

Insight Into



January / February 2024

*“Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; and
Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds” (Psalm 36:5).*

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

**Meditation • A Vital Question
Being Young and Then Old
Christian Liberty • The Happy Man
Promises • Pity in Weakness
The Frailty of Man • The Word of Salvation**

Insight Into

General Information

Insight Into is the official youth periodical of the Netherlands Reformed Congregations in the United States and Canada.

As a Reformed magazine, *Insight Into* seeks to promote the knowledge of the truth and to give biblical guidance to young people in their daily lives.

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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Meditation

by Rev. A. M. den Boer pg. 1

A Vital Question

by Rev. James Tallach..... pg. 2

Being Young and Then Old

by Rev. G. M. de Leeuw pg. 4

Christian Liberty

by Rev. E. Hakvoort..... pg. 6

The Happy Man

From *The Abiding Witness of Lachlan Mackenzie*... pg. 9

Promises

by A. H. pg. 10

Pity in Weakness

by Rev. P. van Ruitenburg pg. 12

The Frailty of Man

by Matthew Henry pg. 13

The Word of Salvation

by Rev. Ebenezer Erskine pg. 14

With Quotations from Rev. Jonathan Edwards, Matthew Henry, Rev. William Gurnall, and Rev. William S. Plumer

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MEDITATION

Moses Enters a New Era in his Life

“And Moses took the rod of God in his hand”
(Exodus 4:20b).

Rev. A. M. den Boer (1929-2004)



When we look back, then we see yet a little of the contours of the past year, but when we look forward, then we do not know what the future will bring. Therein we are like many of our forefathers who, in former years, had left their native country. At first, when they began to sail away, then they still saw the dunes behind them, but gradually the distance became greater, and the dunes became smaller and more vague. They did not know what the future would bring to them, although God’s providence rules over all things.

So it is also with Moses, who was called to return to the land of his nativity. He had a quiet life in the wilderness tending the sheep of his father-in-law. In those forty years, he became united with that way. Before this time he had different intentions—but not anymore! And now this call from the Lord comes to him, to return. He had already said earlier to the Lord that he did not dare to go, because it was a dangerous calling. He objected to this call and said that he was not able to do this work anymore. He was already 80 years old. Finally, he said that he did not want to go. He was being honest.

However, what now changed in Moses’ life, because we read that he *“took the rod of God in his hand”*? This shows his obedience to follow the Lord’s command, although he still felt unable to do this in himself. He felt how dependent he was on the Lord, and that he needed His help and guidance continually. Yet, Moses may trust the promise of the Lord that He will go with him. Then he can and may subject himself to the will of God, because of the love he has for God’s honour and for God’s people who sigh under the oppression in Egypt.

The same help cannot be missed in each of our lives, because without the Lord we cannot do anything. Is there a longing for this help? Young people, you cannot miss this continual protection of the Lord when you go to school. Above all, may this help be blessed to your soul. If we miss the Lord, then we miss everything for a never-ending eternity! Use your time to seek the Lord!

Are we concerned about these questions in our own life? May the guidance of the Lord be given unto us. Since it is free grace, it is possible for all of us as long as we live. Then it would be a blessed New Year!

A Vital Question

“Many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?” (John 6:66-67).

Rev. James Tallach (1896-1960)

How often have the eyes of Jesus had to look upon such a scene? Many have come to Him, just as these had come to Him, stayed in His company for a time, looked upon His face and heard His words; then turning from Him, have gone their several ways. And why did they go away? He had said to them: *“Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you”* (verse 53). This was, and is, the test of discipleship, a test which must be faced by all sooner or later. They were faced with it, and how did they take it? *“This is an hard saying; who can hear it?”* (verse 60), and they went back. But why introduce this hard saying at all? Why not make all smooth and easy so that the crowds are not offended, so that the numbers increase, so that the church retains its popularity with the people? Why not replace hard doctrine with entertainment, godliness with attractive forms of worship, and discipline with the charity which knows not how to rebuke? So says Worldly Wisdom, so says Modernism. But that was not Christ’s way. *“Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you,”* and so they went away, and Christ saw them go and let them go. Did their going condemn His doctrine? No, but His doctrine condemned their unbelief. As it was then, so it is now. Did Jesus not care, then, that they went away? *“And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it”* (Luke 19:41). And again, *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killeth the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!”* (Matthew 23:37). Let that be a sufficient answer. *“This is an hard saying,”* they said, *“who can hear it?”* Yes, it is hard; it is hard to that man whose life consists in the indulgence of sinful lust. What satisfaction can such a man get in the flesh and blood of the Son of man? These are clearly contrary the one to the other; lust cannot thrive on such heavenly food. How many go back on

this account and walk no more with Him? Yes, it is an hard saying; so says the man of the world, the man whose life consists in the pursuit of worldly pleasure, profit, and advantage. The world and a crucified Saviour go not well together. *“God forbid,”* says Paul, *“that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world”* (Galatians 6:14). It is an hard saying; who can receive it? So says the self-righteous man. Yes, it is hard on self-righteousness, its pride, conceit, vain glory, and self-satisfaction; for the cross spells starvation for all that is of self. *“God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross.”* Self and Christ do not agree and cannot walk together; so they walked no more with Him. *“Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?”* So He turns to you and to me, *“Will you also go away?”* It is a searching question. Peter answers, *“Lord, to whom shall we go?”* Back to a life of sinful indulgence, to the pleasures of this world, to a religion of self? What! Back to death, the devil, and hell? *“God forbid!”* In holy awe, dread, and fear let it be said: *“Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life”* (John 6:68). *“My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed”* (John 6:55). The words which are death to sin, self, and worldliness are the words of eternal life to the gracious soul. *“Thou hast the words of eternal life.”* And from the depths of his heart every gracious soul will solemnly and sincerely put his Amen to the testimony of Peter, and instead of going away will cleave more closely to his Redeemer who *“loved the church, and gave Himself for it”* (Ephesians 5:25).

“It is our duty, not only to avoid those things that are themselves sinful, but also, as far as may be, those things that lead and expose to sin.”

~ Rev. Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)

“The garrison that sounds a parley is not far from being surrendered. Those that would be kept from harm must keep out of harm’s way (see Proverbs 14:7; 19:27).”

~ Matthew Henry (1662-1714)

== Being Young and Then Old ==

“I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread”

(Psalm 37:22).

Rev. G. M. de Leeuw

Dear young readers, you all know how David was a man according to God’s heart. What does that mean? Then the Lord has given us a new heart. That makes such a one a beggar at the throne of grace. Is your daily supplication at that same throne ? I hope it is. Only the Lord knows how many places on earth there are with these spiritual beggars.

So, being young, that is, dear boys and girls, what you all are now. David was young when he killed the Philistine giant, Goliath. The way that went was very remarkable. You can read this history in 1 Samuel 17. There the Lord was at the side of His chosen people Israel. Saul was their first king. Were they always at that side? No, they were not. How is that among us? Are there those who sometimes do have a desire to be at the Lord’s side? Maybe you are asking: How do I get there? Oh, that would be a good question.

Dear young friends, how to answer that question? Because to come at that side is completely the Lord’s work. Yet, although this being His work from the very beginning to the very end, it needs to be asked of the Lord. To be asked in your prayers daily, continually, and in true necessity.

Never be ashamed when meals are served (think about flying long distances, meals in restaurants, etc.), to pray. Asking the Lord’s blessing upon all that I have to do, not only with my lips, but with my heart.

Now David is here at the end of his life. You can read in the book of the Psalms, of which many are written by David, how he was seeking for the Lord’s nearness. Young people, is that what you’re seeking as well? Is not much of your precious time going to the so-called electronic devices? And, to be honest, is it really so important, when hearing and watching it all? Must we not acknowledge that most of it is worthless and a waste of time? Maybe you’ll answer: I need to know what is going on in the world of today. Oh, I think that I understand you. But, please tell me:

What is finally the result of surfing for hours on the Internet? Allow me to ask this question: Are you spending the same time reading church history, sound books, and above all, the precious Word of God? It is the Lord Jesus Himself who tells us: *“Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me”* (John 5:39).

Oh, dear boys and girls, youth of the congregations, be aware of your baptized forehead by which you bear upon you the Name of a triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. By this baptism you are set apart, distinguished among millions, who, in general, do not have the least understanding of what the Bible says and who the God of this Bible is. Not knowing who they are themselves, as children of a fallen Adam. By imputation we bear his sin, which is our original sin with the actual sin of ourselves on top of that. Yet, dear youth, never be ashamed of your Christian upbringing, which is such a great privilege. Do not underestimate it, and be aware of over-estimation. Realize what the Lord says in John 3:3: *“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”* So be it. Receive my hearty greetings.

A Prayer for God’s Presence

“Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of Thy wings” (Psalm 17:8).

Dear Lord,

Thy love is great indeed, so rich, so boundless, and so free,

Which does such matchless grace bestow on sinful, worthless ones like me?

O draw me to Thy loving breast; grant me Thy visits, dearest Lord,

When I attend Thy means of grace, or when I read Thy holy Word.

Yea, every day and every hour; O precious Saviour; be Thou near;

To wean my heart from things which lure, and keep me in Thy tender fear.

I know by sad experience past; how very prone I am to stray,

And wander in forbidden paths, unless I’m kept from day to day.

Hide me beneath Thy sheltering wings, preserve me through the coming year;

What e’er to me the future brings, O let Thy love my spirit cheer.

~ Taken from The Sower (1893)

Christian Liberty



Rev. E. Hakvoort

Sometimes, people ask us questions about “Christian liberty.” It happened to a concerned member, and maybe it has happened to you sometimes as well. The accusation was made that we, Reformed people, do not stand fast in the Christian liberty, about which Paul speaks in Galatians 5, because we still keep many rules from the Old Testament. The question comes up: What is it actually to stand in the Christian liberty, and what does that mean for our days?

It may be clear that this accusation does not come from inside our Reformed community. Because the accusation says that we “reformed people” do not stand in the Christian liberty about which Paul speaks in Galatians 5:1: “*Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*”

This is an accusation which comes from the Evangelical circles, and it suggests that they who made this accusation against us are standing fast in the Christian liberty themselves. In summary, they say that the law does not need to be kept anymore, because it is fulfilled by Christ. When a sinner makes the “choice for Jesus” and “believes,” then he or she is free from the law and may stand in the true liberty. All kinds of rules and laws are not applicable to them anymore.

Yet, this is nothing but “sound exegeses.” They go by the sound of the text and the application is quickly made. This is a danger that also threatens our Netherlands Reformed Congregations! But for a right understanding of Scripture, it is important that we read the text in its context and that we compare Scripture with Scripture. Otherwise, we can make the text say the exact opposite of that it wants to say! This is also the case in the above-mentioned accusation.

But in which context do we read Galatians 5:1? First and foremost, it stands in the context of the beginning of this epistle. Paul writes his letter

to the congregations in Galatia, and especially to them “*who are called into the grace of Christ*” (Galatians 1:6). Among them certain heretics have come in. They were the Judaist, who taught that for salvation, faith in Christ is good and necessary, but that for salvation we also need to keep the Jewish laws from the Old Testament.

And many Galatians were influenced by this heresy. But Paul, moved with them, says in Galatians 3:1-2: “*O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth ... This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*” Unto these children of God, he says in Galatians 5:1: “*Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*”

You see, Paul does not want to say what we sometimes also hear: It is about a new heart, right? Then how we live is not so important anymore, because our sins have been forgiven anyway. Against such Antinomians, the apostle warned seriously: “*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid*” (Romans 6:1-2). And those who say: “*Let us do evil, that good may come?*” (Romans 3:8). Paul says to such people: “*Whose damnation is just*” (Romans 3:8).

So, to stand in Christian liberty does not mean you are free in the way you live because Jesus died for you. But it means made free from the law. And how do we need to see this? Because we are all conceived and born in sin and are children of wrath who cannot enter into the kingdom of God, except when we are born again. But through our deep fall we have brought ourselves into the power of the devil. We are no longer free, but we are bound in the cords of death.

We do not have a free will to do good anymore, but our will is in bondage. It is in the cords of sin and death. And how shall we ever be delivered from that? By “choosing for Jesus” or “opening our heart for Jesus”? No, for in Paradise we have already chosen against God. And daily we live this choice out in our thoughts, in our words, and in our actions: “*Depart from me for I have no desire in the knowledge of Thy ways*” (see Job 21:14). We do not want Thee to be King in our lives.

The big question is, however, how those who are bound can be freed. In Isaiah 42:6-7, we read about Christ, the Servant of the Lord: “*And give Thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.*” There lies the secret of salvation. Never shall nor can a sinner who is bound free himself. Thereto we need an eternal wonder from God.

To that end, God the Father has chosen Himself a people to eternal

life. God the Son has offered Himself to suffer and to die for sinners who are bound. He was bound that we might be freed from our sins (Form for the Lord's Supper). And God's Spirit applies that in the heart of a sinner. In regeneration, He places the sinner before His holy law. *"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith"* (Galatians 3:24).

They are a people who learned to know the law in its discovering and condemning work. They learned that *"the cords of death held me in deep despair"* (Psalter 426:2). They tried to keep God's commandments, but they did not succeed, because the more they tried to free themselves from the law, the more it became a hopeless case with them. *"Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them"* (Galatians 3:10).

You see, that is a people who is brought to the end with the law to thus learn that Christ is the end of the law. For Him it became true: *"Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree"* (Galatians 3:13). Oh, then the soul learns to cry: *"Deliver Thou my soul, O Lord!"* (Psalter 426:3). And when the eye of faith is opened for Him, then they taste something of the true liberty. *"Jehovah heard. I pledge Him my devotion"* (Psalter 426:3). They are placed in the freedom from all bonds and spiritual enemies.

The fruit will be evident in their life. They desire to *stand fast* in the liberty. No, that does not mean that they always live automatically out of it. Our marginal notes state *"that is, continue steadfast without turning away."* It points to the life of sanctification without which nobody can see the Lord. There comes a desire to hate sin and flee from sin, and to walk in all God's commandments. Such young and old people learn to ask with Paul: *"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"* (Acts 9:6).

Do we understand it? Search the Scriptures faithfully. Do that prayerfully: *"O let Thy Spirit be my constant aid, that all my ways may ever be directed to keep Thy statutes, so to be obeyed"* (Psalter 428:2). I wish you all to learn this liberty and to stand fast in this liberty. That is possible in Christ. Has the Lord made room for Himself already? Then we may stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. Here in the beginning, but once forever when they may praise His Name eternally.

"Satan teaches men first to doubt and then to deny; he makes them skeptics first, and so by degrees makes them atheists."

~ Matthew Henry (1662-1714)

The Happy Man

Lachlan Mackenzie (1754-1819) was one of those servants of Christ who was greatly used by the Spirit of God in revival times. From his base in Lochcarron, he became widely renowned for the fervour, love, and power with which he preached the gospel to the poor in the Scottish highlands, and the fruit of his work was lasting.

“The happy man was born in the city of Regeneration in the parish of Repentance unto life. He was educated at the school of Obedience. He has a large estate in the county of Christian Contentment, and many times does jobs of self-denial, wears the garment of Humility, and has another suit to put on when he goes to Court, called the Robe of Christ’s Righteousness. He often walks in the valley of Self-Abasement, and sometimes climbs the mountains of Heavenly-mindedness. He breakfasts every morning on Spiritual Prayer and sups every evening on the same. He has meat to eat that the world knows not of, and his drink is the sincere milk of the Word of God. Thus, happy he lives, and happy he dies. Happy is he who has Gospel submission in his will, due order in his affections, sound peace in his conscience, real Divinity in his breast; the Redeemer’s yoke on his neck, a vain world under his feet, and a crown of glory over his head. Happy is the life of that man who believes firmly, prays fervently, walks patiently, works abundantly, lives holy, dies daily, watches his heart, guides his senses, redeems his time, loves Christ, and longs for glory. He is necessitated to take the world on his way to heaven, but he walks through it as fast as he can, and all his business by the way is to make himself and others happy. Take him all in all, in two words, he is a Man and a Christian.”

~ From *The Abiding Witness of Lachlan Mackenzie*,
Banner of Truth Trust, 1979. p. 5.

“The devil, I am sure, begins to tempt when saints cease to watch. When the staff is thrown away, then the wolf appears.”

~ Rev. William Gurnall (1616-1679)

Promises

(Isaiah 54:7-17)

For a moment I've forsaken,
In wrath I hid My face,
But I'll with mercies gather thee,
With everlasting grace.

I'm Jehovah, thy Redeemer,
I've sworn I'll not be wroth,
Just as I've sworn that Noah's flood
No more would cover th' earth.

Although the hills would be removed,
Though mountains would depart,
The cov'nant of My peace remains,
I've 'graved thee in My heart.

Oh thou afflicted, tempest-tossed,
Not comforted... behold,
I'll lay thy stones with colours fair
And with sapphires bold.

I'll make thy gates of carbuncles,
Thy windows of agates,
And all thy borders pleasant stones,
Thy children's peace be great.

Thy children shall be taught of God,
'Stablished in righteousness,
Oppression shall be far from thee,
From fear thou shalt have rest.

No weapon that shall come 'gainst thee
Shall prosper in its way,
And tongues that rise to judge unjust
Thou shalt condemn always.

This is the heritage of those
Whom I My servants call;
Their righteousness is all of Me,
Thus speaks the Lord of all.

Then fear no more, thou doubting one,
His promises are sure;
He's thy Maker and thy Husband,
In Him thou art secure.

- A. H.

Pity in Weakness

Rev. P. van Ruitenburg

The Lord understands what despondency is. Not that Christ ever gave in to despondency, but the Evil One did try to tempt him to that sin. As a result, Christ can have complete “pity” for our weaknesses. In other words, the Lord is not a stranger to despondency, and it may be a comfort to us that the Saviour we call upon understands us completely.

Christ not only understands the weaknesses. It is important that He himself stood His ground when the temptation came to give up hope. He did not become despondent, and He did not allow himself to be carried away by the sentiment of the women from Jerusalem who complained to Him. He clings to His Father, and even on the cross He was not despondent. He suffered pain, was beaten, mocked, and abandoned. He was very sad but always kept an eye on God. In this, God’s Son is not only an example, but also a Refuge. He has never been without faith, He has always trusted His Father, and therefore He can forgive the despondent their sins, including the sin of unbelief. So let us not allow anyone to stop us from fleeing to Him.

The despondent may pour out their hearts to Him and seek salvation in Him who was never truly despondent Himself, but felt the temptation. What a comfort when we have a Saviour who stands beside us and with whom we can express not only our worries but also our sins. High priests were known for their heartfelt compassion and Christ is the true High Priest. It’s a good feeling when people understand you, but it’s even more wonderful to have a Saviour who understands us. Christ was not only moved with the multitude, but the Lord feels much more with His own. Oh, how necessary it is to belong to Him. Only then will we be well off and blessed.

“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).

“Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust” (Psalm 103:13-14).

“But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd” (Matthew 9:36).

The Frailty of Man

“Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children’s children; To such as keep His covenant, and to those that remember His commandments to do them. The LORD hath prepared His throne in the heavens; and His kingdom ruleth over all. Bless the LORD, ye His angels, that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word. Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of His, that do His pleasure. Bless the LORD, all His works in all places of His dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul” (Psalm 103:13-22).

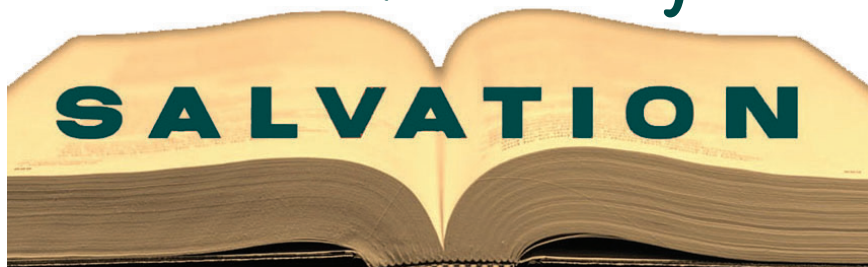
Matthew Henry (1662-1714)

The father pities his children that are weak in knowledge, and teaches them; pities them when they are froward, and bears with them; pities them when they are sick, and comforts them; pities them when they are fallen, and helps them to rise; pities them when they have offended, and, upon their submission, forgives them; pities them when wronged, and rights them: thus the Lord pities those that fear Him. See why He pities. He considers the frailty of our bodies, and the folly of our souls, how little we can do, how little we can bear; in all which His compassion appears.

How short is man’s life, and uncertain! The flower of the garden is commonly more choice, and will last the longer, for being sheltered by the garden-wall, and the gardener’s care; but the flower of the field, to which life is here compared, is not only withering in itself, but exposed to the cold blasts, and liable to be cropt and trod on by the beasts of the field. Such is man. God considers this, and pities him; let him consider it himself. God’s mercy is better than life, for it will outlive it. His righteousness, the truth of His promise, shall be unto children’s children, who tread in the footsteps of their forefathers’ piety. Then shall mercy be preserved to them.

He who made all, rules all, and both by a word of power. He disposes all persons and things to His own glory. There is a world of holy angels who are ever praising him. Let all His works praise Him. Such would have been our constant delight if we had not been fallen creatures. Such it will in a measure become if we are born of God. Such it will be forever in heaven; nor can we be perfectly happy till we can take unwearied pleasure in perfect obedience to the will of our God. And let the feeling of each redeemed heart be, *“Bless the Lord, O my soul.”*

The Word of



“To you is the Word of this salvation sent”
(Acts 13:26).

Rev. Ebenezer Erskine (1680-1754)

Question: What is the Word of salvation?

Answer: Not the law, but the gospel; that is *“the power of God unto salvation”* (Romans 1:16). Whatever discovers Christ, and salvation through Him, is the gospel.

Question: Why is it called the Word of salvation?

Answer: Because it discovers salvation, it describes salvation, it conveys salvation, as a charter does an estate, or as a testament does a legacy; it promises salvation, it establishes a connection between faith and salvation to all sorts of mankind sinners; for *“He that believeth ... shall be saved”* (see Mark 16:16; Acts 16:31); and because it is the organ or instrument by which the Spirit applies salvation.

Question: How does the Word operate in the hand of the Spirit, when believed unto salvation?

Answer: It operates as seed cast into the ground. It operates as rain and dew: *“My doctrine shall drop as the rain, My speech shall distil as the dew”* (Deuteronomy 32:2). As the light: *“The people which sat in darkness saw great light”* (Matthew 4:16). It is a light shining in a dark place. As fire: *“Is not My Word like as a fire?”* (Jeremiah 23:29). As water, as wind, as a seal imprinting the divine nature; as a glass, through which we see God’s glory; as balm for healing: *“He sent His Word, and healed them”* (Psalm 107:20).

Question: What are the qualities of this Word of salvation?

Answer:

1. It is a divine Word, *“the Word of God.”* God: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is the Author of it. Hence the gospel is called *“the gospel of God”* (Romans 1:1; 5:16).

2. It is a Word of God in Christ (see Hebrews 1:1-2; 2:3). It is secured *“in the hand of a Mediator”* (Galatians 3:19) and *“in Him are yea, and in Him Amen”* (2 Corinthians 1:20). It is given to us by Christ, and sealed in His blood. *“This cup is the new testament in My blood”* (Luke 22:20).

3. It is a gracious Word of God in Christ; it is free; it does not move upon our goodness or badness; our goodness does not further, nor our badness hinder it. It is a Word that comes from pure grace, and springs from His free mercy, who is the God of all grace. It is such a gracious Word, that it contains all grace.

4. It is a complete Word, containing all our salvation, for it contains God in it, Christ in it, and the Spirit in it. It contains a righteousness in it, founding a legal title to life eternal, namely, the obedience of Christ; and a legal security from eternal death, namely, the satisfaction and death of the Surety. It contains all the parts of life, and may well be called the Word of life; life in the beginning of it in regeneration: *“Of His own will begat He us with the Word of truth”* (James 1:18). The life of justification; we are justified in believing and receiving of Christ our righteousness, as promised in the Word. The life of sanctification, the life of consolation, the life of glory hereafter.

5. It is a sure Word, *“the sure mercies of David”* (Isaiah 55:3); sure, and more sure than a voice from heaven, such as even that which the disciples heard on the mount: *“We have also a more sure Word of prophecy”* (2 Peter 1:19).

6. It is a gracious, complete, sure Word of God in Christ to sinners, as well as to saints; it is to sinners of Adam’s family, for it presents a remedy for their malady. This leads us to the sending of this Word. From whom, by whom, to whom it is sent, and for what purpose?

Question: From whom is it sent?

Answer: It is a Word of salvation, sent from the God of salvation, to whom belong the issues from death, and it carries the impress of Himself upon it. As the Word is God’s Word, so it is of God’s sending: *“He sent His Word, and healed them”* (Psalm 107:20).

Question: By whom is it sent?

Answer: Not by angels, but by men: *“We are ambassadors for Christ”* (2 Corinthians 5:20). It is true, God sent His Word first by Christ: *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life”* (John 3:16). Then Christ sends it by men, that we may not be afraid at His appearance, as Israel were of old. *“We have this treasure in earthen vessels”* (2 Corinthians 4:7).

Question: To whom is it that He sent this Word of salvation?

Answer: To all sinners that hear it. Whosoever looks to the Word of salvation will find it looking at them. What was the gospel preached to Abraham? *“In thee, or in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed”* (see Genesis 12:3; 22:8). Is not this a Word of salvation to us also? It includes all in the word *“whosoever”* (see John 3:16; 1 Timothy 1:15). *“Christ came to call sinners to repentance”* (see Luke 5:32) It is a word that suits the case of sinners.

Question: For what purpose is it sent to sinners?

Answer: For the same purpose that a healing remedy is sent to a deadly malady; for Christ comes in the Word, and is made there *“wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption”* (1 Corinthians 1:30). More particularly, it is sent as a word of pardon to the condemned sinner: *“I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins”* (Isaiah 43:25). Hence may every condemned sinner lay hold of it by faith, saying, this word is sent to me. It is sent as a word of peace to the rebellious sinner, saying Christ hath *“received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also”* (Psalm 68:18). O, I am a rebel! May the sinner say, here is a word for me. It is sent as a word of life to the dead: *“The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live”* (John 5:25); as a word of liberty to the captives: *“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me; because the LORD hath anointed Me ... to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound”* (Isaiah 61:1). As a word of healing for the diseased, for the word says, *“I am the LORD that healeth thee”* (Exodus 15:26). As a word of cleansing, or a cleansing word for the polluted: *“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you”* (Ezekiel 36:25). As a word of direction to the bewildered: *“I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known”* (Isaiah 42:16). As a refreshing word to the weary: *“The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary”* (Isaiah 50:4). As a comforting word to the disconsolate, it brings in the good news of the river, *“the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God”* (Psalm 46:4), and of Christ, *“the consolation of Israel”* (Luke 2:25). As a drawing word, and a strengthening word to the powerless soul, saying, *“He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength”* (Isaiah 40:29). *“Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power”* (Psalm 110:3). *“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me”* (John 12:32). It is sent, in short, as a Word of salvation, and with

manifold blessings of salvation and redemption to the lost soul, saying, *“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost”* (Luke 19:10), and that we are *“not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot”* (1 Peter 1: 18-19).



“In no sense are good men compelled to sin. God always provides a way of escape. That way may be through a burning fiery furnace, through a lion’s den, through a shower of stones, through death itself; but it is still a way of escape. It is not wicked to die. In his design to prove Job a hypocrite, Satan was entirely baffled. In his attempt to bring to naught the work of redemption, he wholly failed. The Son of God was more than a match for him.”

~ Rev. William S. Plumer (1802-1880)

“It is the tendency of all sin, eternally to undo the soul.” ~ Rev. Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)