

WALTER CRADOCK

'A New Testament Saint'

NOEL GIBBARD

THE EVANGELICAL LIBRARY OF WALES

No. 4: 1977

The Annual Lecture of
The Evangelical Library of Wales
for 1976

COVER DESIGN BY ELGAN DAVIES

The map on the cover by Pieter van den Keere (1571-1646?), the Dutch engraver, is a map of Monmouthshire, Walter Cradock's native county and his main centre of activity in his later years. This map is the 1646 reprint of a plate which was probably first printed at Amsterdam c. 1605, and is reproduced here by courtesy of the National Library of Wales.

Published by the Evangelical Library of Wales Bryntirion,
Bridgend, Mid-Glamorgan, Wales. Printed by Mid-Wales Litho,
Crickhowell, Powys.

CONTENTS

Walter Cradock (1610?-1659): ' <i>A New Testament Saint</i> '. A lecture by Noel Gibbard.	4
Thomas Charles' Choice: A Sermon by Walter Cradock on Isaiah 66:12-13.	26
A Poem by Cradock.	39
<i>Map</i>	20
'Centres of Congregational Worship in Wales at or before the Act of Toleration, 1689' by D. Myrddin Lloyd and H. Noel Jerm an . (This map, showing the distribution of Congregational churches exactly 50 years after the founding of the first Congregational church in Wales at Llanfaches by William Wroth, Walter Cradock and others, gives some indication of the fruit of the pioneer work of Cradock and his fellow Puritans. The map is reproduced here by kind permission of the National Library of Wales and the compilers.)	

[page 4]

Walter Cradock (1610?-1659)

'A New Testament Saint'

NOEL GIBBARD

'A bold, ignorant young fellow.'

The first significant reference to Walter Cradock is in a report drawn up by Archbishop Laud in 1634:

'Llandaff. The bishop of Llandaff certifies that this last year he visited in person and found William Erbury, vicar of St Mary's Cardiff and Walter Cradock his curate have been very disobedient to your majesty's instructions, and have preached very schismatically and dangerously to the people. That for this he has given the vicar a judicial admonition, and will further proceed, if he do not submit. And for his curate being a bold ignorant young fellow, he hath suspended him, and taken away his licence to serve the cure.'

Cradock's boldness and ignorance lay in his opposition to the established order, as championed by Laud, represented by King, Bishop, and the Book of Common Prayer. In 1633 the Book of Sports was reissued, making it compulsory to play particular games on Sunday. Puritans like Erbury and Cradock could not accept such a situation, and refused to read the order to their people. These two men, with William Wroth, became the leading Puritans in the Diocese of Llandaff, and were joined by a Mr Roberts and Marmaduke Matthews in the Diocese of St David's.

In attempting to break this opposition, Laud only served to promote it. Walter Cradock, influenced by Wroth, and having learnt his nonconformity from Erbury, fled to Wrexham, Shrewsbury, London, Brampton Bryan and Llanfair Waterdine. He was one of the pioneers of the work at Wrexham, and it is said that on one occasion he was sent

[page 5]

from there, because the brewers complained of loss of trade. The witness in that town was confirmed by the literary genius, Morgan Llwyd. At Brampton Bryan, Cradock was patronised by Sir Robert Harley a well-known supporter of leading Puritans, and at Shrewsbury Cradock became acquainted with Richard Baxter.

When Cradock returned to Llanfaches, Monmouthshire in 1639, he joined with Wroth, Henry Jessey and others to form the first Congregational Church in Wales. They met in the Parish Church, and this Independent congregation also included Baptists. They were formed into a 'gathered church', according to

the 'New England way', as it is expounded by Jessey, John Robinson and John Cotton. It is explained in the *Keys* of Cotton, and in the *Cambridge Platform*, which included an introduction by Cotton. This was a kind of compromise between Presbyterianism and Independency, emphasising the importance of the local gathered church, while insisting on a close relation with other churches, and claiming on the basis of Acts 15 that a Synod should be called to discuss and arrange important matters: it was not the extreme separatism of Robert Browne and John Penry. The Puritans of Llanfaches were quite willing to use the Parish Church and worship in 'mixed congregations', if the truth were proclaimed there. Cradock and others had no objection to being paid by the State, although the Puritans in Wales, like those in England, were divided on these matters.

The Civil War disrupted the life of the church in Llanfaches. Cradock and some of his people moved to Bristol, and then to London, where he preached at All Hallows. But his going away only deepened his concern for his native land. He was not alone in this concern, as Parliament had discussed the condition of Wales in 1640, and the Committee that considered the matter included Sir Robert Harley, Cradock's patron. It is possible that he was authorised to preach in Wales, for it is known that in the following year, Cradock and others complained to Parliament that they were being hindered in their work of preaching. In 1646, Walter Cradock, Richard Symonds and Ambrose Mostyn, with the blessing of Parliament, came into Wales as itinerant

[page 6]

preachers. They were able to preach in Welsh, and were paid out of the revenues of the Deans and Chapters of Llandaff and St Davids, and the Committees for Sequestrations. Thomas Richards sums up the work of the first Puritan Revolution, 'It had diverted the revenues of sinecure livings to the maintenance of a preaching ministry; it had provided suitable spheres of labour to the Puritans of the Llanfaches school; it had acknowledged the claims of the Welsh language; and through it the Church had been completely disestablished and partially disendowed.'

The way was prepared for the act of 1650, 'An Act for the Better Propagation and Preaching of the Gospel in Wales', which arranged for Commissioners and Approvers to supervise the work in Wales. The Commissioners included Col Thomas Harrison, Col Phillip Jones, Bussy Mansel and Rowland Dawkin. They had the authority to consider all charges brought against ministers and schoolmasters, and after due examination to eject them. When this did happen, the wife and children of the ejected had to be provided for. The Approvers, who included Walter Cradock, Oliver

Thomas, John Miles, Vavasor Powell and Morgan Llwyd, were to approve men, (referred to as 'godly and painful men, of able gifts and knowledge for the work of the Ministry, and of approved conversation for Piety'), to preach and keep school. The number of men needed for the settled ministry was not found, and the main work was done by the itinerant preachers, Cradock himself extending his sphere as far as Presteigne.

Unlike Vavasor Powell, Cradock was a staunch Cromwellian. When Powell attacked Cromwell with his *Word for God*, Cradock presented *The Humble Representation* to the Lord Protector, signed by seven hundred loyal subjects. Powell and Llwyd had opposed the late King because he had misused his authority, and now they could see Cromwell doing the same, endangering the 'just liberty of every man', and hindering the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, as expounded by the Fifth Monarchists. Cradock and his friends thought that the *Word for God* was an 'unseemly paper', and were convinced that the majority of the saints in Wales would

[page 7]

support Cromwell, knowing that while he was at the stern the vessel would not sink. This moderation was characteristic of Cradock's life and work.

In 1653 Cradock settled down in Bryn Buga, in his native county, and was made vicar of Llangwm in the same county in 1655, although he continued to travel back and fore to London in an official capacity. He was very near to Cromwell himself, and enjoyed the friendship of John Owen and William Bridge. Cradock, Owen and Bridge are found sitting on the committee dealing with privileges for the Jews, and when Cromwell died in 1658, Cradock received an invitation to the funeral.

The last four years of Cradock's life were spent in Llangwm, the parish where he was born, and it was there that he died in 1659, at about fifty years of age. It is possible that much travelling contributed to his early death, and it is also said that he suffered physically as a result of smallpox. Both he and Morgan Llwyd went to their rest in the same year, just before the great unrest came about with the return of the King in 1660; but by that time the work had been established in many parts of Wales. Even a hundred years later, serious and godly men in many districts of the land were called 'Cradociaid' (*Cradockians*).

Cradock's wife, Catherine, was the daughter of Richard and Elizabeth Langford of Trefalun, Wrexham, one of the main Puritan centres in Wales, and where Cradock himself preached for a while. It is interesting to note that transactions concerning property in Trefalun bring together Walter Cradock,

Morgan Llwyd and John Jones of Maesygarnedd, and a little later the property came into the hands of Daniel Williams, the eminent nonconformist. Walter and Catherine had two daughters, Lois, who married Richard Creed, clerk to the Commissioners of 1650, and Eunice, who married Thomas Jones of Abergavenny.

This brief summary of his life must suffice as a background. Cradock himself, and especially his sermons, demand attention. What did he preach, and how did he preach? The rest of the work will be devoted to consider these questions.

[page 8]

The New Testament

Cradock had one basic conviction: the *newness* of the New Testament. The Testament itself is new, and anyone brought into this covenant is a new creature, is a New Testament saint. In the fifth sermon on Romans 8:4 in his work *Mount Zion*, after describing the difference between the carnal and the spiritual Christian, Walter Cradock proceeds, as a true shepherd of souls, to lead his sheep from the common of the flesh to the fold of the Spirit. He expresses his fundamental belief in the first point that he makes:

'The first is this, I would desire you to endeavour to study much the difference between the two Testaments, the New and the Old. I mean not the two books but the two testaments as we read of in Hebrews 8 and 9; whereof the one is faulty and the other is excellent, the one is done away, the other remains. Study the difference between them; for thereby you lay the foundation of your Gospel happiness; For there is the misery of many professors, and will be their misery if they should live a thousand years, they jumble both testaments without knowledge and distinction, and so they will never be better.'

It is under the New Testament that the Gospel is revealed clearly, fully and in all its glory. The Old Testament fathers had the Gospel:

'But, beloved, you are to take notice, that though our fathers had the Gospel, that is the glad tidings of life and salvation by Jesus Christ from Adam, from the beginning of the world, yet they had it but dimly and darkly; and they had it mixed with a great deal of bad tidings, a great deal of law (as I may speak) they had a little good news with a great deal of bad.'

Under the New Testament all the bad news is gone. Now the news is purely gospel. Everything is sweet, amiable and comfortable, even to the worst of sinners. As the spouse said of the Bridegroom, 'Thou art all fair my love, there is no spot in Thee ' (Song of Solomon, 4:7).

[page 9]

The jewel in the treasure of the Gospel is the righteousness provided by God for the unrighteous. Justice and mercy are sweetly reconciled and glorified, and that in the crucified Saviour, who died as a 'publick person', as a 'surety', and as the 'second Adam'. This righteousness reveals God as righteous and the justifier of him who has faith in Christ (Romans 3). As a true son of the Reformation, and of the Apostle Paul, Cradock makes salvation a matter of righteousness.

By faith the sinner is united with Christ. The union is a near one; is real, total and inseparable, as between husband and wife. As a result of this union, the believer's relation to the law is changed in two ways. He has now fulfilled the law, while outside of Christ this was impossible. But he has also been made free of the law. He is in Christ, and the believer and his Lord must never be thought of as two; they are one. As Cradock says in his second sermon on Romans 8:4:

'He doth not say in Christ, though that be true, but he takes the boldness to say it is fulfilled in us by virtue of our union with Jesus Christ. So in every true saint or believer the righteousness of the law through Christ is perfectly fulfilled.'

The weakest saint has paid the debt that he owed to the law as if he himself had paid it.

Thus he is free of the law, and that in three respects. First of all as regards his person. God does not deal with the believer according to the law, because in Christ, he has fulfilled it. Thus he is dead to the law and has nothing to do with it, as a wife has nothing to do with a dead husband (Romans 6). Therefore the saint should be clear on the application of the doctrine of justification by faith alone. He must never think of himself as more just' at times, and 'less just' at other times. When the believer falls into sin, he loses his assurance and peace of mind, and can be tempted to doubt his salvation, but Cradock says:

'Your justification doth not lie, or is not built upon anything that is in you, or that is done by you. or that you may hope to do hereafter; you are not justified by your own personal good. or unjustified by your own

[page 10]

personal evils, you are not one jot the more just when you have done all the good you can in the world, and you are not one jot less just when you have committed all the weaknesses, and fallen into all the frailties that a saint can fall into.'

The believer should not look for props to support his justification, but leave it

in the hands of Christ, where God Himself placed it.

Richard Baxter accused Cradock of Antinomianism —disregarding the law, and excusing sin. It is true that isolated statements in the Welshman's works could lead to such a conclusion. He said that we 'grow more fond of grace by sin itself.' But he was not encouraging sin; rather, Cradock's great concern was to encourage the Christian when he falls. In that condition, he must hate his sin and return to God. At the same time realises that the basis of his justification has not changed at all. In that sense, the saint does grow more fond of grace by sin itself. Cradock specifically witness the error of Antinomianism in his sermons on Romans 8:4.

Secondly, the saint is free in his actions. Christ is now the source or spring of his works, and therefore they are accepted by God in spite of the corruptions in the believer.

Thirdly, he is free in respect of his sufferings. Very often when the saint suffers, he thinks that God is angry with him; he feels he is under the lash of the law. But God does not satisfy his vengeance in the sufferings of his people. He is a Father, and will smile on His own in all circumstances. Suffering does not change the favour and love of God in the Gospel.

The life of the justified sinner is a life in the spirit. With Gospel righteousness there is given a Gospel spirit. The 'spirit is all in all in religion.' Gospel religion is Christ crucified and the pouring out of the Spirit. The one great promise of the Old Testament was that of the Messiah, and the one great promise of the New Testament is the promise of the Father, that is, the pouring of the Spirit on all flesh. The Old Testament saints had the Spirit, but not so powerfully, and not in such an abundance as the saints under the New
[page 11]

Testament. The Spirit enables the adopted child to enjoy his Father's company. The Father-child relationship was only hinted at in the Old Testament, but is made manifest in the New. Cradock dwells extensively on this close relationship between God and the believer. It is a relationship based on love, and enjoyed in the Spirit. It is intimate, 'It is very high, a kind of fondness, he will dandle them on the knee.' A Christian's heart should be familiar with God.

A child wants to be with his father as often as possible. A child can be brought up by a nurse, and only see his father occasionally, but this should not be so with the Christian, 'There is such a temper in a saint, he is so fond of God that he will never let God go a moment out of his sight but he will cry after him.' Such a 'holy fondness' creates a 'holy boldness'. A child can leap

into his father's lap at any time, 'and ask him anything without courting or compliment.' In turn a 'holy carelessness' takes hold of him. The Christian knows that his salvation is safe in the hands of God, and that his steps are ordered by his heavenly Father. Therefore he casts himself upon God, thinking more of His service than of his own salvation.

Another way adopted by Cradock to describe this close relation is to think of the union between husband and wife. As the wife is won by wooing her, so God wins the sinner by revealing to him the loveliness of the Lord Jesus Christ. God draws the sinner to Christ and they are married; they cleave to each other, please each other, and share all that they have. There is real fellowship between father and child, husband and wife. This fellowship leads to communion. Under the Old Testament, knowledge of God is so often described in audible, visible terms, but in the New the Spirit has come to raise the heart of the believer to see God, and dwell on His glory in Jesus Christ, as He is the face of God.

Cradock deals with the sight of God in *Gospel Holiness*. It is a clear sight and apprehension of Him (2 Cor.3; I Cor.2). It is not mere knowledge, but an 'assurance going along with your apprehension that doth certify your souls that it is God you see, it is a sight of God.' The Christian can know that he believes, 'It is one thing to believe, and another thing to know

[page 12]

that I believe.' Such assurance makes fellowship with God 'sweet, precious and satisfying.' But although the apprehensions are clear, they are not constant. In the Old Testament the people of God lost sight of God's face often, and that to a great degree. The saints of the New Testament also have their dark days, but not so often, and not to the same extent as those under the Old.

These apprehensions leave strong impressions on the soul. If the believer sees God's faithfulness, then his faith is strengthened. If he has a glimpse of God's love, then more of that love is shed abroad in his heart. These impressions are not only known inwardly, but also by their expressions, especially the grace of love (I John 4:12). The believer loves his brother; the saint loves a saint as a saint. Such expressions and impressions prove that the work of assimilation is taking place. All that is in God is 'sucked' into the heart, and 'works suitable to that that is in God.' With an open face the believer looks on God, and is changed from glory unto glory.

An apprehension of God is 'heaven upon earth' and a foretaste of heaven to come. This is why the note of joy resounds through the works of Cradock, especially in his sermon on I John I: 3. This joy is rooted not in God's

providence, not in His gifts, and not in the graces of the believer, but in God Himself. This is fullness of joy, or exceeding great joy. So often in Scripture, joy is the result of seeing God (John 8: 56; Isaiah 35). Cradock finds it difficult to contain himself as he speaks of it:

'It is such a joy as will make a dumb man sing; it will make a melancholy, heavy, mopish creature that naturally never smiled to sing, and the lame man to leap for joy; and this joy will be the same in heaven that we had in earth. It is not eating and drinking, and marrying, and buying, and selling that will be joy in heaven, but the great joy will be, the beholding of God in Christ, that will be the great joy.'

A New Testament saint, or a Gospel Christian, has Gospel righteousness, and a Gospel spirit. Therefore he should enjoy Gospel liberty; that liberty which is governed by the Holy

[page 13]

Spirit Himself. When He is in full control it will not be misused for sin, or to offend others, as Cradock makes clear in a series of sermons on I Cor. 10: 23. True liberty avoids both the extremes of the left and the right. On the left were the Familists, Seekers, and others who disregarded the word of God, external worship, and the moral law. Cradock exhorts his people not to be wise above that which is written. The Bible is the Book of God, and the work of the spirits must be tested by the truth found in it. On the right were the legalists, making the word of God a dead letter; those with an Old Testament spirit, anxious to make ties on indifferent things.

Under the Old Testament everything was tied; all things were commanded or forbidden, 'their meat, their drink, their clothes, their worship, their manner and circumstances, the place where and the time when; nay they were tied to the very oil, and to the snuff of the candle, nay (with reverence) they were tied concerning the excrements.' Therefore, although the Old Testament saints were sons, they lived as servants, or they were in their minority. They were 'little children as it were in their coats, and we are grown strong, grown men of full age' (Galatians 4:4). Under the New Testament the Spirit Himself reveals to the believer how to deal with indifferent things.

Cradock establishes the first of three propositions, 'First, that the saints of the New Testament are not as strictly bound in point of lawfulness, as the saints were in the Old Testament.' Saints under the Old Testament were not allowed to eat all flesh, but this is permitted under the New Testament. Saints of old were not allowed to keep their unbelieving wives, but under the new they are allowed to do so. Details of worship were minutely described in the Old

Testament, not so in the New Testament. Therefore the Christian should enjoy his liberty and be careful not to make laws concerning indifferent things, like the singing of hymns, wearing a hat during the sermon, mode of baptism, the nature of the wine in the Lord's Supper, or the use of the 39 Articles in worship.

His second proposition is, 'That the saints of the New Testament are as strictly, or rather more strictly bound, in
[page 14]

point of expedience, than they were in the time of the Old Testament.' Paul argued that it was lawful to marry, but not always expedient. Worship in the Old Testament was a matter of law, but Jesus Christ rebuked the legalism of the Pharisees, as they could not see beyond the letter, and told them the story of the farmer who went after his straying animal on the Sabbath. Spurred by the New Testament spirit, the farmer could enjoy his liberty.

Cradock then deals with the passage in I Corinthians which refers to meat consecrated to idols. A believer is invited by an unbeliever to partake of it. It is perfectly lawful for him to do so, but he is governed by four considerations. First, the glory of God. The believer argues that if he eats, perhaps the unbeliever will think that he is careless, and therefore will not think much of his God. Secondly, he knows that he must 'bring good and gain' to his brother. Although the eating would not cause him to stumble, it could be a stumbling block for another believer. Thirdly, he is careful not to do anything which is not conducive to the winning of souls. He must act expediently and in the right spirit. Lastly, the action he takes must bring peace of mind and conscience to the believer who makes the decision.

The preacher's last proposition in this context is, 'The saints should be exhorted in their walking, not only to eye that which is lawful, but also that which is expedient.' He must watch over his whole walk, avoid factions, must not be rash in drawing up rules from the word of God, remembering at all times his responsibility to God, and that he must give an account of himself at the last day. This is the way of peace and charity. This spirit must be safeguarded, especially in matters of church government. Cradock himself was an Independent—a moderate one—and was anxious to promote a better understanding between Presbyterians and Independents. The tendency in his day was to make them into two religions, but according to Cradock they were one. What divides them is the 'ruffling of the fringe; therefore make not the breach wider, and blow not the fire more'.

Here again Cradock emerges as a man of moderation. His first love was the

Gospel, and nothing would draw him away
[page 15]

from it. Others might be called Fifth Monarchists, Quakers, Seekers, Presbyterians or Independents, but he was not anxious to accept any of these labels. This does not mean that he was a man of compromise. He strongly opposed the ideas of the Fifth Monarchists, and bitterly attacked the Quakers, but controversy and church matters did not dictate his life. He was an Independent, and there is no doubt that he was proud of the fact. His greatest delight however was to proclaim the grace of God to unworthy sinners. Above everything else he was a preacher, and the sermon and the preacher cannot be separated. It is true that the message is more important than the messenger, but when God raises a man to do His work, He also equips him for that task. This was certainly true of Walter Cradock. What he said is of primary importance, but the manner in which he presented his message also deserves attention. How then did he preach? A brief attempt will be made to answer this question.

'Sending men to heaven.'

The author of *A Winding Sheet for Mr Baxter's Dead*, in a most enlightening paragraph, describes Cradock the preacher:

'For Mr Cradock (however despised by Mr Baxter) was a man of very quick and pregnant natural Parts (which it is true) his many avocations too much kept him from cultivating and improving a man that had a wonderful faculty of coming down and bringing the things of God to the meanest of his Auditors; and a man for whose very successful labours the mountains of Wales praise Almighty goodness, who sent many to Heaven, where he himself also (I doubt not) is, and where we leave him out of reach of Detraction and Calumny.'

According to the quotation, the minister of God must proclaim 'the things of God'. There is no doubt that this was true of Walter Cradock. He would not use the pulpit for wrangling, but proclaimed the whole counsel of God. He preached on the various aspects of that counsel, but he had a centre, and that centre was Christ. The minister of the word

[page 16]

lays open the Lord Jesus Christ 'clearly and fully', and that in a spiritual manner. Preaching is the spiritual promulgation, manifestation, or declaration of Jesus Christ in his person. excellencies and Privileges, doings and sufferings.' It is not just talking in the pulpit, it is the spiritual promulgation of God's message; therefore the aid of the Spirit is absolutely essential. Indeed the preacher must depend entirely on Him, because a converting work must be

aimed at in the preaching of the Gospel. The work of the Gospel is to bring forth a new creature who will be sent on his way to heaven rejoicing. The need for such a change, and the means of accomplishing it, must be laid out before the hearers. However, the preacher must not pry too much into the mysteries of the new creature. He should marvel at the new birth, but not investigate too closely the child in the womb. If Cradock was living today and had a motor car, he would not be found under the bonnet very often. Humanly speaking, not looking under the bonnet can be a sign of neglect, but spiritually speaking, the mechanics of salvation are in the hands of God. The preacher must not speculate, and must never lose sight of the mystery of godliness.

A Gospel ministry humbles the hearers and brings them into submission to Christ. A humble frame of mind will receive the privileges, and the responsibilities; will come to Christ for forgiveness, and take up His Cross. The sinner comes to Christ when he realises that he cannot come of himself. This humbles him, but his inability casts him on the mercy of God. According to Cradock, sinners are like the poor women of Wales: they are so poor, that when they beg a little buttermilk, they also ask for a pot to put it in. Cradock continues:

'We cannot carry one grain of grace home, unless God gives us spiritual buckets; as that woman said, John 4, "Here is water but where is the bucket to draw?" So God may say, "thou wantest grace, but where is thy bucket?" Saith the humble sinner, "Lord, I have none, thou must both give the water, and lend the bucket to carry it home. "'

[page 17]

God's Gospel provides salvation and faith, and He is the Author of both. Conversion is a spiritual work, which can only be accomplished by God. There is no doubt that Cradock would be baffled with the man-centred emphasis found in some circles today, when a person is almost congratulated on becoming a Christian, and almost commended for his good deed.

The glorious Gospel of the glorious God must not be marred or clouded in any way. Cradock could see this happening because of the over-emphasis on knowledge and education. He was amazed at the professors who extolled learning and accounted it almost heresy to commend the Spirit of God. He strikes a warning note:

'As long as thou keepest the spirit an underling, as a cipher, as many of the clergy and learned men, they extol learning to the heavens, and many of them on purpose to despight the spirit of God, as long as they do so they shall never know the will of God: We are not debtors to the flesh, but we must be debtors

to the spirit, if we will have one true thought of Jesus Christ. O praise the spirit and prize the spirit.'

Learning in and of itself is good, but care must be taken as to its use. It can be a great help to understand the Scriptures—Cradock himself refers to the original text, and he quotes Calvin, Beza, Fox, Bolton, and 'the blessed Dr Preston' — but knowledge is like the fire: a good servant but a bad master. As a servant it can help the preacher of the word, but as a master it can undo him. Apart from the Spirit of God, a man can only have a 'frozen knowledge' of God.

The Christian should read widely throughout his life; indeed, there should be no end to his acquiring of knowledge. But as far as reading the Bible is concerned, he should depend more and more on the Spirit of God, and less and less on the words of man. Cradock illustrates his point with a delightful simile:

'When we are children, and young, we use not spectacles; it may be at twenty, or thirty, or forty years old we can read without spectacles, but when we come

[page 18]

to fifty or sixty, then we can see nothing but through spectacles. It should be contrary with us when we are Christians. When we are young we usually never read the word of God but through the spectacles of men's glosses, but when we are older Christians, and stronger saints, we should learn to read better without spectacles; we should daily make less use of men's books and more of God's book.'

The same Spirit must dominate in the call of a man to preach the word of God. Some speak of their call without mentioning the Spirit, which is no call at all, and they should not be preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ. Others speak of their call, and know that the Spirit is calling them, but in such cases there should be a confirmation, especially by the company of believers. As usual Cradock attempts a balanced view of the matter:

'Take this caution that because God fills many with the Gospel, and they do a great deal of good, take heed lest any of you run before you be sent; that is, that a man go not rashly, and believe his own judgement rather than the judgment of the godly— But if God fill a man with the tidings of the Gospel, and others of the people of God see it sparkle out as a vessel full of new wine, who am I that I should resist, if with humility he makes known these tidings to others?'

No Christian should rush into the pulpit. On the other hand, no one should be

prevented from preaching because he has not been ordained in what is believed to be the only valid method. The Presbyterian and the Independent should not prevent each other from preaching because they cannot agree on the method of ordination. (Vavasor Powell had an argument with Stephen Marshall, a member of the Westminster Assembly, on this very point).

When the Gospel is proclaimed, it must be done with simplicity; simplicity of style and manner must be maintained. Cradock's method follows the usual Puritan order of headings, sub-headings and application, but he is never complicated, elaborate or laborious. There is much

[page 19]

repetition, but this is deliberate, as Cradock hammered home the truth on the anvil-like hearts of his hearers. His style is fresh and sometimes vigorous. One reason for his effectiveness is his abundant use of illustrations in his sermons. He was a family man, and it was in the home that he found most of his illustrations. He continually uses the father-child relationship in his works, and even more often the husband-wife relationship. At all times everyday incidents would offer themselves for the pulpit. As the mother was peeling the onions, Cradock would think of the heart of the Christian. After peeling for a while the mother comes to the hard core. So the heart of the Christian has many corruptions that must be laid off, but inside is the holiness wrought by the Spirit of God. As he watches the fly circling the candle, it is suddenly sucked by the light. Cradock makes use of this to warn his hearers of the dangers of playing with sin.

He is a lover of nature, and calls on the sun, the clouds, and the rain to serve him in his preaching. He marshalls the animals and the birds like soldiers, and they do him noble service in the pulpit. He urges his congregation not to waste time with trifling matters, reminding them that the eagle does not bother with flies. It is the prerogative of God to reveal Himself to sinners, as Christ says in John 14: 2L When the sun is under the cloud, it is pointless for men to take their candles and torches in order to discover it; they will never see it until the cloud is removed, and men cannot decide when that will happen. God reveals Himself when and where He pleases.

Occasionally Cradock makes use of the world of trade and commerce. When God created Adam, He gave him a stock of righteousness to trade with. But when Adam fell he lost his stock, and God shut up his shop. It is foolish to trade in a shop that has no stock, and indeed a shop which has no right to be open. Yet this is exactly what man, as a sinner, is doing. He trades in what he does not possess, that is, in righteousness. There is nothing in his shop, and the sinner should come to Christ, and take of the stock of righteousness found in

Him.

Cradock does not neglect Scripture itself as a source of
[pages 20, 21]



[page 22]

illustration. It is one of his strong points that he deals with a particular text in the context of the whole Bible. He would deal with humility from Isaiah 6: 5, but would elaborate on the examples of Job, Peter and Paul, as revealing true humility and repentance, and Cain, Saul and Judas, as expressing false repentance. This he did continually, so that the great, majestic themes of the Bible would be clearly portrayed to his congregation.

As a preacher, Cradock loved his pulpit and his people. No one, he claimed, can preach effectively without knowing his flock. In this he was following the example of his friend William Wroth, who knew the spiritual estate of all his hearers. He would teach them on Sundays, and learn from them during the other six days of the week. If a man wants to be a minister of the word, he must study souls as well as books. Such an understanding deepened Cradock's seriousness and humility. Like Isaiah he knew the woe of the unclean lips, and the touch of the burning coal. He had an eye for his people, and an eye for eternity.

He was burdened for the spiritual welfare of sinners, and the need of his own countrymen lay heavily on his heart. When preaching before Parliament in 1646, he made an impassioned plea on their behalf, which echoes the voice of John Penry. Cradock mourned for 'poor contemptible Wales', a country that was sighing, famishing, mourning and bleeding. The preacher pleaded with those in authority to send preachers to his native country, and suggested that they should also provide for them, even if it were mere food and raiment. But in spite of the great darkness in his country, Cradock rejoiced in the fact that there were a few who were ready to be spent for the glory of God and the good of their country.

One extract from Cradock's sermons will not reveal all the characteristics of his preaching, but it will give an idea of his zeal, earnestness and simplicity as he preached 'so great a salvation'. At the end of his first sermon on Isaiah 6:5, he deals with the natural darkness of man's mind, and the miracle of life and light wrought by the Spirit of God in the day of the Son of Man:

[page 23]

'To a carnal eye the preaching of the Gospel is a dead, drowsy thing; a man shall hear many things that he heard before, and be taught till he sleep, and be tired out, unless he look on it with a spiritual eye. As the merchant when he sees such a shell, he considers what is in it, there is a glorious pearl in it, and for that he goes many a mile. So do you consider, that the preaching of the Gospel, by poor and weak means, it is that shell, that cabinet, wherein these

glorious treasures are found; therefore esteem it, and prize it highly, look on it with reverence, look for the pearl in it, prize it, and praise God for it.

`It may be some of you, that are sleepy creatures, may say, I cannot tell that there is any such thing in it; others are so sottish to this day, that they no more know nor understand what we have been doing in the preaching of the word, for these twelve months past, than a post.

`It is not because the treasure is not here, but you shall see the reason in 2 Cor. 4:4, the reason why you see it not is because the God of this world hath blinded your eyes, that the light of the knowledge of the glory of God should not shine upon your souls. God shines upon one man's soul and not upon another; another sees nothing but a poor preacher full of weakness, and so he goes away, and remembers little or nothing, or, it may be, sleeps all the while.

`Beloved, for the Lord Jesus' sake, trifle not. It makes me tremble to consider seriously, how those decrees, that are infinite and innumerable, that were before the beginning of the world, are to be opened; when we preach the word, yonder man and yonder woman, we know not whether of them belong to God or the devil; but when we preach the decree is opened, there is a poor man, or a poor woman, that belongs to life, it makes him a new creature; another is as very a sot at the year's end as at the beginning. Who would not tremble when God threatens to seal up your condition by it? O! it is a glorious thing, the Gospel: Look to it, you sottish people, that are like the fool in Proverbs, that, tell him a tale, and, when you have done, he will ask, What is the matter?, or as a man asleep that knows nothing what he hath been doing.

[page 24]

For the Lord's sake consider what we are doing, and what the Gospel is, and what it is to have one day of the Son of Man; It is a very strange word in Luke 17:22, consider of it, thou poor, sottish creature:when Crist demanded of the Pharisees, When the kingdom of God should come? he answered them The kingdom of God cometh not with observation, neither shall they say lo! here, or lo! there; for; behold the kingdom of God is within you (or among you). And he said unto his disciples, The days will come when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and ye shall not see it. And yet he saith after, they shall see the day of the Son of Man. We are to consider the Son of Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, hath two sorts of days; he hath one day that every wicked man shall see, when they shall be eating and drinking, as in the days of Noah, when the Son of Man shall come to judge according to my Gospel, as Paul preacheth, and according to the Gospel that you have here preached. That is one day of the Son of Man. And thou that wilt not receive Christ, it will be a terrible day to thee, a day of blackness and darkness, when the earth shall reel

as a drunkard, and the heavens shall be gathered as a scroll and the world shall be on fire, and thou shall be at thy wit's end, it will be a terrible day; the Lord deliver thee from that day.

But the Son of Man hath another day, that is the day of grace, the day wherein the Son of Man, in the preaching of the Gospel would bestow grace upon thy soul. Why doth he call that the day of the Son of Man more than the other? He delights more in it, he delights not in the death of a sinner. This is that sweet day that Jesus Christ delights in to offer himself to thee, and to lay before thee life and salvation by his death. These things were not written for them only but for us also. Remember the day will come when thou shalt desire to see one day of the Son of Man, but shall not see it. Thou wilt say, O that I had one such day as we have now in this place when the preacher told me of seeing God and Christ: O that I had but one day, but one motion in my heart, by the spirit that I had then, and yet I sotted it out, and did forget it: O that the Lord would smile as he did then, but it shall not be. Therefore the Lord help you that you do not trifle out your salvation, as abundance in this nation and in this city do,

[page 25]

between sottishness and formality. Abundance of people hear the word, but there is abundance of formality; few men consider with whom they have to do when they hear the word of God, and what the business is, but in a trifling manner pass it by. Therefore consider what treasure there is in the Gospel; there are unsearchable treasures in the Gospel, but of all this is the jewel of all, the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.'

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. *Walter Cradock's Works:*

1646 *The Saints fulnesse offjoy*

(A sermon based on I John 1: 4, and preached before Parliament).

1648 *Gospel Libertie — Whereunto is added good Nerves from Heaven*

(I Cor. 10:23, and Mark 16:15).

1649 *Mount Sion* (Romans 8:4).

1650 *Divine Drops Distilled from the Fountain of Holy Scripture*

(Observations on different texts of Scripture).

1655 *Gospel Holinesse* (Isaiah 6:5).

T. Charles and P. Oliver edited the sermons. *Works* (Chester, 1800).

B. *Life and Background:*

Thomas Richards, 'Eglwys Llanfaches', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, 1941.

J. Morgan Jones, 'Walter Cradoc a'i Gyfoeswyr', *Y Cofiadur*, 1938.

Gwilym S. Rees. *Walter Cradoc a'i Oes* (Dathliad Pumed Jiwibili 1662).

R. Geraint Gruffydd. *In That Gentile Country . . .* (*Evangelical Library of Wales*, 1976).

Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *The Welsh Saints* (Cardiff, 1957).

Thomas Richards. *A History of the Puritan Movement in Wales* (London, 1920).

Thomas Charles' Choice

During 1799 Thomas Charles of Bala seems to have spent some time studying the life and work of Walter Cradock. An unsigned biographical article on Cradock appeared in the October 1799 issue of the *Trysorfa Ysprydol*, a new Welsh religious magazine jointly edited by Thomas Charles and Thomas Jones of Dinbych (*Denbigh*). Professor R. Geraint Gruffydd informs me that the source of much of the material on Cradock in this article is NLW Add. MS. 128C, the manuscript Professor Gruffydd refers to as 'the Thomas Charles manuscript' in his lecture *'In That Gentile Country . . .'* (Evangelical Library of Wales, 1976). Also from about Easter 1799 until approximately the same time the following year, a volume containing all of Cradock's printed works was published in parts, and finally bound in one 532 page volume, *The Works of the late Rev. Walter Cradock* (Chester: W.C. Jones, 1800); the joint editors of this enterprise were Philip Oliver of Chester and Thomas Charles.

The publishing of the magazine *Trysorfa Ysprydol* lapsed with the December 1801 issue, but the magazine was revived in March 1809 under the sole editorship of Thomas Charles. In the issues of August 1811 and January 1812 there appeared (abridged and in two parts) a sermon by Cradock on Isaiah 66: 12-13 translated into Welsh. It seems reasonable to suppose, therefore, that Thomas Charles held this sermon of Walter Cradock's in especially high esteem. This was an important consideration in choosing this sermon to be reprinted here, but the sermon also contains good examples of many of the characteristics of Cradock's work discussed in the previous pages, such as his emphasis on the need for a true understanding of the New Covenant, his delight in taking illustrations from home-life, and some statements which when taken in isolation could lead to the accusation of Antinomianism being levelled against him.

This sermon first appeared in the volume *Divine Drops Distilled from the Fountain of Holy Scriptures* (London, 1650), and in reprinting it here this first edition has been closely followed as regards the actual wording of the sermon, (even to the point of retaining some rather archaic forms such as *shew*, *thorough*, *charets*, *alway* and *chuse* where they seem to reflect a variant pronunciation — and sometimes meaning— to forms in current usage). The spelling and punctuation and the extensive use of italics and capitals have been thoroughly revised,ⁱ however, and obvious printing errors have been corrected. This revision may have diminished the academic and historical value of the

text, but it is hoped that it has increased the spiritual usefulness of the sermon to modern readers.

E. Wyn James

[page 27]

EXPOSITIONS AND OBSERVATIONS ON
ISAIAH 66. 12, &c.

For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and [be] dandled upon her knees, & c.

The prophet in this chapter speaks of the calling of the Gentiles by the Jews; what glorious times the last times should be when the Jews that were the eldest sister — as the Gentiles are called the little sister in Scripture, 'We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts'— when this eldest sister should go and carry the youngest, when they should go and call in the Gentiles, and feed them and cherish them as the eldest children use to do the youngest. They shall bear them upon their sides, and dandle them upon their knees, as we see children nourish one another, especially the elder do the younger. So they should be tendered: they should bring all their brethren as an offering to the Lord; they should bring them upon mules and upon swift beasts; and when they could not go on foot, they should put them on horseback; and if they could not ride, they should put them in charets; and if that were too harsh, they should put them in litters: that is, they should do anything to nourish them and to bring them up. We may well reason, if the children be so fond of one another as that they should carry them, and let them hang on their sides, and dandle them on their knees, much more fond will the Lord be to those children: therefore in the next verse he saith, 'As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you'.

GOD AND THE SAINTS FOND OF EACH OTHER

God shews the dearness of his love by those little sparks of love in the children of God one towards another: but his love is very high, a kind of fondness; he will dandle them on the

[page 28]

knee. Why? Cannot he do them good but he must dandle them in the lap? There is a holy, spiritual fondness between God and his people: he is fond of them, and they are fond of him.

It is not every saint that is so. Thou mayest be a saint, and yet be a stranger to all that I am to speak of from this text. But there is such a thing, because a saint, if he be a right saint, you cannot put before him any pitch of grace and

holiness but he seeks to attain it. As when Christ's disciples came into the company of the disciples of John, and John's disciples knew how to pray, and they did not, say they, 'Lord, teach us to pray'; so you need but put a higher degree of grace before a right-hearted saint and he will be sick, and never be well till he bath it. Therefore I will present you with such a temper that is in some saints, that they are fond of God with a holy, not with a sinful, fondness; as your children, they are fond of you sometimes with a great deal of sin, but this is a holy fondness.

First, I will shew you that it is so.

Secondly, I will shew you which way God makes his children fond of himself.

PROVED IN FIVE PARTICULARS:

1. The first thing is this, that a fond child will never suffer his father to go out of his sight. Beloved, one may be a saint and yet may see his Father but as a child at nurse, once a quarter or so. It is ordinary with the saints they see their Father, it may be, at such a sermon, or at such an ordinance, or in such a private chamber where they have examined their souls; and, it may be, they do not see him in a fortnight after; and they make shift with grace received, with the impression of God's love (when they saw it), and with a little help of the creature and the comforts of the world, to hold up till they see him again: this is the life of most saints. But there is such a temper of a saint, he is so fond of God that he will never let God go a moment out of his sight but he will cry after him. My meaning in a word is this, that there is such a temper, if thou and I had attained it, that God can never go

[page 29]

out of ken, but I always behold him, and see him always beholding me in the face of Jesus Christ; I am always with him.

See it in the saints: David was a fond child. 'Thou seest my thoughts', saith he, 'and my speech, when I sit down and when I rise up; thou knowest all, and whither shall I go from thy presence?' It was not in a hypocritical way, that he might flee from God, but, 'When I awake I am alway with thee; when I walk abroad I have set God on my right hand that I might not sin.' When a man is always in view, when God's eye is always on him and his eye always on God, what a blessed thing is it! Such a saint, let God but hide his face and he is troubled; let God go but one hour from such a soul and he is ready to cry out his heart, as we see in a fond child. That is the reason there is so much carnalness in the saints, that they have so many unsaintlike tricks, like the men of the world. Why? They go behind God's back; they think God is asleep a while, and they may dispatch their business: whereas Joseph said, 'How shall I

do this thing, and sin against God?' God was in the view of him when he was with that wretched woman. So a man would say, 'How shall I pretend my office is for the good of the public and for the glory of God, when it is to enrich my family?' God may be out of sight and ken, and yet you may be saints; but there is a more glorious life, when a man always walks in God's sight, God seeing him and he seeing God. These things are not for the head, but the heart. Now talk with thy heart a little, and see what is thy temper and thy way, and if thou find it not thus, tell God, 'The minister said that there be saints that live gloriously, that are fond of God, that are always with him, sleeping and waking, at bed and board; they are never out of his sight. Lord make me such.'

2. Another thing is, that a saint that is grown fond of God, he will never be still or satisfied with any creature. A child that is not fond, you may give him twenty baubles while his mother goes to market or doth other things; but if he be grown fond, a thousand of those will not satisfy him. So a true saint hath much of God and little of the creature. A man may be a true saint and be much upon the creature, but when the

[page 30]

soul grows fond of God, no creatures or rattles will serve. If God put the creature into his hand, he is glad; but if God be away, nothing will serve him: as a child that is fond of his mother, give him a rattle or a cake while he is in her hand, he is glad; but nothing will still him without her.

3. A third thing is this, there is an exceeding boldness in a fond child to ask anything of his father, truly such a boldness as were rude in a stranger: a child will sit in the lap of his mother and snatch a thing out of her hand. So people may talk of forms how people should pray, and stand half an hour confessing of sins, and so come on by degrees; but one that is fond of God with an holy fondness, he knows he may leap into his Father's lap at any time, and fall into his arms, and ask anything without courting and compliment.

There are some saints that cannot at any time get to God and ask anything, but they have much ado to set their hearts and to get off the guilt that is between them and God as a cloud; they have much ado to get a little adoption to call God Father and to lay hold on the promises: but there is such a temper of holy fondness that there needs not all, or any, of this; God and the soul are so well acquainted, and always together, that as soon as ever he comes he can ask anything, and in a holy boldness snatch it; for the kingdom of heaven is taken by violence, therefore saith God, 'Concerning my sons and daughters, command ye me.' A child can command his father, and say, 'I must have a new coat', 'I must have a new book', or 'I must have a ball to play with': so a saint

can say, 'Father, there is a covenant; thou art my father, and I am thy child. It cannot stand with thy truth, thou wert not just, if thou shouldst deny me anything that is good.' O, this is a holy boldness! As a child can creep into his mother's breast and pull it out with his hand, yet because there is an inward love she bears with it, and smiles in his face.

It argues a great deal of nearness to God when one is always in a readiness to ask anything. I have observed that souls that are far from God, they must always go upon their knees; but a soul that is near can pray standing, or walking, or talking— as that good man that you read of in the Book of Ezra— he can

[page 31]

pray with his hat on, he can pray in his bed, or where you will, when he is [in] communion with God.¹ It is a most glorious thing, and a grace that I have seen in some saints, (and it hath made my soul sick to have it), to have a soul always in such a temper they can speak a spiritual word at any time, as it is said of Bradford,² to have a heart so familiar with God that it can speak in a moment. A weak professor prays, and he is put to it to the utmost for his duty in the morning, and he goes behind God's back all the day till night; and unless he set aside all his work and go upon his knees, he cannot pray as he buys and sells and trades.

4. Fourthly, there is in a fond child a holy carelessness of casting himself, body, and soul, and family, and business, and affairs, and all, upon God— 'Be careful for nothing'. It is not to make careless Christians, but it is true in one sense, when in a holy carelessness a man casts himself upon God. It is your weakness, much of your dispute concerning grace and salvation and justification: a fond child of God smiles at it; he can come near his father, and catch him, and hold him, and say, 'I know whom I have trusted, on whom I have laid my soul', as a man that puts his estate in another[s] hands can say, 'I know whom I have trusted.' A weak saint thinks little of, and cares little for, the service of God, but he cares much for his own safety and security and salvation: a strong, fond saint takes less care for his own salvation, but he

¹ " In Thomas Charles and Philip Oliver's edition of this sermon (1800). the following foot-note is inserted here by the editors: 'He by no means here intends to condemn stated times or places for prayers; his own practice was so contrary. that he used to wet with his tears the seat of a leathern chair, where he was wont to be on his knees in prayer. — With such a caveat many of his expressions must be taken both here and elsewhere.'

² Probably John Bradford (1510-1555), the Protestant martyr.

cares much for the service of Jesus Christ. 'For', thinks he, 'let the Lord Jesus look to that; he hath taken on him to die for my soul, and he hath promised to receive it, and he hath said he will not cast away them that come to him. I have cast my soul on him, sink or swim; I will not trouble my head with that, but all my thought and care shall be how I may please Jesus

[page 32]

Christ, and love and glorify him.' It is a blessed pitch of grace when a saint can come to that carelessness that a man is not thoughtful for his soul, [but] when he hath brought it to Christ, leave it there, and think not of it, but think of the work and will of Christ, and how to honour him. As suppose you meet in the way as you travel, an enemy, a man that (it may be) stands there to destroy you, though you meet him you know not his purpose—if you did, you would go another way! Now when you meet the man, there is one of these two things to be done, either concerning your safety, or your carriage to Christ. Now a saint is apt to take Christ's work and lay aside his own; another man doth not care, in that case, how he is pleasing to Christ and carries himself to him, but his care is how he may get off from his enemy that he may not kill him and take away his life. That is our error; we should leave that to Christ; he hath put an enemy before me, and he cannot kill me without Christ give him power; but my care should be how to be pleasing to God, and so to speak and think and do. As for outward things and for the body, so for the soul, my care should not be so much whether I shall be damned or saved—I know into whose hands I have put it—but my care should be how to walk more holily and pleasing to Christ, and for the edification of his church and kingdom: this a child that is fond of God will do.

5. Fifthly, a saint that is fond of God in Jesus Christ, he seeth something of God in everything. As they say of love, one that is in love sees nothing with her eyes, nor hears nothing with her ears, but love: so a saint that is fond of God, bring him meat, he sees the love of God in Christ in it; bring him clothes, or any thing, his eye is fastened more upon the love of God in Christ than upon the thing. As the spouse in the Canticles, (for the Canticles is a book of fondness between Christ and his people), she hears one talk warrant you', saith she, 'this is the voice of my beloved.' She is so fond of him that she could not hear one talk but she saith, It is my beloved.' When she looks on the gallery and the lattice, 'I warrant you', saith she, 'my beloved looks thorough that grate', and when she sleeps, her heart waketh. It is a blessed thing when we do not eye things in themselves, but so as we are able to see God in

[page 33]

them. And you shall know it by the various tempers of your souls, for sometimes you are more spiritual, and sometimes more carnal. When you are carnal, you use more of the creature, and never see God at all; but when you

are spiritual, you see God and his love in Christ in everything.

THIS FONDNESS WROUGHT FOUR WAYS

I shall now shew you how God brings his children to this holy fondness, and I would leave you longing for it; and I trust in God to leave some souls sick till God work and bring up their souls to that. I will name but only four:

1. BY DISABLING ALL THE CREATION TO THIS END

The first thing is, that God utterly convinceth a saint of the vanity of every creature and of every condition; he will never be fond till then. God lets him suck one creature after another, and then he sees the vanity of them. God puts him into one condition after another. 'Or saith a saint when he is sick, 'if I were well I should rejoice and glorify God.' God gives him health, and then he is in a worse temper. When he is poor, saith he, 'If I had to pay my debts and to set up handsomely, then I should serve God.' God sets him up, and lets his heart go after covetousness, and saith to him, 'Dost thou not see that thou art worse than thou wert before?' So God chaseth him from one creature to another, and from one condition to another. If he would be in the country, God convinceth him that he will be worse than in the town. At last he saith, 'Lord, I have tried and hunted all, and I see they are a company of vanities.' And sometime, when he is sick in body and shaken in soul, God appears gloriously and makes the worst condition better than the best. So God follows, and traceth, and chaseth him from one to another, till he bring him to see every creature vanity, and every condition; and, saith a saint, 'I do not much care what condition, whether he put me in prison or at liberty, whether I be rich or poor, well or sick, so he reveal himself to my soul.' You will never be fond till you come to that, till God convince you of all

[page 34]

conditions, and of the use of all creatures, and tire thee that thy soul may say, 'God is all in all. I am indifferent what creatures I have or want, or what condition I am in, for I have seen God to be all in all. I have seen nothing in riches and in liberty, but as God comes into a condition or is absent, so it is sweet or bitter, good or bad.' People that are professors in these sad times, they would not be so reaching, and griping and undermining for offices and places and preferments, and I know not what, if they did see this.

2. BY GOD'S POURING FORTH HIS LOVE IN THEIR HEARTS

Another way is this, that the Lord sheds his love into their hearts (Rom. 5). He pours it out as you would pour out a pail, or a bucket of water. God so overpowers the heart with his love that there is no guilt, no hardness, no fear,

no spirit of bondage at all left in the soul. Beloved, why are not we more fond of God? Why is not he more dear to us? The reason is because we have many hard thoughts of him, that he may be an enemy as well as a friend, and I know not what he means. I look upon him at a catch, as with a staff in his hand to strike me. There are abundance of those thoughts in the soul, especially in affliction; some professors are ready to say, 'God hath found me out as an hypocrite and plagueth me.' In afflictions, ordinary professors lose more, though they talk of getting. But the Lord comes to some of his children, and so overpowers their hearts with his love that there is not one thought nor imagination in their hearts but only of love to him— and then they will be fond. For when they see pure love in God, and nothing but a principle of pure love in them to God, what should hinder but that they should be fond one of another? There is a homely comparison: a woman that hath butter in a dish, she melts some of the butter, but if she take it too soon from the fire there will be a core, a knob in the dish left, and being taken from the fire it grows bigger till all be hard. So a weak saint: by studying the promises of God and the love of God, it dissolves much of the knobbinness, yet there are some hard thoughts and jealousies and suspicions; but God comes at last, and melts all the butter together, all

[page 35]

the knobbinness that is in the heart, every thought and imagination of terror and guilt and fear, that there is a clear and pure principle of love to God—and then the soul is fond of him.

The Lord takes a great deal of delight to train and bring up his child to be more in love with him. God will so train and bring him up, that if he throw him into the worst condition that can be for body or soul, and shall say, 'What thinkest thou of me now? Hast thou any hard thoughts of me?' saith God. 'No,' saith the soul, 'all is love.' As for instance, I will tell you a thing- the worst on this side [of] hell- I speak not of imprisonment or shame, but God may take him and leave him to sin; and then the soul awakes and thinks, 'Good Lord, where am I? O, what a hell have I in me!' For there is a hell in the heart if God take off the veil of grace; if he draw the curtain, there is nothing but hell in the soul. 'There are many sins that thou hast committed that there is not a soul in the world that hath committed worse.' 'That is true', saith a saint. 'And dost not thou think', saith God, 'that thou art an hypocrite and that I shall damn thee for this?' 'No,' saith the soul, 'I know I have nothing in me but of thy grace, and if thou draw the curtain all is hell; but there is nothing but love.' Even then, after sin, there is not one hard thought; it makes the soul more fond. He saith, 'It is true, I am so, and there is no devil that hath worse thoughts; but the more need I have to go to my Father, (for I am thy son; I am sure of that). And seeing that I am weaker than I was, I have the more need to betake me to thy lap, and into

thy arms.' And so he grows more fond of God by sin itself.

Nay, I will tell you a greater than that. What can that be? There is one greater — and yet all this cannot quench the love and fondness that is between the soul and God— that is, when God corrects his child with one sin for another. It may be for his fault he lets him run to covet places and offices, &c., and the next day after, the Lord suffers another lust to carry him as in a chariot to hell, that this may make him take heed how he looks after such things. This is the worst between this and hell. Saith God, 'Should I not now come and break thee in pieces as a villain?' 'No,' saith the soul, 'this is a wise design of

[page 36]

thy love, and there is nothing but love in thee to me, and there shall be nothing but pure love in me to thee.'

Learn these things, beloved. There are many that come to hear, and all that I can see from them is, that if there be controversial, they dispute of that when they come home; but lay these things to heart, (as it is said of Mary), and beg of the Lord to screw up your souls to that heavenly, blessed life that you may attain in this world.

3. ASSURANCE OF CONQUEST OVER ALL KIND OF ENEMIES

The third thing before which a saint will never be fond is, God will convince him of an absolute, perfect conquest over all his enemies. A child of God will never be fond till he be secure, and he will never be so till God shew him by his spirit that he is more than conqueror over most of his enemies, and that he is a certain conqueror over all. And this is by faith: for by sense, sin prevails over us, and if we say we have [no] sin, we do not say true; but by faith, when Satan is most severe, he is conquered, and sin when it is most violent, he looks on it as a vassal at his foot intreating pardon. It is said in Daniel that Christ came to bring in everlasting righteousness and make an end of sin. A saint by faith sees sin ended; as hell and damnation and wrath and the curse is so, sin shall be out of doors. There is no damnation to them that are in Christ. 'He hath redeemed us out of the hands of our enemies, that we might serve him without fear,' as Zacharias saith; from all our enemies; and 'he shall', as Malachi saith, 'tread his enemies as ashes under his feet'.

This is that that keeps a saint under: he cannot come to the height of love to God because there is some enemy that over- tops him. This day, when he hears that our souls are over sin, he is cheery; but when he comes home, there comes a sin or a temptation and breaks all, and he is at a loss. Now when faith is screwed so high as to tread on all enemies, on sin, which is the strongest—say

it be a strong temptation of covetousness: thou studiest to purchase and to enlarge thine inheritance—suppose there be such a thing in thy soul, and it is violent, and thou hast offered to resist it, and thou canst not, thou mayst say, 'Sin, though thou be strong, and I

[page 37]

cannot put thee out, thou hast bolted the door, but thou art my slave, and in the blood of Christ I am thy conqueror. Thou thinkest to conquer me, but thou art my vassal and my slave.' And much more may he say so of Satan, 'Thou molested me, but thou art condemned; I am made lord over thee in the blood of Christ.' Grace and sin will mount as the bird and the hawk, and the one seek to out-mount the other, the bird for safety, the hawk for prey; so grace and sin get one above another. 'Or saith grace, 'I would be holy.' Saith sin, 'Thou shalt be covetous.' 'I will pray', saith grace. 'But I will make thee my possession', saith sin. When the soul out- mounts sin to the place where dwelleth righteousness, that kingdom that cannot be shaken, that I see all my enemies beneath, and when they are most strong and imperious over me, I look on them with a peaceable & quiet spirit.

4. BY A SPIRITUAL ADHESION TO THE NEW COVENANT

Last of all, (and so I have done with this), notwithstanding all this, the soul could not be fond of God but as God gives him a spiritual understanding of the new covenant; the enemies will overmount the soul else. As for instance, (to give you but one illustration), there are such pangs and such a temper in the soul of a saint as that sometimes nothing in the world can give him satisfaction; there is sin and temptation, and, it may be, pain in body— and where is God and the spirit and any thing to help? 'God can help, but who knows whether he will or no now I am in the hands of mine enemies?' In comes the covenant. 'O! saith the soul, 'it is true; I am in the hands of mine enemies, and God may chuse whether he will rescue me.' He might have done, but now he is bound in an everlasting covenant that, (with reverence), God must help. "Time was when God might have cast me to hell, and he was not bound to save me, but the case is altered; God is bound to save me. Therefore saith David, "Though my house be not so with God, yet there is covenant: this is my desire, and joy:" Many times, the soul is so that nothing can relieve it but the covenant that God is bound; that God cannot, though he would, desert him.

[page 38]

If you examine what this covenant is, and whereto it is: the Lord knows we are apt to measure him by ourselves, and so we do in everything; we think our thoughts as God's thoughts, and his thoughts as ours; therefore God is willing to condescend unto us in our own way. For that God that contrived a way of

salvation before the world was, we may not fear but that the love will carry us thorough; but God would come in our way, and take that way that one man doth with another. Because we are apt to measure God by ourselves, therefore he comes and saith; and if that serve not, he swears; and if that will not serve, he brings a seal and a covenant; and then, with men, a man is safe enough. So God's word had been enough, but because we should have strong consolation that must be conveyed according to our apprehensions and thoughts, there God saith, and swears, and makes a covenant, and binds himself that we may see him bound. Therefore saith the apostle in the Galatians, 'If it be but a man's covenant, none can disanul it': as if he should say, 'I made this for your sakes; or else I have one, and none can alter it; but for your sakes I came down, and made a covenant like men; and there are three that bear witness, and that is enough among men; therefore think my love will be constant to the end.' So when a Christian is at a dead lift, this relieves him—not that God can save him if he will, but that God must, he is bound to save him. It is a pitiful thing when a man is in the hands of a thousand enemies, and then can only say, 'Peradventure God will save me and rescue me'; but when the soul sees that God must rescue it, and there is a covenant made and sealed with the blood of Christ, and it is not possible to be broken, 'God's covenant is to save me and preserve me to his everlasting kingdom.'

Thus I have briefly shewed you that fondness that is between a saint and God; and the book of Canticles is, (as I told you), nothing but a book of fondness, (as I may say), between Christ and the saints. Therefore you should aim at the good of your souls, and seeing there is such a condition, that there are saints that are so, desire the Lord to make you such.

[page 39]

A Poem by Cradock

This poem is found in NLW Add. MS. 128C, and is transcribed here together with the comments which accompany it in the manuscript:

As for his writings we have nothing in manuscript remaining after him, but the following spiritual well worded poem—

Ten virgins have been drowsing,
The saints have had their napping.
The Cry is out the bridegroom is near,
Awake my Dear from Sleeping.

Sleep on the virgins foolish— ,

Sin on the sinners Sottish— ;
The day is past alas therefore
We will no more admonish.

But blessed are the faithful,
The sober and the watchful,
The just that walketh in his might,
The upright and the faithful.

For all shall come to judgement
For prison or enlargement,
All jews and gentiles shall come on
For guerdon, or ejection.

What shrieks and noise and howlings
What shoutings and what cryings
That mountains might some rescue bring
To Sinners then in anguish.

There's Moses and Elias
There's Jezebel and Caiphaz;
There's Peter Preston Roth and Paul;
There's Saul and Cain and Judas:

[page 40]
Now Saints sing Halelujahs,
Snares shall no more encompass
Your Soul; farewell all dross and sin,
Farewel all Sin and trespass.

Since Christ deals in this manner,
My Soul sleep thou no longer;
The gate is strait with speed prepare;
For few there are that enter.

The poem is elegant and sounds well; and the matter of it most interesting: we would have been glad of more such poems from any hand.'

Although in English, this poem is written in a Welsh metre (the *englyn cyrch* or *Triban Morgannwg*), and it is in effect an English *cwndid*. The *cwndid* was a religious poem written in Welsh in the so-called 'free metres' by a school of poets in South Wales (mainly in Glamorgan and Gwent) in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. William Wroth of Llanfaches was an important influence on Cradock, and Cradock obviously held him in high enough esteem to name him in the same breath as the Apostles Peter and Paul and the English Puritan leader John Preston in one of the verses of this poem, (which means, incidentally, that the poem was composed sometime after Wroth's death in 1641). William Wroth also wrote some *cwndidau* in English, and it would seem, therefore, that there was a tradition of composing English *cwndidau* amongst the poets of bilingual Gwent. (Another example of an English *cwndid* is to be found in L.J. Hopkin Jones and T. C. Evans, *Hen Gwndidau* (Bangor, 1910), pp. 152-3). For a discussion on William Wroth as a poet, and reference to this poem of Cradock's and the manuscript NLW Add. MS. 128C, see R. Geraint Gruffydd, '*In That Gentile Country . . .*' (Evangelical Library of Wales, 1976), pp. 11, 18-21, 31.

NOEL GIBBARD