



D. BROUGHTON
KNOX

SELECTED WORKS



VOLUME III

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

EDITED BY TONY PAYNE AND KAREN BEILHARZ



D. BROUGHTON
KNOX

SELECTED WORKS



VOLUME III

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

EDITED BY

TONY PAYNE

AND

KAREN BEILHARZ



matthiasmedia

D. Broughton Knox, Selected Works, *Volume III: The Christian Life*
© Matthias Media, 2006

This resource may only be used under a valid licence purchased from the publisher. Please familiarize yourself with and respect the licence conditions, which can be found at www.matthiasmedia.com.au/download_licence.

Matthias Media
(St Matthias Press Ltd. ACN 067 558 365)
PO Box 225
Kingsford NSW 2032 Australia
Telephone: (02) 9663 1478; international: +61-2-9663-1478
Facsimile: (02) 9663 3265; international: +61-2-9663-3265
Email: info@matthiasmedia.com.au
Internet: www.matthiasmedia.com.au

A NOTE ON BIBLE VERSIONS.

In the course of his lectures and writings, Dr Knox characteristically quoted from either the King James Version or the Revised Version, and sometimes from a combination of both. We have retained this feature.

Design and typesetting by Lankshear Design Pty Ltd.



CONTENTS



PREFACE 5

PART 1: THE GOSPEL OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. The God of the Gospel 9
 2. The Message of the Gospel 25
 3. The Preachers of the Gospel 47
- Appendix to Chapter 2: The Meaning of the word 'gospel' 59

PART 2: THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

1. Justification 63
2. The Chief End of Man 91
3. The Normal Christian Life 97
4. Love and the Obligation to Love 103
5. Jesus, Jesus Himself 105
6. The Holy Spirit 109
7. Forgiveness and its Assurance 115
8. Prayer 121
9. Thankfulness 131
10. Joy 133
11. Spiritual Depression 135
12. The Christian and Money 137
13. How to Grow as Christians 143
14. The Christian Family 149

PART 3: THE CHRISTIAN IN SOCIETY

1. The Gospel and Society 155
2. Civil Disobedience 159
3. Social Justice or Compassion—what is the Christian motivation? 163
4. 60th Anniversary of the U.S.S.R. 167
5. The Train Strike: Right or Wrong? 169
6. Animal Farm 171
7. The Resurrection and Permissiveness 173
8. Why Obscenity should be Censored 175
9. The Women's Year 179
10. Abortion 181
11. Gambling 187
12. Race 191
13. Education 197
14. Naked Bathing Beaches 199
15. Responding to Disaster 201
16. Sunday Trade 205
17. Inflation—a new sin? 207
18. Wealth 209

GENERAL INDEX 217

BIBLE PASSAGES INDEX 229



..... P R E F A C E



*T*HIS IS THE THIRD AND, IN ALL likelihood, final volume in the Selected Works of David Broughton Knox.

Knox fans everywhere will rejoice at its arrival, while no doubt also wishing that the series might somehow be extended. Those less familiar with Dr Knox's writings might wonder what all the fuss is about. Who is this rather obscure Australian theologian, and why do his selected works run to three volumes?

The short answer is that D. B. Knox was one of the most extraordinary theological minds of his generation—at the same time original and conservative, provocative and pastoral, theoretical and practical. As principal of Moore Theological College, Sydney, from 1959 to 1985, he not only built Moore into one of the world's finest Reformed-Evangelical theological colleges, but shaped the minds of a generation of Christian leaders who in turn have influenced countless thousands—men like Peter and Phillip Jensen, John Woodhouse, John Chapman, David Cook, David Peterson, and many more.

In his lifetime, D. B. Knox was a prolific lecturer, preacher and writer, but only a small portion of his output was ever published, much of which subsequently fell out of print. The 'Selected Works' project, begun in 1998, with the first volume published in 2000, set about to remedy the situation, and to make the profound contribution of D. B. Knox accessible and available to a wider audience.

Volume 1 drew together material on the doctrine of God, including the full text of 'The Everlasting God', Dr Knox's best-known work. Volume 2 focused on his influential teaching about church, as well as a range of writings about ministry, the sacraments and Roman Catholicism.

This final volume contains a diverse collection of materials relating to the broad theme of 'the Christian life'. As with the prior volumes, there is a mix of theological papers, sermons and lecture notes, as well as numerous short articles adapted from Dr Knox's long-running

‘Protestant Faith’ radio broadcasts. The volume opens with a previously unpublished (and unfinished) work on the nature of the New Testament ‘gospel’, followed by material that expounds the Christian response to that gospel—in personal faith and discipleship, and in our relationship to the broader society.

According to D. B. Knox, the normal Christian life is not difficult to understand. Christians are people who “have turned from the world to serve the true and living God, and to wait for his Son from heaven. No longer earthbound, they are heavenly-minded, seeking not earthly blessings, benefits and affluence, but the heavenly blessing of relationship with God and with one another.”¹ Our hope and prayer is that this volume will encourage and stimulate you to lead that heavenly-minded life, to the glory of God.

Tony Payne

SYDNEY, 2006

1. ‘The Normal Christian Life’, p. 97.

..... PART 1

THE GOSPEL
OF THE NEW
TESTAMENT



Chapter 1

THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

THE GOSPEL OF GOD

THE FIRST PREACHERS OF THE GOSPEL were conscious that God was the source of the message they preached. It was the gospel of God, as Paul described it in the opening sentence of his letter to the Romans, or, as he put it in 1 Corinthians 2:1, it was “the disclosed secret [μυστηριον] of God”.

Paul, the most famous of the gospel preachers, was vividly conscious that he was sent on his mission by God. At the end of his ministry, he told the crowd gathered below the steps of the Roman castle in Jerusalem about the commission he had received from Ananias at his conversion. Ananias had said to him, “the God of our fathers has appointed you to know his will ... and you will be a witness to all men of what you have seen and heard”.¹

Throughout his ministry, Paul prefaced his letters with the statement that he was an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God. This phrase, “through the will of God” is found for example in the opening sentences of 1 and 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians and 2 Timothy. In 1 Timothy the phrase is strengthened slightly. He describes himself as “an apostle of Jesus Christ according to the commandment of God”.² In the opening of Galatians Paul expanded the phrase. He described himself as “an apostle of Jesus Christ through God the Father who raised him from the dead”.³

The other preachers were equally confident that their preaching was the result of the commandment of God. Thus Peter told Cornelius

1. Acts 22:14-15.

2. 1 Timothy 1:1.

3. Galatians 1:1.

that the word of God that he brought was “the word God sent”⁴ and that God who had raised Jesus “had charged us to preach to the people that Jesus was the one ordained of God to be the judge”.⁵

God who sent the apostles on their preaching ministry was the God of the Old Testament. The apostles were quite unconscious that they had in any way changed their religion by preaching Jesus as the Messiah whom God had raised from the dead and appointed to be judge.

The God of the gospel was the God who had revealed himself through the law and the prophets. No alteration in the character and attributes of God revealed in the Old Testament is detectable in anything the early Christians preached or wrote. Nor is there any alteration in the New Testament in proportion of emphasis that is given to the various aspects of the character of God in the Old Testament. The God of the gospel was the God of the Old Testament. Thus for example Paul told Felix the governor of Judaea, “I serve the God of our fathers”,⁶ and he repeated the sentiment in his second letter to Timothy: “God whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience”.⁷ Paul was quite convinced that the God whom he had been taught to serve as a boy and whom he had sought to serve all his pre-conversion days, was also the God whom he served during the whole of his Christian ministry, so that, at the end of his ministry when he was on trial for his life, he was able to affirm to Felix with complete confidence, “I serve the God of our fathers”. He added that he believed the whole of the Old Testament in its entirety, “believing all the things which are according to the law and are written in the prophets”.⁸ Shortly before, while still in Jerusalem, Paul had told the Sanhedrin, “I have lived before God in all good conscience unto this day”.⁹ The God whom the members of the Sanhedrin worshipped was the God whom Paul believed he was worshipping all his life “in all good conscience”.

This conviction that the God of the gospel was the God of the Old Testament was shared by other Christians in the early church. For

4. Acts 10:36.

5. Acts 10:42.

6. Acts 24:14.

7. 2 Timothy 1:3.

8. Acts 24:14.

9. Acts 23:1.

example, Ananias, who was sent to lay his hands on Paul after Paul's experience on the Damascus Road, told him "the God of our fathers has appointed you to know his will".¹⁰ Peter told the Jerusalem crowd very early in the Christian mission that "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of our fathers has glorified his servant Jesus".¹¹ The early preachers were convinced that they had not changed their religion but that they continued to serve the God of their fathers, the God of the Old Testament, though they were now commissioned to proclaim the news about God's actions in sending his Messiah, raising him from the dead after crucifixion by the Jewish people and exalting him to the right hand of power as judge.

The character of God is much more amply described in the Old Testament than it is in the New, and so it is to the Old Testament we must go in order to understand who is the God whom the preachers of the gospel worshipped and whose actions and intentions they proclaimed.

CREATOR

The most fundamental aspect of God in the Old Testament is that he is the creator. The first sentence of the Bible is, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth".¹² Everything is included. Creation is depicted as an act of God's will, not an emanation from God or an inevitable aspect of his being. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made ... He spoke and it was done".¹³ "He commanded and they were created."¹⁴ It was an act of deliberation and reflection. God said, "Let us make ...".¹⁵

Not only in the opening chapters of Genesis, but throughout the Old Testament, God as creator is clearly taught. In the Pentateuch, creation is affirmed in the Decalogue: "In six days the Lord made the heaven and the earth, the sea and all that in them is".¹⁶ It is affirmed

10. Acts 22:14.

11. Acts 3:13.

12. Genesis 1:1.

13. Psalm 33:6, 9.

14. Psalm 148:5.

15. Genesis 1:26.

16. Exodus 20:11.

in the prophets: “The gods that have not made the earth shall perish”, Jeremiah stated.¹⁷ Isaiah called upon the children of Israel to “lift up your eyes on high and see who created these ... the everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth”.¹⁸ Indeed the doctrine of God as creator is fundamental to Isaiah’s message of trust in God: “Thus says the Lord that created you, Jacob, fear not”.¹⁹

The doctrine of God the creator is equally important in the religion of the New Testament. In speaking to the Pharisees, Jesus described God as the creator of humanity.²⁰ Prayer is often the way to inner spiritual life and thought. The prayers of the disciples in Jerusalem began by apostrophizing God as creator: “O Lord, you made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that in them is”.²¹ And Jesus prefaced his prayer with, “Father, Lord of heaven and earth”.²²

The concept of God the creator was basic to the gospel message. When the apostles were preaching to Jewish audiences, there was no need to emphasize this aspect of God’s character. The preacher and his hearers shared a common belief in God as creator. It was a prominent and essential feature of their concept of God so that the doctrine was assumed by the preacher. But this same assumption could not be made when the preacher was addressing a Gentile audience whose concept of deity did not include creator Lord as a fundamental notion, if it were present at all. Thus, when preaching to non-Jewish audiences, the gospel sermons began by stressing that God was the creator of everything, for this was the God in whose name the missionaries were sent, and whose actions they were bringing news of to their Gentile hearers. Thus Paul, addressing the gathered throng in Lycaonia, spoke of the living God who had made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that in them is.²³ In Athens, in his sermon before the Areopagus, Paul began in similar vein with a fourfold repeated affirmation of the creatorhood of God who had made the world and all things, the Lord

17. Jeremiah 10:11.

18. Isaiah 40:26, 28.

19. Isaiah 43:1.

20. Matthew 19:4.

21. Acts 4:24.

22. Matthew 11:25.

23. Acts 14:15.

of heaven and earth, the one who gives life and everything to all, the one who made mankind and determined its history.²⁴ This was the God of whose actions Paul was bringing news.

God is creator of everything. This is fundamental in the biblical revelation and it continued as a vivid element in the religion of the New Testament Christians. It was the first doctrine proclaimed by the preachers to the Graeco-Roman world. In the book of Revelation, what is described as the timeless eternal gospel to be proclaimed to all who dwell on the earth contained as an essential feature the command, “worship him who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and the fountains of water”.²⁵

In modern western thought, the truth of the creatorhood of God of heaven and earth and sea and of everything in them is widely denied. Even among Christians, this clear and prominent doctrine of revelation is in practice pushed into the periphery of their thought and world view by the theory of origins known as evolution which is so vigorously and religiously taught by pedagogues and educational publishers. Modern western secular thought believes the world and man to be autonomous and self-created. The impersonal term ‘nature’ has replaced the personal will of God as the cause to which everything is ascribed. Though the evidence to support the theory of evolution is slight and, in fact, much evidence is more compatible with the bringing into existence of our present world by a succession of creative acts of God rather than by a continuum of random and purposeless viable mutations, yet Christians generally do not feel able to challenge the dominant theory. The theory, however, is essentially incompatible with Scripture. Before modern evangelism can expect success (i.e. the blessing of God), preachers must be willing to delineate the true character of God as Paul did at Athens. They must proclaim God as creator before they go on to proclaim the actions and intentions of God in Christ.

Since God is the creator of all things, it follows that God is all-powerful within his creation. The created universe is what it is through his will and his word. It could have been quite different had he so willed it. And at any moment of its existence, it can be completely changed

24. Acts 17:24-26.

25. Revelation 14:7.

by his will. “There is nothing too hard for the Lord.”²⁶ As Job confessed, “I know you can do all things”²⁷ and, as Jesus prayed, “Father all things are possible to you”.²⁸

Only God has immortality. Everything else is contingent on his will, nor has he in any way limited his power or restrained the sovereignty of his will when he brought creation into being. It came into being through his will. It exists only so long as he wills it, and the form that it has taken, or the form that it may take, is in accordance with his purposes and his will.

God’s sovereignty extends equally to the greatest as well as to the least significant feature of his creation, as we estimate significance. The sun rises each day because God so wills it.²⁹ It can stand still without any unusual cosmological consequences if that is his will. No sparrow falls to the ground apart from him.³⁰ All areas of human life are equally under his powerful sovereignty. The mind and will of the despot is directed by God as he will.³¹ The acceptance of the gospel, or indeed its rejection by its hearers, is the consequence of God’s purpose. This Jesus clearly affirmed in his prayer in Matthew 11.³² Yet this does not in any way affect the reality of the initiatives of response in the hearer.³³ This comes out clearly in the passage. Jesus acknowledged God’s sovereignty in those who accept or reject the gospel, yet earnestly urges his hearers to respond. Our Lord repeats the same two notions in John 6:37 and John 5:40. Similarly in Exodus, Pharaoh’s hardening of his own heart and his rejection of the word of God is God’s action and the consequence of God’s decision.³⁴ The action is at the same time both God’s action and Pharaoh’s action.³⁵ The almighty creator is actively sovereign in all respects within his world.

26. Genesis 18:14.

27. Job 42:2.

28. Mark 14:36.

29. Matthew 5:45.

30. Matthew 10:29.

31. Proverbs 21:1.

32. Matthew 11:20-26.

33. cf. Matthew 11:28-29.

34. Exodus 4:21, 7:3, 9:12, 10:1, 14:8.

35. Exodus 8:15, 32.

GOD OF ALL

The God of the Old Testament is the God of the whole human race. This truth follows naturally from the fact that he is the creator of all. Thus Joshua reminded the Israelites as they faced the crossing of Jordan and the attack on Jericho that their God the Lord was the Lord of all the earth,³⁶ a sentiment echoed by believing Rahab who had confessed her faith to the two spies who had put themselves under her protection: “the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above and on earth beneath”.³⁷ Centuries later, the prophet Amos expressed the same truth that God is the God of every nation and that all are under his control and care when, in God’s name, he asked, “Have not I brought ... the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir?”³⁸

GOD IS GOOD TO ALL

The creation reflects the benignity of God. The creation is good. This is testified to by our own judgement and experience. We enjoy our created life and our created world. Our five senses are continual sources of pleasure through their contact with the created world, and the mental pleasures and the pleasures of personal relationship are greater still. Our experience that creation is good is underlined and clearly affirmed by Scripture itself. The verses of the creation story in Genesis 1 reverberate with the refrain that what was successively brought into being by God was good and the narrative culminates with the statement that God saw everything that he had made and it was very good.³⁹

In the New Testament, when the audience consists of Jews, the preachers made no reference to the goodness of creation. Once again this was assumed. But when preaching to the Gentiles it is otherwise. When the heathen Lycaonians had identified Paul and his companion with their own mythological gods, Paul appealed to his hearers’ innate

36. Joshua 3:13.

37. Joshua 2:11.

38. Amos 9:7.

39. Genesis 1:31.

appreciation of creation as a pointer to the character of God whose gospel he was proclaiming to them. He said, “God did not leave himself without witnesses in that he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness”.⁴⁰ So too at Athens Paul declared to his hearers that all we possess and enjoy is the gift of God to us. He gives us life and breath and all things.

The act of creation by which God brought everything into being involved the creator in a relationship with his creation. His benignity means that he is beneficent towards his creation: “His tender mercies are over all his works.”⁴¹ His omnipotence with regard to everything which he has brought into being by his word (and over every aspect of it) means that nothing can thwart his benevolence and gracious purposes. These purposes are expressed in promises. Put another way, God’s goodness places him in covenant relationship with all that he has brought into being from the moment of its creation. This caring relationship with his creation is reflected, for example, in the account of the garden of Eden where God made to grow “a wealth of trees which were pleasant to see and whose fruit was good to eat”⁴² and he gave man liberty to eat the fruit of all of them except the one that was deleterious.⁴³ God in his graciousness warned man about that tree because mankind had not been made to know evil but only to know good—that is, to know God and to receive from him life and all things,⁴⁴ including knowledge. Innocence is more truly human than the knowledge of evil. God warned Adam and Eve not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for that would bring death. When they disobeyed and involved themselves in an independent knowledge of good and evil, God’s benignity provided for them what their new situation outside the garden required—namely, clothing to cover their nakedness, to protect them from one another and from the elements.

40. Acts 14:17.

41. Psalm 145:9.

42. Genesis 2:9.

43. Genesis 2:16-17.

44. Acts 17:25.

THE FAITHFUL GOD

God's covenant relation with his creation found explicit expression in the Noahic covenant⁴⁵ in which God promised that the natural phenomena of the created world would be consistent and so enable subsistence farming which was mankind's lot ("by the sweat of the brow")⁴⁶ to be planned. God also promised that his long-suffering would avert the judgement on creation which mankind's evil lust provokes.⁴⁷ God's benignity and long-suffering is sometimes called common grace. It extends equally to all creation, for God's benignity means that he is in covenant relationship with all he has brought into being through creative power. God's covenant relationship with his creation is often expressed as God's faithfulness. As the song of Moses puts it in Deuteronomy 32:4, God is the faithful God. Even though creation remains unresponsive, God remains faithful to it; he cannot deny himself.⁴⁸ This was the aspect of the character of God which Paul proclaimed in his sermon at Athens. Paul told his listeners that God is the creator of all and the omnipotent sovereign, and he is also the God who provides for all "life and breath and all things".⁴⁹ He is, in other words, the God of faithfulness, faithful to that which he has created.

The faithfulness of God is the basis of all life. Life depends on the reliability of the phenomena of nature. And the phenomena of nature are the direct result of the will of God, the Scriptures ascribe to God the causation of light and darkness. It is he who makes the sun to rise,⁵⁰ he brings out the stars at night,⁵¹ he sends the rain and gives fruitful seasons, as Paul in his sermons to the Lycaonians underlined.⁵² Scientific observation may bring to light the consistent way the faithful God effects his benign purposes for sustaining life in the world, but the motivation of these observed events is the will and power of God.

45. Genesis 8:21, 9:17.

46. Genesis 3:19.

47. Genesis 8:21.

48. 2 Timothy 2:13.

49. Acts 17:25.

50. Matthew 5:45.

51. Isaiah 40:26.

52. Acts 14:17.

The faithfulness of God is the basis for the Christian life. The Christian life is personal relationship with God, friendship with God, love for God, obedience to God, trust in God, joy in God, hope in God. All these personal experiences are based on the knowledge of God's unchanging character—on the knowledge of his faithfulness. As the knowledge of God's character grows, so love and trust deepen in the believer. God's character of faithfulness is made known by his promises, and these are conveyed to us by knowledge of God's infallible inscripturated word. The promises must be known if they are to form the basis of a life of faith, and they must be known reliably and truly. For this, two things are necessary. First, promises must be preserved in an accurate form—that is, in an inspired and infallible Scripture. And secondly, they must be learned—they must be apprehended because they are not known by nature, and this in turn involves the need for faithful teachers and preachers of God's promises, and the need for ministers of God's word who will be faithful to their ministry.

HOLY

The God of the Old Testament is not only creator, all-powerful within his creation, benign and faithful, but he is also a God of judgement. God has created men with a sense of right and wrong; with the knowledge that right ought to be followed and wrong avoided; and with the further innate knowledge that evil, if chosen in spite of conscience, deserves judgement, punishment and death. This is how the creator has stamped his own character on the hearts and minds of mankind. The Old Testament is very clear that God will judge his creation and that he will assess it according to the standards of right he has given it. He will render to every man according to his works. The God of the Old Testament is eminently a God of judgement—righteous and true judgement. Abraham assuaged his anxiety lest injustice ensue from the destruction of Sodom by his knowledge that the God of the whole world was a righteous judge.⁵³ Jeremiah fortified himself in his grief over the righteous destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of malevolent

53. Genesis 18:25.

and unrighteous enemies with the thought that God had provided a day of judgement “and they shall be like me”.⁵⁴ The Psalms call on the whole world to rejoice at the prospect of the presence of the Lord, “for he comes to judge the earth ... with righteousness”.⁵⁵

God is a holy God. That is to say, he is truly related to his creation as creator. God is God. That is what the phrase “the holy God” implies. God takes this relationship of his creation to himself seriously. It is his will that it should be a genuine and true relationship. That is, he requires his creation to acknowledge him as God and to relate itself to him in a thankful, trustful, obedient, loving attitude and action; if it will not do so—that is, if it will not hallow his name through its own true response—then his name is hallowed (i.e. seen to be holy and God seen to be the true and living God) through his judgements.

In the Old Testament, God’s holiness is revealed by the rules for approaching his presence as laid down in the Mosaic legislation—namely that only the High Priest, and he only once a year, could enter into the Holiest of Holies, and the priests (but only they) could enter within the temple, while only the Levites could handle the furniture in the temple. Yet the people of Israel were themselves holy. God had “brought them to himself”,⁵⁶ they were a holy nation. They were near to him and he was a God near to them, yet even so, if the ordinary Israelites presumed to approach God without priestly mediation, wrath would overtake them. The Book of Numbers makes it clear that this holy wrath was the reason for the graded rules of approach to the presence of God in the temple,⁵⁷ so that, when Uzzah ignored these rules, he immediately received the threatened judgement.⁵⁸

God’s holiness has, as its corollary, his judgement on those who do not relate themselves to him truly as creatures to their creator—as men to their God—that is, who do not hallow his name. Reality and truth requires God to put right the record. Those who ignore in their will the truth that he is God, the holy one, receive the evidence of it against

54. Lamentations 1:21.

55. Psalm 98:9; cf. Psalms 58:11, 67:4, 96:13.

56. Exodus 19:4.

57. Numbers 1:53; cf. 1:51, 3:10, 38.

58. 2 Samuel 6:7.

their will in his judgements, even though they continue to refuse to acknowledge its source.

The Scriptures indicate that the primary way by which humanity may hallow or make holy God's name is by believing in him.⁵⁹ In this contingent world, in which the future is unknown to us, to act in line with trust in God is to acknowledge his goodness and his sovereign Lordship. For those who will not believe in him and live accordingly, God hallows his name by judgement. But this is God's "strange work".⁶⁰ Essentially and pre-eminently, he is a God of blessing, and he himself takes action to ensure that his name is hallowed and his true character displayed and gladly acknowledged by reviving his people, by forgiving them and giving them his spirit that they might be his praise.⁶¹

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

The Old Testament also testifies to God's righteousness. He is not only the holy God, he is the righteous God. He relates himself justly to all and he requires men to relate to one another in accordance with righteousness, that is to say, in accordance with the sense of fairness and right with which they have been endowed by creation.

God's requirement of righteousness extends to all men, not only to Israel. It embraces nations which do not know the true God, for they also have a knowledge of what is right and wrong through the light of nature. The prophet Amos, for example, makes clear that God will judge not only Judah and Israel but also the nations around, in accordance with their response to what they know to be right and fair and just in their relations one with another.⁶²

God is the holy God and God is the righteous God. He requires all to relate themselves truly to him as the holy one, and he requires all to relate themselves truly to one another by acting fairly to each other. When these requirements of holiness and righteousness are ignored,

59. Numbers 20:12; John 6:29.

60. Isaiah 28:21.

61. Ezekiel 36:23ff; Ephesians 1:14.

62. Amos 1:3ff.

God will judge, setting right what is wrong by bringing the appropriate consequences on these violations of holiness and of righteousness. He will vindicate the right.

The Old Testament is clear that God is a God of retribution and of judgement. The message of the prophets is uniformly judgement on unholiness and unrighteousness. For example, Ezekiel prophesied that God would judge Egypt for its arrogance against God, in as much as it said, “The Nile is mine, I made it for myself”.⁶³ By this attitude Egypt flouted the holiness of God. It regarded itself as its own creator. It was an expression of autonomous man, an attitude which characterizes humanity.

This foreseen destruction of Egypt is said by Ezekiel to be the day of the Lord,⁶⁴ that is, a day of judgement. Not only are the prophets full of warnings of judgement, but the rest of the Old Testament bears witness to the fact that God is a God of judgement. Moses warned the Israelites that if they depart from the commandments of God, they will receive the judgement of God.⁶⁵ The Book of Judges gives ample illustration of the truth of this prediction, while the Books of the Kings, having recorded the declension from the worship of God in favour of the worship of the local baals, conclude with a clear affirmation that the destruction of Jerusalem and the carrying away into Babylon is the judgement of God on Israel’s continued impenitence.⁶⁶

Although God is long-suffering in postponing the judgement and in forgiving when there is repentance, yet the Old Testament abundantly testifies that he is the God of judgement. If there is no repentance for injustice towards one another or for unholiness in ignoring God the creator and Lord, the day of the Lord, the day of judgement, will be “a day of darkness and not light”.⁶⁷

Although the severe and complete judgement and wrath of God is the inevitable, inescapable consequence of sin in a world governed by the holy and righteous sovereign Lord, yet judgement may be said not to be a primary but only a secondary activity of God. Goodness and

63. Ezekiel 29:3.

64. Ezekiel 30:3.

65. Deuteronomy 4:25-26.

66. 2 Kings 24:3.

67. Amos 5:18.

beneficence are primary, springing directly from God's character. Judgement is evoked by sin. It would never have been called out had the universe continued in complete righteousness. Judgement is God's "strange work, his strange act" as Isaiah put it.⁶⁸ But in turn God's inmost character is seen in that mercy glories against judgement⁶⁹ and that God is a God who saves from judgement and "rescues us from the wrath to come".⁷⁰

In the Old Testament, one of the most prominent aspects of God's nature is his saviourhood. God became known as saviour at the Exodus. After escaping from Egypt, the children of Israel found themselves pinned between the sea and Pharaoh's pursuing army. In their fear and hopeless despair, "they cried to the Lord". Moses replied, "Fear not, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today".⁷¹ After the deliverance at the Red Sea, the nation sang, "the Lord is become my salvation".⁷² From that time on God is known in Israel as a saviour God.

The historical books of the Old Testament, as well as the Psalms and the Prophets, proclaim God as the saviour of his people. As Samuel told the nation at the inauguration of the monarchy, "The Lord is your God who saves you out of all your calamities and distresses".⁷³ The prophet Isaiah especially speaks of God in his attribute of saviour.⁷⁴

In the Old Testament, God is not only the saviour of the nation, but the saviour of the individual Israelite. David as a young man sang of God, "my refuge, my saviour, you save me from violence. I will call upon the Lord ... so shall I be saved from my enemies."⁷⁵ Solomon advised his pupil not to avenge himself, but rather "wait on the Lord and he will save you".⁷⁶ So too Jeremiah prayed to God as his saviour

68. Isaiah 28:21.

69. James 2:13.

70. 1 Thessalonians 1:10.

71. Exodus 14:10, 13.

72. Exodus 15:2.

73. 1 Samuel 10:18.

74. e.g. Isaiah 43:3, 11, 45:15, 21.

75. 2 Samuel 22:3-4.

76. Proverbs 20:22.

in his own personal predicament.⁷⁷ Long before in the patriarchal age Jacob had affirmed his faith in God as his personal saviour.⁷⁸

Thus the preachers of the New Testament would be fully aware that the God of the Old Testament with whose gospel they were entrusted, was a saviour, and that Old Testament piety rested in the hope of the salvation of God.⁷⁹ The preachers were “apostles of Jesus by the will of God”.⁸⁰ Apostle means “one who is sent”. They were sent by Jesus. They were sent by God. The two are one.

77. Jeremiah 17:14.

78. Genesis 49:18.

79. Genesis 49:18 et. al.

80. Jude 1:17; 1 Corinthians 1:1; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Ephesians 1:1; Colossians 1:1; 2 Timothy 1:1.