

## MAN AS EVANGELIZED IN RELATION TO GOD.

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### *Editorial Note.*

*Herewith a further extract from Dr. Kennedy's excellent little book "Man's Relations to God", this being an extract from Chapter 3, under the title as carried herewith. As the whole volume is soon to come into print, this will be the last of our extractions from that said volume, and we urge our readers to purchase the reprint of the whole when it emerges fairly soon.*

In considering the relation in which men, as evangelized, stand to God, it must not be forgotten,

1. *That it must be consistent with those relations, in which men, as fallen, stand to God, as these are defined by the terms, and determined by the breach, of the covenant of works.*<sup>1</sup> All men are "children of wrath" (John 3 : 36) till they are in Christ. It is as such the gospel addresses them, and such they shall continue, till they "repent and believe the gospel". The mere *revelation* of God's grace cannot alter the relation in which, as sinners, they stand to God, as Judge - a *work* of grace alone can do so. The light of the gospel only makes more manifest how lost they are.

2. *That it must be consistent with "the purpose of God according to election;"* for, while I cannot explain how the general proclamation of the gospel consists with the special purpose of God, **I must not form any conception of the one which is irreconcilable with the other. There can be no warrant for saying, to all who hear the gospel, that God loves them, nor that Christ is their Head, or their Brother, or their Redeemer; for this would be utterly incompatible with the purposes and arrangements of the Covenant of Grace. (emph. mine, Ed.)**

3. *That it is the same as that which was constituted in the days of old, between God and those to whom the covenant was revealed.* In its import and design, the gospel which was preached to Abraham, was the same which is now preached to us. It was then, and it is now, a revelation of the same covenant, the same Messiah, the same love, the same salvation, the same God; and it is designed now,

<sup>1</sup> By "covenant of works" is meant here the conditions of obedience required of man by God as in the original pre-fall paradisaical state. The Westminster Standards refer to this as the "Covenant of Works, see Confession Chapt. VII SECT. 2.

as well as then, for the salvation of God's chosen. ( Gal. 3 : 8 ) The scheme of grace, unfolded under the glimmering light of types, is the self-same on which the full light of the gospel now clearly shines. It could not then have been a scheme of universal benevolence, for it was authoritatively restricted to the circumcised; and it cannot therefore be so now. How, if it were so, could it be consistently administered by its Almighty Author, if providentially restricted, as it still actually is, to a portion of our race ?

But though the message of the gospel comes from the same God, reveals the same Messiah, and proposes the same terms of salvation, now as of old, the mode in which it is conveyed is different, and the measure of its light is greater. And, before inquiring how men, to whom the gospel is now preached, stand related to God, we must try to apprehend what the novelty is which gives its distinct character to the evangelic economy, as compared with that which it displaced. This is necessary, because to many minds the change seems as radical as if it were a passing to another covenant, and to another God.

**First,** *it is not new, because it is Mediatorial.* God's government, bearing on the church, and on all men, had ever been since the fall, through the Son as Mediator. In no other way was a dispensation of grace possible. It was the covenant of which Christ is Head that was administered in Old Testament times. It was He who spake to guilty man in Eden. It was He who appeared to the Patriarchs. He was the Angel who led Israel through the wilderness by the hand of Moses. ( Exod. 23 : 20-21 ) It was He who ordered the equipment of Israel as a nation and a church in the land of promise. It was "the Spirit of Christ" who inspired the prophets. ( 1 Pet 1 : 11 ). All the blessings by which the saints of old were enriched, were given in His right and by His Spirit. Then, as well as now, all judgment was in the hands of the Son, as Mediator. But now the Son, as Incarnate, reigns. "The Word made flesh" is now the King of Zion, and the King of nations. The same Person, with the same authority, is on the throne; but He is now seated there, after having been crucified and crowned in the flesh.

**Secondly,** *the light of Old Testament revelation has not been so eclipsed as to be superseded by the effulgence of the gospel.* True, there is a clearer light now than then. "The last days" have come, and brighter, with light from heaven, there shall not be on earth. "The word of the Lord" which now is "abideth for ever". ( See I Peter 1 : 25 ). But if the ancient Scriptures could be of any benefit to the church, would we expect that the "Lord merciful and gracious" would set them aside? Can they not now be all the more instructive than of old? Are they not required for the confirmation of the Christian's faith? Can he embrace the Jesus of the gospels, unless he can recognize Him as the Messiah of the prophets? And the Lord was careful to make it known that it was not His design to supersede the Old Testament Scriptures. At His first teaching after His resurrection, the lesson was taken from Moses and the prophets. ( Luke Ch. 24 : 27 ). He would not allow His

disciples to recognize Him in the flesh till they first identified Him with the promised Messiah. (Luke 24 : 16 and 31). The sermons preached by His apostles were from Old Testament texts. And when He was inspiring the men who wrote the New Testament, He acknowledged, in countless instances, the authority of the Old, as still conclusive, in deciding questions both of faith and duty.

**Thirdly,** *the new economy has not arrested the administration of the covenant of Works; nor has it weakened the authority of the moral law to any extent whatever.* All that was typical in the worship of Israel has been superseded; for He, who is "the way, and the truth, and the life," has come. The yoke of the ceremonial law no longer lies on the neck of the church. That "law was a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ". ( Gal. 3 : 24 ). As a ritual, its design has been fulfilled, and its end has come. But as a part of the revelation, its written rules abide; and through them glimpses of Christ shall be seen, by New Testament saints, to the end of time. And all that was not '*moral*' in the national laws of Israel, is no longer binding on the church. No nation is now a church; no church is now a nation. The Jewish code can no longer be in force; for the covenant according to which it was administered, has decayed, waxed old, and vanished away. ( Heb 8 : 8 - 13 ). But there is a law which cannot be set aside; and there is a form of its administration which is still in force - the moral law administered according to the covenant of works. It is the image of God drawn by His own hand. Because He is unchangeable and His work perfect, the moral law can never alter. A clearer light may shine on it than of old, but its features are still the same. And how strange is the delusion of those who imagine, that the gospel, in which appears the highest conceivable proof of God's regard for the honour of His law, and by which is revealed the only possible way of escape from its yoke and its curse, as a covenant, should be regarded as setting it altogether aside, or as intended to teach men to despise it as if it were utterly invalid or effete. In these three ways, the authority of God must bear on men under the gospel. (i) If unbelievers, they are still under the covenant of works. This is no Jewish peculiarity; it is the natural condition of the children of Adam. ( 1 Cor. 9 : 21 ). (ii) If believers, they are "not without law to God, but under law to Christ;" for no arrangement of their relation to God, can ever remove this essential condition of creatureship. (iii) All are bound to submit to the will of God as revealed in the Gospel. They are shut up by divine authority to " the obedience of faith" ( Rom. 16 : 26 ). But how common is it to ignore these truths; and to regard the gospel as superseding all law, and consulting only the convenience of those who need to be saved.

But the gospel dispensation is *brighter, freer, more catholic,* and more *spiritual* than that which preceded it.

It is *brighter*. "The Word" has been "made flesh". He has actually "dwelt among" men on the earth, Himself "the Son of man." We have now before us the history of His life of three and thirty years. During that period, what flashes of

divine glory shone out of that tabernacle in which He dwelt, making Jesus manifest as "the only Begotten of the Father," ( John 1 : 14 ) to all whose eyes were opened. What light His obedience "unto death" now sheds on the relation of men to the law, and of the law to God; as well as on the divine plan of redemption through the Son. In His dealing with His only Begotten in the flesh, appears the whole character of God; each perfection revealed, and the lustre of all harmoniously blending in His glorious name. He who was crucified and buried is now risen. The work of redemption is actually finished. The blood that made atonement is shed, and accepted, and presented. Jesus has been raised on high; glory has been given to Him, and power, at the right hand of God. His life in the flesh above, with its gracious bearing on the church below, is discovered to the eye of faith. The privileges of believers are fully detailed in the doctrines, and frequently assured in the promises, of the gospel. In the dim light of the apocalypse the future of the visible church appears on to its close, in the awful grandeur of Christ's second coming; and beyond the scene events and results of the final judgment, are disclosed the eternal glory, bliss, and service of heaven, and the darkness, the woe, and the wailing of hell.

It is *freer*. The removal of cumbrous and costly ceremonies has made it so. Its clearer light, too, secures greater freedom. "The way into the holiest" is now "made manifest". ( Heb. 10 : 19 and 20 ). The name of God, who is there, is more clearly made known. There is an opportunity of greater boldness in approaching the mercy-seat. But gospel liberty is not mere escape from burdensome service; it is freedom to serve God with more faith, and love, and reverence. And let it not be forgotten that the gospel dispensation does not secure the liberty of all who are under it. Its being free does not emancipate. ( John 8 : 36; Rom. 8 : 15; Gal. 4 : 6 ) Nor are we to think that necessarily New Testament saints have greater liberty of soul than they of old. The Spirit of adoption, as the Spirit of the Son, alone makes free; and, under all the disadvantages of the Old Testament, He enabled some to reach attainments in faith and holiness, which raised them above comparison with many believers of the gospel.

It is more *Catholic*. The Mosaic law was a fence as well as a yoke. It formed a "wall of partition"( Eph. 2 : 14 ) around the "peculiar people", excluding all the Gentiles, as such, from the society and privileges of the Church of God. But now it is taken down; and the gospel is preached to the Gentiles. "In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek." This is a new thing; but, since Abraham's day, it might have been expected. The God of Abraham, promised to bless, in Messiah, "all the families of the earth." ( Gen. 12 : 3 ). When Messiah came "in the fulness of time," He was announced to be the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world;" and ere He ascended, He commanded ( Matt. 28 : 19 ) the gospel to be preached to all nations. It was thus He appeared to be the Messiah promised to Abraham. If He claims to be "the light of the world," the one "propitiation for the sins of the whole

world,” the Prince and Saviour to all the nations of the earth, He may thus be recognized as “the hope of Israel” promised to the fathers. The comprehensive reference of New Testament words of hope, accords with the terms of the promise to Abraham. These words of world-wide embrace, were needed in order to the identification of the Christ of God; and that, in their light, the Gentiles might discover that there was hope for them. That Gentile does a foul thing who abuses them as an occasion for misrepresenting the scheme of grace. And yet how many there are who regard the wide words of grace, which they find in the gospel, as intended to teach, that the scheme it unfolds is one of universal love. But it is no new thing to cover a restricted reference in such forms of expression. The promises of grace which were given of old, seemed to embrace all within the area on which the light was shining. “Israel shall be saved in the Lord” - “Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely.” (Isaiah 45 : 17; Jer. 23 : 6). These, and many such promises, seemed to embrace all the people, to whom the covenant was revealed, although the gracious reference was only to a chosen few. “They were not all Israel” in the sense of the promise, “who were of Israel,” as a nation. (Rom.9 : 6). So now, “all the world” as the gospel area, seems to be embraced in its words of grace; but now, as well as then, there are an elect people, who are the special objects of God’s love. All in the world are not “the world” whom God loved “from everlasting”, whom He gave to His Son to redeem, and for whom the Son as Surety gave His life a ransom. The design of God, of old, was to gather His chosen out of Israel; His design now, is to gather them out of all nations. *Inrelation to the area which it illumines, the gracious reference of the gospel is not more universal than that of the revelations of grace given of old to Israel.* (Emph. here is Dr. Kennedy’s).

It is more *spiritual*. There is less, for the carnal eye, less for the self-righteous heart, in the simple worship of these gospel days, than in the elaborate ritualism of the days of old. The sun has risen; and all the cumbrous apparatus for giving light by night is now removed. The church is thrown open to the full free light of day. But there are owls that cannot be drawn or driven into the light - there are who will be ritualists still. And how aptly they illustrate their system by their practice ! Darkening the windows of their chapels, lest the pure light of day illumine them, they place, upon forbidden altars, candles to give a feebler light. The mosaic law, with its divinely arranged ritual, was once a honeycomb in which the Old Testament faith found food and sweetness for the broken heart. But these, loathing the honey, which was expressed from it on Calvary, still cleave to its empty rites. And as not from the honeycomb do they always derive the material for the candles which they use; - for quite as often is it drawn from marshes in which long ages of decay have left their debris; - so quite as much have modern ritualists borrowed from the vile deposits of Pagan superstition, as from the ancient ceremonies of the Jewish church. Ritualism is not mere folly; it is wickedness. It is not merely

a thing to be despised as silly; it is a thing to be shunned as deadly. It is not merely like the foolish behaviour of men who amuse themselves with their old nursery toys - who prove their heads to be light, as well as grey, by making sport with the playthings of their earliest youth. It turns into a prison and a slaughter-house the Church of God, where souls are bound with chains, fed with husks, and poisoned with deadly drugs.

And it is more spiritual, not merely because its worship is more simple, but also because it is attended with a more copious and widespread effusion of the Holy Ghost. This followed the ascension of Christ; this marked on earth the youth of His life on high, that the connection might be more evident of the Spirit's procession and work in all ages, with the Person, death, and life of Him who is the Christ of God.

There are five great facts, which demand primary attention from all who would discover the exact relation in which men, as evangelised, stand to God. 1. That the Author of the Gospel is God - that the grace and the message are "of God". Then, 2. That it is "concerning His Son Jesus Christ". 3. That the death of Christ appears prominently in the light of the gospel. 4. That it is about salvation God deals with men by the gospel. And 5. That it is preached to sinners as such.

*The Gospel is "of God"*. Its message comes to us from Him. ( Rom. 1 : 3 ). We must therefore "give earnest heed". He speaks with divine authority and should be revered ; He is faithful - "it is impossible for God to lie" - He should therefore be believed. All who hear are bound to attend and believe.

*Christ is the great theme of the gospel*, the personal Saviour, whom it reveals and presents to us. He is preached as "Jesus Christ the Lord;" His *right* to save, certified by His attested commission and His accepted merit; His *power* to save, extending "to the uttermost;" and His *willingness* to save, assured both by His death and by His word. Such is He as presented by God to "every creature under heaven," to whom the gospel is preached.

*It is as Christ crucified He is preached.* ( 1 Cor. 1 : 23 ). The gospel requires us to fix special attention on the death of Christ. Its place, in the arrangements of the covenant of grace, requires that it be prominently presented in the light by which that covenant is revealed.

*It is to deal with Him about salvation God calls us by the gospel*, - about salvation as embodied in His Christ, and as assured to all who by faith receive Him.

*And if we ever come it must be as sinners.* We cannot exercise faith in Christ, unless we realise that we are sinners; nor will we ever seek an interest in Him. It is not a sense of sin which entitles us to trust in Him. We are required to do so whatever be our state of feeling. As an absolute sinner I may trust in Him; but as a whole hearted sinner I never will.

It would be well if preachers of the gospel were more impressed with these great facts. If they preached as men who realised that they carried a message from Jeho-



vah; that the Saviour was the Christ and the Son of God; that His death was the only atonement for sin; that the salvation which is by Jesus Christ is full, free, and everlasting; and that their hearers are sinners ready to perish; how impossible would they then find it to hesitate about requiring faith from all who hear the gospel ! No difficulty arising from the sovereignty of God's love, and from the restricted reference of Christ's atonement, could hamper their minds or straiten their feelings in preaching Christ to sinners. All the more free and urgent would they be, as they realised a love, whose purposes must take effect, and a death, that shall not be in vain. And how the light of those great facts would clear men's views of faith, if only they would admit it into their minds ! It can be nought else than the reception of the Gospel, as true, because divine, and trust in the Christ of God, whom it reveals as a gracious Saviour from sin.

But we must more minutely consider how sinners, to whom the gospel is preached, are placed in relation to God, to Christ, to the atonement, and to salvation.

In thinking of God, as the Author of the gospel, we must not forget that He is the God of the covenant, and that it is by means of the gospel He is fulfilling the purposes and communicating the blessings of that covenant on the earth. His gracious design is to gather His elect to His Messiah, that in Him He may give them grace and glory.

We must remember, too, that the view of God's character given in the light of the gospel must be consistent with former revelations of Himself. He is committed by a threefold exhibition of Himself, which He gave in Old Testament times; and not only must He be consistent with Himself as He then appeared, but there must be in the gospel a fuller and clearer manifestation of Him, in each of these aspects of His character. He appeared as the God of Sinai - Jehovah, the Supreme Ruler, the only Judge, reverend in majesty, glorious in holiness, awful in His wrath. Before Him were a host of cowering slaves, representing our fallen race, dreading His anger, intolerant of His presence, and hopeless of His favour. In relation to these, He appears as the Great "I am" proclaiming His sovereignty, and, by the exercise of His irresponsible will, accounting for His election of some of them as objects of His mercy. According to His everlasting covenant, all is arranged for the fulfilment of His purposes bearing on His chosen; and His name, according to which He is to act in executing His scheme of grace, He declares to be, "Jehovah, Jehovah God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands; forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty." (Exod. 34 : 6, 7.) This is His character, as it shall be developed in His dealings, in all ages, with men according to His covenant of grace. Thus shall He always express Himself as the God of salvation. His name is no abstraction. It is not something which I can know, while standing at a distance from Himself. He reveals His name in His work; and I can know that

name, only when, as a sinner, I transact with Him about salvation. It is only as He acts towards me, according to His name, that I can know Him.

Thus shall God reveal Himself to the end of time - thus is He made known by the gospel. It gives a clearer view of His character, as it was revealed from Sinai; makes a fuller display and furnishes occasion for a continued and more minute assertion of His sovereignty among the nations; and though the glory of His grace appears in the clear light of the doctrines of the cross, it is still as true as ever that none can know, appropriate, or taste His love, but such as have come, because He brought them, to Himself in Christ. The treasures of that glorious name are not sown broadcast over the race of Adam; - He reserves them under His own control. "He will have mercy on whom He will;" (Rom. 9 : 18 ) and these as believing sinners, lying at His footstool, and only these, shall "taste that the Lord is gracious."

How often and how greatly misrepresented is the character of God, as revealed in the gospel, by those who single out the one attribute of love, and insist on the universality of its regards. To their minds, the view of God, given by the law, seems inconsistent with the love commended in the gospel. The latter they use as an expedient for getting rid of the impressions of God's character, produced by the law. They think they are entitled not to look at the stern aspect of divine glory, as it appears in the lurid light of Sinai. They seem to conceive of an Old Testament God and a New Testament deity altogether different. They cannot honestly say "to us there is one God;" for if they had but one God, how could they reverence Him, unless they recognised Him as one, in all the manifestations of His glory - unless they beheld in the cross the very truth and righteousness which gave so severe an aspect to His character, as revealed from Sinai. It is impossible to respect the God of the gospel unless those views of His character, which gave its distinctiveness to the revelation of old, are seen in a clearer light, and in harmony with His love. It is the glory of the gospel, that in the very measure in which it displays the awfulness of divine wrath, and gives a deeper impression than that given by the law, of the truth and justice of Jehovah, it encourages the sinner to hope for His favour, and to appropriate the gifts of His love. God, as revealed from Sinai, I must not ignore. I must contemplate Him in the light of the law, till my self-righteous hope shall die; and I must recognise Him in the cross, that I may reverence and trust Him.

The gospel of God is "*the gospel of His grace*" - the God of the gospel is "the God of all grace." In its light is seen how "God is love" to Himself and to His people. His Son has been actually given as a lamb for the sacrifice. All he is, in His divine dignity, and all He is to the Father, as His only Begotten Son, must be considered in thinking of the bounty of the love that gave Him. This gift expressed divine love to sinners- guilty, loathsome enemies. For these the given Son has died, that through His blood they might be reconciled to God; and, as their Head, He has risen, that He might save them by the power of His life.



But this love is *Sovereign*. If God loved, because He was love, and not because He was pleased to love - if the actings of His love were required as an expression of what He was - then its exercise was necessary, and its embrace must be universal. But it is the love of the Almighty, and it must be gratified. It cannot be a fruitless affection. Its purposes must take effect. The final results of His government can furnish no disappointment to His love. It shall have secured at last the perfect blessedness of all whom it embraced. Therefore, the love of God must be sovereign, electing love. And the salvation of the gospel is the provision of love. It is, throughout, a provision suitable, and therefore intended, for sinful persons. The Almighty cannot provide in vain. The benefit He designed must be secured to those for whom it was intended. His love is saving love. He cannot love and not save. Salvation is the necessary expression of His love - this is His one way of making it known. But salvation requires sinful persons as its subjects; therefore love required certain persons as its objects.

Whence springs the anxiety to evade the truth that electing love is the source of all salvation? Let men clothe it as they may, it is the vile progeny of pride. It is the stubborn protest of the carnal mind against the righteousness of the Judge, and against the power of the Sovereign of all. Men will persist in thinking, that, though sinners, they have some claim on God; or, that, if it is not due to them, God owes it to Himself, to deliver them from death. Oh, that men would only listen to the voice which proclaimeth, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy."

There are some who try to imagine an abstract benevolence of Jehovah, different from, and something, as they fain would have it, even higher than, His saving grace, which is discovered through the mediation of His Son. They desire not quite to leave it in the region of the abstract; but they cannot extricate it. They try to think that it may, somehow, find expression in God's general dealings with mankind, by means of the gospel; because they can think of nothing definite. But where, in the firmament of Scripture, does this nebulous thing appear? What is this benevolence, apart from the goodness of God, as Sovereign, which he meantime extends to all, in order to His having an opportunity of fulfilling His purposes of grace? It is one love, and only one, which is revealed in Scripture - the love that gave the Son, and that giveth all things with Him. It is in the outcome of this love that God manifests Himself in Jesus Christ. To some minds it appears as if the manifestation of such love were not after all a revelation of God as love. The direction and expression of His love menwards, originating in a sovereign exercise of His will, seems to them to give occasion for a revelation of His purpose, rather than for an exhibition of Himself. They would therefore introduce a supplementary scheme. They seem to think that God has left room for this. But what is this but to cover a vile impertinence under a cloak of zeal for the honour of God? Let not vain man intrude his suggestions upon God, nor dare to flaunt his anxiety

as to the results of divine arrangements, before the eyes of Jehovah. It is by the fulfilment of His purpose, bearing on the elect, God determined to manifest Himself as love - as love to Himself, in the first instance, and to His people in the second. His special purpose only makes Him to appear all the more kingly in His love; and looking to the commendation of His love, which He hath given, it is manifest that He is all He is in loving thus. It is only thus that I could know that "God is love" - that I could recognise Jehovah in the actings of His love, and discern the activity of His love as expressive of all He is.

*The love of God was displayed before men, through Jesus Christ ; it can affect them only by bringing them to Christ ; and it can be expressed to them only when they are in Christ.* It was displayed in the gift of the Son, as the Lamb, that through His blood it might flow as saving grace to sinners. It cannot affect them so as to produce any change of state, except through the work of the Holy Ghost in effectual calling. And never, till he is in Christ, can any one be assured of the love of God to him; and never otherwise can the provision, which it hath made, be either obtained or enjoyed.

How prone men are to forget these truths ! How strong is the anxiety of unconverted sinners to discover that they are loved already ! How many reason thus - 'God loved the world; but I am of the world; therefore God loves me.'<sup>2</sup> A most unexceptionable syllogism this, if the premises were true. But in order to determine this, they must follow the world, in the light of Scripture, along the whole line of its revealed connection with the love of God. When they do so, they will discover that the world which the Father loved He sent His Son to save; that for the life of that world the Son gave His flesh; and that this same world the Spirit convinces "of sin, righteousness, and judgment." They would thus discover that He who can truly say, 'God loves me', is he, and only he, who has certified his calling by its appropriate fruits, and to whom these have been sealed as evidence of his being in Christ, a son of God, an heir of life eternal. To tell men that God loves them before they have believed, is to tell them what God has not revealed even to His chosen, and what can give no encouragement to a wounded spirit. Such assurance of God's love does not meet the anxious sinners case. To tell him that God loves him as he hath loved millions who are already in hell, is but to dishearten him, and it dishonours God. This is but to cheat him with "a delusion," and to decoy him with "a snare." His desire is to know how God may express His

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<sup>2</sup> The reader should note this carefully, and observe how far away Dr. Kennedy is from the kind of gospel preached and advocated by not only Arminians, but even by many modern day Calvinists, as was manifest in the Evangelical Times of January 1995, and the Banner of Truth of Aug/Sept 1994, where the position herewith repudiated by Dr. Kennedy was effectively espoused with fervour. Suffice it to say that Dr. Kennedy's views on these matters concord with Scripture, and are supported by the exegesis of such as John Owen *Death of Death* pp.202 ff., ( Works vol X pp.314 ff.) Here Owen expounds in some detail WHAT it is that is contained in the true, Scriptural Gospel, as requisite that a sinner should believe, all set in contrast to the kind of "gospel" that is being advocated by an increasing number of modern-day "calvinists". *Ed.*

love to a sinner, and at the same time display His love to Himself. There is no love to which he can lift his eye in hope but free sovereign love, whose exercise consists with all that God is, and with all that God hath said, and whose provision fully and exactly meets such a case as his.

Such views of divine love as have been given raise two questions, which many a fool's attempt has been made to answer.[1.] Why, if God designed only the salvation of some, does He address the gospel call to all without distinction? [2.] How can an earnest call be addressed by God to those whom He doth not love?

[1.] All Calvinists hold that the gracious design of God, in the preaching of the gospel, is the salvation of the elect through faith in Christ; and this is plainly intimated in the Word of God. Why then, it is asked, is the gospel preached to all? The answer must be, that "so it seemed good" in the sight of God; and the arrangement must be accepted as perfect on the credit of God's character. To some extent it may be defended against cavils. (a.) It seems *necessary* because the gospel is to be preached by men from whom the "secret things" are hidden. The mysterious thing is not, that the gospel is preached to all, but that it is preached by men. (b.) It seems *wise* because it meets the case of God's chosen, as sinners, in a state common to all the race. The gospel of the grace of God is most fitly preached to sinners, as such. From amongst the mass God gathers His chosen by a word and a work of grace adapted to the ruin common to all. He cannot come nigh to these in a revelation of grace without approaching all among whom they are. (c.) It is *becoming* that God Himself, and not another, should bring His own loved ones into view, and should do so by a work of grace. (d.) There is a design of God, in reference to the non-elect, which shall take effect by means of the gospel, to the praise of His glorious justice. There is a work of judgment, as surely as a work of grace, in connection with the gospel;<sup>3</sup> and however we may shrink from realising this, it is plainly set before us in the light of Scripture. (Rom. 11: 7 - 10).

[2.] The difficulty felt by many minds in dealing with the second question, is not owing to the necessary mysteriousness of the divine, but is one of their own creation. Regarding the call of the gospel as necessarily an expression of love, they cannot reconcile it with the doctrine of election. But is the call of the gospel an expression of love to each individual to whom it is addressed? True, the doctrine of the gospel is a revelation of God's love to sinners; and the embrace of divine love is assured to all who close with the call of the gospel. But is not this

<sup>3</sup> Note how Dr. Kennedy is here taking the same position as the much-unjustly-maligned Herman Hoeksema and the Protestant Reformed Churches of the U.S.A. This position is ably articulated by Prof. David Engelsma, in his most excellent and eye-opening book, **Hyper-Calvinism and the Call of the Gospel** ( Grand Rapids, Michigan : Reformed Free Publishing Association, Second edition 1994 ) pp.69 - 70, where the position is justified exegetically with ref. to numerous Scriptures including the very significant passage in II Cor. 2 : 15 - 16. In that Kennedy's book has not seen publication for 125 years, it is highly significant that the modern Protestant Reformed are repeating his arguments point by point ! Co-incidentally (?) both Kennedy and the PR's have been ostracised and slandered as "hyper-calvinists" ! And that by virtually identical, doctrinally speaking, theologians who, professing to be "Calvinists", are in fact QUASI - Calvinists. Ed.

something very different from the call being an expression of love to all to whom it is addressed? True also, the call must be addressed in all sincerity and earnestness by God. But this is secured in perfect consistency with all the doctrines of Calvinism.

Genuine and earnest the gospel call must be, (a) because *it presents a claim in behalf of Jesus Christ*. He is infinitely worthy of confidence. He is so in the view of God. His eye rests on the glory of His beloved Son as Jesus Christ when He calls sinners to believe in His name. Till I suspect that God is not in earnest in saying, "this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," I cannot suspect His earnestness in saying "kiss ye the Son." It must be so, (b) because it is a call to accept of Christ as a Saviour in whom the love of God is free, and delights, to save all who come to Him. His call to me as a sinner, as it points me to salvation by grace in Christ, is expressive of all the earnestness inspired by God's delight in mercy. It must be so also (c) because salvation by grace is to the praise of His glory. This is the terminus to which he calls the sinner. His call is therefore expressive of all the earnestness of His zeal for His own glory. And it must be so (d) as a call to believe, because once it has pleased God to testify regarding Jesus Christ, it cannot be a matter of indifference to Him whether men believe or not. His zeal for the claims of His own truth, and for the honour of His name as the God of truth, pours an infinite tide of earnestness into "the word of faith".

It is to divine earnestness, as thus accounted for, our minds should be directed when we are plied with gospel calls. The Son and His worthiness; salvation by grace to the glory of God; the truth and the authority of God; - these should be considered as accounting for the genuineness and earnestness of the calls addressed to us. When a sinner is in earnest under the power of the gospel, it is because these elements of the divine earnestness have touched his heart through faith. The gospel as the testimony of God, as an authoritative assertion of the Son's claims, and as revealing a peace in the hand of mercy, bright with the lustre of God's glorious name, has set his soul in motion in unison with the mind of God. Divine earnestness, thus expressed in the gospel, has been borne in upon his soul, and its strong current bears him on to Christ.

Especial care should ever be taken *not to dissociate God's love from Christ*. There must be zeal for the *holiness* as well as for the *freeness* of the love of God. But to tell a sinner that God loves him apart from Christ, is to represent the love of God so as to provoke contempt - as a love adapting itself to the sinners convenience rather than as a love which God becomingly expresses. How can the love of God be fitly expressed but in providing Christ as a Saviour, in bringing sinners unto Him, and in blessing them with all spiritual blessings in Him when they come?

In perfect harmony, with all God is, and with all His antecedents and utterances, a sinner may be told that he is a child of disobedience and of wrath, under the yoke

and curse of the broken covenant, but that God has provided a Saviour ( Acts chap 2 : 22 - 36 ) for such sinners as he; that, in that Saviour, God is willing to show the riches of His grace, in justifying, adopting, and sanctifying all who receive Him; that it shall be to the praise of His glory thus to bless them; and that all, who hear the gospel, are required by God, to believe in Christ, in order that the promise of salvation may be theirs in Him. What is there in such a declaration awaiting in order to its being a word of hope to sinners, or to forbid its being preached in the name of God. It presents a salvation sure and free in a Saviour provided by God, resulting in glory to God in the highest. It exhibits the love of God as a holy and a saving love. It allows to the sinner no legitimate alternative but faith. God's word of authority shuts him up to God's love in Christ in whom salvation, full, free, and everlasting, is assured to every believer by the counsel and oath of Him for whom it is impossible to lie. ( Heb. 6 : 18 ).



## POSTSCRIPT

Readers will be interested to know that the complete volume of Dr. Kennedy's book, "**Man's Relations to God**" is about to be reprinted, ( DV ) with nothing left out. A new publishing venture in Scotland has made all the preparations, and we look forward to seeing the whole volume in its new format. Such a reprint is long overdue, and no doubt the reason for it being pushed to one side over the last 125 years ( while a lot of other material, some of dubious value, and some of outright poor quality has been reprinted ) is due to the kind of position the author took with respect to the so-called "free offer" of the gospel, and indeed the actual content of the gospel. The reader will do well, if, having read the article printed herewith, he now pursues the chapter further by reading the article in Issue No.9 of the British Reformed Journal entitled "Preaching the True Gospel Properly." We shall ( DV ) keep our readers informed about the reappearance of Dr. Kennedy's book, and also give details concerning purchase of the same.

*Editor.*