



Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony Centenary

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT:

There will, God willing, be a special Centenary Meeting held on Saturday, 24th November, 2018 at Westminster Baptist Church, 100 Horseferry Road, London, SW1P 2EE.

The preacher engaged for this very unique occasion is Dr John Douglas, who has been associated with the Testimony for over 50 years.

It is hoped that friends will take the opportunity to attend, and we should be glad if you would reserve the date and come.

The Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony was, under God, formed on the 1st November, 1918, which means that this year marks the centenary of the movement. During that time there have only been two secretaries. Mr George H Fromow was appointed at the inaugural meeting in 1918 and continued until his home-call in April, 1974. On his passing, Mr Stephen A Toms was appointed and, by God's grace and help, has continued till the present time.

BEGINNINGS

About one hundred years ago, a series of prophetic studies had been held in Ealing, conducted by Mr Thomas Parkes, but these meetings were unavoidably discontinued. Several friends greatly regretted that they could not continue and desired to make a restart. (Mr Parkes was a London City Missionary attached to Park Chapel, Chelsea). At the same time, there were those who had severed their connection with 'The Scripture Research Society' on a matter concerning the honour of our Lord, whereupon they desired to direct their efforts among their immediate Christian associates. Also, the large inter-denominational movement, 'The Advent Testimony Preparation Union' had issued a statement on a broad basis, to which friends could not subscribe. These coincidences, together with the desirability of seeking to rouse God's people to quickened interest in the hope of our Lord's return and prophetic truth connected therewith called people to prayer, and through prayer to action. Accordingly, following prayer meetings held in Mr Frederick Parker's house at Ealing, a Conference took place in that same house on 1st November, 1918, and it was resolved 'that meetings be instituted for Addresses and Conference on Scriptural Teaching, especially in relation to our Lord's return, the first to be in Carmel Chapel, Pimlico, on Tuesday, November 26th.' When Mr Parker gave his testimony at a meeting in July, 1921 he spoke of the S.G.A.T. as being born of prayer, and the desire to carry the light of prophecy to fellow believers.

SGAT INAUGURATED

At the meeting on November 1st, conveners were appointed and those brethren involved were Pastor John Hunt Lynn (the highly esteemed and learned pastor at 'Hope' Chapel, Bethnal Green), Mr Frederick Parker, Pastor E Rose, Mr Thomas Dean, and Mr George Hazelton Fromow. Mr Lynn was appointed to be chairman, Mr Fromow to be secretary, and Mr Dean to be treasurer. Thus, the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony was commenced. Others quickly joining them were Mr G L Silverwood-Brown, Pastor George Barnett, Pastor James Payne, Mr James H Pizey, Mr James E Rayner, Missionary William J Rowlands, Pastor William Wileman, and Mr Stanley G Taylor. The friends at 'Carmel' responded warmly and other meetings were subsequently held there for a time. Sadly, the lease on the property at Pimlico expired after a short period. The Lord's guidance was sought and members of



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the Testimony were thankful to the Lord for His directing to 'Bethesda' Chapel, Notting Hill Gate, where meetings were held regularly for some years. It was soon discovered that there was a great dearth of suitable hymns on Advent and Prophetic Truth, so a hymn sheet was produced. This led to the publication of the first edition of the 'Grace and Glory Hymn Book.' Prior to that time a magazine entitled 'Perilous Times' bearing testimony to the truth embraced by the founders of the S.G.A.T. had been circulated, and that had succeeded a similar magazine entitled, 'Old Truths.' In fact, the last issue of 'Perilous Times' was in March, 1919, it being decided to introduce a new magazine entitled 'Watching and Waiting.' So, the first copy of this later magazine was published in April, 1919. The last three issues of 'Perilous Times' announced the new paper. It has oftentimes been said that Christians cannot be expected to agree on the subject of unfulfilled prophecy. That may be largely true, but should it be so, with an open Bible, and the willing, gracious teaching of the Holy Spirit? If non-agreement should be a fact, it is not reason for silence as to one's convictions. From the outset, the S.G.A.T. conveners were all men of strong convictions, and it did not take long for them to draw up an affirmation of faith, or manifesto. This affirmation stated clearly that the Testimony was based on the teaching of Free, Sovereign and Distinguishing Grace (often called, 'Calvinism'), in contrast with those prophetic schools associated with Arminianism and teaching which belittles the sovereign rights and finished work of our Redeemer. Adhering to God's sovereignty, the manifesto declared that God would faithfully fulfil all His word. Thus, receiving doctrinal truth on the bare Word of God, the same principle was followed in all departments of Biblical research, being persuaded that 'God says what He means, and means what He says.' Consequently there has been a witness to Prophetic and Advent Truth known as 'Historic Premillennialism' and 'Simple Futurism,' that is, a personal coming of the Lord Jesus Christ which will be post-tribulational and pre-millennial. This Testimony has always been, and continues to be, a hearty supporter of true missionary activity. However, we do not believe that foreign missions were designed of God to convert, or radically improve, the world, or bring in the Millennium. Neither do we believe that any political reform can work the desired change and bring in 'the Golden Age.'

OUR MESSAGE

The S.G.A.T. continues to bear its testimony, praying that, both in professing Christendom and in the world at large, many may, by sovereign grace, be brought to 'cease from man' and trust wholly in the promises and prophecies of the Word of God. Many people are disillusioned of worldly, political and international hopes, and are looking about them for some answers to the world's problems. We desire that God the Spirit will use the prophetic message to bring such to Christ and to the knowledge of the truth; and that they may be brought into the light through the study of prophecy. The S.G.A.T. bears witness to the profound conviction that Christendom is fast advancing in apostasy from God and His Christ and Truth, towards the climax of antichristianism, and with the nations, to the judgment of the Day of the Lord; and at the same time testifying to the belief that the Lord is gathering out His elect, both from Christendom and Heathendom, by the preaching of the Gospel of His Grace, throughout the world. Our message warns of the fast collapse (1) of organised religion, (2) of democracy, and (3) of international good faith; it also points beyond things that are, and shall be shaken, to our receiving the Kingdom which cannot be shaken (Hebrews 12:28). Should God's people study prophecy? Our reply is 'Yes' (1) Because God has given it to us in His Word, and we charge Him with foolishness if we neglect it; (2) Because the days in which we are living are days of crisis, and we need to seek unto the Lord for guidance; and (3) Because thereby we are warned against the very things which many are falling into, through ignorance of the Prophetic Word. Over the years, many meetings have been held and much literature has been distributed, including the regular issue of the magazine, 'Watching and Waiting,' promoting the teaching of Holy Scripture, setting forth in order those things which are most surely believed among us. In these days, we may be few and despised but the message that we seek to declare is the all-important one. The godly men who met one hundred years ago had a vision which, sadly, so many today are lacking.



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A WORD FROM 1943

Friends may be interested to know that at the twenty-fourth annual meeting held as long ago as 23rd January, 1943, Mr Fromow made the following statement, 'The prophet Daniel says that in the Time of the End, 'Many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased' (12:4). Some think this indicates rapid locomotion, increased means of transport and great progress in scientific knowledge. We believe otherwise; that Daniel as God's messenger is telling us that in the 'Last Days' there will be intensive enquiry as to the meaning of prophecy and thus knowledge thereof will be increased. That enquiry will bring revival in grace and strength to the 'wise' or 'instructed' or 'understanding' ones; for service and suffering in the last days; of which days our Lord said, 'Whoso readeth let him understand' (Matthew 24). It is to promote that enquiry and call many to 'run to and fro,' in the reading of Daniel and other prophets, and so to increase accurate knowledge, understanding and wisdom, that the S.G.A.T. was instituted and continues its testimony. Our Bibles should be ... much thumbed at Daniel and the Revelation. With such high objectives the S.G.A.T. has humbly laboured ... and we feel sure that in not a few quarters 'knowledge has been increased.' We reaffirm our conviction that if revival in the Church is to come, it will be along the line of increased reception of the whole Word, including prophecy. But we have not yet reached 'the time of the end' or the 'last days,' though signs indicate that we are hastening thereto. 'Some folk are asking, 'Is this World War a sign that we are in the last days or the end of the age?' We may reply by adapting the Premier's words about the North African Campaign, 'This is not the end or the beginning of the end, but it may be the end of the beginning,' i.e. we may be approaching, and we think we are, the end of the age preparatory to 'the time of the end' or Daniel's seventieth week. We expect, following this war, a period of worldly peace and commercial prosperity, of increasing lawlessness Godwards, giving space for the final apostasy to develop, the ten kingdoms of prophecy to align themselves, Babylon to become the world's emporium and Satan's seat, and the Antichrist to arise; but withal we expect opportunity for the true Church to carry the Gospel to the uttermost part of the earth. We expect therefore that the united nations will survive the Axis powers, not only because of their vast resources; not only because of their defence of freedom; not only because they have befriended Israel, while Axis powers have diabolically downtrodden them, not only because of the Godly remnant in the world whose universal intercessions are acceptable before God. Not only will God permit this for the sake of the Church, Israel, and the progress of Evangelism; but we have all along expected this result because of the sure word of prophecy. It declares, according to the prophetic visions of Daniel, that God has been pleased to delegate supreme world power; and dominion over Israel, during the times of the Gentiles, to the four prophetic Empires, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome; not to Germany, Russia, Japan, or for that matter, to U.S.A. Here a solemn warning is needed: Power and privilege, if abused, calls forth Divine judgment, and who dare deny that this power delegated from God is being abused? The power of Government delegated to these Gentiles since the fall of the Israel's Theocratic monarchy has been given to none besides, and waits the time of our Lord's return, when He Whose right it is will come forth invested with universal sovereignty. He as Messiah and Son of Man will reign in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously. 'He shall not fail nor be discouraged till He have set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for His Law' (Isaiah 42:5).'

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