was born on 11 November 1491 in the small city of Selestat which lay in the valley of Alsace. At that time it was a centre of learning and religion. His parents moved to Strasbourg when he was ten, leaving their son behind in the care of his poor but pious grandfather. At the age of fifteen, in order to further his education, Bucer was urged, much against his will, to enter the Dominican monastery in the city. For ten years he endured the rigours and failings of this institutional life until he was transferred at the age of twenty-five to a monastery of the same Order in Heidelberg. The Dominicans strongly upheld the position of the medieval schoolmen but the University of Heidelberg contained many professors who were leaders of the learning associated with Renaissance humanism. The highly intelligent Bucer came to detest the teaching associated with Thomas Aquinas and was full of enthusiasm

for the new learning that encouraged the reading of the ancient Greek and Latin texts. His desire was to become a second Erasmus — one of the leading Renaissance scholars of the time.

### *Evangelical Conversion*

A year after moving to Heidelberg there came the most significant encounter of Bucer's life. The Augustinian monk, Martin Luther, the one who had caused such a stir with the publication of his Ninety-five Theses against the sale of indulgences, came before the Augustinian friars in Heidelberg at their triennial meetings in April 1518. Bucer was already sympathetic to Luther's cause, and made a point of going to listen to this dynamic Wittenberg professor expound his evangelical views in what has become known as the Heidelberg disputation. The following day Bucer dined with Luther and asked him many questions. One can understand the opposition that Bucer faced from his fellow monks for siding with Luther when it is remembered that John Tetzel, the infamous indulgence seller whom Luther opposed, was of their Dominican order. The German Dominicans, in fact, were the ones who first persuaded the pope that Luther was a dangerous heretic. Despite this, Martin Bucer embraced the gospel that Luther had rediscovered. As a despatch bearer, Bucer was also present at the Diet of Worms (1521), when Luther refused to recant and declared that his conscience was held captive to the Word of God.

After receiving the degrees of Bachelor of Theology and Master of Students, Bucer was ordained a priest at Mainz in 1519. His degrees gave him the right to read the Bible for himself, something he was eager to pursue. It opened his eyes further to the false teaching propagated by the ministers of the pope and further convinced him that Luther was preaching the truth. Persecuted by his own Order for not merely siding with Luther but persuading others to follow the reformer's teachings, he fled the monastery the following year. Thanks to supporting friends he was able to obtain a legal release from his monastic vows in 1521 and allowed the right to hold any clerical position. Rome, however, had been alerted to the fact that Martin Bucer was 'more learned and no less dangerous' than Martin Luther.

### *Energetic Reformer*

After two brief postings, during which time he married a nun, Bucer had in mind to engage in a quiet life of study. An evangelical pastor in the city of Wissembourg refused to allow him such luxury and constrained him to help in the reformation of that city. It was not long before the bishop of the area excommunicated Bucer. His life was now in danger for he was seen as a heretic and rebel. He quietly left the city in the spring of 1523 and took refuge in Strasbourg where his elderly parents still lived. Here he stayed for the next twenty-five years and became the leader of reform. Besides his involvement in establishing Protestantism in Strasbourg, he was invited to help in reforming other areas of South Germany, such as Augsburg, Hesse, Constance and Cologne. He was actively involved in many of the theological and political debates of the period, including the various conferences and concords that took place, taking copious notes on proceedings. Historians owe a great debt to Bucer for his notes and summaries of meetings. They provide one of the most important collections of source material for the history of his age. Eventually Bucer was forced to leave Strasbourg when he rejected the peace terms imposed on the city by the emperor Charles V after his victory over the German Protestant alliance.

### *English Exile*

Bucer made his way to England with his companion Paul Fagius at the invitation of Archbishop Cranmer in April 1549. This was during the brief reign of Edward VI when England and Wales became officially Protestant. He was appointed Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge but, because of illness, did not take up his duties until the beginning of 1550. Cambridge treated this 'political refugee' with the greatest of respect and awarded him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity which he accepted with some diffidence. He lectured on Ephesians and delivered a series of sermons in Latin.

The fact that he could not speak English added to Bucer's loneliness and longing for home and family. He was already failing in health before he crossed the channel due to the many years of arduous

labour in the cause of the gospel in Germany. The damp climate of East Anglia and the change of diet did not help his poor worn-out body and after severe pain and breathing problems he died either late on 28 February or in the early hours of 1 March 1551. An eyewitness reported that the whole university and town of Cambridge, numbering around three thousand, came to his funeral at the university church of St Mary's to pay their last respects. This indicated how greatly he was esteemed in the city of his exile.

His body did not rest in peace for long. Four years later, when England was again under the dominion of Rome, the enemies of the gospel at Cambridge were bent on revenge. A commission was appointed by Cardinal Pole, the pope's representative in England, to cleanse the university of all vestiges of Protestantism. On February 6th, 1555 Martin Bucer was posthumously condemned as a heretic at a formal trial and his body was exhumed and publicly burned on the market square.

Further religious and political change came with the death of Mary. One of the first acts of Queen Elizabeth was to appoint a commission to restore 'true religion' in Cambridge. As a result, the university arranged for a solemn assembly to publicly reinstate this exceptionally gifted and eminent reformer. This was held on 30 July 1560. Many of Bucer's former friends and colleagues attended, including Matthew Parker and Edmund Grindal, the first two archbishops of Canterbury under Elizabeth.

### **Assessment of his Life**

#### *Devout disciple*

He stressed the importance of a humble walk with God and expressed it in own life as a true disciple of Christ. Loving God meant keeping his commandments with inner devotion and this included remembering to hallow the Sabbath day. Before removing idols from home and public buildings he saw the need for them to be removed from the heart. Bucer taught by word and example the Christian duty of putting others before oneself. His first reforming tract published in 1523 is

entitled *No One Should Live for Himself But for Others*. The pastor's office he saw as the most holy calling on earth for it meant serving the community and its eternal salvation. It was easy for people to find fault with a person like Bucer for he did so much and was such a public figure. Certainly there were weaknesses in his character and life but all his activity was for the furtherance of the gospel and the good of others and not for selfish ends. Throughout his busy life of preaching, lecturing, writing letters, publishing books, making long journeys, listening to the problems of others and attending conferences, he made time for private study of the Bible and prayer. His friends knew that he worked too hard and long, but dogged, often stubborn, determination drove him on even when his body demanded rest. In this way he got results where most people would have given up in despair long before.

### *Exegetical Expert*

Calvin wrote of Bucer's ability at opening up the text of Scripture in these glowing terms: 'No one has to our knowledge exerted himself so precisely and diligently in biblical exegesis.' Second only to Erasmus in his knowledge of Greek, Bucer also acquired considerable ability in the Hebrew language. In preparing commentaries on the Old Testament, he broke new ground by consulting the works of Jewish scholars of the Middle Ages. During the 1520s he produced commentaries on the Synoptic Gospels, Ephesians, John, and Zephaniah. His most celebrated exegetical work was his massive commentary on the Psalms in 1529, which he revised and enlarged in 1532. When Calvin came to write his commentary on the Psalms, he recorded his debt to Bucer in these words: 'Before I proceed to the interpretation of the Psalms I must say at the request of the brethren what is true; if I had overlooked what the most faithful doctor of the church, Martin Bucer, accomplished with the highest erudition, diligence and faith, displayed in this work, there would not have been so much use for my own work.' After 1530 Bucer found himself too busy to write commentaries, but he did manage to publish an 'exhaustive' one on Romans in 1536. It was intended to be the first of a series on Paul's Letters but he was never able to put his thoughts on

paper. A commentary on Judges was published after his death from notes made by one of his students.

### *Faithful Friend*

Not only was Bucer a close friend and confidant to the rich and powerful like Philip of Hesse but also to many lesser lights. He was kind and ready to help anyone who came to him for advice or help. He was of immense encouragement to refugees and poor students. While he led the work of reform in Strasbourg he was no petty pope but worked well with the other pastors and reformers in the city. He bore no grudges and, though he lost friends, it was only after doing all he could to keep them.

### *Hospitable Home*

Though often away for months at a time, Bucer loved his home and family. His wife Elizabeth was a model of what a pastor's wife should be. Bucer had little interest in money and was generous to a fault, sometimes incurring heavy debts. Were it not for his wife's good management, they would have been penniless and hungry. There were guests around the table most days, sometimes as many as eight to ten at a time, including refugees, diplomats, merchants, scholars and friends. Before and after each meal a passage of Scripture was read and apt comments were made.

His wife and four of their children died in the plague that broke out in the autumn of 1541. It was Elizabeth's dying wish that Bucer marry the widow of Capito, a fellow Strasbourg reformer, who had also died in the plague. A few months after the marriage he wrote: 'Surely God has given me a suitable support in cares and labours; may he grant that I may be as serviceable and obliging to her, as I am convinced that she is to me.'

### *Inspiring Influence*

Bucer's influence as a reformer spread far and wide. A modern biographer notes that he 'wrote books for "brethren" in other lands, helped to send them preachers, and even showed a glimmering of the missionary zeal which so many of the reformers lacked.'

We have already mentioned Calvin's debt to Bucer. In fact, the friendship between the two was deep. They esteemed each other greatly and in many ways influenced one another. When Calvin was forced to leave Geneva in 1538, Bucer was eager to do all he could to have him reinstated. When this proved impossible Bucer persuaded him to spend his exile in Strasbourg. He was first given employment at the university and then put in charge of the small French refugee congregation. Here Calvin put into practice many of Bucer's ideas concerning church discipline and Holy Communion. Bucer's influence on Calvin in the matter of the church's visibility and order is also clear in the 1539 edition of Calvin's *Institutes*. It was also the forms of worship established by Bucer that Calvin used, not only in Strasbourg but later, when he returned to Geneva.

During Bucer's own exile in England he was well respected and played a significant though brief part in the advance of English Protestantism. He recommended a tutor to the young princess Elizabeth and corresponded with other dignitaries on the progress of reform in England. His last work, *The Kingdom of Christ*, expressing many of his earlier ideas on the church's relationship to the social order, was presented to King Edward as a New Year gift. Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer all admired him, and John Bradford was one of his most loyal English followers. Parker, Grindal and even John Hooper came to respect his advice. In the Vestments Controversy, although he sided with Cranmer against Hooper, he wrote to Cranmer stressing the need for the abolition of vestments. He contributed to the 1552 revision of Cranmer's *Book of Common Prayer*. The changes he suggested were all for the purpose of eliminating ceremonies of a superstitious and Romish nature. Professor David Wright is of the opinion that Bucer also 'contributed to the shaping of the English exegetical tradition'.

#### *Protestant Preacher*

Basil Hall has written that 'Bucer believed in the significance of preaching'. Like most of the early Reformers, he was first a proclaimer

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of the biblical gospel that had been rediscovered by Luther. Bucer saw the importance of taking the message as much to the illiterate and uneducated as to scholars and craftsmen. In the winter of 1522 at Wissembourg, he began preaching evangelical truth from 1 Peter and Matthew. When he moved to Strasbourg he was given permission to preach for one hour each day on the Gospel of John. So many people gathered to hear him that the magistrates regretted their decision for fear of attack from outside and demanded that he cease preaching in German. He therefore resorted to teaching the Pastoral Epistles of Paul, in Latin, to small groups of students.

August Zell, who had himself become a popular evangelical preacher in the city, invited Bucer to preach in the cathedral every other day from a wooden pulpit that had been erected for Zell, when the ecclesiastical authorities denied him entry into the church's own ornate stone structure. In the face of much opposition from the church officials, Martin Bucer was chosen by popular consent and installed as the first evangelical pastor in Strasbourg at the church of St. Aurelia. It was in this newly appointed position that he preached in the cathedral on 21 February 1524. The enemies of the gospel used what means they could to prevent him speaking. In the middle of his sermon, some of the monks in the choir stalls began singing at the top of their voices and a riot commenced. Very soon changes came and ecclesiastical opposition in the city subsided.

Bucer became an encouragement to other pastors in the city to become evangelical preachers. In his conversations and letters to influential people, as well as in his lectures, he constantly urged the need for more preachers who would effectively proclaim the gospel to needy sinners and build the people up in their most holy faith.

When Bucer happened to be in Wittenberg in 1538 he preached from Luther's pulpit with the great reformer in the congregation. Later, Matthew Parker summed up this aspect of Bucer's ministry by stating that he was 'diligent in preaching the Word for the work of regeneration and sanctification in the hearers.'

*Respected Reformer*

Like many humanists of his day, Bucer was at first merely concerned to see the reform of certain abuses within the church system. Embracing the evangelical faith helped him to see how unbiblical were the teachings of the pope that led to the abuses. From his initial admiration for Erasmus, he became a supporter of Luther. When Erasmus published his work on *Free Will* in 1524 Bucer urged Luther to respond, speaking of his former hero as that ‘unhappy slave of glory, who pushes forward to prefer the spit of his own opinion to Scripture’. He declared, ‘Let the gracefulness of the Latin language perish, let that miracle of erudition perish, if the glory of Christ is obscured by it.’

He was in many ways more radical than Luther. On the other hand, Bucer did not join the radical wing of the Reformation. He saw the need for balance and moderation, as the effects of his preaching and those of others caused people to question so many of the practices that had grown up in the Middle Ages. His attitude to images and statues is similar to his position in the English Vestments Controversy. At first, he could state that images are indifferent if they are not worshipped; but if there is a danger of them being worshipped then they must be destroyed. Later, he urged that even those who did not abuse them should renounce them so that weaker brothers might not be tempted. He also advised that people should remove them in an orderly fashion, after first gaining permission from the local authorities.

In addition to the religious changes that were made in Strasbourg, social and educational improvements followed. Bucer saw to it that the city authorities provided for the poor and at the same time put a stop to begging in the streets. This concern for the poor remained with him throughout his life as can be seen in his interest in the poor of Cambridge. Another policy adopted at Strasbourg was the toleration and protection of religious refugees from various countries. A better educational system was established. The present University of Strasbourg arose from the setting up of an official salaried faculty. Due to Bucer’s efforts an enlightened system for educating children was also instituted.

Bucer was well respected, and all kinds of people turned to him for advice. He was not only the Strasbourg reformer but ‘the reformer of Central Europe.’

### *Skilful Statesman*

Bucer’s fame as a statesman was legendary. The Chancellor of Electoral Saxony remarked: ‘I must confess that among all the theologians now living, Bucer is truly an excellent man for negotiating in theological affairs after the manner of the world.’ When the emperor, Charles V, broke off his alliance with Henry VIII in 1544 and negotiated a separate peace with France, England sought an alliance with the German Protestants. Such was Bucer’s influence among the princes of the Smalkald League that an envoy was first sent to Bucer, who made strenuous efforts to obtain the approval of the German Protestants. Again, it was to Bucer along with Melancthon that the League looked when the French king sought an alliance with the Protestant states of Germany. Bucer was also involved in negotiations with the emperor at the Colloquy of Ratisbon (or Regensburg) in 1546. This was a last desperate effort to avert war. Bucer clearly perceived the meaning of the emperor’s actions and knew he had no intentions of making peace. He alerted the Protestant states to prepare for war and indicated how they should act, but the princes were so divided among themselves that they were ill-prepared when Charles declared war. The imperial army routed the Protestant League and Charles imposed a provisional settlement, known as the Augsburg Interim.

### *Theological Thinker*

Martin Bucer was a theological heavyweight who could quickly silence opponents in open debate or by the written word. Ideas flowed fast and furious from his fertile mind. Bucer’s theology arose out of his deep study of the Scriptures and his exegetical skills. Central to Bucer’s theology is his doctrine of election. For Bucer it emphasised not only that the source of human salvation is God (his grace and Christ’s merits) but that ultimate salvation is certain for the elect. God has an appointed time when he will call the elect and lead them to faith. Through the Word and the Spirit he calls them.

In Bucer's mature work, justification has two meanings. Firstly, it has a forensic sense and is used as the opposite of condemnation. It 'consists in God's graciously forgiving us our sins and granting to us and reckoning to us the righteousness of his Son, which we receive when we rightly believe'. It has a further meaning almost equivalent to praise. God justifies or praises the godly in the sense that James gives. 'The justification of works, which means praising them and promising a reward to them, depends entirely on justification by faith.' Like some of the later Puritans he could also speak of three justifications: first, predestination to life in eternity past through the merits of Christ; secondly, through God's gift of faith and by the Spirit, the enjoyment of eternal life here and now; finally, the full enjoyment of that life in the world to come.

His main contribution to theology lies in his teaching on the Holy Spirit and the Church. He refers to the church as the elect and regenerate, who are known only to God. It is 'by virtue of their common faith' that particular churches 'constitute the one universal church.' The descriptions of the universal church apply equally to each particular church. He rejects an abstract view of the church. A church is made up of individual people. He sets out five marks of a true church: obedience to the Shepherd's voice, the ministry of teaching, suitable ministers of the Word, the lawful ministration of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and righteousness and holiness of life.

The preaching of the gospel was seen as central to the life of the church. Discipline in the church must be firm but not over-oppressive. It must bear a pastoral character and serve to remind people of the church's holy position. Christ's kingdom becomes visible in such a church. His views on the Supper represent a mediating position between that of Luther and that of Zwingli, which resembled the position of Calvin. Bucer has been called the 'father of evangelical confirmation'. This development arose out of his fight with the Anabaptists. He recognized the force of some of their arguments and, though he had won the debate with them in open contest, he saw the need for reformed and

biblical thinking with regard to children. In 1537 he also published a children's catechism that proved extremely popular.

Unable to see all his ideas on the church put into practice in Strasbourg, he created during his final years in the city the most original of all his innovative measures. Within the place where the majority of the population worshipped Bucer set up small communities of confessing Christians. They were called 'Christian fellowships', a sort of church within a church. They were not unlike the early Methodist experience- or society-meetings within the Church of England. Bucer was concerned for the holiness of believers and the faithfulness of the church to the apostolic model.

### *Untiring Unifier*

His statesmanlike ability to see through issues clearly, to bring people with opposing views to talk through problems, and then to produce a formula to which all sides could agree is particularly apparent in his endeavours to bring together men of differing theological views. It was these endeavours that took up so much of his time and energy as he dashed from one crisis situation to another. There are two areas where his talents are to be seen:

#### *1. Protestant Divisions*

Bucer is known as the person who struggled more than others to obtain peace on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. During his early days at Strasbourg he was far from being a peacemaker. His views seemed to support those of Zwingli and he soon found himself in deep trouble with Luther. After reading Luther's polemic on the Supper published in 1528 Bucer realized that he had not fully understood the position of the great Reformer. He concluded that their differences were minor. At the conference called by Philip of Hesse in his castle at Marburg to unite the German and Swiss Protestants, known as the Marburg Colloquy, Luther was extremely rude to Bucer, who in the end sided with Zwingli against Luther over the Supper. Bucer was also present at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530 when the *Augsburg Confession* was submitted for approval and signed by the Lutheran princes. Bucer

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drafted a separate statement of faith on behalf of four south German cities, known as the *Tetrapolitana*, or *Four Cities' Confession*. Talking with other Lutherans at Augsburg led to Bucer meeting Luther face to face and to the possibility of concord over the Supper. This time it was Zwingli who would have nothing to do with ambiguous formulas. Later, Bucer achieved a notable peace which included Luther and many Zwinglians. It was known as the *Wittenberg Concord*. Bucer, however, was not satisfied with reconciliation. He wanted union between the Lutherans and Zwinglians and continued to work for it. The *Second Swiss Confession* was a high point in his efforts for union. He also made a favourable impression on the Lutheran theologians and took part in the composition of the *Smalkald Articles*. In the end, through all his efforts to bring concord, he did gain the respect of the Lutherans but at the expense of losing the Zwinglians.

## 2. *Protestants and Rome*

It would be wrong to think of Bucer as a sixteenth-century equivalent of a modern day 'ecumaniac.' No ecumenist today would speak of the pope as the Antichrist and the teachings of the pope as the doctrine of demons and the ceremonies of the church as the work of Satan. Before the Council of Trent put an end to any meaningful dialogue between Protestants and Rome, there was the hope in some circles that doctrinal statements could be agreed between the emerging Protestant states and Rome to enable peace to exist in Europe. Martin Bucer was one of the leading negotiators who worked hard to achieve better understanding between the opposing forces so that the Reformation movement might continue undisturbed by pope and emperor.

Both Luther and the pope were skeptical from the beginning, and in the end refused to compromise on any of the fundamental issues. Bucer was a born optimist and was always willing to try almost anything to unite opposites. There were times when his compromises turned into surrender. Luther saw this only too well when Bucer and Melancthon brokered an agreement on justification at Regensburg in 1541, and we can be thankful that he did. Evangelicals who wish for closer ties with Roman Catholics, should learn from Bucer's own

frustrations in this area. Rome, as we see very well today, will not budge on what it considers fundamentals. In the various ecumenical dialogues and agreed statements recently published, Protestants have surrendered essential gospel truths including justification by faith alone and the supreme authority of the Bible.

### **Conclusion**

We can thank God for Martin Bucer. He is an inspiration to us all of a life dedicated to the glory of God and the advancement of his kingdom. Bucer was one of the ablest scholars of his day and at the same time an approachable pastor - a rare combination. In many ways he provides an early example of what was later to be seen in English Puritan piety. (Used by Permission)

### ***Reminder***

The SGU Website may be found on the Internet at:

**[www.sgu.org.uk](http://www.sgu.org.uk)**

The following pamphlets are now available

**FREE TO SUBSCRIBERS**

for an A5 s.a.e. (85p stamp):

Was the Reformation Necessary? - *Graham Bidston*

An Age of Lawlessness - *James Ormiston*

The Centrality of the Cross - *Samuel Champion*

Shall Everyone Be Saved? - *John M. Brentnall*

The Pardon of Sin - *Archibald Cook*

Justification - *James Battersby*

Christ the only Mediator - *John Flavel*

God's Purpose of Grace - *William S. Plumer*

An Accomplished Redemption - *W. J. Grier*

Augustine and Prayer - *John M. Brentnall*

## *Annual General Meeting*

The Annual General Meeting of the Sovereign Grace Union took place on Saturday 17 June 2006 at Zion Chapel, Pembury Road, Tonbridge. After prayer and the reading of Holy Scripture, the Vice Chairman welcomed everyone, explained that the Chairman was unavoidably absent and expressed gratitude to the Lord for all His goodness to us. Following the reading and unanimous acceptance of Reports, it was agreed that existing Committee Members be re-elected, the Office Bearers continuing *nem con*. The Vice Chairman expressed gratitude to the friends at Zion Chapel for their kind hospitality. In the service that followed, John M. Brentnall spoke on 1 Thess 1.4 - "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God."

### Balance Sheet as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2005

Current Assets	2005	2004	General Fund	2005	2004
	£	£		£	£
Bank accounts:			Opening balance at 1 <sup>st</sup> January	83,924	81,070
Cafgold	5,909	5,675	Excess income	<u>911</u>	<u>2,854</u>
Cafcash	1,361	1,317			
Barclays	<u>2,836</u>	<u>2,231</u>			
	10,106	9,223			
*CAF Income Fund at cost	<u>75,000</u>	<u>75,000</u>			
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>85,106</b>	<b>84,223</b>			
<b>Current Liabilities</b>					
Subscriptions for 2006 paid in advance	<u>271</u>	<u>299</u>			
<b>Net Total Assets</b>	<b><u>£84,835</u></b>	<b><u>£83,924</u></b>	<b>Total Funds</b>	<b><u>£84,835</u></b>	<b><u>£83,924</u></b>

\*CAF Income Fund valuation at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2005 was £76,274

We certify that the Balance Sheet and the annexed Income and Expenditure Account have been prepared from the books and vouchers of the Sovereign Grace Union and have been audited and found correct.

K J Appleton (Hon. Treasurer)  
April 2006

S. J. Wiffen (Hon. Auditor)



## *Book Reviews*

### **Reformation Heritage Books**

*The Decades of Henry Bullinger* ed T.Harding. 4 vols in 2. Photolitho Parker Society Edition. 1,865pp. Hdbk. \$110. £65. ISBN #1-892777-38-X.

Bullinger's *Decades* (5 sets of 10 sermons, each expounding an important doctrine) is, like Calvin's *Institutes*, a Reformation classic. It represents a faithful Reformer's final thoughts on faith, godliness and the Church. Presenting its topics systematically, it served as a source book for countless young preachers in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and clearly aims to "preach reconciliation in Christ and to bring the penitent to the Word of God." (Peter Opitz) The sermons are long, but the treatment is rich. There is a splendid introduction to the Scriptures, a massive treatment of the Law, a heart-warming section on the Gospel and detailed expositions of the Church and means of grace. Some of the author's descriptions are delightful: Christ is "the mighty and bountiful Redeemer of the world" and "the eternal King of all ages." Holy Scripture is "the speech of God" and "doctrine giving life." The style is not stiff and academic, but almost conversational, reminding us of our first English Reformers. The spirit throughout is that of a scholarly pastor fully in touch with the people of his day and keenly aware of their deepest spiritual needs. Unreservedly recommended. J.M.B.

*The Covenant Theology of Caspar Olevianus* - Lyle D. Bierma. 203pp. Pbk. \$22. £15. ISBN #1-892777-43-6.

This excellent scholarly study, on a topic of great contemporary interest, demonstrates how this little-known German Reformer and co-author of the *Heidelberg Catechism* viewed God's Covenant of Grace. While he was not the first to build a theological system around the covenant motif, Olevianus was an important link in transmitting federal theology from Bullinger into the 17<sup>th</sup> century. We are grateful to God for Dr. Biersma's thorough sifting of so many conflicting views, and for his convincing demonstration that Olevianus's view of the covenant - as a solid basis for the believer's assurance of salvation - is both Biblically grounded and pastorally orientated. Warmly recommended. J.M.B.

*Evening Thoughts* - Octavius Winslow. 733pp. Hdbk. \$35. £20. ISBN #1-892777-45-2.

Marked by doctrinal soundness, experiential depth and directness of address, these daily devotional readings deserve the widest circulation. (The Publishers have already produced Winslow's *Morning Thoughts*.)

ISBN #1-892777-29-0.) Selected from his own writings by the author himself, they touch on virtually every aspect of applied salvation, expose such errors as ritualism and traditionalism, and search the heart for lurking sins and latent graces. They are full of spiritual discernment (a grace signally lacking in our day), solemn but tender warnings, encouraging promises and probing enquiries. Most of all, they display Christ in His beauty and urge sinners to close with Him as their only hope. The following samples represent the author's emphases: "Dear reader, is your soul saved? Are you converted by the Spirit of God?" "All backsliding has its commencement in the neglect of prayer." "What do you know of the broken heart and contrite spirit?" "Oh, what inspiring words are these, 'Hope thou in God!'" "It was not faith that died for you; it is not faith that saves you. It is Christ, and Christ alone." J.M.B.

### ***Rutherford House***

*Caspar Olevian and the Substance of the Covenant* - R. Scott Clark. 257pp. Pbk. £14.99. ISBN 0-946068-90-9.

Generously recommended by Lyle Bierma, Dr. Clark's study places Olevian's doctrine of the covenant in the context of his theology as a whole. It reveals him as a first-rate exegetical theologian whose contribution to Reformed thought did much to link the first generation of Reformers to their 17<sup>th</sup> century successors. The author's conclusion, that Olevian viewed the Covenant of Grace as the foundation of every believer's two-fold benefit in Christ - namely, justification and sanctification - is fully warranted, and complements Dr. Bierma's findings. Warmly recommended. J.M.B.

### ***Evangelical Press***

*Nothing but the Truth* - Brian H. Edwards. 512pp. £12.95. Pbk. ISBN 0 85234 614 X.

This is the third edition of the very helpful book first published in 1978. It has been updated and is full of information on the inspiration, authority and history of the Bible. I wish I had had access to it when I first became a Christian. Not only would it have filled in some fairly large gaps in my knowledge, but also it would have helped me to steer clear of errors of various kinds. Not everyone will agree with everything in the book (the author's view of typology, for example, may seem unnecessarily restricted). But this is a small blemish compared to the vast amount of excellent material available here. Written in the engaging style for which the author is well known, the book is warmly commended. J. Manton.

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*Living in the Hope of Future Glory* - Tom Barnes. £9.95. 320pp. Pbk.

The topic of this book is seldom the subject of sermons or text books. Part One deals with 'The Theology of Glorification' and Part Two with 'The Transformation in Glorification.' In days when so many believers have their heads bowed by the affairs of our pagan society we do well to be reminded that man was designed to glorify God! As the author says: "Soteriology cannot be fully understood unless we understand that the history of redemption is, in part, the restoration of man to a God-glorifier." This is a very readable book, with forty pages of notes containing contributions from Berkhof, Piper, Sproul, Packer, C.S.Lewis, Pink and others. Some of the author's anecdotes and illustrations hardly justify the space allotted to them. That apart, the book should find a place in pastors' reading, and all who are weary of the journey home will find much drawn from Scripture to strengthen and encourage. Buy it, be challenged and encouraged by it, and let us be (as Paul and Wesley put it) changed from glory into glory.

A. Ridge.

*Fire on the Altar* - Noel Gibbard. 244pp. £9.95. Pbk. ISBN 1 85049 211 5.

"It is impossible to deny that the Spirit of God swept through Wales from 1904 to 1906 and left its mark on the land." An evaluation of this revival is the subject matter of this thoroughly researched, balanced study. After setting the scene, the author takes us through the revival's beginnings in Cardiganshire to thrilling and detailed reports of the way the Spirit worked in named towns and villages in N. and S. Wales. He shows how several eminent men of God were instrumental in spreading the revival; e.g. R.B. Jones, Seth Joshua, Sidney Evans - not just Evan Roberts, whose character study in this book is very revealing. The effect of the revival in other parts of the United Kingdom and other lands; its impact on the social, political, moral and religious life of Wales is evaluated, and its critics, past and present, are frankly assessed. The author gives us both the gold and the dross: the influence of prayer and hymn singing; the thousands swept into the kingdom; the moral improvement of the people; the rise in missionary activity; the establishment of Bible Schools; the influence of the Keswick Movement; the rise of the Apostolic Church; excessive emotionalism; the lack of sound teaching; and the ascendancy of Arminianism over Calvinism. Much can be learned from this book that would be most valuable should God in His mercy send another visitation of His Spirit on this needy land of ours.

M.E. Brentnall.

## **Tapes of SGU addresses**

may be obtained from Mr T. Field, 34 Pembury Road, Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 2HX  
£2.50 + 50p each cheques payable to "Sovereign Grace Union"

- Martin Luther: A Sharp Physician with the Word of God –  
Paul Brown (Dunstable)
- Martin Luther and the Bondage of the Will – Graham Bidston (London)
- Martin Luther and Sanctification – Andrew King (Haywards Heath/Brazil)
- Martin Luther and the Significance of the Reformation for Today –  
John Marshall (Hemel Hempstead)
- Martin Luther and Justification – Philip Eveson
- Sovereign Grace and Unity – Paul Clement (Halland)
- The Birth and Life of Christ – Mark Johnston (Camberwell)
- The Death and Resurrection of Christ – Mark Johnston (Camberwell)
- The Second Coming of Christ – Mark Johnston (Camberwell)
- The Importance, Foundation and Some Priorities in Worship –  
John Marshall (Hemel Hempstead)
- The God of Our Salvation, Father, Son and Holy Spirit –  
Mark Johnston (Camberwell) – 3 tapes
- Calvin the Evangelist – Graham Bidston (London)
- Calvin's Use of the Old Testament – Philip Eveson (London)
- Calvin and the Call of the Gospel – John Marshall (Hemel Hempstead)
- What is Missing from the Reformed Faith? – Mark Johnston (Camberwell)
- Examples of Revival, The Theology of Revival, & Revival Today –  
Vernon Higham (Cardiff) – 3 tapes
- The Doctrines of Grace as taught by Jesus Christ –  
Peter Rowell (Crowborough) – 2 tapes
- Adoption – Robert Oliver (Bradford on Avon)
- God's Good Purpose – Andrew Davies (London)
- The Weakness of the Law and the Power of God – Achille Blaize (London)
- The Grace of Christ, The Gift of Salvation and The Glory of Heaven –  
Vernon Higham (Cardiff) – 3 tapes
- God's Plan for Marriage and The Family – Vernon Higham
- God's Guidance in Raising a Family – Mark Johnston
- The Family as the Basis of Society – Achille Blaize
- 'A Chosen People' – Chosen in love, Chosen with Purpose & Chosen in Christ,  
3 tapes by Mark Johnston
- Perseverance – Michael Harley of Friston, Suffolk
- Sanctification: Romans 6 – Austin Walker, Crawley
- God our Hope: Jeremiah 14: 1-9 – Malcolm Watts, Salisbury
- The Rock Christ Jesus: Isaiah 28 – Ian Densham, Hemel Hempstead