

SEPTEMBER–OCTOBER 2018

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The Gospel Magazine

The precious blood • The Minister's true calling • Exposition of Jude 1

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1766–2018

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

These texts, which have been associated for so many years with *The Gospel Magazine*, give some indication of what this bi-monthly stands for. We seek to present the Lord Jesus as the only Saviour for a lost world: to edify the people of God; and to promote unity among believers, 'the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace'.

The Gospel Magazine is believed to be the oldest religious periodical still being published. One distinguished former editor was the Rev. Augustus Toplady, whose famous hymn, 'Rock of Ages cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee', was first published in these pages.

The Trust Deed of *The Gospel Magazine* is defined in terms of the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion of the Church of England, but the magazine itself is non-denominational. We aim to provide variety in unity, publishing articles from a wide diversity of past and present writers committed to 'the faith once delivered to the saints'.

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EDITORIAL

WE read in Genesis 2:3 that the Lord God rested from his work, being the work of creation. We know that the Lord God did not rest because he was tired: God is a Spirit, and physical or mental—let alone spiritual—tiredness is not possible for him. For the whole of the created order, however, they are. In particular, we become physically and mentally tired through exertion. We may also become spiritually tired.

Rest, therefore is a wonderful gift from the Lord. He has given us one day in seven on which we may legitimately set aside the burden of the curse, the labour and sweat of our brow, in order to have fellowship with him. We ought to have fellowship with God through our Lord Jesus Christ daily, but so often it is with the pressures of daily life breaking in on our times of prayer. On one day in seven, the Lord's day, we are delivered from those cares.

We have also the blessing of sleep. Those who abuse this benefit are fools. Those who, for various reasons, cannot sleep well, know

how much they suffer as a consequence. That we can lay us down in peace is a privilege of our being children of a loving heavenly Father.

These days we also have the benefit of leisure. Working hours are shorter than in former generations, and opportunities for doing other things are easily had. We must be wise in our use of leisure time, and not fritter away the hours, nor use them to do anything that dishonours our Saviour Christ.

The most wonderful rest awaits us. 'And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.' There will come a time when all Christ's redeemed will enjoy the eternal rest of heaven. By definition eternity is without end; the labours of this life for Christ are therefore to be weighed against a true rest. While we are able, let us labour for the Lord. The time will come when strength will fail. Let us have no regrets in that day.¶

A SERMON

BY THOMAS MANTON

He hath done all things well. (Mark 7:37).

This is the attestation of the people to Christ's miracles. He forbade the publication of them, because he would not too openly discover himself till the resurrection; but they were surprised with such wonder and astonishment, that they could not hold their peace. If they admire and praise, Christ forbidding them, surely we should admire and praise, Christ commanding us. That which is spoken of the miracles of Christ is true of all his actions, 'He hath done all things well.' It is a good account of all the dispensations which pass through his hands.

Doctrine. That the works of the Lord are all good, exceeding good;

We will consider Christ's works—

1. More limitedly and restrainedly to the matter in hand; his works in the days of his flesh, especially his miracles.

2. More largely, extending the words to all his works, of creation, redemption, and daily providence.

I. In the limited restriction, this speech may be interpreted to imply either the matter or the manner of his actions, *bonum* or *bene*. He did nothing but what was good and well.

1. *Bonum*, good. It was Christ's work to do good, and only good, for the life, preservation, and welfare of man: Acts 10:38, 'How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.' The whole story of his life was nothing else but a catalogue of good works. You find him everywhere going up and down upon this

errand, that he might give sight to the blind, limbs to the lame, health to the sick, liberty to the possessed, life to the dead. You will find him either feeding the hungry or healing the diseased, and having compassion on them that are faint, and raising the dead.

2. *Bene*, well. This may be represented negatively and affirmatively.

[1.] Negatively; and so—

(1.) Not vindictively. His miracles were not such as tended to destruction, but acts of succour and relief, except blasting the barren fig-tree, and permitting the devils to enter into the herd of swine; the one a notable emblem, and so the instruction countervailed the loss; the other showed the devil's rage, but Christ's lenity, and his power over Satan. Of all his miracles that ever he wrought, he never wrought any in malice and revenge. He used not his divine power to make men blind; or lame, or to kill any; no, not his worst enemies, when he could easily have done it, and might justly have done it. He rebuked his disciples when they called for fire from heaven against those that rejected his person, and showed that this furious zealous spirit did not suit with the meekness and persuasiveness of the gospel dispensation: Luke 9:54, 55, 'When his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, as Elias did? But he turned and rebuked them; and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.' They considered not that this spirit was unsuitable to his design and business in the world, who came

not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

(2.) Not out of pomp and vainglory; which appeareth because none of his miracles were fitted for the stage, but done only upon weighty occasions, in case of great necessity, when humbly asked and believably expected. If a miracle were asked in wantonness, he refused to do it; as Herod, to satisfy his vain curiosity, was desirous to have seen some miracles done by him: Luke 23:8, 9; 'And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad, for he was desirous to see him of a long season; because he had heard many things of him, and he hoped to have seen some miracles done by him. Then he questioned with him in many words, but he answered him nothing.' Christ would not satisfy him in that point, nor let his divine power lackey upon men's idle humours. They that desire to show juggling tricks are not shy of doing their feats at any time. Besides, that ostentation had no influence upon him appeareth by his frequent injunctions of silence: 'He charged them to tell no man;' so often repeated in the Gospel, and in the verse before the text. When his own mother asked a miracle for the credit of her kinsfolk rather than the glory of God, he rebuked her: John 2:1-4; 'And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. And both Jesus and his disciples were called to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.'

(3.) Not by conspiracy with the devil, or to befriend his design. This speech of the people is supposed to be a vindication or answer to the calumny of the Pharisees, who, to divert the people from owning him as the son of David or true Messiah, said, Matt. 12:24, 'This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by

Beelzebub, the prince of devils;' which was the last refuge of their infidelity; for when they could not deny the evidence of the fact, they calumniate the power, as if it were done by co-operation with the devil, or magical imposture, which Christ refuteth by sundry arguments, but especially by this; that every kingdom, city, or family set against itself is ruined: ver. 25, 26, 'And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: and if Satan cast out Satan he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand?' Therefore if Christ, who was a declared enemy of Satan, and came to draw off men from sin to God, should work by Satan, he would make Satan an enemy to himself, and lend his power to destroy that kingdom of sin which by all means he seeketh to uphold, and so consent to his own ruin; for what was the great design of the Son of God but to dispossess Satan, and cast him out of his empire over the bodies and souls of men? and so Satan must cast out Satan, which is an unreasonable conceit.

[2.] Positively, he did all things well.

(1.) Suitably to the dignity of his person, or the nature and power of God, which was in him. God's nature is to do good: Acts 14:17, 'Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.' This was Paul's witness of God, that he was 'doing good,' not taking vengeance of their idolatries, but inviting them by many temporal mercies. So it is said of Jesus of Nazareth, that he was 'doing well,' Acts x. 38, 'He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.' Mark that clause, 'God was with him.' How was God with him? It was a plain proof

of his divine power and authority: 'No man can do such miracles that thou doest, except God be with him,' saith Nicodemus, John 3:2. *Object:* But God is with all his people: Rom. 8:31, 'If God be with us, who can be against us?' I answer—God was with Christ in another manner than he is with us. He is with us by his love and gracious assistance, as he doth own us, and defend us; but God was with Christ by personal union and inhabitation: 'The fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily,' Col. 2:9. Not only with him, but in him, as he was true God, as well as man; and so he did all things becoming his divine power.

(2.) He did all things suitably to the nature of his office, which was that of a mediator; and so he did all things well. The Mediator came not to destroy, but to save: John 3:17, 'God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.' This mission was all in mercy and charity, not to punish and condemn man, but to save him from punishment. So John 12:47, 'And if any man hear my words, and believe not, judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.' His first coming was as a meek saviour and mediator, to purchase mercy, and to make an offer of life to lost man. So Luke 9:56, 'For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them;' not to kill any, but to preserve and rescue them from death and all that is evil. Therefore the people give him such a testimony as implied the true characters of a mediator: one that was God, and came from God, to succour and relieve men from all their miseries and necessities.

II. More largely; for these words, 'he has done all things well,' are a full and proper account of all the works of God, not only of what the Mediator did in the days of his flesh; but of whatever he did or doth as God.

I shall instance—(1.) In the work of creation; (2.) The works of redemption; (3.) The works of daily providence.

1. In the work of creation; for by Christ God made the world: John 1:3, 'All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.' All the creatures owe their beings to Christ the Son of God; now all things were made well, and did show forth the wisdom, goodness, and power of him that made them; for they were fit for the ends to which they were appointed: Gen. 1:31, 'God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good.' Every day's work apart was good, and altogether very good; good for their kind, and good for the use and benefit of the whole in their proportion, and correspondency.

2. In the work of redemption, all that Christ did was good or well done—(1.) As to the ends; (2.) As to the way that he took to accomplish these ends.

[I.] His end was to deliver us from all evil, and to bring us into the possession of all good.

(1.) To deliver us from all evil. There is the evil of sin and the evil after sin; now Christ came to cure us of the evil of sin: 'Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins,' Matt. 1:21. To deliver us from the flames of hell: 2 Thess. 1:10, 'And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come.' And surely they that are sensible of their own misery and condemned estate cannot but give him this acknowledgment, 'He hath done all things well.'

(2.) To bring us into the possession of all good. We are often inquiring, 'Who will show us any good?' Ps. 4:6; Who will find out a full and proper happiness for mankind? Now Christ hath not only showed what is

the true good; but procured it for us, and offered it to us, if we will not take up with lower things, but prefer the greatest good before the lesser. The chiefest and greatest is God, for beyond God there is nothing, God reconciled, and God finally and fully enjoyed. Our happiness by the way consists in our reconciliation with God, and our happiness at the end of the journey consists in the vision and fruition of God. This is happiness indeed, to know God, and to love him, and to be beloved by him. This was Christ's undertaking, to reduce man from his wanderings to God; that he might live in the knowledge and love of God now, and be brought into his immediate presence, that he might live in perfect vision and fruition of him hereafter. Our reconciliation with God through Christ is a great happiness: Rom. 5:1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.' But the great good is when our nature is perfected, and by its most perfect acts is employed about the most perfect object; and is most capable of his most perfect communications of grace to us, and shall for ever remain in the presence, sight, and love of God. Now what is sweeter than this blessed presence? Ps. 16:11, 'In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.'

[2.] The way he taketh to accomplish these ends. There is his work without us and his work within us.

(1.) His work without us is either on earth or in heaven; on earth, by his death, in heaven by his intercession. On earth by his death, and so he delivered us from all evil: Isa. 53:5; 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.' And bringeth us to the enjoyment of all good: 1 Peter 3:18, 'For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the

just Just for the unjust; that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.' Christ's great end is to teach us to know and love God, and bring us to him. In heaven he is mindful of his office; it is his work in heaven to do mankind the greatest good: Heb. 7:25, 'Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.' After he had vindicated the justice and holiness of God, and repaired the breaches made by sin, he is gone to heaven to finish the work of man's salvation by his constant intercession.

(2.) His work within us; he doth by his Spirit renew and sanctify us, and make us more like God; and so we are fitted for the vision and fruition of him. This sanctifying Spirit is said to be 'shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Lord,' Titus 3:6; and Christ is said to be 'ascended far above all heavens, that he might fill all things,' Eph. 4:10. Our sun in his glory doth continually send down his beams and influences on earth, even the Spirit of the Father, to be the constant agent in the hearts of his people, to renew and heal their natures. Now by this short view you see he hath done all things well in the business of our redemption.

3. In the works of providence. His goodness is exemplified in the acts of daily providence: Ps. 33:5, 'He loveth righteousness and judgment, the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.' There is no part of the world we can come into, but it is filled with the bountiful effects of his goodness to men. If he correct us, it is in a fatherly manner; if he suffer us to be tempted, it is not beyond what we are able to bear; if he afflicteth us with evil, it is for our good; if he deprive us of any comforts, yet he will not wholly leave us comfortless: John 14:18, *orphanous*; I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you.' If he cut us

off by death, it is to free us from all other calamities, and bring us the sooner to our final happiness in heaven. In short, he is not severe upon all our failings, heareth those that seek to him in their troubles, delivereth the afflicted, succoureth the tempted, bindeth up the broken-hearted; and the short issue of all is, 'He doth all things well.'

Use 1. Let us give God this glory. Hitherto thou hast done all things well which thou hast done; others have found it so: Ps. 22:4, 5, 'Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them; they cried, and were delivered; they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.' Never did any of his people address themselves to God in vain; all his people have had long experience of his mercy and fidelity; after humble, constant, importunate addresses, they received what they sought for. Now you must come in also with your attestation: Lord, thou hast done all things well. So the saints often do: Ps. 22:10, 'I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou art my God from my mother's belly.' So Moses: Deut. 32:4, 'He is the rock; his work is perfect.' So David: Ps. 111:3, 'His work is honourable and glorious.' We were made and redeemed to declare the goodness of the Lord and his mighty works. Man is the mouth of the creation, by whom all the creatures praise God for his wise ordering of all things; it is the business of our lives: 'I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord,' Ps. 118:17. In heaven we shall give him this praise, Lord, thou hast done all things well; there we shall know as we are known.

It is necessary for us—

1. That we may entertain a good opinion of God when he seemeth to deal hardly with his people, and may check temptations of doubting of his providence: Pa. 73:1, 'Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.' We must hold fast this

conclusion, that it be not wrested out of our hands.

2. It is very necessary to breed patience and humble submission under our personal afflictions: Ps. 119:71, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted.' There was a certain Jew called Gamzu, because, whatever beset him, he was wont to say, 'Gamzu, this also shall be for good.' So let us say, This is good and that too; nothing is bad that cometh from a good God.

3. That we may hope and depend on God that it will be so for the future. Our heavenly Father doeth all things well, therefore he will give light in darkness, comfort in trouble, and life in death; nothing raiseth our trust so much as to be persuaded that God loveth us and careth for us, and will do all things for the best. Christ urgeth no more but this to suppress our distrustful cares: Mat. 6:32, 'Your heavenly Father knoweth you have need of all these things.' You have a father that is not ignorant and unmindful of you. What he will do Christ saith not, but that must be left to his fatherly love.

4. God expecteth from you the glory of his works. Not that God is affected with praise, but it doeth you good, and increaseth your love and esteem of him, to observe how he guideth all things for good: Rom. 8:28, 'All things shall work together for good to them that love God.'

Use 2. Let us imitate our Lord, and learn of him to do all things well; for Christ's excellencies must leave an impression upon us. In our religion all is good. There is a good God: Ps. 119:68, 'Thou art good and doest good.' From him cometh every good and perfect gift: James 1:17, 'Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning.' A good Christ; you have heard how he went

about doing good to the bodies and souls of men. There is a good Spirit: Neh. 9:20, 'Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them.' And what is the operation of the Spirit of Christ? First, to make us to be good: 'We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works,' Eph. 2:10; and then to quicken us to do good: Eph. 5:9, 'For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.' There is a good word: Heb. 6:5, 'And have tasted the good word of God.' Now what remaineth but that we be a good people? Goodness should be the constitution of our hearts, and doing good the business of our lives. Certainly that is a good religion which only employeth men to do good. Now we must not do good coldly and carelessly, but with a zeal: Titus 2:14, 'Zealous of good works.' And to whom must we do good? Gal. 6:10, 'As ye have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, but especially unto them who are of the household of faith.' Nay, your enemies are not excepted: Matt 5:44, 'But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.' And this doing good God expecteth from us in every relation and capacity. Magistrates, because of their eminent and public influence: Rom. 13:4, 'For he is the minister of God to thee for good.' So also ministers: 'Barnabas was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost,' Acts 11:24, and therefore 'much people were added unto the Lord.' A man of a selfish, froward spirit hath no true zeal for God, nor compassion over souls, and is likely to do little good. And we must do good to one another: Rom. 15:14, 'I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that you are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.' Husbands, wives, parents, children, masters, servants, all are to do good in

their several relations: Eph. 6:8, 'Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.' They that are not good in their relations are nowhere else good; and therefore every one should make conscience of being good, and doing good in his relation, calling, and place; and so if there be any good thing done, though it be by a poor bond-servant, God will take notice of it.

Now the motives to this are these—

1. God's great goodness to you in Christ. God will be served not as an imperious sovereign, but as the God of love; and we must serve him not as slaves, but as children; therefore his love should be instead of all motives to us: 2 Cor. 5:14, 'The love of Christ constraineth us.' With all readiness of mind we should set ourselves to do good, out of a deep sense of his goodness to us in Christ.

2. The great reward which is appointed for us: Gal. 6:9, 'And let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.' His free grace hath provided a rich reward for those that imitate Christ's example; they shall enter into the glory he is possessed of, and then they shall enjoy the full comfort of their laborious and expensive obedience.

3. This will honour our profession in the eyes of the world. Goodness and usefulness gaineth esteem much more than a rigid innocency: Rom. 5:7, 'Scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.'

4. You will mollify the hearts even of your most froward adversaries: Rom. 12:21, 'Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.' Goodness will reconcile their minds to the truth; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on their heads, melt them into kindness and gentleness.¶

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

BY CARINE MACKENZIE

A friend of ours was involved in a serious road accident and had to be rushed to hospital. As he lay on the trolley with the medical staff working on him he heard a doctor say, 'He'll need blood. Is there any blood in the blood bank?' He remembers feeling so thankful and relieved to hear the nurse reply, 'Yes, there's plenty.'

The Blood Transfusion Service does wonderful work collecting pints of blood from donors. The blood is vital in treating sick people and those who have had accidents and lost blood. Our blood is essential for life. It carries oxygen through our body; the white blood cells fight infection and the plasma carries nutrients, hormones and proteins through our body. If a patient loses too much blood he will die.

So we need our blood to live but our greatest need is for the blood of Jesus. We can be thankful and relieved that Jesus' blood is sufficient and plentiful. Jesus shed his blood as he died on the cross. His hands, feet and side were pierced. The crown of thorns made his head bleed. His back was lashed. His suffering was so great that 'his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground' (Luke 22:44.)

Peter described Jesus' blood as precious (1 Peter 1:19). Jesus Christ saved his people from their sins by shedding his precious blood for them. He took the punishment for their sins, he suffered, he bled, he died as a substitute, in the place of his people who trust in him.

When God's people were delivered from slavery in Egypt, Moses was given special instructions from God. Each family was to kill a spotless, perfect lamb and paint the blood on the door posts and lintel of their house. This meant that when God sent the angel of death through the land, to slay the first born as the last plague against the Egyptians, he would pass over the homes which were marked with blood. God told his people to have a special celebration feast every year to remember how God saves his people and punishes those who reject him (Exodus 12). This feast was called the Passover Feast.

When Jesus and his disciples were eating the Passover Feast in an upper room, he told them to have another special meal regularly to remember him and his death and shedding his blood. We call this meal the Lord's Supper. The bread used represents Jesus' body which was broken for us, and the wine is a symbol of Jesus' blood shed for us. 'This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me,' he told his disciples.

God required the children of Israel to bring to the tabernacle offerings of animals from their flocks. The animal was killed, the blood sprinkled on the altar, then cut in pieces and burned as an offering for sin, or as a peace offering (Leviticus 1, 3, 4, 6). The shedding of the blood of these animals was pointing towards the great sacrifice. Jesus fulfilled the law. He shed his blood once, so now there is no need for other sacrifices. Jesus finished the work.

What do the children of God gain from Jesus Christ's precious blood?

We receive forgiveness of sin. The apostle John in his first epistle tells us that 'the blood of Jesus Christ his (God's) Son cleanseth us from all sin' (1 John 1:7). Jesus is the one who 'loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood' (Revelation 1:5).

God's love for his people is so great 'that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us' (Romans 5:8). Paul then adds that we are 'justified by his blood' (Romans 5:9). This means that we are accepted as righteous in God's sight, because Christ's righteousness becomes ours through faith.

We also have redemption through his blood (Ephesians 1.7). Redemption means buying back something that was lost. Adam and Eve fell into sin and as a result the whole of humanity is born as a sinner. But God provided a redeemer in the Lord Jesus. He bought back his people by shedding his blood.

Jesus suffered and died to gain sanctification for his people. 'Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate' (Hebrews 13:12). Sanctification means making a person holy. This is a gradual work which is not complete until death.

The Church of God is very precious to God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Paul exhorted the elders of the church of Ephesus 'to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood' (Acts 20:28). He could have done nothing more. He loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father' (Revelation 1:5, 6). That should cause us to look to him and to trust and obey.

Bible Search

Find the missing words from the verses. The initial letters of your correct answers will spell out one of the great gifts that Jesus' precious blood purchased for his people.

1. Having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to _____ all things unto himself. (Colossians 1:20)
2. Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he _____ in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. (Hebrews 9:12)
3. Being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great _____ of blood falling down to the ground. (Luke 22:44)
4. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's _____? It is God that justifieth. (Romans 8:33)
5. For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to _____ an atonement for your souls. (Leviticus 17:11)
6. Through faith he (Moses) kept the _____ and the sprinkling of

blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them. (Hebrews 11:28)

7. And the blood shall be to you for a _____ upon the houses where he are: and when I see the blood I will pass over you. (Exodus 12:13)
8. Saying (ie. Judas), I have sinned in that I have betrayed the _____ blood. (Matthew 27:4)
9. And they _____ him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. (Revelation 12:11)
10. For this is my blood of the _____ testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. (Matthew 26:28)

CHRIST AND BELIAL

PART IX

BY THE REV P LOS

Supplied by A W DE LANGE (Scherpenzeel, The Netherlands)

What do you imagine, tiny creature! That you shall win it of King Christ? Your battle is powerless, it is kicking against the pricks, because you are merely clay in the hand of the Potter. And shall the potsherd strive against its Maker? Shall the king whom you serve now, let you work even longer at this iron chain, without giving you any wages, until you once shall be eternally bound by it?

I pray you, traveller to eternity! Stand still on your way and ask yourself whose you are: Christ's or Belial's?

Before we conclude, let us look for a moment at the battle between these two kingdoms. Where did this battle begin and where shall it end?

We just need to repeat that that battle

began in Paradise. The serpent has since then persecuted the seed of the woman and at last bruises the heel, but by the death of the Christ of God the head of the serpent was bruised. Since then he persecutes the servants of the that blessed King, and where he makes them sin, he fights against him who conquered sin and death and the devil. He exercises his great influence in you and me. Are you unconverted? then he has you in his power and you are fighting with him and for him and you are ruining your own soul. If grace is shown to you, then the remains of sin remain in you, but sin shall not dominate you, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

The end of the battle shall be when all children of Belial, and their king at the head,

shall be sent to the pit, the abyss, for eternity, when he who closeth and nobody shall open, shall close the pit for eternity. Then he shall see his chosen servants, as they are called, eternally unified around him, then the Sabbath of rest is begun, and under the eternal booth of his power. Then that nation shall sit eternally under the new vine and fig tree.

Do you want you serve any longer under the banner of hell, that banner on which is written: death and damnation? Do you not want to go to Jesus, who saveth sinners, who seeketh what is lost, who reviveth the dead and giveth his sheep eternal life?

Choose you this day whom ye will serve. What shall it be: Christ or Belial, death or life?

'We will serve the LORD, thus spoke the people of Israel and Joshua said: 'Ye cannot serve the LORD your God.' Here it is the same. In yourself you cannot do it, and when Christ cometh to serve you, then you shall understand what we want to say.

Reader, bow down into the dust before the holy Being, if you can bow. Ask, if you can ask, the Lord for revealing light. Confess, if you can confess, your sin. And if you cannot, let there be no sighing with you and acknowledge that it is not possible to make anything good of you. And may it please the Lord to make something good of you and to take you is his fellowship in order to glorify the triune God there eternally. ¶

THE MINISTER'S TRUE CALLING

BY BRIAN GARRARD (Basingstoke)

1 Timothy 1

The Epistles of 1 and 2 Timothy with Titus are often called the Pastoral Epistles, the reason being that they were written by the Apostle Paul to young men who were more or less at the beginning of their ministerial lives. Concerning Timothy, his mother was a Jewess and his father a Gentile (Acts 16:1). His mother and grandmother were both believers, and Timothy came to faith under Paul's ministry. This is assumed from v.2 and 2 Timothy 1:5. Later on, he became an assistant to Paul and was held in high esteem. As part of his work as a minister he was left by the Apostle at Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3).

Why was Timothy left at Ephesus?

Verses 3-4 supply the answer: he was to correct false teaching that had arisen from some in the congregation. This was particularly true with regards to the Law of God and its use. They were placing undue importance upon certain aspects of the Law of Moses and mixing this with some of their own ideas and instructions and fables. Sadly, they did not understand the true nature and design of the Law. Immediately there is some application for the present time. No other truth is to be taught but Bible doctrine, but at the same time it must be rightly understood and

applied. As Paul says in 2 Timothy 2:15, the minister must ensure that he rightly divides the word of truth.

What else is taught here?

The believer is not to give heed to 'fables and endless genealogies' and all the equivalents of the modern day. Endless and empty follies concerning the Law of God abound in these times, and there are many who say that it does not apply today, and use all kinds of tenuous and also complex arguments to advance their errors. All of these are the inventions of men and (alas) women. Like Timothy of old, it is very necessary to rightly understand the Law of God and teach its present relevance and importance.

Throughout my own ministerial career I have noticed a confusion in the minds of numerous people about the Law of God. It must be appreciated that when the Law is spoken of there is a three-fold division. First of all there are the ceremonial laws of Moses, and secondly the judicial. The ceremonial has passed away at the death and resurrection of Christ and is no longer binding upon the Christian. As for the judicial laws, the majority of those concerned the Old Testament state of Israel and therefore in most cases have also passed away. The third division of the Law respects the Moral Law or Ten Commandments (also referred to as the Decalogue).

Now this moral law remains in force until Christ returns.

Sadly, this has become a very controversial subject, but only because the prevailing tendency in the modern church is worldliness and Antinomianism. The word comes from the Greek *anti* meaning against, and *nomos* meaning law. In other words, 'against or opposing law'. Such a spirit is present in society generally, and dislikes any kind

of authoritarian regulation of its conduct. Religious antinomianism teaches that the Moral Law is not a rule of life for Christians. Historically, numbers adopted this view out of a reaction to the idea of being justified by faith and works. They were anxious not to detract from the work of Christ and the teaching of the Apostle Paul. This says that sinners are saved only by grace through faith in Christ and this is a truth that must never be lost. Those who take such a view are worthy of respect, for their lives reflect true holiness and godliness.

They may be theoretical and theological antinomians, but in their lives they show themselves to be genuinely righteous, and are a world apart from an increasing number of believers. The latter not only believe in freedom from the Moral Law, but live quite contrary to the Word of God, and often try to out-do the world in its attitude and conduct. Shame on them! However, the Moral Law still remains and I will return to the subject of its present importance shortly.

What is the purpose of the law of God?

Verses 5–11 explains this. Its true use and design was, and is, to produce love; that is divine, 1 Corinthians 13-sort of love. See v.5, 'now the end (purpose) of the commandment is charity (love)' The aim of the Law is not to bind the conscience with troublesome and unscriptural ceremonies, rules and regulations, but the opposite. Verses 9–10 teach that the Law restrains the wicked and convicts them of sin. And then, secondly, it produces love out of a pure heart and a good conscience in those who are born again. These two things are the main intentions of the Christian religion and the Law of God.

The law of God is not inconsistent with the gospel

See v.11, 'according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust'. Some misunderstand here and think that the gospel cancels the Law but it does not. Rather, the gospel strengthens and enforces the importance of love that is at the heart of the Law. So for the sinner the Law condemns and convicts them. However, for the saint it becomes a means of sanctification and a help and 'rule' that teaches them how to live. The Gospel brings the heart and life into conformity with the Law and hence the believer is under Law to Christ (1 Corinthians 9:21).

What does that mean? It means that the believer keeps the Moral Law as Christ's servant. They never violate it, for the Lord obeyed each one, and commanded observance. Religion has never come to set the believer free from the Law or authorise sin and licence. Its underlying purpose is to make men holy.

The mention of the gospel pours forth thanksgiving from Paul, vv.12–17. He thanks the Lord Jesus Christ for putting him into the ministry even though formerly he was a wicked man. This blessed gospel is forever glorious (v.11) and you and I must be continually thankful for those who preach it. Millions have never heard and yet what a

mercy that Christ has come to you and to me and we are saved. It is a great marvel that he chooses men to preach the gospel and not the angels. Pray for the servants of the Lord and that he will raise up more faithful ones. Who would have thought that a time would come in this land when there would be vast tracts of the country where there is no gospel witness! The souls of men and women, boys and girls are in danger of perishing because no one is taking the Word of God to them and they live and die as pagans. Never cease to pray.

A final exhortation to Timothy, vv.18–20

These words do not apply merely to this young servant of the Lord but to the whole Church of God in any age. What is said here? First of all, be faithful to the Lord and to the Gospel and then learn from the shipwreck of others to watch and pray ... Again, remember existing ministers that they may remain faithful and true and that God would give more of them. Keep in mind that he gives ministers and he makes and trains them. Let me close by taking you back to vv.3–4. The Word of God is never to be disregarded but is to be the only doctrine that is taught. Be careful not to give heed to all the modern day fables and follies of the human mind and heart but reject them in favour of the words of the Holy Spirit in Scripture. ¶

The Gospel Magazine Trust holds a complete set of bound volumes of the magazine from 1766 to date apart from the years 1772, 1799 and 1824. Additionally the volume for 1783 contains only January–September, missing October–December and January 1784, which was the final issue before a break in publication. If any of our readers can assist in locating the missing volumes with a view to acquisition, please contact the Editor. The set of volumes is currently held at St Mary's Library, Castle Street, Reading, and is available for reference and study *by prior arrangement*. In addition a full set of issues has been scanned to the website at www.gospelmagazine.org.uk.

THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH

BY JAMES E. NORTH (Totton, Hants)

'behold, a man of Ethiopia' Acts 8:27

To read the early chapters of the book of the Acts of the Apostles is to read not only of the acts of God's workings in the soul of man, but it is also a recording of the Acts of God's Providential dealings in the history of the Church of Jesus Christ.

In the opening chapters of the Acts we see how the church was established in Jerusalem, and there it may well have stayed had it not been for God in his providence, and his working all things after the counsel of his own will (Ephesians 1:11). We see that a dispute arose between the Hebrews and the Greeks because the Grecian widows were neglected. To solve the problem, the office of deacon was introduced, seven deacons being appointed (Acts 6:1–6). The remaining part of chapter six and the next chapter of the Book of Acts deals with one of these deacons, namely Stephen. He disputed with the Cyrenians and Alexandrians in the synagogue of the Libertines, he was then accused of blasphemy and was brought before the council. Chapter 7 is mainly Stephen's defence before the Sanhedrin in which he traces the work of God down through the history of the Children of Israel, concluding with his rebuking of the High Priest and the remainder of the priests: 'Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the

betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it' (Acts 7:51–53). He then speaks of his sight of the Lord Jesus Christ: 'Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God' Acts 7:56. Stephen is taken out and stoned to death, his last words being in prayer to the Lord Jesus Christ: 'And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep' Acts 7:60.

Chapter 7 introduces us to Saul who was consenting to his, that is, Stephen's death. And, such was his hatred of the Lord Jesus Christ that he wrought havoc in the church by instituting a general persecution of Christian believers in Jerusalem, bringing them to prison (Acts 8:1–4). In the providence of God this caused there to be a scattering abroad of the Lord's people and in accordance with the words of the Lord Jesus Christ to his disciples: 'But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth' (Acts 1:8).

It is here that we are introduced to Philip for the second time. In Acts 6:5 Philip was chosen, along with Stephen and five other brethren to be deacons of the church at Jerusalem. Now we are told that he was one of those who was scattered abroad during the first persecution of the church, Philip, we are told, 'went down to the city of Samaria,

and preached Christ unto them.' Here we find Philip preaching and there being great joy in the city of Samaria. We are then introduced to Simon the magician who, when the Apostles Peter and John went down to Samaria, sought to give them money to obtain the ability to give the Holy Ghost to whomsoever he laid hands upon. He being rebuked by the Apostles, asked that they pray for him that none of those things should 'come upon me.' We are not told whether this man was a gracious soul or not! (Acts 8:9–24). In the midst of all this activity and great blessing, 'the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert' (Acts 8:26). Why should such a commandment be given, surely it was best for Philip to stay in Samaria and consolidate the work that was being undertaken? Was there no-one else who could do that job? And what was the point of going down to a desert—there is nothing there, why go? But Philip was obedient to the Lord's command. The Lord had gone before him and there in the desert place, he had an appointment made by Almighty God before ever the world was—an appointment to meet with a man to whom he had to preach the gospel of the grace of God, an appointment with one of the election of grace who would be called out of nature's night into the glorious light and liberty of the gospel! Philip took his journey—to Jerusalem, then he took the road down towards Gaza: 'And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship' (verse 27).

Behold, a man of Ethiopia

Verses 27 to 40 concern Philip's dealings

with this man. Although we are not told a great deal about him—we do not even have his name, there is much we can glean from this meeting of the Eunuch and Philip. I want to consider him and his experience, with the Lord's help under three headings:

1. His condition
2. His concern
3. His confession

1. His condition

We are told a number of things about the condition of this man. I just want to notice three of them:

Firstly, we are told of his affluence. He had the charge of all Queen Candace's treasure. He was her Chancellor of the exchequer. A man used to dealing with funds. At home with all the treasures of the kingdom and therefore obviously a man of affluence and trustworthy. A man of great importance in Candace's government!

Secondly, he was a man of authority. He also was a man who had a retinue of servants. He was not driving the chariot. In verse 38 we are told that he commanded the chariot to stop. Another was obviously driving that chariot. A man of such great importance would not have travelled alone in such a treacherous area—it was desert land through which he was travelling, a place where there would have been thieves and robbers who would have had no hesitation in attacking him unless he was well protected. He no doubt had a retinue of servants (we read in 1 Kings 10 of the Queen of Sheba coming to see Solomon 'with a very great train.') It is unthinkable that the Ethiopian Eunuch would have travelled alone.

Thirdly, he was in a desert place. In Scripture the desert signifies a number of things. The desert is a place of barrenness.

He was in a barren place. There was nothing to give him comfort in that place. It speaks of his spiritual condition—he was barren, without God and without hope. True! He had been to Jerusalem for to worship (v. 27). He had been into the Temple, but had only been able to enter the Court of the Gentiles; he had not been able to go into the place of sacrifice. And now he was returning home to a pagan land, a land of false gods as empty and barren as the desert through which he was passing.

The desert speaks also of rest. ‘And he (Jesus) said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat’ (Mark 6:31). The disciples were in need of rest because of all the activity in which they had been engaged. Oh! no doubt the Ethiopian Eunuch was in need of rest—rest from all his labours; rest from his endeavours to find peace with God; rest from all his vain efforts. He needed to be brought to the place where he could rest in the Lord (Psalm 37:7).

So the desert also speaks of provision. What? provision in the desert? ‘Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?’ (Psalm 78:19). Indeed, there is provision—the Children of Israel found that provision daily for forty years. And here in the desert the Ethiopian Eunuch found that provision for his soul! What a mercy that in the wilderness of this world there is provision made for every child of God. ‘But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus’ (Philippians 4:19). And it is a full provision. All that we need is in the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30).

We are given his qualities, but then shown his need. Throughout the Scriptures we are told about people and their qualities, Naaman, for example—he was a great man.

We are told how he was a great soldier, he was a great man and then follows his problem ‘But he was a leper’ (2 King 5:1). The same applies to us. We may make our boast like the Pharisee who went up into the temple to pray; he told the Lord all his qualities, even pointing out how much better he was than the publican who would not so much as lift his eyes to heaven. But as sinners we are in need; in constant need of the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ and his mercy!

2 HIS CONCERN

Here was a man in such a situation with his thoughts and his needs, but he was an awakened sinner; an awakened soul! He had been quickened and made alive. We know this from his reading the Scripture of Truth, and of his questioning of Philip. He had come to Jerusalem from a pagan land. He had made the treacherous journey across the desert facing all the hazards of the terrain and the times. He had come to Jerusalem for to worship (v.27). That was the concern of an awakened soul; and it was made manifest.

Firstly, he was searching the Scriptures. ‘Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me’ (John 5:39) said our Lord Jesus Christ. And here was a man who was doing just that. He was reading the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah which speaks of the Suffering Servant of God, even our Lord Jesus Christ, and the glories which would follow. Paul tells us that ‘faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God’ (Romans 10:17). If we would know Christ, it can only be through the Scriptures:

‘Go Search the Scriptures,’ saith our Lord,
‘They testify of Me’;
’Tis truth’s eternal, great record,
From every error free.

(John Kent)

One of the blessings of the Reformation was that the Scriptures were given to us in our own language. Up until the time of the Reformation, the Bible was kept from the people by the Church of Rome. What a mercy it is that we have the Scriptures in our own language to day. God give us a desire to read the Word of God. ‘They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so’ (Acts 17:11). When Augustine of Hippo was under conviction of sin, he heard the children playing and repeating the phrase ‘*Tolle Lege! Tolle Lege!*’ (Take, read!) which he took as a divine command to read the Scriptures. God grant that we too may read the Scriptures! ‘For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus’ (Romans 15:4, 5).

I do like the collect (prayer) for the second Lord’s Day in Advent:

Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning; grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Secondly, it was not just a cursory glance at the prophet Isaiah. He wanted to know of whom Isaiah was writing: ‘And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?’ (v. 34). How do we read the Scriptures? Do we read them as we would read any other book? Or do we

meditate upon the daily reading of the Word of God? The cow is a ruminant, that is, it chews the cud. It eats the grass and then it chews it over and over in its mouth. It is from that word ruminant that we get the word *ruminant*, that is, to turn it over and over again in the mind, to meditate thereupon. The Psalmist says: ‘O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day’ (Psalm 119:97).

Thirdly, the Ethiopian Eunuch sought an explanation from others. ‘I pray thee of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other?’ (v. 34). We should never be afraid to seek advice on the Scriptures from individual ministers and books which expound the Scriptures. And we should always seek to sit under a sound ministry of the Gospel. What a mercy it is if we sit under such a ministry as that of Philip: ‘Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus’ (v. 35). That was the sum of his ministry, of his preaching, speaking of his fulness.

A fulness resides in Jesus our Head,
And ever abides to answer our need!
The Father’s good pleasure hath laid up in store
A bountiful treasure to give to the poor.
(John Fawcett)

3. HIS CONFESSION

Like any good and faithful preacher, Philip commenced with the Word of God. The Ethiopian Eunuch asked his advice on the portion he was reading, ‘and [he] began at the same scripture.’ Philip spoke from Isaiah 53:7–8, ‘and preached unto him Jesus.’ From those verses we can see how Philip would have set forth the Lord Jesus Christ:

(a) He speaks of a Predestined Christ. ‘He was led as a sheep to the slaughter’ (v. 32). The Lord Jesus Christ came from the glories of heaven with one purpose in view, namely, to bring many sons to glory, and in so doing he

had to go by the way of the cross. 'Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain' (Acts 2:23). 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil' (1 John 3:8).

(b) He speaks of the meekness of the Lord Jesus Christ. 'Like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth' (v. 32). Our Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. He could have frustrated all the designs of the wicked one; but he did not. He could have called ten thousand angels to aid him; but he did not. He is meek and lowly of heart. O what a mercy!

(c) He speaks of a sacrificial lamb. 'Led as a sheep to the slaughter.' Christ is the Lamb of God. Christ our Passover is slain for us. What a mercy! Isaac Watts writes so beautifully of that sacrificial lamb:

Not all the blood of beasts,
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away the stain.

But Christ, the heav'nly Lamb,
Takes all our sins away;
A sacrifice of nobler name,
And richer blood than they.

My faith would lay her hand
On that dear head of Thine,
While, like a penitent, I stand,
And there confess my sin.

(d) He speaks of the humiliation of Christ. 'In his humiliation his judgment was taken away' (v. 33). He submitted himself to the humiliation of being taken in the garden by the rabble, being falsely accused by the Sanhedrin, being mocked and scoffed by

the Roman soldiers and then being crucified, suspended between heaven and earth. All this he submitted to in great humility!

(e) He speaks of a substitute. 'His life is taken from the earth' (v. 33). Why was his life taken? Why did the Lord Jesus Christ give himself as a sacrifice for his people? Because,

There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin;
He only could unlock the gate
Of heaven and let us in.

(C.F. Alexander)

There was no one else who could fulfill the law in every joy and tittle. No-one else could pay the price. What a mercy! And,

Payment God cannot twice demand—
First at my bleeding Surety's hand,
And then again at mine.

(A.M. Toplady)

And as a result of this preaching, by the Holy Spirit's application, there was a response which was two-fold: Firstly he confessed faith in Christ, and, secondly, he went on his way rejoicing.

He confessed his faith in Christ: 'he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God' (v. 37). He made a public profession of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was baptised with water in the name of the Holy Trinity; and that before his retinue of servants and guards. Then we are told he went on his way rejoicing (v. 39). What a mercy the Lord worked in his heart. The Christ whom Philip preached is the same Lord and Saviour today. What a mercy it is that he will gather his own people in by the preaching of the everlasting gospel. One by one his election of grace will be gathered in just as this Ethiopian Eunuch was gathered in, until the church is complete. ¶

ON PRAYING IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST

BY THOMAS BOSTON (1676–1732)

Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you (John 16:23)

First, I am to shew what it is to pray in the name of Jesus Christ.¹

That this takes in whatever is necessary in prayer, both as to matter and manner, is evident from the text, 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name,' etc. And no man can thus pray but by the Spirit, 1 Corinthians 12:13.

Negatively, it is not a bare mentioning his name, in prayer, and concluding our prayers therewith, Matthew 7:21, 'Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.' We must begin, carry on, and conclude our prayers in the name of Christ, Colossians 3:17, 'Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.' The saints use the words, 'through Jesus Christ our Lord,' 1 Corinthians 15:57; but the virtue is not in the words, but in the faith wherewith they are used. But alas! these are often produced as an empty scabbard, while the sword is away.

Positively, we take it up in these four things.

1. We must go to God at Christ's command, and by order from him. This is the import of the phrase 'in his name,' Matthew 18:20, 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.' If a poor body can get a recommendation from a friend to one that is able to help him, he comes with confidence and tells, such a one

has sent me to you. Our Lord Christ is the friend of poor sinners, and he sends them to his Father to ask supply of their wants; and allows them to tell that he sent them; John 16:24. And coming that way, in faith, they will not be refused. This implies,

1. The soul's being come to Christ in the first place; John 15:7, 'If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.' Sense of need brings the soul to Christ, as the poor man's friend, who has the favour of the court of heaven, that through his means the soul may get its wants supplied there. See Acts 12:20. We must first come to Christ by faith, ere we can make one acceptable prayer to God.

2. That however believers in Christ are relieved of the burden of total indigence; John 4:14, yet while they are in the world, they are still compassed with wants. God will have them to live from hand to month, and so to honour him by hanging on daily about his band for their supply from time to time. In heaven they shall be set down at the fountain; but now the law of the house is, 'Ask, and ye shall receive;' Matthew 7:7.

3. That Christ sends his people to God by prayer, for the supply of their wants. This he does by his word, commanding them to go, and by his Spirit inclining them to go. For thus the whole Trinity is glorified by the praying believers, the Father as the Hearer of prayer, the Son as the Advocate and Intercessor presenting their prayers to the Father, and

¹ This is an extract from Boston's sermon.

the Spirit as the Author of their prayers; Ephesians 2:18, 'For through him we both have an access by one Spirit unto the Father.'

4. *That acceptable prayer is performed under the sense of the command of a God in Christ*; Isaiah 33:22, 'For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king, he will save us.' Men may pray, though not acceptably, with little or no sense of the command of God on their consciences; that is, not serving God, not themselves. They may pray under the sense of the command of an absolute God out of Christ; that is but slavish service to God. But the believer has the sense of the command, as from Jesus Christ, where majesty and mercy are mixed in it; and that is son-like service.

5. *Lastly, That the acceptable petitioner's encouragement to pray is from Jesus Christ*; Hebrews 4:14-16, 'Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.' It is Christ's token that he has given them to carry with them, that affords them all their confidence with God; that is the promises of the covenant sealed with his own blood. Faith laying hold on these, carries them as Christ's token to the Father, upon which a poor criminal may expect to find acceptance and supply.

2. **We must pray for Christ's sake, as our motive to the duty.** This also is imported in the phrase, 'in his name;' Mark 9:41, 'Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, in my name, because ye belong to Christ, he shall not lose his reward.' As we

must be influenced by his command, as the reason of our praying, so with regard to him as our motive. As there is no coming to God but by him; so there is no kindly drawing of us to God, but by the allurements of the glory of God in the face of Jesus; 2 Corinthians 4:6. Any other sight of the glory of God would fright the sinner away from him, as from a consuming fire. So we must behold God in Christ, and go to him as the object of our love and adoration. This implies,

1. *An high esteem of Christ in the acceptable petitioner*; 1 Peter 2:7, 'Unto you which believe, he is precious.' No man's prayer will be acceptable to God, who wants a transcendent esteem of the Lord Christ; for God is honoured in his Son; John 5:23. And the more the esteem of Christ has place in one's heart, the more it will be found, he will give himself to prayer.

2. *Complying with the duty out of love to Christ*; Hebrews 6:10, 'God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love.' The soul must discern Christ's stamp on every duty, and so embrace it for his sake. The duty of prayer some embrace and use, because of the usefulness of it to themselves; but God's children embrace it for the sake of Christ; 2 Corinthians 5:14, 'For the love of Christ constraineth us.' Love natively leads to desire communion with the party beloved; and love to Christ recommends prayer to a holy heart, as a means of communion with God in Christ.

3. *Complying with the duty out of respect to his honour and glory*; Philippians 1:21, 'For to me to live is Christ.' Christ humbled himself, and therefore the Father has glorified him, 2:9-11. And every act of praying in his name glorifies him, being an acknowledgment before God of the unspeakable dignity of his merit and intercession, as procuring that access for sinners unto God, that no

other way could have been obtained.

4. *Lastly, Doing it with heart and good will*; for what is done for Christ's sake by a gracious soul, must needs be so done; Isaiah 64:5, 'Thou meetest him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways.' One praying indeed in the name of Christ, is acted by a principle of love to him, which, oiling the wheels of the soul, sets all in motion, so that the heart is poured out like water before the Lord. And where that principle is wanting, there is acting by constraint.

3. **We must in praying to God act in the strength of Christ.** This also is imported in the phrase; Luke 10:17, 'And the seventy returned again with joy, saying. Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.' So Zechariah 10:12, 'I will strengthen them in the Lord, and they shall walk up and down in his name.' We must go to prayer, as David went against Goliath; 1 Samuel 17:45, 'I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts.' And here consider, 1. What this presupposes; 2. Wherein it lies.

First, Let us consider what this acting in prayer in the strength of Christ presupposes.

1. *That praying acceptably is a work quite beyond any power in us*; 2 Corinthians 3:5, 'Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves.' The want of this persuasion mars many a prayer, and makes many a rash and inconsiderate approach unto God. To manage aright an address to God on his throne of glory, cannot miss [ie. fail] to appear such a work in the eyes of all, who have due thoughts of God's majesty, or of their own ignorance and weakness.

2. *That there is a stock of grace and strength in Jesus Christ*, for our help, as to other duties, so for this duty of prayer; 2 Corinthians 12:9, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' Man at

first had his stock of grace in his own hand, and he made a sad account of it. Now the Lord has lodged it in the Mediator, as the head of believers; Colossians 1:19, 'For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell.' In him there is not only a fulness of sufficiency for himself, but of abundance for his people, as of water in a fountain, or of sap in the stock of a tree; John 3:34, 'God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.'

3. *Sinners are welcome to partake of this stock of grace and strength in Christ*; 2 Timothy 2:1. For it is lodged in him as a storehouse, to be communicated. The fountain stands open, and whosoever will may come and take; Zechariah 13:1. They are very welcome; as it is an ease and pleasure for the mother to have the full breast sucked by her babe, so it is a pleasure to Christ to communicate of his fulness; Isaiah 66:11, 13, '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. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.'

4. *We must be united to Christ, as members to the head, and branches to the vine*, if we would act in prayer or any other duty in the strength of Christ; John 15:5, 'I am the vine ye are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.' We cannot partake of the stock of grace and strength for duty in Christ, without partaking of himself; Romans 8:32. As the soul in a separate state doth not quicken the body, so the soul not united to Christ cannot be fitted for duty by strength derived from him. The graft must knit with the stock, ere it can partake of the sap.

TO BE CONCLUDED

EXPOSITION OF JUDE 1

Part 1 – Of effectual calling

By WILLIAM PERKINS (1558–1602)

Now to proceed, we are in the next place to intreat the order which God observeth in bringing men by degrees to life everlasting: And first of the **calling** mentioned; which is a work of God, who of his mere favour and grace calleth vile and miserable men out of the world, and inviteth them to life everlasting: to understand which, we must know that the calling of God is twofold: the first is *general*, when God calls a whole nation, kingdom and country, that is, when he offers them salvation in the means; as when he sends his Word among them, affords them the sacraments to seal the Covenant, gives leave to approach him in prayer, and all this in the ministry of man: yea, when he vouchsafeth private means far inferior to the former, yet often serving for a general calling, as is the reading of the Scriptures, yea, of men's writings, and sometimes reports, as in Rahab's example, and the woman of Samaria:¹ by these means the Lord generally calleth men, offering, but often not giving grace offered, in great judgment turning away from a froward people.

Objection: If God offer, but give not grace, it is a deluding of men:

Answer: No, for first a man was once able to receive it: secondly, hereby he maketh them without excuse whom he will destroy: thirdly hereby he keeps the wicked in outward order.

Use: Considering to be called of God is the first step to life everlasting, and we in this Church of England are thus called, it remains

that every man must answer this calling.²

Question: How shall this be done?

Answer: Frame thy heart to answer God, as David did when God bade him seek his face: 'Thy face, O Lord, will I seek (see also Mark 9:23, 24 of the father of the possessed child, and Psalm 40:6, 7 when David's ear was pierced, he answered, 'Lord, I come')': this ought to be the answer of our hearts to the Lord's voice sounding in the ministry.

The second calling is more *special*, when grace is not only offered, but given also by God, through the effectual working of his Spirit in our hearts; which is the beginning of grace in us, he himself laying the first foundation of it: by giving power to receive the word to mingle it with faith, and bring forth the fruits of new obedience. For the better conceiving of the nature of it consider six points:

First, the *ground* and foundation of it, namely God's eternal free election of us unto life everlasting, as 2 Timothy 1:9. When I say free, I exclude not only whatsoever man can imagine within himself as vain in procuring such good unto himself, as not of works, saith Paul, lest any should boast; but also placing the ground of all our good works out of ourselves in the counsel of God, which the Apostle calls, 'his good purpose,' Romans 8:28. Yea, to show the freeness of this grace it is thence denominated and called 'the election of grace.'

Secondly, the *means* of this calling, which

² Perkins lived at a time when, in England, there was only the Church of England, so he is speaking of the whole Church in the realm in that day.

in the Lord's hands are diverse, whereof some prepare to calling, othersome are instruments of it: as first the reading of the Scriptures, serving to beget a general historical faith. Secondly, afflictions in body, goods, name, friends or otherwise, tending to humble a man and prepare his heart as soft ground. Thirdly, the denouncing of God's judgments, and threats of the Law which sends to hell, but gives no grace: these are generally preparatives. Others are instruments to effect the inward calling, as the preaching of the glad tidings of the gospel which is the most principal and effectual means of this special and effectual vocation, and to this Paul ascribes it, as 2 Thessalonians 2:14, whereunto he called you 'by our gospel'; that this is true, consider a two-fold work of this ministry, when it is powerfully applied to the hearts of men. First, it openeth the very heart of a man, and lays him out to the beholding of himself, showing him that by his detestable sins he hath made himself more ugly in God's eyes than an toad can be in man's: whereby he is prepared not to be asleep in this estate, but unto the second work, which is to apprehend and apply the blood and merits of Christ (exhibited in the gospel) for the washing and bathing of his sinful soul, that he may be saved from wrath.

Thirdly, the *persons* that are called: those that are mentioned, Romans 8:30, namely those whom he had before predestinated, those he called: which seems to be expounded in Acts 13:48, 'So many as were ordained to life believed', that is, were called unto the faith: all therefore are not called.

It pleaseth some to teach another doctrine, namely, that God for his part calls all men effectually and gives them a power to believe if they will; but the difference, say they, is in the will of man. To prove such a thing they bring this comparison: the sun

shines on wax and clay equally; the wax is softened, but the clay is hardened. But this is not true out of the Scriptures, for it is not given to all to understand the mysteries of the kingdom, Matthew 13:11; these things are hid from most of the wise of the world, and revealed unto babes, Matthew 11:25. Knowledge is given to some, not to others, and consequently faith, for they which have not known cannot believe.

Fourthly, the *time* of this calling. The particular time of any man's calling is not revealed, but laid up in the secret counsel of God, in whose hands times and seasons are: yet the extent of the time is large enough though stinted, even the time of this life—some at the sixth hour, some at the ninth, and some at the eleventh, etc., but not after, because that then all means of calling men cease. Now because men know not the date of their days, it behooves them out of hand to strive to enter, not to defer from day to day, alleging some were called at the twelfth hour, but accept of the Lord's call while it is the acceptable time. If the Lord now say, Seek my face, let thy heart answer as an echo which takes the word out of the mouth, 'Thy face, O Lord, will I seek,' Psalm 27:8, such a pleasant harmony God is delighted with. If he say, (as the prophet speaketh) Behold now my people, they are presently³ to answer, Behold now our God, and the rather because the Lord will be free, and not stinted by thee, that either he shall call thee in thy crooked years,⁴ or not at all: he will not be prescribed extraordinarily to call thee at the twelfth hour, as he did the thief on the cross, when thou howlest upon the bed of thy sorrow, and gaspest upon thy death-bed. Therefore while it is called to day let us hear the voice and harden our hearts no more (Psalm 95:7–8).

³ ie. immediately

⁴ ie. old age

¹ See Perkins' exposition of Hebrews 11:31.

Question: Fifthly, wherein doth this effectual calling stand?

Answer: Both in the outward and inward calling, because the former is often the means given to nations, people, men, at least to make them without excuse: but the second being secret and inward, whereby the Lord makes a man's heart inwardly answer the outward calling, professeth him to be a willing mind steadfastly to believe in the Lord Jesus, with an endeavour to please the Lord in all things: thus is the heart pierced, Psalm 40:6, the heart of stone changed into an heart of flesh, that is, made tractable and pliable, Ezekiel 11:19, and an heart which is a sacrifice accepted of God. Such an heart was Lydia, Acts 16:14, when God had opened it, it was heedful and attentive to the words of Paul; this heart can rely on the sweet promises of the gospel, and no other.

Sixthly, the *excellencies* of this calling which we perceive by these considerations. First, that it is a great work, as was the creation of man at the first, Romans 4:18, so the Apostle maketh it, 2 Corinthians 4:6, he that at the beginning called light out of darkness, the same hath shined in our hearts, etc., that as God calls the first time, and dead creatures come forth to life: so with no less powerful voice the Lord calls the heart of man dead in sin, and it is quickened with the life of God.

Secondly, this effectual calling goes beyond the work of our creation; for here a man is taken out of the first Adam, and set into the second, and at the same instant power is given to believe, being in time both together, though in order faith is first, and then ingrafting, wherein is not only a bare privation as in the creation where God called things that were not as though they were: but here is a plain resistance and rebellion, God calling

not only things that are not, but things that would not, and refuse to be. Thus to raise a man out of the blood of Christ is more than to raise Eve out of Adam's side; to raise a dead soul from the death of sin, far more glorious and powerful than to raise a dead body from bodily death; to raise man to supernatural life, far greater than to a natural only.

Thirdly, this calling ratifies all our covenants with God. Men in their baptism enter covenant with God, but often start from it, and will not stand to it, so as the covenant is only made: but when a man is effectually called, the covenant is not only made, but truly accomplished, and that on man's part.

Use. Seeing we are called of God himself in the ministry of the Word, (for Paul calls it, Philippians 3:14, an high calling) we must labour to join the inward calling with it, which is higher than that, by having first a grief because we cannot believe; secondly, a ready mind; thirdly, an endeavour to believe; fourthly, a sorrow because we believe no more, and fail so much in the service of God; which if we want, we must labour for them; and if we have them, be thankful unto God for them.

Second use. Learn the duty laid down by the Apostle, Ephesians 4:1, 'That we should walk worthy of our calling.' To do which, first we must look that we frame our lives holily; being holy in our conversation as he that hath called us is holy. Secondly, there must be the same end of our lives which is of God's calling, that is, to bring us to heaven. The end of our being in the world is to be called out of the world, and (as Abraham) to obey God, as looking for a city in heaven not made with hands.

(Taken from The Works of William Perkins, Vol 3, London, 1631)

TO BE CONTINUED

THOUGHTS ON THE HIGH PRIESTLY PRAYER OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

BY WILLIAM T FOLEY

'These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.' (John 17:1-5)

Expositors and preachers usually divide the whole of John 17 into three sections:

A. Christ's prayer for himself with the Father, vv. 1-5

B. Christ's prayer for his elect disciples, vv. 6-19

C. Christ's prayer for all the elect who would believe in him, vv. 20-26.

Many saints of God have been truly blessed with this prayer: to name one, the great John Knox (1514-1572) who had it read to him by his wife on his deathbed. His soul was awakened by John 17. (He was a leader of the Protestant Reformation who brought, under God, reformation to Scotland.)

This prayer is truly the Lord's Prayer, and gives us an insight into the prayer life of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a prayer of intercession. Almost all things in the prayer are spoken in the past tense, but clearly there are aspects which are to come to pass in the future. There is a definite confidence about the prayer, in that all things will come to pass, which are predestined by God in the counsels of the Holy Trinity.

Let us examine five verses, in the first

section, and see what can be mined from this most beautiful and glorious prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ, showing Christ's intimate relationship and fellowship with his Father.

Verse 1. Christ's petition for glorification by the Father.

'These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.'

The Father is requested by the Son of God to be glorified, as the precise hour had come - the time to fulfil the Father's eternal will and biblical prophecy. (The term glory is pregnant with meaning.)

We witness from the Bible that God is glorified in his Son's incarnation, his work on the Cross, and in his ascension, and his session in glory.

Included, too, in this word 'glory' is Christ's future second coming, in glory. Christ's glory will be seen in the final judgment, and in the creation of the new heavens and new earth, for all things have been and will be created by him. See Ephesians 3:9.

Remember that Christ always had his 'intrinsic' glory, even in his humanity, it was hid from view, for no one could look upon his glory and live. Peter, James and John saw his glory at the transfiguration.

In 2 Peter 1:16-18 we see Peter saying, 'We made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'

Christ glorified God, his Father, in his doing and dying, in his active and passive obedience; his miracles/signs, preaching and teaching ministry glorified God; but ultimately Christ glorified God in his vicarious, penal substitutionary death, his great sacrificial work of Calvary for all his dear elect people spread throughout the ages of time, including Jews and Gentiles.

Verse 2. The authority, power and sovereignty of the Son of God.

'As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.'

The Son of God acknowledges that the Father has given him authority in being sovereign over all flesh. He is sovereign, in giving eternal life to as many as God chose in eternity. The Father donated to the Son, his elect. The Lord Jesus has particularly in mind his elect in verse 2.

A key point in v. 2: it is Christ that gives eternal life to his elect.

These are the 'vessels of mercy' that Paul wrote about in Romans 9:23. The Holy Spirit says, 'And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory.' Christ is the absolute controller and

dispenser of eternal life. This work has been given to him of his Father, in bringing many adopted sons to glory. Seven times Christ refers to believers as having been given to him by the Father, verses 2, 6 (twice) 9, 11, 12 and 24. Jesus mentioned seven times the Father's gift of the Elect to him.

So, the logical conclusion is, if anyone does not believe or trust Christ, as God, then they cannot be saved, and it proves that God never elected them to eternal life, in Christ. The number of the elect cannot be added to or taken away from; nevertheless, it is an innumerable number but a limited number, which is known to the Holy Trinity.

In Revelation 7:9, we see this aspect, when John, the beloved disciple, wrote, 'After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.'

Christ is not going to save anyone in any other religion, or in any of the other faiths, which do not believe in him. (See John 14:6 and Acts 4:12.) When the sinner is brought to Christ in their brokenness and poverty, then they leave their former life of unbelief, unrighteousness and ungodliness, and that includes leaving all false religions.

When the great numbers of humanity appear at the Great White Throne Judgment they will discover to their alarm, and terrible fear, that Christ is God, and their Judge.

There can be no question of doubt: every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God. There will be no conflict or dispute of who the Lord Jesus Christ is, in all his glory.

No human being will be able to challenge Christ's actions: his authority, his sovereignty or his Godhead. He is King of Kings, and Lord of lords. He is the same yesterday, today

and forever, the unchanged and unchanging truth of God, and from God, in all his very essence and glory. Praise and glory be to his Name.

The elect will bow gladly at Christ's feet with enormous thanksgiving, eternal glorious praise and adoration, with unspeakable joy and rejoicing.

The wicked will tremble, be in bitterness of soul, tortuous agony of mind and body, at the prospect of Hell at the final judgment. Now the wicked live in rebellion, as if there is no God to face, or account to, but the prospect of the grave. The Bible doesn't teach annihilation but a real hell with endless pain, panic and suffering, where the sinner is under the permanent wrath of God. (The grace of God doesn't extend to the grave of the wicked, and there is no second chance of forgiveness and reconciliation with God after one's last breath.)

We see in 1 Corinthians 15:24 an important truth that Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

Verse 3. Knowing Christ is eternal life, and to know Christ is to know the Father.

'And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.'

What a treasure in this verse! We know Christ, through his truth, John 17:17.

First, we know God only through Christ in regeneration, 1 Peter 1:23, Titus 3:5, John 3:3, 5. Regeneration is God's exclusive work in the soul. There is no helping or assisting of God by the sinful will of man, or by human cooperation, or decision making on the part of the sinner. Salvation is all of the LORD.

Second, there is a knowing Christ in our Christian walk in life. Paul, in Philippians

3:10, wrote, 'That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.' Oh, that we might have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. Note from verse 3 that if we know Christ we know the Father.

The evidence of knowing Christ is seen in believing biblical doctrine, participation in the Breaking of Bread (Communion), Fellowship with saints and Prayers (public and private). See Acts 2.42. The indwelling witness of the Holy Spirit unlocks the knowledge of the Living God, but by the Word.

To the believer, there is only one true God, and Christology, in all its aspects, reveals that Christ is the second person of the Blessed Trinity, truly God and truly man.

Someone who claims they know God and says that they don't believe in the Lord Jesus Christ is in spiritual bondage, and self-deceit, and has a completely wrong and deficient view of God. Why is this the case?

A. They are blinded by their sin, and are creating a false God of their own sinful imagination. For we are sinners by nature and sinners by choice.

B. They have not been given by the Lord a heart to perceive, or ears to hear, or eyes to see.

C. They are dead in sin and to the sin of the rejection of Christ.

D. They are fools in regard to the welfare of their souls and the true purpose and meaning of life.

Verse 4. Mission Accomplished.

'I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.'

This was not a wild unfounded boast on the part of a madman, liar, deceiver or false Christ, but it was the true Christ speaking normally about a real fact—the Cross, a so

great salvation, achieved in the 'finished' work of Christ!

Rome and her foolish cohorts seek to add and take away from the accomplished work of Christ, but Christ contradicts her claim, and will hold her to account, especially for her false claims.

Christ claimed that he glorified God the Father. He did that perfectly!

Christ claimed he finished God's work. He did so in the glorious work of the cross!

Christ made reference to the fact that God, the Father, gave him his mission. He achieved all the divine objectives and targets, for the family of the Trinity and his elect; the latter are his co-heirs.

This verse bears repetition for emphasis. In John 17:4 Christ said to the Father, 'I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do'

Victory is in view by Christ. In Acts 2:22 we see that Jesus of Nazareth, was a man 'approved of God' among the people by miracles and wonders and signs. The testimony of the Father is: this is my 'beloved Son'. The Father said, both at Christ's baptism, and at the Mount of Transformation, that 'he was well pleased' with his Son.

So, we deduce that the Father was glorified in all of Christ's life work, in all things.

Especially, too, we can note that the mission and ministry of Christ was preeminent in accomplishments to the glory of God. Throughout his earthly life, Christ was (and still is) a Saviour who was harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners.

Christ is sinless. He was and is impeccable in every aspect. Christ is unique. Christ was obedient to his Father at all times, and lived in the power of the Holy Spirit, resisting and overcoming the most awful trials, and temptations of the devil.

The term 'work' is a clear reference to the

Cross of Christ and the great redemption, the holy Redeemer purchased for his people, the elect. Always remember that the cross was given to Christ to die upon by the Father, so that we may have eternal life, and finally to behold Christ's glory, in the eternal glory.

In Acts 2:23, we find Peter, as recorded by Dr Luke, preaching and making it perfectly clear to his hearers who was ultimately behind Calvary.

The cross-work of Christ was determined by God the Father, in eternity. Peter says, 'Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.' Yet, we see in the purpose of God that wicked humans were responsible.

Wonderful to think in this prayer that Christ said he 'finished the work' (v. 4) before he even died on the cross.

Verse 5. The petition of Christ for the restoration to the glory.

'And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.'

Christ longed for the glory. He wanted it with all his heart, soul and body.

Christ obviously wanted to go back to the Father in his glorified body to heaven. So, in a definite sense, we can see by implication the resurrection and ascension of Christ, in this prayer. He set his face toward Jerusalem unflinchingly, and uncompromisingly.

Christ was confident that he would rise from the dead, for he is the Prince of life and Glory.

It was logical that Christ would receive again this glory, as he 'had it' in eternity with the Father and the Holy Spirit throughout eternity. Christ was, as it were, desirous to return to His roots, in the glory.

Yet, while he was on earth, he was God

in heaven, because of his omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence. The Lord Jesus Christ is and always was God. Christ never ceased from being God, the God of glory, during his earthly life.

In a fully human, and fully functioning body, Christ limited himself and we can see why, because no man can see God in his majesty and glory and live.

Moses asked God to show him his glory, but Moses was only allowed to see the back of God, as God passed him by. See Exodus 33:18-23.

Paul, in Philippians. 2:5-11, gives us insight to show us that Christ left the glory and eternity of heaven and took upon himself flesh and blood, and made himself of no reputation.

Christ never emptied himself of his divine nature, or his glorious attributes. Christ emptied himself only of the outward and visible manifestation of his Godhead. But, when occasion demanded it, Christ did use his attributes, but as, the scholar Lightfoot said, Christ 'stripped himself of the insignia

of Majesty.' Again, Christ 'veiled in flesh, the Godhead see. Hail the incarnate deity!' (Wesley)

But return to glory was on Christ's mind, while he was on earth, for his hour had come, and so he would be crucified and raised from the dead by the power of God and ascend from the Mount of Olives to the Glory. Death and the grave couldn't hold him, for he would rise by the power of God. Glory to God.

Let every true believer of all the ages of time and eternity, like Paul say, 'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me' (Galatians 2:20).

The first five verses of John 17 should cause us to glory in the glory of God in Christ, and reverence the deep spiritual nature of the prayer, thus causing us to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, and so shall be, forever, without end. Amen.¶

AS HARMLESS AS DOVES

BY PEREGRINUS

When the Lord Jesus Christ sent his disciples out to preach the gospel his words were 'Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves' (Matthew 10:16). But it is often the case that we are far from being as wise as serpents, and as harmless as doves.

A few days ago I was visiting a city in the South of England when I passed by a certain

gentleman who was purporting to be preaching the gospel of Christ. I say purporting because what I heard was far from the gospel as I understand it. This man was setting forth an impotent Christ, one who was subject to the free will of man, subject to the sovereignty of the human will. On hearing what he said I left him to his own devices and went on my way to conduct the business that had brought me to that city.

Some short time later I had to pass him by and this time he was engaged with another man in what could only be called a shouting match; neither of whom were making any impression on each other. I approached the 'preacher' and suggested that he should leave the man alone, for what he was doing was tantamount to casting pearls before swine (Matthew 7:16), and get on with preaching the gospel, and I reminded him that the gospel involved setting forth the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour of sinners who was not subject to the fallen will of man, and that Christ was a Sovereign Saviour. After a short discussion on the nature of man, he challenged me to take the rostrum and preach 'my' (sic) version of the Gospel, which challenge I could not refuse. I stood on the rostrum, taking my Bible in hand and turned to Psalm 27:1: 'The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?' The man who had been harangued shouted out to his former opponent, 'At least, he's got a Bible!' (The preacher gave no evidence of having a Bible with him). I then sought to speak of the Light of the World, even our Lord Jesus Christ who became incarnate, referring to Philippians 2:6ff, and who was the substitute for sinners, the election of grace who would all be saved with an everlasting salvation. That every one for whom Christ died would be saved and given faith to believe in Christ. And because Christ Jesus is the Light, then the child of God has no reason to fear, to fear death or eternity.

After I had spoken for about ten minutes,

I drew to a conclusion and stood down, returning to the preacher who still insisted that man had a free will, and that Christ was subject to the sovereignty of man. But what Christ was set forth by him? The Lord Jesus Christ is the Almighty Creator (cf. John 1), the one who spoke the worlds into existence, the one who had the power to heal the sick, and to raise the dead, and yet he is subject to the whims of the human will? Is not this a parody of the Lord Jesus Christ? And yet in these apostate days there are so many who say they preach the gospel but it is nothing but a parody of the gospel of the grace of God. The Apostle Paul warned, 'But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed' (Galatians 1:8). It is so important that we have a correct view of the Lord Jesus Christ. The group of people who had gathered that afternoon were reminded of the words of John Newton:

What think ye of Christ? is the test
To try both your state and your scheme;
You cannot be right in the rest,
Unless you think rightly of Him.
As Jesus appears in your view,
As He is beloved or not;
So God is disposed to you,
And mercy or wrath are your lot.

God grant that we may be brought to have a correct view of the Lord Jesus Christ, and having faith in him, our life, experience and walk in the Lord Jesus Christ may show that we are as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves.

Why does a believer rate himself a poor sinner? Because he really is so, and he hates hypocrisy. The sense of his poverty drives him to a rich Christ, to receive daily out of his fulness. The sense of his sinnership makes Jesus precious to him as a Saviour.

William Mason

BOOK REVIEWS

Meditations on the Lord's Supper

John Willison

Reformation Press, 2014. £5.25 72 pp p/b ISBN 978-1-872556-10-9

This is a reissue of the first book published by the Reformation Press at its inception in 1990. The revision includes some editing, incorporating modern punctuation and explanation of unfamiliar terms and Scottish usage. An apparently new introduction provides a helpful context to the book, summarising John Willison's life as a Church of Scotland minister in Brechin and Dundee during the first half of the 18th century and also explaining the Scottish Presbyterian custom of holding Communion seasons lasting five days over a 'long weekend' with three days of confession, self-examination and preparation before the Sabbath followed by a Monday of Thanksgiving.

The first nine Meditations lead up to the Lord's Supper and the last eight follow the sacrament. In these days Communion is too often taken lightly with little forethought other than that provided in the English Church by the longer Exhortations in the Prayer Book (if and when used). This book provides, therefore, an excellent corrective and Willison writes with an intensity and passion that carries the reader along. It is steeped in Scripture and contained for me one surprise in Meditation 4 in reference to the words of the Centurion in Matthew 8: 'O Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof' since these very words are used in the Roman mass in the context of a supposed corporeal reception of Our Lord. In Willison's work it is clear that a spiritual presence is intended: 'O come and furnish the house, prepare an upper room in my soul, and there abide and keep the Passover with me!'

The book is also available as an e-book.

JBD

Revising Reformation History

John M. Brentnall

16pp self-cover A5 bklt, available from the author, 5 Rosier Crescent, Swanwick, Alfreton, DE55 1RS. £3 incl. p&p.

Our view of history—whether it is a matter of change and chance, or the faithful outworking of the divine will—must determine our reading of the events of history. This is the author's contention in his introduction, and it is a contention we wholeheartedly endorse.

John Brentnall has produced a most helpful guide to the various revisionist views of the Protestant Reformation. He deals with five common revisionist positions, referring to a named individual who has taught that view, and to a work containing it. He then shows how false these views are in the light of easily-accessible information. The intention is to show that the 'Protestant' view of the Reformation is the one supported by the facts of history. Those who wish to revise that view have their own agenda.

This short booklet (in large type) would suit students at all stages of education, particularly those doing A' Levels—and, dare it be suggested, some studying Church History. It would also be helpful to give to friends who have imbibed the wrong views dealt with.

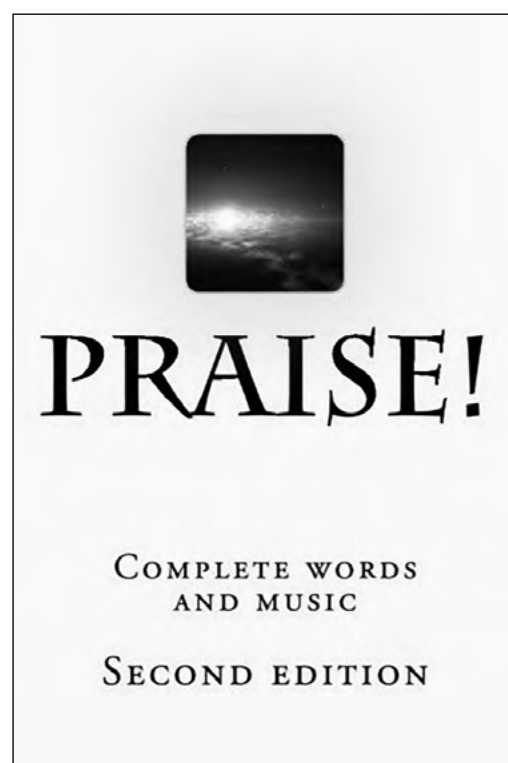
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CHELTENHAM. *Providence Baptist Chapel.* Lord's Day services, 10.30 am and 6.30 pm. Bible Study and Prayer Meeting, Wednesdays 7.30 pm. Use AV and *Christian Worship.* *Pastor:* Mr Pooyan Mehrshahi. Tel. 01242 245116.

FRISTON, SUFFOLK: *Baptist Church,* Mill Road IP17 1PH (4 miles from Aldeburgh, 3 miles from Snape Maltings). Lord's Day services: 10.45 am and 2 pm. Bible Study Tuesdays 7.30 pm. AV and *Gospel Hymns.* Reformed Evangelical worship. *Pastor:* Michael Harley. fristonbaptistsuffolk.org.uk. Tel 01728 602657.

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