

Appendix 2

Modern Addresses: An Example

I have made some very serious claims in this book. I have said that:

Many modern evangelical churches think the best way to evangelise is to attract and hold unbelievers in church attendance.

This means that the *ekklēsia* has to be re-engineered to do the job.

This means that inclusivism rules the roost.

This necessarily involves a radical change of message, not merely a change of tone.

This change can only come about by the prostitution of Scripture.

In this Appendix, I want to support and substantiate these claims by interacting with Martin Salter's sermon entitled '2019 Review', 29th December 2019, which may be found on the website of Kempston Grace Community Church. I take this sermon because KGCC plays a leading role in the contemporary drive in the UK for the style of evangelism I have been criticising.¹

The sermon's title is utterly misleading. It is, in fact, an address on part of Hebrews 2:11, and, if I might be so bold, from Salter's point of view a far better title would have been something like: 'Don't Feel Ashamed Of Yourself: Jesus Isn't!'

Here is Salter's text:

He is not ashamed to call them brothers.

Here is the relevant passage in full, that which was read during the meeting:

¹ See my *Relationship*.

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It was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. It has been testified somewhere: 'What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him? You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honour, putting everything in subjection under his feet'. Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

For it was fitting that he [that is, God the Father], for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation [that is, his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ] perfect through suffering. For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying: 'I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise' [Ps. 22:22]. And again: 'I will put my trust in him' [Isa. 8:17]. And again: 'Behold, I and the children God has given me' [Isa. 8:18]. Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted (Heb. 2:5-18).²

It is the golden rule of Scripture interpretation that context is king. Always. It is not enough for the preacher, as a token gesture, to mention the context, give it a courteous tug of the forelock, and move on. The context must determine what is

² Salter used a different version, but it has no effect on the issue in hand.

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said; if not, nonsense can be foisted on Scripture. Indeed, in that case it would be better by far if Scripture were to be dispensed with altogether. Then, at least, the congregation would not be conned: they would know that the preacher was saying what he wanted to say, not what Scripture says.

While Salter did spend a *very* brief time on ‘the humanity of Jesus’, he failed to set the text in its proper context. He virtually plucked the words off the page and said what he wanted to say.

Let me put this right.

The writer to the Hebrews is writing to believers about believers; more precisely, he is speaking about those whom Christ calls ‘many sons’, ‘my brothers’, ‘the children God has given me’, ‘the offspring of Abraham’, ‘the people’. By this, in this context, he means ‘the elect’; take John 1:11-13; 10:1-30; 17:1-26, for instance. But, of course, no man can know who the elect are until they come to faith; hence the sacred writer is writing to, and talking about, believers. Believers, mark you. More precisely, he is writing to Jewish believers who, for some reason or another, are losing heart and drifting back into Judaism, forsaking the new covenant to return to the old. To do what he can to keep them from taking that fatal step, the writer, calling heavily on the Old Testament, takes the shadows of the old covenant, and, while appreciating that God had given these shadows to Israel under the old covenant, and that these shadows had an external glory, he shows that in every case Christ is their fulfilment. This was always God’s intention.³ This means that in the new covenant believers have, in Christ, the reality – not merely the hazy picture, sketch or outline – of what those shadows represented in the days of the old covenant (Col. 2:17). Moreover, the writer proves that Christ, fulfilling the old covenant, has rendered it obsolete (Heb.

³ The old covenant was given to Israel for a specified purpose to be accomplished in a limited period of time (Gal. 3:19-25). See my *Three*.

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8:13), the new covenant in every way being superior to the old (Heb. 7:19-22) – superior or better because, in every respect, Christ is superior.

By these arguments, the writer seeks to encourage his readers not to desert Christ.

He also approaches them on the opposite flank: he warns them, and warns them repeatedly, that if they do apostatise, they will find that, just as the benefits of the new covenant are far greater than the old, so its penalties, its punishments, are far more severe than those of the old (Heb. 2:14; 3:7 – 4:13; 5:11 – 6:12; 10:19-39; 12:1-29).

Thus, he argues, they are playing with fire even to think of deserting Christ; they would be forsaking the better for the poorer, the greater for the lesser, the effective for the shadow, the extant for the obsolete. In every respect – angels, Moses, sabbath, priesthood, sacrifices, altar and such like – Christ is better!⁴

Coming to the passage in question, in Hebrews 2 the writer is continuing what he had begun in Hebrews 1; namely, dealing with the superiority of Christ over angels.

Why angels? The writer has to deal with the question of angels because the old covenant was administered by them (Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19), while at the heart of the new covenant stands a man! So, isn't the old covenant superior in this respect?

Not at all! Christ is no ordinary man: as the writer has argued in the preceding verses, Christ is none other than the Son of God (Heb. 1:1 – 2:4). What is more – and this is *the* point (Heb. 2:5-18) – he who was infinitely above angels, *became* a man, willingly became a man. That makes all the difference!

⁴ See my *Christ*.

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Think of the effect this must have had on the angels as they witnessed the Son of God becoming a man, one lower than themselves!

Why did Christ become a man? In order to live and die under the law of Moses, to fulfil the old covenant, to render it obsolete, to bring in the new covenant and redeem his people, his elect, from all their sin forever (Gal. 4:4). Christ was willing to give up his glory for a time in order to be humiliated by becoming a man, willing to be made a servant, to be betrayed, willing to be rejected, to be deserted, to undergo a travesty of a trial, to suffer torture, to die, to die on the cross – and all to redeem his elect:

We see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.⁵

For it was fitting that he [that is, God the Father], for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation [that is, his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ] perfect through suffering. For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers...

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery...

For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

This is what the writer is declaring in Hebrews 2:11.

This is the context.

⁵ See my *Amyraut* for more on ‘everyone’.

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But, as I said, while Salter talked of the humanity of Jesus, he simply foisted what he wanted to say on the text,⁶ and used the words in a way never intended by the Holy Spirit. In short, by not giving proper weight to the context, he prostituted Scripture to deliver his discourse. Moreover, he took that which belongs to the elect, and only to the elect, and gave it – cast it – without any sense of impropriety, without hesitation, to all and sundry.⁷

Heavy charges! Let me justify them.

⁶ If I am reproved for attributing motive to Salter, I respond by asking that if his failure properly to weigh the context was done out of ignorance – he does not realise he should properly weigh the context – then why does the management of KGCC allow him to preach in such ignorance? If it was an oversight on his part, why does KGCC publish the sermon on their website, and why does Salter not issue an apology and preach a new sermon thoroughly based on the context? As I go to press, the discourse is still extant on the KGCC website. As to the gravity of my charge, Ezek. 13:1-23 is a passage which every preacher (I include myself) needs to bear in mind. True, it deals with prophets in Israel during the days of the old covenant, but its import is unmistakable: ‘Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel, who are prophesying, and say to those who prophesy from their own hearts [or imagination or invention or what they wish to happen]’: “Hear the word of the LORD!” Thus says the LORD God: Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing!’ (Ezek. 13:2-3; see also verse 17). As the chapter makes clear, these prophets did immense damage, carried a huge responsibility, and had to face a grim punishment.

⁷ Of course, as with every scripture, there is an application to unbelievers. But great care is needed in making this application, in moving from believers to unbelievers. Clarity is essential. This verse is no exception. Unbelievers need to be shown and feel the wonder of the love of the triune God for sinners leading to the incarnation of Christ to redeem such. In light of this, they need to hear the call for saving trust in Christ, and the grievous sin of unbelief (see John 3:14-21,36; 12:35-36; 16:8-9, for instance), and this to follow the setting out of the clear distinction between the unregenerate and the regenerate (John 3:3-8).

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After a breezy opening, Salter welcomed one and all in a most encouraging and morale-boosting way, setting everyone at ease.

Moving on to his sermon proper, although in his opening remarks, Salter said he intended to focus on Christ, what he actually focussed on was men. The address was man-centred. Specifically, it was ‘about us’. Salter focussed on ‘us’, ‘we’ and ‘you’, these words coming over and over again throughout the discourse.⁸ He made no distinction whatsoever among his hearers; he made no mention of the vital biblical truth of the divide between the regenerate and unregenerate, between believers and unbelievers, let alone stressed that divide. And all the while he was repeatedly taking what was said about Christ and the elect and applying it to all and sundry. By his constant and repeated use of ‘us’, ‘we’ and ‘you’, Salter was including all his hearers, both in the hall that morning and throughout the world *via* the internet in perpetuity, whether or not they were – or are – believers. For 99% of his address, there was not a whiff of a hint of a suggestion of any distinction between the believer and the unbeliever. True, at the very end, Salter did, for one brief moment, speak in passing of ‘those who are not followers of Jesus’, but immediately assured them that they were included in what he was saying – just as much as those who are ‘followers of Jesus’.

In other words, Salter’s sermon was, from start to finish, utterly inclusive. All, without exception, were included in all he said.

His point was that since Christ is not ashamed of you, you must not be ashamed of yourself, primarily, nor of anybody else, nor of Christ.

Consequently, what should have been a discourse on the glory of Christ, a discourse which should have exalted him

⁸ There is a proper – vital – use of ‘you’ in preaching. See my *Using*.

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for his willingness to leave his heavenly throne, to lay aside his glory, to suffer abject humiliation and indescribable suffering as a sacrifice to propitiate the wrath of God, and all for the sake of the salvation of his elect, turned out to be a discourse designed to make the hearers give up any sense of shame about themselves; putting it positively, to feel good about themselves.

Let me spell this out as clearly as I can. The writer to the Hebrews wanted his readers, these wavering believers, to be assured – not about themselves – but about the glory of Christ, their Redeemer. He wanted them to have a clear view of Christ, who, though infinite in majesty, was willing to be humiliated and become a man, a real man, to live and die among men (indeed, though he was and remained without sin, was willing to live and die among – and for – sinners, John 10:11,15,17-18). This is what the writer to the Hebrews wanted; this is what he wrote for. Salter, however, by failing properly to argue the context made the words of his text to read as though the writer to the Hebrews – as though Christ himself – wanted everybody, without exception,⁹ to feel no shame about themselves.

In this way, the condescension of Christ was lost in a welter of words about how ‘you’ should feel ‘good’ about ‘yourself’; Salter was encouraging all his hearers not to talk ‘yourselves’ down. Indeed, he was boosting the ‘feel good factor’. And the reason? Because Christ is not ashamed of ‘you’! Moreover, he took ‘your’ shame on the cross. So said Salter.

But this is not what the text is saying! Not at all!

For one thing, Christ did not die for his people’s sense of shame, but for their sins; it was his people’s guilt, their sin, that he bore on the cross. His sufferings were penal: he died

⁹ Not just church attenders. Do not forget this sermon is available world-wide. Nor am I faulting a man for an occasional word or slip. The sermon was inclusive from start to finish.

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to appease the wrath of God on behalf of his elect. Very different to Salter's doctrine!

Salter did not explain the difference between shame and guilt. Indeed, guilt got only passingly mentioned. Yet guilt is far, far more important than shame. The distinction between the two, with guilt being the real issue that man must be concerned about – shame being only a symptom (an important symptom, yes, but only a symptom) – was set out by God, right from the fall of Adam. As Genesis 3 makes clear, it is the fundamental aspect of the relationship between God and man as a result of sin – one which God immediately spelled out to Adam, and thence to us. Adam sinned; he disobeyed God. He immediately felt ashamed and took steps to suppress his shame, to disguise it. But God would have none of it. It was not only Adam's *shame*, but – and this *the* point – it was his *guilt* that God brought home to his conscience.

First, the sin:

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

Then the immediate consequence:

Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

God was not allowing that to go unchallenged:

But the LORD God called to the man and said to him: 'Where are you?' And he said: 'I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself'. He said: 'Who told you that you were naked? Have

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you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?’ The man said: ‘The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate’. Then the LORD God said to the woman: ‘What is this that you have done?’ The woman said: ‘The serpent deceived me, and I ate’ (Gen. 3:6-13).

You see the point. Adam and Eve were concerned about their feelings, about how they felt, their embarrassment, their shame and fear. God, however, went straight for their guilt, their accountability. Even then, they did all they could to divert their guilt to somebody else: Adam tried to blame Eve; Eve tried to blame the serpent. But God cursed them all! Each of them had to bear the responsibility for their sin, and God, in no uncertain terms, made sure this fact was brought home to them all (Gen. 3:14-19).

So must we in our preaching. Anything less is cruel. Concentrating on shame, and the like, at the partial, let alone total, expense of guilt, is to fall far short of preaching the gospel.

David F. Wells set out the difference between shame and guilt. The difference is vital:

Shame is the sense of awkwardness a person feels when seen doing something, or heard saying something, he or she does not want others to know about... Guilt, by contrast, happens when an external standard has been violated... It is the same in [the] Christian faith. The guilt the gospel addresses is... objective in nature. It is our guilt before God’s law.¹⁰ It is the result of our violating the standards of his character. It is all about our blame-worthiness before *God*, not about how we feel or do not feel or whether... we feel shame... Shame today is what lines up in our actions *horizontally*. Guilt is what lines them up *vertically*. Shame

¹⁰ I repeat the earlier note. The ‘law’ as to be understood in its context. Here ‘law’ means the entire word of God as used in the law of Christ.

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is what we feel before others. Guilty is what we are before God.¹¹

As I tried to make clear in the body of my book, the modern preacher concentrates on the horizontal – the human – to the detriment of the vertical – the Godward. Salter’s sermon demonstrates this perfectly.

So strongly do I feel about this, so grievously did Salter wrest the text, let me drive home the truth of Hebrews 2:11. I make no apology for restating such an important argument.

The writer to the Hebrews was not encouraging his readers to think well of themselves. Rather, he was pressing them to think of Christ, to see that the Lord of glory was not ashamed to become a man, that he did not balk at becoming a man, that he did not shrink from it, that he did not run away from all that was entailed in saving his people from their sins, including the cross: witness his agonised willingness in prayer in the garden before his arrest (Matt. 26:36-46; Mark 14:26-50; Luke 22:39-53). Think of that! ‘Not ashamed’ is a *litotes*; Christ delighted to become a man, he gladly came to do his Father’s will and save sinners. The writer quotes verses from Psalms 8 and 22 and Isaiah 8 to make his case. Later, in Hebrews 10:5-10 (in reference to Christ), he quotes the messianic Psalm 40 in which David declares: ‘I delight to do your will, O my God’ (Ps. 40:8). David spoke the words but they belong to Christ. As Christ, with his own voice, said:

My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.

I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.

I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.

¹¹ David F.Wells: *The Courage to Be Protestant: Truth-lovers, Marketers, and Emergents in the Postmodern World*, William B.Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, 2008, pp162-163. Emphasis original throughout this extract.

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I glorified [the Father] on earth, having accomplished the work that [he] gave me to do (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 17:4).

Christ loved the elect, says the writer to the Hebrews; he loved them so much – even while they were yet sinners (Rom. 5:8) – that he did not spare himself, but despised the suffering and the shame of becoming a man in order to redeem them, God propitiating his wrath for them by the sacrifice of his Son. This is true of you, believer! Think of that! This is what Christ did for you! This is how Christ loved – and still loves, and will forever love – you!

Think of what this means about the superiority of Christ, the superiority of the new covenant over the old. True, the old covenant was administered by angels, whereas the new covenant has a man at its heart, but that man is the Lord Christ, the Son of God who *became* a man, became a man to endure separation from his Father on the cross (Matt. 27:46), undergo indescribable degradation, and all for the salvation of his people! Unfathomable it is, but this must not stop us trying to grasp it. Although it is a task beyond the wit of man to find words adequate enough, let me try to tease out the wonder of this.

I, for instance, had no choice; I was born a man. But Christ was God, and he had that choice; he chose to become a man. Indeed, in order to fulfil his eternal decree to save his elect, God the Father made his Son, for a time, a little lower than angels (Heb. 2:7). Because the elect are men, ‘for this reason or cause, that is why, so’ Jesus became a man (Heb. 2:11). And in that state of humiliation, he descended to the very depths of degradation:

Though he was in the form of God, [he] did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

And all was for the elect and their redemption!

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That, of course, was not the end of the story:

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:6-11).

And, as the writer to the Hebrews would go on to say:

Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame... is [now] seated at the right hand of the throne of God (Heb. 12:2).

But, we must never forget:

Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered (Heb. 5:8).

And not the least part of that ‘suffering’ was his incarnation:

It was fitting that he [that is, God the Father], for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation [that is, his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ] perfect through suffering. For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers (Heb. 2:10-11).

And, please note, the writer to the Hebrews said that Christ was not ashamed to call ‘them’ – not ‘you’ – his brothers. In other words, the writer was addressing believers, speaking of the elect, saying that, in fulfilment of the eternal decree and purpose of God, Christ was not ashamed to become a man to do God’s will on their behalf; ‘their behalf’, I stress. It is wholly wrong to speak, as Salter did, as though this precious truth belongs to all and sundry.

Christ spelled out what ‘doing God’s will’ meant:

When Christ came into the world, he said: ‘Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said: ‘Behold, I have come

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to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book?.

When he said above: 'You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings' (these are offered according to the law), then he added: 'Behold, I have come to do your will'. He does away with the first in order to establish the second. And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (Heb. 10:5-10).

I cannot stress this enough. Whatever the cost, whatever the shame, Christ, despising that shame, willingly became a man in order to live and die to save his people from their sin. Think of that! Let Scripture speak of Christ:

[He is] Immanuel, which means, God with us (Matt. 1:23).

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14).

Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness... [God] manifested in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16).

He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of [us] who through him are believers in God (1 Pet. 1:20-21).

He appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin... The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:5,8).

Others have tried to set out the wonder of all this. I could call upon Charles Wesley with his 'Glory be to God on high', Frank Houghton with his 'Thou who wast rich beyond all splendour', and scores of others, but I limit myself to these two:

Charles Wesley:

*Let earth and heaven combine,
Angels and men agree,
To praise in songs divine
The incarnate deity,
Our God contracted to a span,
Incomprehensibly made man.*

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*He laid his glory by,
He wrapped him in our clay;
Unmarked by human eye,
The latent Godhead lay;
Infant of days he here became,
And bore the mild Immanuel's name.*

*See in that infant's face
The depths of deity,
And labour while you gaze
To sound the mystery
In vain; you angels gaze no more,
But fall, and silently adore.*

*Unsearchable the love
That has the Saviour brought;
The grace is far above
Or man's or angels' thought:
Suffice for us that God, we know,
Our God, is manifest below.*

*He deigns in flesh t'appear,
Widest extremes to join;
To bring our vileness near,
And make us all divine:
And we the life of God shall know,
For God is manifest below.*

*Made perfect first in love,
And sanctified by grace,
We shall from earth remove,
And see his glorious face:
His love shall then be fully showed,
And man shall all be lost in God.*

And Isaac Watts:

*Ere the blue heavens were stretched abroad,
From everlasting was the Word;
With God he was, the Word was God,
And must divinely be adored.*

*By his own power were all things made;
By him supported all things stand;
He is the whole creation's head,
And angels fly at his command.*

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*But lo! he leaves those heavenly forms;
The Word descends and dwells in clay,
That he may converse hold with worms,
Dressed in such feeble flesh as they.*

*Mortals with joy beheld his face,
The eternal Father's only Son:
How full of truth, how full of grace,
The brightness of the Godhead shone!*

*The angels leave their high abode,
To learn new mysteries here, and tell
The love of our descending God,
The glories of Immanuel.*

Exalting Christ for his willingness to become a man in order to save his people from their sins (Matt. 1:21; 1 Tim. 1:15) – this is what the writer to the Hebrews was doing; he was not remotely urging us to give up all sense of shame about ourselves and our sins, encouraging us to cultivate our self-esteem and sense of well-being. Salter missed the point entirely.

And what about this notion that nobody should have any sense of shame? Shouldn't unbelievers? Shouldn't believers be ashamed when they sin? Should David have had no sense of shame after his sin with Bathsheba and his murder of Uriah? Was he misguided to feel and write Psalm 51, especially: 'I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me' (Ps. 51:3)? How should Solomon have regarded his apostasy? What should Peter have thought after his denial of Christ? What should have been going through the hearts and minds of the disciples after their desertion of Christ? What should Thomas have thought of himself after his unbelief? Paul never seemed to lose his sense of shame at his actions in the days of his unregeneracy (1 Tim. 1:12-16). Think of what all these offenders would have been spared if they had had the 'benefit' of Salter's dictum!¹² And why did

¹² Although I do not accept the Reformed interpretation (often amounting to 'feeling wretched about myself is a mark of the highest spirituality for a believer') of Paul's exclamation:

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Paul counsel Timothy (2 Tim. 2:15), and John his readers (1 John 2:28), to make sure they live now so as not to be ashamed at the last day?

Of course, I admit – I glory in – the believer’s justification and positional sanctification in Christ,¹³ but this is not what Hebrews 2:11 is about.

More was to come from Salter. As he drew near the close of his address, he spoke of what, apparently, was to follow straight on in the service that morning – the Lord’s table. The definite impression I received was that all were invited. Indeed, the distinction between coming to Christ and coming to the table was utterly blurred. The conclusion I was left with was that coming to Christ and coming to the table were one and the same. If so, this is the high road to Romanism.

The discourse offered no sense of God’s present wrath upon the unbeliever, no sense of the impending judgment, did not stress guilt (as distinct from shame). There was no call for repentance. To preach for any of that, of course, would have run counter to Salter’s agenda: nobody should feel ashamed because Christ is not ashamed of you! And if Christ is not ashamed of you, why should you be ashamed of anybody else, or of yourself? As a result, there was no call for any conviction of sin, and no mention of repentance, nor any attempt to persuade sinners to believe, to trust Christ, and to do so at once.

Salter preached ‘another gospel’, which he managed by warping Scripture, wresting it out of context, to make it say what he wanted it to say. If not that, at the very least he was showing a cavalier attitude to the word of God.

‘Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?’ (Rom. 7:24) (see my *Psalm 119*), does this not make a contribution at this point, especially when you link it with 1 Cor. 3:7; 13:2; 15:9; 2 Cor. 12:11; Eph. 3:8; 1 Tim. 1:15?

¹³ See my *Justification; Positional; Four*.

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As I say, this sermon kills several birds with one stone. It demonstrates the kind of preaching a modern evangelical church can produce, what kind of gospel it likes, wants and proclaims. One thing is certain: Salter was not preaching the apostolic gospel.

Of course not! As I have argued in the book, the apostolic gospel would not have fitted in with Salter's purpose. Yes, he did take words of Scripture, but he warped them dreadfully to foist his ideas on Scripture.

Salter, alas, is not unique. I increasingly meet this kind of preaching. Sadly, it is becoming more and more rare to hear a preacher divide his congregation between the regenerate and the unregenerate, the believer and the unbeliever. The note of judgment is muted at best. Conviction of sin, repentance and conversion to Christ is being obscured, to say the least. Services are becoming more and more man-centred, less and less Christ-glorifying. The longer this goes on, the more severe will be the consequences for the churches, for the unconverted, *and for the preachers*.¹⁴

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Extract from John Brown's commentary on Hebrews

I have long held John Brown's commentaries in the highest regard, agreeing with C.H.Spurgeon's assessment of them.¹⁵ Having written this Appendix, I was delighted to read, yet again, the following in Brown's *Hebrews* when he was commenting on the passage in question.

The object of the [writer]¹⁶ ... [is]¹⁷ to show that to gain the great ends of his mission – to 'bring many sons to glory'...

¹⁴ No preacher should ever forget Ezek. 3:16-21; 33:1-20; 1 Cor. 4:2; Jas. 3:1.

¹⁵ See C.H.Spurgeon *Commenting and Commentaries*.

¹⁶ Brown thought that Paul wrote the letter. I do not. This note applies throughout this extract.

¹⁷ Brown had 'seems to be'. There is no 'seems' about it. This applies to other notes, too.

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it was necessary that [Christ] should be a man – a suffering, dying man. The words now before us...¹⁸ express this general idea: that the Saviour and the saved must belong to the same class, and, of course, that the Son of God, if he is to be the Saviour of man, must himself be a man...

What the [writer] is doing here is to account for the incarnation of the Son of God... The people he came to save were men, therefore he must be a man; and we find this is just the argument which he states and illustrates...

‘He is not ashamed to call them brethren’. These words plainly intimate that it was an act of condescension to call them brethren. If Jesus had not been possessed of a nature superior to the human, this language could never have been applied to him. For one who was no more than a man to refuse to acknowledge the bond of brotherhood which binds him to the rest, would have been intolerable haughtiness and pride; for him so readily to admit it could be no proof of humility. But it is a subject of wonder to angels that the Sanctifier, who ‘is the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of his person’, the Creator and Lord of the universe, should not be ashamed, even when he became incarnate, to call the sanctified ones his ‘brethren’... He readily owned his relationship to us, though he knew that doing so would cost him dear. By claiming us, poor debtors to divine justice, as his ‘brethren’, he, ‘though rich, was made poor’. He well knew that the throne of the universe was destined for him as the incarnate Son of God; and yet, in the prospect of this aggrandisement, indeed, and in the [actual] possession of it, he [still] calls the meanest of his redeemed people ‘brother’. But nothing places his condescension in so strong [a]¹⁹ light as the consideration of his divinity. That he was the only begotten of God – ‘God over all, blessed for ever’, shall acknowledge so close relationship to guilty, depraved, self-ruined man, is a mystery of kindness which will never be fathomed. We can do nothing but exclaim with the apostle: ‘O the depth!’

The inspired writer now proceeds to quote a variety of passages from the Old Testament in proof of his assertion, that both the sanctified and the Sanctifier are of one common nature. The proof is [that] he speaks of them as

¹⁸ I have omitted Brown’s ‘seem to me to’.

¹⁹ Original had ‘point of’.

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brethren in a way which shows that he is possessed of the same nature with them...

Our Lord often speaks of his people as given to him by his and their Father (John 6:37,39; 17:2,6,24). He also denominates them children (John 13:33; 21:5). Being the children of God, they are his brethren...

The Messiah who comes to redeem men was himself to be a man. The Sanctifier and the sanctified were to be all of one nature...

The Son of God assumed human nature – a nature capable of suffering and death; he became a man, that he might die, and, by dying, destroy the power of the great enemy of man, and deliver his people from his dominion...

Since... the Sanctifier and the sanctified, the Saviour and the saved, must be of the same race, and since the saved are human beings, the Son of God, the appointed Saviour, assumed a nature capable of suffering and death – even the nature of man, whom he came to save, that in that nature he might die, and by dying accomplished the great purpose of his appointment, the destruction of the power of Satan, and the deliverance of his chosen people...

The Son of God became a man that he might suffer and die, and, by suffering and dying, accomplished the deliverance of his people from the power of the enemy, and bring, first himself, and then them, to that glory to which his Father and their Father, his God and their God, had destined them... As they were men, he became a man also – he took part of the same flesh and blood... He was indeed without sin, but he appeared in ‘the likeness of sinful flesh’...

The language of the inspired writer [is]²⁰ obviously intended to suggest the idea of the pre-existence of the Deliverer of men before he became a man... He was possessor of another nature than the human. He was a man; but he *was* [emphasis mine] – [that is,] he existed before he was a man. He became man... ‘Great’, great indeed, ‘is the mystery of godliness’ – unfathomable are the depths of wisdom, and power, and righteousness, and kindness which it opens to the astonished and delighted mind of the believer – ‘God was manifested in the flesh’.

The design of the Saviour in assuming the nature of the saved – a nature capable of suffering and death – was that

²⁰ Brown had ‘seems’.

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he might be capable of suffering and dying – that he actually might suffer and die, and thus accomplish what, in consistency with the perfections of the divine moral character, and the principles of the divine moral government, could not be otherwise accomplished – the destruction of the power of the great enemy of his people, and their complete and everlasting deliverance from his dominion. He ‘took part of flesh and blood, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death – that is the Devil – and deliver those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage’.

The ends of our Lord’s incarnation, both immediate²¹ and ultimate, are here brought before the mind. The first is plainly implied; the second is expressly stated. The immediate²² end of our Lord’s incarnation was that he might be capable of that suffering and death without which he could not have been the accomplished Saviour of men. The ultimate end of our Lord’s incarnation was that by thus suffering and dying he might be perfected, fully accomplished as a Saviour, that he might deliver man by vanquishing his great enemy. The Son of God, previously to his incarnation, had power enough, and wisdom enough, and kindness²³ enough, to effect the salvation of men, but from the very perfection of his divine nature, he could not suffer and die. As a divine person, he is ‘the King eternal and immortal’. Had he never been anything but the great God, he could not have been our Saviour. Had he never been anything but God, he, no doubt, could have annihilated or punished in ten thousand ways ‘him that has the power of death’, but he could not have ‘destroyed him’ by dying; and this was the only way in which his destruction could have been our salvation. The Saviour of man must expiate man’s guilt; this could be done only by suffering and death. The Saviour of man must be a high priest – he must offer a propitiatory sacrifice; and when the only begotten Son assumes that character, he must have somewhat to offer, he must be placed in circumstances in which he can obey and suffer. To his executing the will of his Father ‘in bringing many sons to glory’, suffering and

²¹ Brown had ‘proximate’.

²² Brown had ‘proximate’.

²³ Brown had ‘benignity’.

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death are necessary; and therefore he gladly took on him the body which had been 'prepared' for him, that in it, infinitely dignified by its union with the divine nature, he might have a suitable and an available sacrifice to lay on the altar of divine justice, as the expiation of the sins of his people. How do wonders – wonders of divine wisdom and divine grace – thicken on us while contemplating the economy of salvation through the sufferings and death of the only begotten Son of God!

