

NOVEMBER–DECEMBER 2023

£1.50

# The Gospel Magazine



Of the eternal decrees, or predestination • Christ all in all

# Contents

161	'Unity' .....	<i>The Editor</i>
163	The Lord's Prayer.....	<i>The Editor</i>
167	Of the Eternal Decrees, or Predestination.....	<i>John Edwards</i>
173	What's in a name .....	<i>Carine Mackenzie</i>
175	Christ all in all .....	<i>Eduard Meinders</i>
178	Of God who will have all men to be saved.....	<i>Edward Malcolm</i>
181	The Lord, the Shepherd of his people .....	<i>James North</i>
187	Former Days, Being a summary of past issues from <i>The Gospel Magazine</i>	
189	The Protestant Beacon .....	
191	Book Reviews.....	<i>Various</i>

---

## 1766–2023

*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'.

---

### Editor

The Rt Rev Edward J Malcolm  
**1 Downshire Square,  
Reading, Berkshire RG1 6NJ**  
Telephone: 0118 9595131  
edward.malcolm@btinternet.com  
*Only matters to do with  
articles and book reviews  
should be sent to the Editor*

### The Secretary

Mr Philip Lievesley  
1 Chaplins, Kirby Cross  
Frinton-on-Sea, CO13 0RU  
philip.lievesley@sky.com  
*Only subscriptions and  
advertisements should  
be sent to the Secretary*

**Cheques and postal orders  
should be made payable to *The  
Gospel Magazine*, in Sterling.  
Please do not mail cash.**

Where subscriptions are due  
a reminder is sent and prompt  
payment is appreciated.

### Subscription Rates

Bi-monthly, **£8.50 a year**  
Previous issues, where available,  
are **25p plus postage**  
Current copies **£1.50**  
*We encourage Church and  
Chapel group subscriptions to  
reduce administration*

### Advertising Rates

To advertise please send details **six  
weeks** prior to publication, and  
include your cheque for the correct  
amount as follows:  
Full page **£30 mono, £45 colour**  
½ page **£16 mono, £24 colour**  
¼ page **£8 mono, £12 colour**  
Classified adverts **14p per word**  
*We reserve the right to refuse  
advertisements*

[gospelmagazine.org.uk](http://gospelmagazine.org.uk)  
Charity No. 1070357

# THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE

*Incorporating the Protestant Beacon and the British Protestant*

*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.*

---

---

New Series  
No. 1753

NOVEMBER–DECEMBER 2023

Old Series  
No. 2753

---

---

## ‘UNITY’

RECENTLY a man entered my church before our evening service, knelt down at the back, crossed himself, and appeared to pray. A moment later he arose, turned to me, and said, ‘I am a member at Christ the King [a local Roman Catholic congregation], and it is my prayer that we may all be one.’ He then marched out and vanished into the gloom.

Our Saviour’s prayer for the unity of his people, John 17:21, is commonly abused by ecumenists and promoters of interfaith activities as justification for getting together with people and groups with whom believers should not be associated. It has been said that this verse has displaced John 3:16, another abused verse, as the favourite verse of many who call themselves Christians.

The Bible speaks against unity as well as for it. Unity is condemned in Genesis 49:6, and in Isaiah 14:20 (‘not be joined’ or ‘not be united’). In both cases it is uniting with sin that is condemned.

Perhaps the best-loved verse on the subject is Psalm 133:1, ‘Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell

together in unity!’ It may come as a surprise to learn that the words ‘in unity’ have no direct basis in the Masoretic Text, although the sentiment is strongly implied in the goodness and pleasantness of brethren dwelling together. The word comes twice in the New Testament, and both times in the Epistle to the Ephesians. In 4:3 we endeavour, that is, we labour or strive, to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Calvin wisely comments,

With good reason does he recommend forbearance, as tending to promote the unity of the Spirit. Innumerable offences arise daily, which might produce quarrels, particularly when we consider the extreme bitterness of man’s natural temper. Some consider the unity of the Spirit to mean that spiritual unity which is produced in us by the Spirit of God. There can be no doubt that he alone makes us ‘of one accord, of one mind’ (Philippians 2:2), and thus makes us one; but I think it more natural to understand the words as denoting

harmony of views. This unity, he tells us, is maintained by the bond of peace; for disputes frequently give rise to hatred and resentment. We must live at peace, if we would wish that brotherly kindness should be permanent amongst us.

In Ephesians 4:13 we are told that the ministry has been given for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying or building up of the saints, 'Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children...' The unity of the faith is contrasted with the immaturity of children, who swing from state to state and from opinion to opinion. True unity is had when we receive the fulness of the gospel, the knowledge of the Son of God. This is maturity, and those who are mature are to be one.

How should we react when things are done that do not conform to the knowledge of the Son of God? What happens when expediency or flattery, where the party spirit or a desire for promotion, govern the actions of individuals and groups? In the immediate aftermath of the horrible terrorist attack on Israel, a business leader in the United States has responded to a statement put out by some undergraduates at Harvard University,

in which Israel was blamed. Among other things he said, 'If an organisation of which you are a member puts out a public statement you disagree with, you have a few choices. You can: Stay silent and have the entire world conclude that you stand by the statement. Convince the other members of the group to withdraw or otherwise modify the statement so that it can reflect the views of all members. Or you can resign in protest.' Such a view has much to commend it in the secular world. What about in the church?

Our option is clear. We have to speak out against error, no matter how high up the ladder it stands. We have to separate ourselves from the error and from those who hold it, especially if they refuse to amend their position in the light of Scripture. We may not all be able to speak, nor have a voice. But we all have the choice of whether to stay or go. Coming out from among those who compromise or deny the truth is a requirement for believers. So too is prayer for any who are in error, that they may be brought to the light of God's word and truth.

True unity is counted, not in numbers on earth who can cobble together a form of words they will grudgingly accept, but from so being in Christ, so knowing Christ, that we are all governed in all things by the word and the Spirit. Let us endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ¶

#### NOTICE

The Trustees of *The Gospel Magazine* inform subscribers and advertisers that our bank account has been closed.

Steps are being taken to open a new account, and subscribers will be given those details as soon as they are available. In the meantime please do not send cheques to the Treasurer, and please be aware that

no standing orders or direct debits can be honoured.

The finances of the Trust are unaffected. We continue to carry sufficient funds and reserves to cover foreseeable costs for many years to come, for which we give thanks to our Father in heaven.

# THE LORD'S PRAYER

*'And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.'* (Matthew 6:5–8)

IN these words our Lord speaks about three things: almsgiving, prayer and fasting. In each case he shows that there is a way of doing them that is not to be imitated, and that there is a way of doing them that is. The difference is the same for each. What connects them is that they are all spiritual exercises, or expressions of our Christian faith. To give to the needs of others and for the work of the Lord; to pray; and to fast, are all scriptural expectations and commendable in themselves. It is the fact that each may be done amiss that causes our Lord to speak to these matters, and to show us the right way.

Of the three, prayer receives the longest treatment, for to the warning against profitless prayer and the teaching on profitable prayer, Christ adds the pattern for us in the Lord's Prayer, vv. 9–13, with two verses of explanation of one clause, vv. 14–15. The section from vv. 19–34 also says something about our subject, albeit more generally.

It should be evident from this that the subject is important, the teaching is truly Christian and the matter deserves our closest and humblest attention. From the text we note:

## 1. The warning against hypocrisy

*That the fact of prayer is taken for granted: 'And when thou prayest...'* Or, as it may be translated, 'Whenever thou prayest.' This is

not teaching that only applies in some situations but in all. It takes for granted the fact that we do indeed pray. The word 'pray' is interesting. It is a compound word in Greek, the main part of which is used in Romans 9:3 and Acts 27:29 and is translated 'wish'. 'For I could wish that myself was accursed.' They 'wished for day.' In classical Greek such wishes are prayers to the gods, and perhaps there were many on that ship in Acts 27 who looked for some sort of divine intervention. When the first part of the compound word is added such wishes become directed, always towards a deity, and the word always means 'prayer.' Prayer is the directing of our hopes, fears, desires and felt needs to God. Prayer is about us directing our desires towards God in asking him to supply them.

*That prayer is capable of being done amiss: 'thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are.'* Notice the strong form, 'thou shalt not,' which has the force of a commandment. This is not simply a warning but a divine injunction, and failure to obey is sin. The hypocrite is the one who is a play-actor, a pretender or dissembler: he is not what he appears to be. Here, it is the prayers of these dissemblers that our Saviour is criticising. We are commanded not to be like them.

*The ways in which prayer may be done amiss.* First, 'standing in the synagogues.' It is not the posture that is being criticised, nor

even the place of prayer, the synagogue. Here was the place of assembly, where the people met for worship and to hear the Scriptures read. Here was the place of prayer and of public meeting. Such gatherings took place not only on the sabbath but also at other times. Some people, says Christ, went to the synagogue to stand and pray, and loved to do so.

Secondly, 'in the corners of the street.' We might discuss whether this applies to broad ways or narrow, but again this is not the focus of the comment. The exact location, in the corners, suggests a desire to be in a place where the person praying can be seen and heard most effectively, that is, by as many people as possible.

This is the real ground of Christ's criticism. It is not that such people love to pray, and not even that they love to do so standing in synagogues or in the corners of the streets. Rather, it is that they choose these locations and this manner of prayer in order to be seen of men. We may restate the words like this. 'To this end the hypocrites love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corner of the streets – in order to be seen of men.' They go to the place where people will notice them. These include the appointed place for divine worship, to which the religious will go, so that the religiosity of these hypocrites will be displayed before such people. The corners of the streets are places where as many passers by as possible will hear the prayers, and will observe the outward attitude of prayer, and will know that such men are at their prayers.

There were set times of prayer, and the situation being described is of individuals, called hypocrites, who managed to be found in the synagogue or in the street at the appointed hour. They contrived their business arrangements such that they appeared to

have no option but to make their prayers before men.

Why did they do this? To be seen of men. They wanted to be known to be at prayer, and they made sure as many as possible saw and heard them.

Our Lord's verdict on such people and their prayers is plain. 'Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward.' They sought the praise of men and they obtained it. They have the thing they desired, and the purpose of their plans and schemes has paid off. Well done them. They have been paid in full, earning exactly the wage for which they worked.

We may wish to pause and ask why any should be hypocritical in prayer. Why would a person become a play-actor in this matter? The answer to this is found in weighing what is said about hypocrites and prayer with what is said about them and almsgiving, v. 2, and fasting, v. 16. The character of the hypocrite is drawn for us in sharp detail. Expressions of mercy or charity, here called alms, are not to be done before, in front of, men. That is, do not give in such a way that others are meant to notice. If the purpose of our acts of kindness or compassion is to be seen by others, then the reward we seek will come to us, in the form of their praise. By sounding a trumpet we may understand the literal blowing of the ram's horn, or the announcement by a herald that an act of charity is about to be performed. The same is true of the one who fasts hypocritically, v. 16. Everything is done to show that the individual is fasting, so that even when it is not time to eat, the chosen abstinence of the hypocrite is plain to behold. They do so by disfiguring their faces. Whether this was done by rubbing ash around the eyes to make them appear haggard, or by colouring the whole face to appear pale, or even by veiling the face as if the sight of this poor faster were too horrible

to behold, the effect is the same. The person who fasts hypocritically does so in order to be seen, known and recognised as fasting.

In each case the aim is the same. The praise and admiration of people is sought. When that is obtained, the reward is had. Aiming at men and not God, they can only be paid in earthly coin. Like the actor on stage who delights in the applause of the audience for a performance they appreciate, so the hypocrite aims only at his fellows, whose approval is his reason for acting as he does.

It may seem strange to us that any should pray like this. We live in a time when religion is hardly fashionable, and indeed is viewed as irrational, divisive and undesirable. Why should any of us ever consider hypocrisy in prayer, or in almsgiving? I do not mention fasting for the simple reason that I do not think it is much practiced among us: this is not a commendation.

The reason why we need to be warned against hypocrisy in prayer is that, although the possible audience is far smaller, it still exists. Some of us meet to pray. Some pray in church before the service. Some talk to others about their prayers. These are all good, right and proper things, and so long as they are not done in an attitude of hypocrisy they are to be encouraged and increased. But if, and I stress if, our desire is to be known as men or women who pray in the prayer meeting, whose bowed head before the service is intended to mark us out as superior to those around us, or whose conversation about prayer is meant to draw attention to us, then we are guilty of hypocrisy in this matter.

This brings us to consider the other half of the subject, as set out in v. 6.

## 2. The exhortation to pray aright

*'But thou...'* This is addressed to all the disciples, 5:1-2, being plural and emphatic. Our

Lord will not have his disciples to be like the hypocrites, but requires something else from them.

*'When thou prayest.'* 'Whenever you pray' or 'as often as you pray.'

*'Enter into thy closet.'* The word speaks of an inner room, often a place where valuables are stored, and hence can be used to mean a granary or barn. But it is used in the Septuagint for the room into which Joseph went to weep when his brothers were present, Genesis 43:30, of Pharaoh's bedchamber into which the frogs would come, Exodus 8:3. It is the secret chamber of Matthew 24:26, the closet of Luke 12:3.

*'And when thou hast shut thy door...'* Christ would have us to go apart from others to pray, and to do so unobserved, even unheard, by anyone else. How different this is from the attitude of the hypocrites, v. 5. Prayer may be offered silently, in the heart, as when Nehemiah prayed before answering the king, Nehemiah 2:4f, 'Then I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said unto the king...' In Exodus 14:15 the Lord said to Moses, 'Wherefore criest thou unto me?' when we read not a word of Moses having said anything: but in his heart, in the face of the rebelliousness and unbelief of the nation, he was crying to the Lord. Just as the face that does not betray fasting and the hand that does not betray almsgiving mark the one who acts in faith, so inner and secret prayer can mark the true child of God in those circumstances where to pray aloud is not practicable.

*'Pray to thy Father which seeth in secret.'* Secrecy from men is not secrecy from God, 'unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid'. That our heavenly Father sees in secret shows that our prayers cannot be kept from him, and that we cannot truly pray but in his presence.

*'And thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.'* There are two things to note here. First, our heavenly Father, seeing in secret, will reward the one whose prayer is of this sort. That is, it is he who rewards and not another. The hypocrite sought the reward of human praise, whether for his almsgiving or for his prayers. The child of God presents his petitions to his heavenly Father, or does his alms as unto the Lord. In each case his heavenly Father, being in secret and seeing in secret, rewards or recompenses him. The same is true for those who fast before the Lord rather than before men, v. 18. Thus neither almsgiving, prayer nor fasting are profitless with God, whose recompense is more greatly to be desired than that of men. After all, the most that men can do is to think well of us, even if just for a moment. What is the most our heavenly Father can do for us? Given that he is already our heavenly Father, we cannot think that there is some hope of salvation from all this. Rather, we seek that blessing, benefit or grace which he considers to be right and proper for us. We desire to serve him whom we love, and our reward is in knowing that he receives our service.

Secondly, we are told that our heavenly Father will reward us openly. Although these final words are omitted in vv. 4, 6 and 18 from the critical text, they are present in the Received Text and so are rightly in our version. It is important that we understand the open reward, else we may fall into error here. This open reward may not be had until we come to the day of judgement, when the secrets of all hearts will be opened, and when the books of all men's deeds are opened and read. That we who love the Lord, and who have served him with a true heart and conscience will be rewarded openly is a very great comfort. To hear those wonderful

words, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world' (Matthew 25:34) will be to be blessed indeed. To whom will such word be spoken? To those of whom the next verses are true: 'I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came to me.' And if we ask when did we do these things, hear Christ's further words, v. 40, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.' This shows that the target of our almsgiving is to be the household of faith. Our prayers and our fasting cannot have another aim, for although they may not be done to the household of faith, they are to be done towards the Head of the household, who is Christ. So that the aim and desire we have in our good works, in prayer and in fasting is to honour and serve our Saviour Christ.

The reward with which our heavenly Father rewards us is of infinitely greater worth than anything man can say, do or give to us. 'This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles' (Psalm 34:6). Unless the Lord does indeed reward or recompense us, why do we read, 'O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come' (Psalm 65:2). It was Solomon's plea that the Lord would hear and answer whenever prayer was made at Jerusalem or towards the temple, 1 Kings 8:28-30, 'Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee to day: That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest

hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place. And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive.' Our Saviour did not condemn the Pharisee in his parable for going up to the temple to pray, but for praying in the manner he used, Luke 18:11–12. The prayer of the publican was heard, not because it was prayed in the temple, but because it was the unrestrained outpouring of his heart to the Lord, in humility and contrition, v. 13. The reward granted to that man was open: he may not have been changed in his appearance or dress, but in his heart he knew he was forgiven. That speaks to us of the open reward promised here. The Lord does not leave us to guess whether we have been heard, but he promises that he hears prayer, and by his Spirit he so moves our hearts that we know we have been heard and accepted at the throne of grace.

If our aim is the praise of men we have failed to have in the most basic understanding of spiritual matters. We are not put on earth to seek the praise of men but to serve the Lord our God. He is our Maker, and he is our Judge. He is the giver of good gifts and the one from whom all blessings flow. And yet even here we must be warned: if our intention in giving alms, in praying or in fasting, is to obtain a spiritual reward, we are at fault. The Lord is worthy of our service and worship because he is the Lord. He is God. He is the Almighty, Holy, Righteous, Majestic, Glorious, Infinite God, and the whole creation was brought into being to serve him wholly, faithfully and instantly. If we are truly his children, if he is our Father, then such service is natural to us. We pray to him because we have both a desire to pray and no one else to whom we can pray. That there will be a reward is secondary. We pray because we must and because we can. We desire to see the face of our God. Let him be our shield, and our exceeding great reward. ¶

---

## OF THE ETERNAL DECREES, OR PREDESTINATION

by JOHN EDWARDS (1637–1716)

The matter and argument which our Saviour is treating of in this chapter demonstrates this to be the genuine sense, 'Take no thought,' saith he, 'for your life, what you shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on', v. 25; that is, be not fearful and anxious about your future subsistence; be not over solicitous how you shall sustain and uphold your bodies by

meat and drink, and how you shall consult your health by having convenient clothing, and by any other ways prolong your lives; for, besides that God's providence takes care of you, you are secure by his decrees, which hath so fixed the life of man, that not on cubit, that is the least measure or portion can be added to it. And upon this our Saviour grounds his ensuing advice, v. 31,

'Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat, or What shall we drink?' Which makes it clear that the test must be understood of the life and subsistence of man, and not of his stature. And it might be further added, that the word which the Syriac here uses, (as Ferraris, and from him Dr Hammond hath observed) signifies the year of a man's age, as well as the magnitude of the body.

But that the Greek word is meant, not from this latter, but of the former only, is manifest from what this our learned annotation hath observed, namely, that one cubit here is set down as a very small measure, which yet would be a very great one if it were applied to the stature of a man's body. Christ's auditors, to whom he spake these words, are supposed to have arrived at a considerable growth, and therefore they could not hope to add a foot and a half to their stature. But now, on the other hand, as the fore said writer remarks, a cubit will seem but a small part of the many years of a long life. And perhaps are generally solicitous to make some additions, though never so little, to their days by the use of food and physic, and other methods which they think proper for that purpose. But though our Saviour doth not condemn the use of lawful means for the preserving of life, yet he here acquaints us, that we cannot possibly add the least proportion to it. We cannot enlarge the period of it, beyond what God hath set us, as this excellent author speaks, which I the rather mention, because he is no great friend of the decrees at other times, especially if they look absolutely; but here we see this learned man plainly submitting to this grand truth, (and as grounded on this text) that the limits of human life are set by God, and that there is no accession to be made to them, certainly it is the greatest honour and credit that truth can attain to, when the opposers and

adversaries of it are forced to own the reality of it.

This is further evident from John 7:30. 'They sought to take him, but no man laid hand on him, because his hour was not yet come.' Which gives us to understand that there was a certain fixed period to our Saviour's life, and consequently to his death, and that was the true reason why the Jews, who had often attempted to seize on him, and to take away his life, had not been able to. His hour, that is, his determined time was not yet come, and therefore it was impossible to apprehend him or to crucify him till that arrived. But afterwards it is said, 'Jesus knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of this world unto the Father', John 13:1. There is an hour of departing fore-ordained of God, which it is impossible either to prevent or avoid. Again, the same Evangelist tells us, that our Saviour seeing his death approaching, lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, 'Father, the hour is come', John 17:1, and then follows the history of his sufferings and death. From this manner of speech it has grown into a common way of speaking among us, concerning persons that are dying, or are not like to die yet, 'their time is come', or 'their time is not come', which I have known some men, who thought themselves wise, laugh at as a vulgar and foolish saying. But though I grant that there may be ignorant people that make use of it, yet we are certain that it is not the language of ignorance and folly, but of wisdom itself. We hear it said by our blessed Lord, his time was come, and before that, one of the Evangelists observed that his time was not come, that is, the set time appointed by God when he should leave the world. He could not be betrayed by Judas; he could not be carried before Caiaphas, Pilate, and Herod; he could not be fixed on the cross, and expire

there, before his hour, before his time came. The like bounds are set to every man's condition, and every man's time of residing in this world. Their life is fitly compared to a race, because they must finish their particular course that is set them, The number of their days is determined, and there is no altering it, unless they can reverse the eternal decree of heaven.

The same might be inferred from what the Apostle saith, Heb 9:27, 'It is appointed unto men once to die', it is as it were reposit[ed] [stored away] (ἀπόκειται.) (for that is the word) in the everlasting decrees. It is determined and appointed by the divine will and counsel, that every man shall leave this world, and the precise time is determined; once and no more; once, and at such a particular season, and no other. For as there is here the designation of the thing itself, dying, so likewise there is the determination of the certain minute when shall happen; and this is appointed as well as the other.

The usual answer to these several express places of Scripture is this, that they speak of the general law of nature concerning the short duration of men upon earth. They only tell us that man is mortal, and cannot continue long in this world. But this is very poor and mean, very frigid and diluted, and no considerate man can satisfy himself with this, because it is manifest from the particular applying of this to individual persons, as to Job, who speaks of his appointed time, to David, who acknowledges that his times are in God's hands; and to our Saviour, who said his hour was come, that the exact determination of every particular man's life is here meant. This shows that what is alleged is fantastical, and is the issue of a licentious imagination. It hath not so much as an air of probability, and it is too trifling to be seriously confuted. Besides, if God hath set the

limits of man's life as to the main and general, so that it shall not exceed such a time, we may with as much reason conclude that the very particular and precise boundaries of every man's days here on earth are fixed. This, without doubt, was the apprehension of our Church, who hath ordered in one of her prayers for a sick person, that the minister should pray that God would deliver him in his good appointed time from his bodily pain. And in the next prayer in that office, the time of his dissolution is mentioned and acknowledged, to let us know that there is such a certain and determined time as I have been speaking of.

This may be proved not only from these particular texts which mention the stated determination of man's life, but also from all those other passages of Scripture which more generally acquaint us that all times and seasons are fixed by God. This is the meaning of what Solomon saith, Eccl 3:1, 'To everything there is a season, (that is, a fixed and appointed season, as we find the word used in Neh 13:31, Esther 9:31) and a time to every purpose under the heaven.' And then he particularly proceeds to enumerate the several occurrences of man's life, and lets us know that they are all exactly timed, ordered and disposed; but he begins his calendar with that which I am now particularly speaking of: 'There is a time to be born, and a time to die', v. 2, that is, there is a set time for both.

And our Saviour acquainted his apostles, that as to the times and seasons, God had put them into his own power, Acts 1:7, because they were all fixed by him, and in respect of his decree are unchangeable, and therefore in the power of none but God. Whence we cannot but be astonished at the perverse and obstinate denial of this predetermination, though the Scripture so positively and expressly asserts it.

Concerning all nations of men the Apostle pronounces that 'God hath determined the times before appointed', Acts 17:26, not only the place of their habitation, (as we read in the next words) is determined, and therefore is properly called the bounds of their habitation, but all events, and the times and seasons belonging to them are exactly set and appointed; yea there is a double determination and appointment of times, he 'hath determined the times before appointment.'

The just time of Israel's bondage in Egypt was prescribed, Gen 15:13. 'Thy seed, (saith God there to Abraham) shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years' and no longer. So the particular space of time wherein that people afterwards were to be captives in Babylon was punctually determined, Jer 25:8. 'This hole land shall be a desolation, and this nation shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.' Thus the exact duration of the Church of Smyrna's troubles and calamities was fixed, Rev 2:10. 'The devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried: and ye shall have tribulation ten days', and when those are past, ye shall be free; ye shall be discharged from prison.

And if the time of evils and calamities be set, then tis no wonder that the Scripture so often tells us, that the evils and calamities themselves which befalls the world, whether single men, or whole bodies and societies, are decreed and appointed by God. After the description of the miserable state of the wicked even in this life, we find this added at the close of all, Job 20:29. 'This is the portion (the allotted portion) of a wicked man from God, and the heritage of his decree from God.' As much as to say, this was appointed unto him, (and so our translators render it) by the eternal decree of God, for this decree

is expressly mentioned in the Hebrew text. We read of God's determining or counselling to destroy a person, 2 Chron 25:16. We read of the consumption decreed, Isa 10:22, and consumption even determined, v. 23, and again, 28:22, and the counsel of the Lord of hosts which he hath counselled or determined against Egypt, Isa 19:17. When Daniel was undertaking to tell Nebuchadnezzar his fate, he thus prefaces to it, 'This is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king:' Dan 4:24. To this purpose is that in Hab 1:12, 'Thou hast ordained them for judgement; thou has established them for correction.' In Zeph 2:2, 'The meek of the earth' are exhorted 'to seek the Lord before the decree brings forth', that is, before God's decree concerning the punishment of that people be put in execution. 'We are appointed thereunto', 1 Thess 3:3, that is, we are appointed, and predetermined to the afflictions we suffer. So fully and amply doth the Scripture testify concerning the pre-termination of all evils.

And as the time of distress and trouble, so that of relief and deliverance is exactly prefixed and determined. Joseph 'was laid in iron', he was a fettered captive, 'until the time that his' (that is, God's) 'word came', Ps 105:19, until the time of the accomplishing of God's decree, which is fitly called his word. So it is expressly taken notice of, that the Israelites were not delivered from their bondage before the appointed time. 'It came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self same say it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt', Ex 12:41. The period of their dismissal was set, and we see it was exactly fulfilled. And this seems to me to be contained in these words of the pious Psalmist, 'The Lord will be a refuge in the times in trouble', Ps 9:9, for so it is in the

original. And again, Ps 10:1, we read of 'the times in trouble', which, as I conceive, expresses to us the certain times, and the critical seasons of God's helping the distressed, whether they be persons, or whether they be whole nations, or a church. To these latter the Psalmist's words relate, in Ps 102:13. 'Thou shalt rise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come.' There is a prefixed time when the Church's enemies shall be destroyed, and she exalted. 'The Lord hath spoken, saying, Within three years, as the years of an hireling, and the glory of Moab shall be contemned,' etc, Isa 16:14. Precisely within that time, neither sooner nor later, shall the judgements of heaven overtake the Moabites.

So it is remarked, that 'in that very night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain', Dan 5:30. Namely, at the very time when the seventy years of captivity were expired. And in this Book of Daniel we read of 'the times appointed', 8:19; 10:11; 11:27, 35; of 'determined times', and 'a time, and times, and half a time', 7:7 and so in Rev 12:14. And the fall of Babylon, and the deliverance of the oppressed church are said to be 'in one hour'; that is, in a certain predetermined time, an appointed season. Which lets us understand that all the periods of time, whether longer or shorter, are fixed by the Almighty, who is the Lord of times and seasons; and if they be all fixed, then those of life and death more especially. So that, whatever thoughts some may have, I apprehend it most agreeable to the tenor of the Holy Scriptures, that every man's life is determined by God. By an unalterable decree it is ordained how long men shall live. No man dies before his appointed time that was fore-ordained; and I cannot but declare that I wonder at it, that prejudice and incredulity should so blind men, that they become easy proselytes to another doctrine.

And now seeing it is evident that the times are fixed, and that of human life more especially, who can doubt whether all circumstances of man's life be fixed? The place of actions and events, no less that the time of them, is determined by the divine decree; as we may gather from variety of instances in Scripture, and more particularly from the wonderful account of the birth place of Christ, Luke 2:1-7, and from what is said with relation to the place where he was betrayed, Matt 26:55-56, 'I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hands on me', saith our Saviour to the enraged multitude, who came out with swords and staves to seize upon him; 'but all this was done', saith the Evangelist, 'that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled'; that God's decrees spoken by Isaiah and other prophetic writings might be accomplished. Not the temple, but Gethsemane was the place appointed for the betrayal of Christ, and the Jews could not lay hands on him till he came thither. So we read that all the other main circumstances belonging to our Saviour's nature, miracles, passion, resurrection, ascension, were pre-determined; and by comparing the Old and New Testaments together, we may satisfy ourselves that they were all fulfilled.

So through the whole time of every man's being here upon earth, there is nothing left undetermined. Every particular state of life, all events and issues of things that happen, are determined beforehand. Not only the *time*—when, and the *place*—where, but the *kind*—what, the *manner*—how, the *measure*—how much, the *end* and *issue*—how long, are fixed by an unerring hand. The scenes of man's life are all laid out, and every part that is acted was pre-assigned by God. The Jews proverbially say, A man doth not prick his finger at any time but it

is determined above. Their meaning is, there is not the least concern belonging to man on earth, but it is fore-ordained in heaven. And I have made it appear that this is an unshakeable truth, it having its immovable foundation on the word of God. For there we are informed that 'there is a decree made for the rain', and for all the other works of nature, and particularly as to man, that 'he hath appointed a time upon earth', that 'his days are determined'; that 'the number of his months is with God'; who 'hath appointed his bounds that it cannot pass'; that 'he accomplisheth, as a hireling, his days'; that 'his times are in God's hands'; that he 'cannot add one cubit to his age'; that when 'his hour is come' (and not before) 'he must depart out of this world; that 'it is appointed unto men once to die'; that there is therefore 'a time to die'; that more generally 'the times and seasons are put in God's own power'; that 'God hath determined the times before appointed'; that there is a set time for 'God's favouring Sion'; that there are 'determined appointed times' for delivering the Church.

But the proof of this is not only to be had from Scripture, which I have abundantly shown, but also from reason and experience. First, the doctrine of the divine decrees, as

I have hitherto asserted it, is established on this rational grounds, that God is of infinite knowledge. He foreknowing all things of what kind soever, we cannot but grant that he may easily determine them, and fix the circumstances belonging to them all; especially if we consider that his knowing differs from ours; for he knows them altogether and at once. Nothing is to come, and nothing is past with him, but everything is present, and therefore it is no wonder that they are all fixed and determined by him. Arminius himself makes use of this argument. 'God,' saith he (Disputation 15 & 16), 'doth nothing in time but what he decreed from eternity,' and he quotes Acts 15:18 for it, 'Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world'; inferring from his omniscience, that he hath fixed the events of all things that ever shall be. And truly it is a very solid inference; for the foreknowledge of God, and his decrees, are reciprocal and inseparable. What he discerns by his prescience must be concluded to have been predetermined, that so his knowledge may be certain and infallible. And, on the other hand, what he hath thus determined by his decree, was foreseen and certainly known by virtue of his unlimited prescience.

### *TO BE CONTINUED*

---

Plutarch, in the life of Phocion, tells us of a certain gentlewoman of Ionia, who shewed the wife of Phocion all the rich jewels and precious stones she had: she answered her again, 'All my riches and jewels are my husband Phocion.' So may a saint say of his blessed Saviour, 'Christ is all my jewels, my riches, my treasure, my pleasures, etc. His sufficiency is all these, and more than these, to me.'

*Thomas Brooks*

It is the duty of a Christian to wait God's leisure. There is no mercy worth praying for, but it is worth waiting for.

*Ralph Venning*

# WHAT'S IN A NAME

by CARINE MACKENZIE

When someone's asks you 'Who are you?', how do you reply?

You probably reply with your name. 'I am Molly.' Or 'I am Robert', or whatever your name is.

Your name is what identifies you. It makes you different from other people in your class or in your street. Your parents would have carefully chosen your name—perhaps calling you after a relative or someone your parents admired.

Zacharias was a priest in the temple. One day an angel appeared to him and told him the wonderful news that his wife Elizabeth would have a baby even although she was old. 'You shall call his name John' the angel instructed Zacharias.

When the baby was born, all the neighbour and cousins were very excited and glad. They thought that the baby would be called Zacharias like his father. His mother said 'No. His name is John.' 'There is nobody with that name in your family.' But his father Zacharias confirmed the decision. 'His name is John.'

You may know someone called John. The meaning of the name is 'God is gracious.' Your name has a meaning too. In the Bible names are really important.

When God sent his Son to this world, he was miraculously conceived in the womb of a young virgin called Mary. Joseph her husband was told by an angel in a dream that the child was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph was told what name to give to the baby. 'Thou shalt call his name JESUS, for he shall save his people from their sins' (Matthew 1:21). The name Jesus means 'the Lord is salvation.'

Jesus was given another special name—Emmanuel which means 'God with us' (Matthew 1:23). God the Son humbled himself and became a human like us so that he could live a perfect life for us and die in our place for our sins.

The name of Jesus is strong and powerful. People might think very little about it or even despise it, but the Bible tells us 'That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow' (Philippians 2:10). Everyone will bow down at the name of Jesus, whether in mercy here or in judgement at the last day.

Jesus is the one and only Saviour. A lame man came to Peter and John outside the temple and begged for some money. Peter had no money to give him, but he received something much better. 'In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk' (Acts 3:6). The man immediately received strength in his feet and ankles and went into the temple, walking and leaping and praising God.

The church leaders wondered how this had happened. 'By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?' they asked. Peter replied, 'By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you.' Peter went on to declare the power of Jesus to save. 'There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved' (Acts 4:7-12).

A name involves more than just the letters spelling out the word Molly or Robert. The name refers to the whole person, his character and power. You may ask a friend for advice about using someone to do work in your house. 'Yes, you can trust that man,' she may say, 'he has a good name.' This means that when people speak of him, they can trust him to do a good job. The Bible tells us that 'a good name is better than precious ointment' (Ecclesiastes 7:1) and 'rather to be chosen than great riches' (Proverbs 22:1). A good reputation is a valuable asset.

The name of God is the most special name of all. One of the commandments tells us 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain (Exodus 20:7).

God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are one God equal in power and glory. We must take great care when using any of the names and titles of God and when referring to his attributes. 'Give unto the Lord the glory due to his name' (Psalm 29:2).

Our names will be forgotten in years to come but God's name 'shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun (Psalm 72:17).

His name is worthy of all praise—this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD. (Deuteronomy 28:58).

### Bible Search

Find the missing words from the verses. The initial letters of the correct answers will spell out something from Proverbs 18.11 which tell about the name of the Lord.

1. Repentance and remission of \_\_\_\_\_ should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. (Luke 24:47)
2. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name \_\_\_\_\_. (Psalm 34:3)
3. But as many as \_\_\_\_\_ him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. (John 1:12)
4. By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for \_\_\_\_\_ to the faith among all nations, for his name. (Romans 1:5)
5. I have remembered thy name, O Lord, in the \_\_\_\_\_, and have kept thy law. (Psalm 119:55)
6. And in his name shall the \_\_\_\_\_ trust. (Matthew 12:21)
7. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving \_\_\_\_\_ to God and the Father by him. (Colossians 3:17)
8. To him that \_\_\_\_\_ I will give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man

knoweth saving he that receiveth it. (Revelation 2:17)

9. I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done it: and I will \_\_\_\_\_ on thy name; for it is good before thy saints. (Psalm 52:9)
10. O Lord our Lord, how \_\_\_\_\_ is thy name in all the earth! Who hast set thy glory above the heavens. (Psalm 8:1)
11. Thou, O Lord, art our father, our \_\_\_\_\_; thy name is from everlasting. (Isaiah 63:16)

---

## CHRIST ALL IN ALL

REV EDUARD MEINDERS (1691–1752)

Supplied by A.W. DE LANGE (Woudenberg, The Netherlands)

*'But Christ is all, and in all' (Colossians 3:11)*

Congratulations to the faithful about Jesus' allsufficiency and their portion thereof

Come near, faithful, and behold for your joy and satisfaction of the soul the great and untaxable gladness that has become yours in communion which the allsufficient Jesus. Man is incapable to name it, and the pen of the best writer is not able to truly describe it. In order to speak stammeringly about it, pay attention, I pray you, to the following:

1. To the allsufficient Jesus himself, and that blessed all encompassing fullness which is found with him. Are you by nature debtors to God? Your debts up to your ears, yes, are you immersed above your ears and head? Jesus is the Surety, and a perfect Surety, who hath paid fully to last penny to God's righteousness. Did you stand with God in a unatoned state? The Mediator Jesus hath atoned you with God and satisfied him. Were you

chained and bound as a captured slave by chains of sin, the law and Satan? Goel Jesus hath redeemed you, and broken the chains into pieces. Were you sunk down by sin into a dreadful state? Jesus, your Saviour, hath attained salvation you, and began to apply this powerfully to you. Were you dead in sin? Jesus, who is your life, hath quickened you. Were you, from head to feet, burdened by spiritual maladies, blind, deaf, lame, dumb? Your Healer Jesus hath made you in the beginning whole, seeing, hearing, going, speaking. Were you polluted by sin? Jesus hath washed you by his blood and Spirit. Did it seem that you would perish by hunger and thirst? Jesus is become your food and drink. Did you not have clothes to cover your nakedness? Jesus hath clothed you with the robe of his righteousness. Were you poorer than the poorest beggar? Jesus made you rich. Were you dejected and despised? Jesus lifted you to highest point of honour and

respect. Do you not have him as a Teacher, when you are ignorant, as a Leader on the path of life; is he not Strength unto to you when you are weak? Is he not for you a shelter in every need? Does he not deliver you in from all difficulty? Does he not sanctify you more and more? Who assureth you of your state of grace? Who comforteth you? Who rejoiceth you? Who giveth you boldness to approach to God's throne of grace? Who reviveth your hope? Who giveth you a right to the world? Who pleadeth for you at the Father's throne? Doth the Lord Jesus not do all this? He shall deliver you from death? He shall set you free from hell, and shall soon after your death make you soul blessed. He shall let your bodies appear again from the dust and shall glorify them unspeakably. He shall once point you to heaven and bring you there with body and soul, whereby you shall be plunged over head and ears into the stream of God's immediate communion, and be eternally blessed and glad. Stand still, faithful! And behold it fully, drawn up in holy wonder and attention, this fullness of grace of your Jesus.

2. Then descend in your thoughts into yourself, and ponder in quiet calmness your fellowship to Jesus' fullness. Everything believers, what Jesus is, what he can and wanteth for the salvation of the sinner, is for you, you are partaker of it, it belongs to you. You we say, who were together with all people by nature were removed heaven high from God and Jesus. Totally undone and damned. But the Lord cast from eternity an eye of grace on you, and chose you in Christ onto glory, while he passed many thousands of other people and decide to let them fall in sin, and because of sin, to punish them in eternity, to show his holy righteousness. The Lord began, according to this decree of election, by calling, regeneration and conversion

the work of grace in you, gave you faith in Jesus, united you with him by this faith and then Christ became in you in the beginning everything.

3. Lastly, ponder also for yourself, that Jesus not only is everything to you, but also in you, in your inner part. Temporal goods are without their owners and therefor can easily be lost. But believers, Christ is in you. He liveth in your hearts (John 14:23). You are carrying him in your souls and therefor you shall never lose him fully. Also Jesus' fullness is in you and hath filled your treasures (Proverb 8:21). And you shall never lose them again (Matthew 6:23). So that may rightfully say: We are bearing all ours with us. What do you think, faithful, are you not to be counted as blessed because of your portion the blessed Jesus?

### **How one can know that he has a portion of Jesus**

But Jesus shall not be all in all in all men, head by head, but only in the elect, regenerated and believers. And therefore everybody should examine himself accurately whether he has a portion of Jesus' fullness or not.

1. Let him examine whether Jesus is precious to him and whether he esteems Jesus higher then everything that is outside of him. Thus Peter says about all true believers: 'Unto you therefor he is precious' (1 Peter 2:7). There may be a certain esteem for Jesus in a time believer, but he does not esteem him more than everything, because he has not noticed the all exceeding preciousness in Jesus, where a true believer esteems Jesus therefore above everything, because weighing Jesus and the world in the scale of a sanctified judgement, Jesus is found to be exceedingly heavier than the world. Yes, all true believers have such a high esteem for Jesus,

which clearly is found in these two parts:

First, they cannot endure outside of him, even though they would have in this world everything one could wish. They are content with it if they have to miss Jesus and his presence. The bride could not stay on her bed when she did not find her Bridegroom Jesus. (Song of Song 3:1, 2).

Second, they do not ask for everything, if they may only enjoy Jesus. Then they are wonderfully content and cry out, being encouraged, with Asaph: 'My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever' (Psalm 73:26).

2. It is also the evidence that somebody has a portion of Jesus' allsufficiency, when Jesus in him is everything what he can become for a sinner, pleasure and desirable. A true believer does not split Jesus. Jesus' commands are just as sweet to him as his mercies. Behold this in the bride, when she had, in a manner of speaking, had describes her Bridegroom from the head to the feet and could not mention more particularities, she broke out in these words: 'He is altogether lovely' (Song of Songs 5:16).

3. Further one must find himself in a cordial or restless desire or hunger for Jesus.

'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled' (Matthew 5:6). We do not speak of the soon coming and vanishing wish for Jesus, which in the time believer; but of such a desire, that is so strong and ardent, which makes man to use all means to have Jesus as his part, and will not rest or be content, until Jesus fulfilleth it.

4. Lastly, one can know whether Jesus is his, when he has made a faithful use of him, which exists in this: Man sees his emptiness in everything and is sensitive about it. He desires to have it filled and noticing that there is such a fullness of grace found in and at Jesus, and that Jesus is willing to fill his emptiness, he lays himself as an empty vessel and a beggar before Jesus, sighs and calls to Jesus that he may look upon him with eyes of grace, and will give him salvation good unto wisdom, justification, sanctification and redemption; he submits himself without measure to Jesus and accepts him in denying all, own power, own worthiness, own wisdom, own will etc. only and fully, to be saved for time and eternity. That is coming to Jesus to buy and to eat, wine and milk, without money and without price (Isaiah 55:1).

### *TO BE CONTINUED*

---

It is only here that you have your troubles and fears, and castings down; for these things are all temporal, they will vanish away anon, when eternal things take place; the one is limited, the other unlimited.

*Richard Bentley*

The world cannot exalt a proud man so high, but God will bring him low; neither can all the world so debase an humble man, but God will exalt him.

*Ralph Venning*

I am a stranger even at home. Therefore if the dogs of the world bark at me, I neither care, nor wonder.

*Bishop Hall*

*In the September–October 2023 issue of The Gospel Magazine there appeared a short piece on Christ’s lament over Jerusalem, by John Hooper. That was the first of a series of articles, proposed by the Trustees of The Gospel Magazine, in which certain misunderstood texts are given their true scriptural meaning. The following article is the second in this series.*

## OF GOD WHO WILL HAVE ALL MEN TO BE SAVED

by EDWARD MALCOLM (Reading)

*‘For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth’ (1 Timothy 2:3–4)*

The question we ask is, In what sense is it said that God has a will to save all men? That God has such a will we do not deny, since it is plainly stated in various places. ‘He died for all’ (2 Corinthians 5:15). Christ ‘gave himself a ransom for all’ (1 Timothy 2:6). Jesus tasted death for every man, Hebrews 2:9. None dare deny the existence of these words, and none dare try to argue them away. On the other hand, none ought to dare to load these words with more than they are intended to bear.

The answer to the question requires us to examine the words of Paul to Timothy in the light of the passage (context), the wider inspired writings (the analogy of Scripture) and the tenets of our doctrine (the analogy of faith). No explanation of the words that fails any one of these tests can be received.

### **The context**

The passage begins at v. 1, where Paul writes, ‘I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men’. The context, therefore, requires us to consider the subject of prayer. Calvin points out that three of the four words used for prayer are synonyms, and modern commentators can see no

appreciable difference between them. That such prayer is exhorted ‘first of all’ means that it is the foremost matter about which he intends to write. There is a pressing need for the prayer he exhorts. That prayer is for all men. None will deny that the ‘all men’ of v. 1 must be the ‘all men’ of v. 4. Here, ‘men’ are human beings, not males.

Then, in v. 2, Paul speaks of a particular class of men, ‘For kings, and for all that are in authority’. That is, we are exhorted to pray even for those who rule us, in whatever context or situation. Elsewhere the same Apostle requires that every soul be subject to the higher powers, Romans 13:1. Peter requires that we submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether kings or governors, 1 Peter 2:13f. For Christians who live in generally law abiding countries, where stable government and peaceful transitions of power are expected, such prayers may not appear to be particularly urgent. In the first century, and in many places today, such prayers are perhaps hard to justify. After all, what have the rulers and authorities of those nations done for Christ’s people? Like Pilate and Herod they have oppressed. Like the rulers of the synagogues, the chief priests

and elders of the people, they have opposed the gospel and persecuted any who love the Saviour. There have been times in the history of our own nation when it has been rulers, in State and in Church, who have led the way in resisting the light of God's truth.

It will come as no surprise therefore to learn that there have been and continue to be some who are reluctant to be subject to the higher powers, or to submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. How can a person, or a congregation, that bewails the oppressive actions of authority, be moved to pray for that authority? How can Christians suffering state-sponsored persecution pray for their rulers? Yet we are commanded to pray for those who persecute us, Matt 5:44.

However, the Apostle Paul commands that prayer be made for all in authority, both for kings and all rulers. This is a class of people who are not to be excluded from our prayers, even if such prayers are hard, and seem counter-intuitive in the circumstances. Why should we pray for such people? 'For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.' Paul both commends prayer itself, and the matters for which we are to pray—'that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.' To do so means to pray for all in authority, and for all other classes of people. We are affected by those who make our laws, and by those who enforce them. We are affected by those who think and propose, and by those who instil the thoughts and proposals through education. Whether we like it or not, leaders in the churches have an influence, so would it not be wise to pray for them, that the Lord would turn their hearts, rather than complain against them and their frequently disappointing statements and actions? All of this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour. And in that he is our Saviour,

we know that he will save all whom he has chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. This may include kings, and some who are in authority. This may include philosophers and journalists, teachers and lecturers, archbishops and other ministers. Or do we doubt the saving power of God?

Notice that 'there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.' The gospel is not for one class of persons only, neither does it exclude any class of persons. Poor widows and beggars stand alongside the Nicodemuses and Josephs of Arimathea in the Kingdom of heaven. There may be more of the former than of the latter, but we have good cause to think that George III will stand with Billy Bray in the presence of their Saviour.

And we cannot overlook the way our translators have punctuated the verse: 'Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.' Two things are in the will of God our Saviour: the salvation of men from all classes, and their coming to the knowledge of the truth. Since there is no salvation without that coming to the knowledge of the truth, and since none come to that knowledge who are not objects of saving grace, it follows that the second aspect of the divine will here must dictate our reading of the first aspect: those whom he purposes to save in Christ Jesus will come to the knowledge of the truth.

From this, it will be clear that we are arguing for the contextual reading of these words to mean that Paul is speaking of classes of people, not of all mankind. How does this relate to our other two tests?

### **The analogy of Scripture**

A text taken out of context becomes a pretext, as the adage reminds us, with good

reason. The same may be said of a reading that, though it seems to fit the context, falls foul of something else in Scripture. The church may not 'so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another' (Article XX of the Thirty-nine Articles). Such a requirement does not give us license to give up the exposition of Scripture by claiming to hold two things in tension: that is mere laziness.

Are we justified in understanding 'all men' here as referring to all classes of men, in the light of the teaching of the rest of Scripture? We affirm that we are.

Here, the apparent problem lies in v. 6, where we read that Christ 'gave himself a ransom for all.' If the 'all men' of vv. 1 and 4 are indeed all classes of men, then the 'all' for whom Christ gave himself a ransom is all classes of men as well. However, if the 'all' for whom Christ gave himself a ransom is indeed all men, it follows that the 'all men' of vv. 1 and 4 cannot be all classes, but must be all men. So we ask, Did Christ give himself a ransom for all men, or for all classes of men?

We answer this by looking at v. 5. There we read that 'there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.' Is it possible that the 'men' of this verse differ from the 'all men' of vv. 1 & 4? Is Christ the mediator of all men generally, or is he not rather the mediator of his people? In Matthew 20:28 we read the words of Christ, that the Son of man came 'to give his life a ransom for many.' Did the saving benefits of Christ increase between this pronouncement and that of Paul writing to Timothy? Was an extension made, so that the scope of the atonement was enlarged after the fact? Or are we meant to understand the two statements as synonymous, where 'many' and 'all' are not in tension, far less are they contradictory. Rather, 'all' in 1 Timothy

2:6 either means 'many' or 'all classes'. Its meaning must conform *both* to vv. 1 and 4 of the same chapter *and* to Matthew 20:28. Isaiah 53:12 teaches us that God's Righteous Servant bore the sins of many, not of all.

### **The analogy of faith**

What is our doctrine? Do we have a full-orbed gospel? Do we acknowledge the divine decrees, the will of God with which he has predestined all things? Does he truly declare the end from the beginning, does his counsel stand, and will he do all his pleasure, as Isaiah 46:10 teaches? If so, we cannot think that our gracious and loving God has not decreed the very souls he will save, who are chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, Ephesians 1:4, for whom Christ died, who was foreordained before the foundation of the world, 1 Peter 1:20. We dare not think that Christ laid down his life on the cross without knowing for whom he died, for he saw of the travail of his soul, and was satisfied, Isaiah 53:11. He knew the penitent thief was his, and the impenitent was not. He knew the difference between Jerusalem which then was, over which he lamented for the wrath to come, Matthew 23:37ff, and the Jerusalem which is above, for whom he prayed in love, Luke 23:28, John 17.

Any view of 1 Timothy 2:4 that contradicts the Reformed doctrine of particular redemption must be resisted. This is not because we set our system up above the plain words of Scripture, but because we are convinced in our souls that the Reformed faith is the authentic gospel. We are not ashamed of it, and do not feel the need to hold in tension things that are apparently contradictory: no, we resolve those apparent contradictions through the study, exposition and application of God's holy word. Where we cannot yet resolve a matter (I speak of individuals,

since the church has resolved them, in the body of writings handed down the generations, and often sitting gathering dust on the shelves of many a ministerial study) let us be honest and admit that we have yet to do the work. But let us not call into question the truth of God's word through our failure to apply the analogy of faith.

### Conclusion

The blessed Apostle Paul exhorts that, first of all, prayers of all sorts be made for all men, including for those for whom we many not be naturally inclined to pray. After all, Christ died for all classes of men, omitting

none. Let us not lean to our own understanding as to the fit subjects for prayer, but let us obey the Lord's will. Let us not lean to our own understanding as to the meaning of Scripture, but let us submit to the Lord's wisdom, as the Holy Spirit the Comforter leads us into all truth.

Needless to say, objectors will want to point to other verses that, they believe, deny the doctrine we have maintained here. We trust over the coming months to deal with more of those verses, to help all readers of *The Gospel Magazine* in their love for Christ, their delight in the goodness of God, and their confidence in the Scripture of truth. ¶

---

## THE LORD, THE SHEPHERD OF HIS PEOPLE

by JAMES NORTH (Totton, Hants)

*'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.'* Psalm 23:6

This 6th verse of Psalm 23 is a conclusion. It is as if David the Shepherd-king is summing up the whole of the psalm in just a few words before he moves on to consider the triumphal entrance of the Shepherd-king into the realms of glory. In Psalm 22 he has considered the priestly work of the Shepherd-king. In this psalm, Psalm 23 he has considered the experience of his sheep and is now entering into his glory as related in Psalm 24.

David, of course, is not speaking about himself, but is, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, speaking prophetically of the Lord Jesus Christ who is the true Shepherd-king of his people. He is the Messiah, the Redeemer of his elect, the church. James

Montgomery wrote:

Hail to the Lord's Anointed,  
Great David's greater Son.  
Hail, in the time appointed  
His reign on earth begun.  
He came to break oppression,  
To set the captives free;  
To take away transgressions,  
And rule in equity.

As we draw our thoughts on this 23rd, Psalm, there are 6 facets for us to consider: a word

1. of conclusion: *Surely*,
2. of assurance: *Goodness*,
3. of pardon: *Mercy*,

4. of pilgrimage: *All the days of my life,*
5. of promise: *I will dwell in the house of the LORD,*
6. and of perpetuity: *For ever!*

And what a mercy it is that the end of the psalm is not the actual end of all things. No! It is but the beginning of the eternity for the people of God who will indeed dwell in the house of the Lord for ever and ever singing the praises of him who gave his life for them

### 1. A word of conclusion

#### *Surely*

This verse, then, begins with the word 'surely'—because of all that has gone before. Because of the opening words of this psalm, 'The Lord is my Shepherd'; because of the care of the shepherd; because of that which he has passed through; because of all the kind care and attention given by the Shepherd; because of all the patient work undertaken by the Shepherd, the sheep of his pasture is brought to say, 'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me.' The child of God has confidence, not in his own ability to save, but in the ability of the glorious Shepherd of Israel. He has come to the conclusion: 'surely goodness and mercy shall follow me.' He has confidence in the work of the Good Shepherd.

How has the Good Shepherd cared for his people?

(I) He has entered into a covenant with them. David speaks on his death-bed of the covenant of God's everlasting grace: 'Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow' (2 Sam 23:5). John Kent wonderfully writes of the fullness of the Covenant of Grace as follows:

With David's Lord and ours,  
A covenant once was made,  
Whose bonds are firm and sure,  
Whose glories ne'er shall fade!  
Signed by the sacred Three-in-One,  
In mutual love, ere time began.

Firm as the lasting hills,  
This covenant shall endure,  
Whose potent shalls and wills  
Make every blessing sure:  
When ruin shakes all nature's frame,  
Its jots and tittles stand the same.

Here the vast seas of grace,  
Love, peace, and mercy flow,  
That all the blood-bought race  
Of men, or angels know:  
O sacred deep, without a shore,  
Who shall thy limits e'er explore?

Here when thy feet shall fall,  
Believer, thou shalt see  
Grace to restore thy soul,  
And pardon, full and free;  
Thee with delight shall God behold,  
A chosen sheep in Zion's fold.

And when through Jordan's flood  
Thy God shall bid thee go,  
His arm shall thee defend,  
And vanquish every foe;  
And in this covenant thou shalt view  
Sufficient strength to bear thee through.

That covenant is ordered, that is, it was in the mind of the Eternal God who has brought all things to pass. It is a sure and dependable covenant which can never fail because each Surety in the covenant engagements are the Eternal Three. And because of this, the child of God can say, 'this is all my salvation.'

(ii) The Good Shepherd has provided for him. 'But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory' (Phil 4:19). See Paul set out that provision to the Corinthian Church, 'But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption' (1 Cor 1:30). Christ Jesus is all:

A fulness resides in Jesus our Head,  
And ever abides to answer our need;  
The Father's good pleasure has laid up in store  
A plentiful treasure, to give to the poor.

Whate'er be our wants, we need not to fear;  
Our numerous complaints his mercy will hear;  
His fulness shall yield us abundant supplies;  
His power shall shield us when dangers arise.

As we look back through this psalm, we can see something of the goodness and provision for his people: his providential mercies daily bestowed upon us: 'It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness' (Lam 3:22, 23). What a mercy it is that his compassions do not fail to all his people even unto the present hour.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd who both leads and cares for his flock, the church. He cares for them! He feeds them! He succours them! And by their experience of following him, they know that he will never leave them nor forsake them in accordance with his promise: 'For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee' (Heb 13:5). So much so that we can sing with John Newton:

His love, in time past, forbids me to think  
He'll leave me at last in trouble to sink:  
Each sweet Ebenezer I have in review  
Confirms His good pleasure to help me  
quite through.

John Newton uses such a lovely word in that verse of his hymn: 'Ebenezer', taken from 1 Samuel 7: 'Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us' (v. 12). The word 'Ebenezer' literally means 'Stone of Help'. It is a recognition by Samuel of the help given by Almighty God to the Children of Israel in the battle against the Philistines. It was a memorial to the Lord's goodness! How many times in our Christian pilgrimage do we have occasion to raise our Ebenezers to his great Name. Times when we omitted to thank the Lord for his daily goodness towards us; times when we recognize the Lord's providential mercies, etc. we should seek to have a grateful heart of thanksgiving for all the good gifts and goodness experienced:

Sorrowing I shall be in spirit,  
Till released from flesh and sin,  
Yet from what I do inherit,  
Here Thy praises I'll begin;  
Here I raise my Ebenezer;  
Here by Thy great help I've come;  
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,  
Safely to arrive at home.

*Robert Robinson (1735–1790)*

Samuel placed the 'Stone of Help (Ebenezer)' between Mizpah and Shen. 'Mizpah' means 'Watch Tower' and 'Shen' means 'Rocky Place'. Which reminds us that the child of God should be constantly watching his own progress in the narrow way, the way he walks in the pilgrim path ever onward towards glory; but there is also the reminder that the child of God's pathway is not always easy. The Lord Jesus tells us that the pathway is both narrow and steep. It is a hard path in which the devil, like roaring lion seeking whom he may

devour is always trying the child of God. But Peter brings in some words of comfort: 'Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ' (1 Pe 1:6, 7). And, again, 'Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you' (1 Peter 4:12). Trials and tribulations are the common lot of the people of God but what a mercy it is that we are, by grace, able to look from the Watch-Tower over the crags and stones of temptation and trials to the glorious heavenly Jerusalem from whence comes our aid as we travel through the wilderness of this world: 'The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore' (Ps 121:7, 8).

Is it any wonder, then, that David commences this last verse of this psalm with the word, 'Surely'. When we hear something that is hardly believable we usually say 'Surely not!' But here there is nothing uncertain here with the promises of God towards his people: 'For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us' (2 Cor 1:20). So David says, 'Surely!' There is no 'if', 'maybe' or 'perhaps' in the promises of God:

Glory to God, they ne'er shall rove  
 Beyond the limits of His love;  
 Fenced in by Jehovah's 'shalls' and 'wills',  
 Firm as the everlasting hills.

*John Kent*

## 2. A word of assurance

### *Goodness*

'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me...'

The Hebrew word *tob* is translated in a number of ways throughout the Old Testament, and looking at the other ways in which it is translated can give us a better understanding of the goodness of the Lord towards his people, and the Shepherd's care over his flock.

#### *(a) Kindness*

'And they spake unto him, saying, If thou be kind to this people, and please them, and speak good words to them, they will be thy servants for ever' (2 Chron 10:7). Here the word *tob* is translated as 'kindness'.

These words are the words spoken to Rehoboam, Solomon's son by the elders of the Children of Israel. They were counselling him to be kind and tender towards the ten tribes of the Children of Israel. If he took the advice of the elders and spoke kindly towards them, then they would be united to the other tribes and continue as one nation. But he refused their counsel and took the advice of his young companions who had little or no experience of governance of the nation whose advice was that Jeroboam should rule them with a rod of iron. The result, of course, of that counsel was that the ten tribes rebelled against the king.

What a mercy it is that the Lord, the Good Shepherd of the Sheep cares for his flock and he has not dealt with us after our sins and the just judgment which we deserve, but he has dealt with us accord. He has shown and continues to show his mercy towards his people.

David dealt kindly with Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son. He was lame because of a fall. We are no less lame because of our fall in Adam, the representative head of the Human Race. But just as David provided for

him with a seat at his table for the remainder of his life, so the Lord cares for and provides for his people.

Look at some of the kindness shown by Almighty God, the Triune God, to his people, his flock. Consider the plan of redemption. Had not the Lord intervened in the affairs of man there would not have been anyone saved and brought to heaven. The kindness of God is shown in the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ. He 'made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross' (Phil 2:7, 8).

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

Consider also the atonement made by the Lord Jesus Christ. Was not this substitutionary death in the place and stead of his people, of his flock? 'I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. ... As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. ... Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father' (John 10:11; 15; 17; 18).

All these matters to do with the salvation of the Children of God came about because of the love and kindness of the Triune God. The gods of the heathen nations know nothing of a god of love, their gods have to be

appeased. No! Here is the Good Samaritan who ministered to the one who fell amongst the thieves and the robbers; who made provision for us in the inn; who poured the wine and oil of the covenant of grace into the wounds made by the broken law and sin. Oh, what mercy! Oh, what kindness!

*(b) Prosperity*

'In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him' (Eccles 7:14). The word translated here as 'prosperity' is the same Hebrew word as is translated in Psalm 23:6 as 'goodness'.

'A certain rich man' was prosperous in this world's goods, and Lazarus who laid at his gate was in total poverty (Lk 16:19ff). But his prosperity was solely of this world's goods. The rich young ruler could be said to have been prosperous, but that prosperity only extended to his worldly wealth (Matt 19:16ff).

The prosperity that is meant by this Hebrew word and the context in which it is found is that of spiritual prosperity. It is the prosperity of which John writes to Gaius: 'Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth' (3 John 1:2).

But what is the nature of spiritual prosperity? We can take notice of the nature of the sheep! (i) The sheep will always keep close to the Shepherd—so the child of God keeps close to the Lord Jesus Christ. 'And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice' (John 10:4). (ii) As the text of Scripture just quoted says, the child of God will follow the shepherd or, to change the metaphor slightly, they follow the Lamb: 'These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they

which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb' (Rev 14:4). (iii) The child of God will not prosper spiritually if they absence themselves from the ordinances of God for example, public worship: 'Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name' (Mal 3:16); 'Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching' (Heb 10:25). Since the Covid pandemic it seems as if the numbers in the congregations have reduced. People seem to be afraid of joining in true public worship and prefer to stay at home and tune in to broadcasted services on the internet. This should not be the case! The child of God should have a desire to join in public worship. It the case of the aged and infirm the internet has been a God-send, but for those who are physically able to get to the Courts of the Lord, there is no excuse for them to stay away. The seasons of public worship are a blessing to the child of God and the place for Christian fellowship.

And if our fellowship divine,  
In Jesus be so sweet;  
What heights of rapture shall we know  
When round His throne we meet.

He bids us build each other up,  
And gathered into one,  
To our high calling's glorious hope,  
We hand in hand go on.

(iv) Prayer is another means of grace by which the child of God grows in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,  
The Christian's native air.  
His watchword at the gates of death,  
He enters heaven with prayer

Without prayer, there is no spiritual prosperity. (v) The same applies to the Word of God. Paul's exhortation to his son in the Gospel, Timothy was 'Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth' (2 Tim 2:15). These are just some of the ways in which the child of God will know spiritual prosperity. We can sum up the way to spiritual prosperity in the words of Peter: 'But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen' (2 Pe 3:18). God grant that we may know the Lord's goodness and prosper in the things of God.

#### (c) *Wealth*

'For Mordecai the Jew was next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed' (Esther 10:3). The word *tob* is here, in this verse translated as 'wealth'. In this case the wealth referred to is financial wealth that Mordecai sought for his people. But here in Psalm 23 David is not speaking of natural wealth, but of being rich toward God: rich in faith; rich in prayer; rich in fellowship.

The Lord Jesus Christ told a parable of one who hoarded all his riches (Lk 12:16–21). He laid up all his treasures, but they were of no use to him because he died the very night that he built bigger barns.

To the rich young ruler, the Lord Jesus said, 'One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me' (Mk

10:21). To another he said, 'So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God' (Lk 12:21). It is the folly of a sinful race that it seeks to lay up treasure for self and neglects laying up treasure in heaven

and being rich toward God. What are these riches? They are the experience of sins forgiven, a knowledge of Jesus Christ and peace with heaven. They are the fruit of the Spirit in exercise in the Christian walk.

*TO BE CONTINUED*

---

## FORMER DAYS

BEING A SUMMARY OF PAST ISSUES FROM *THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE*

### **250 years ago: November & December 1773**

The **November** issue continues the letter from William Mason, on believers being made meet for glory. The piece, *A Mirror of Mercy* (begun in the October issue) continues, as does the article on objections to the circumstances and witnesses of Christ's resurrection answered. It is an attempt to separate the different aspects of the Gospel accounts into distinct events. The next part of *Typical Things* follows, dealing with the tree that sweetened the waters at Marah, the manna, the water-giving rock, the well at Beer (Meribah), the cluster of grapes from Eschol, and the brasn serpent. More will come. Answers to queries on predestination continue from a much earlier issue. The autobiography of one Sergeant James Nisbet, from a Covenanting family. He describes the persecution they suffered under the Stuarts. Poems conclude the issue.

For **December** we begin with *Thoughts on Marriage*, followed by the conclusion of the life of James Nisbet, dealing with his conversion. The *Mirror of Mercy* continues, with more *Typical Things* after that. These are the pool of Bethesda, the pool of Siloam, the deliverance of the Hebrews from Egypt, and the crossing of the Red Sea.

A writer submits a series of questions and propositions to help readers know whether they have a true interest in Christ or not. Another writer sets out to answer a query from an earlier issue on the nature of saving faith. A third writer reflects on a minister encouraging himself in Christ. Another query is raised, concerning the tree of life. Poetry, as usual, concludes the issue.

The year under review saw the publication of a supplement, in which William Mason's letter, continued in November, was brought to a conclusion. The *Mirror of Mercy* was also concluded, as was the answer to the query on the nature of saving faith. Further poems were also published.

### **200 years ago: November & December 1823**

The **November** issue opens with thoughts on the peace Christ promised to his disciples. Thoughts on perseverance follow. Proof is offered that Christ's death did not purchase or procure eternal life for all mankind. A further contribution concerns the believer's death. Yet another asks the Editors to insert something to show the true nature of true antinomianism, that right looking to Christ for perfect righteousness rather than to anything the law contains.

Zion's Pilgrim has reached the account of his life in his seventies. The ongoing debate with Myra is the subject of a letter.

A lengthy article quotes extensively from one Abbe Dubois, lately returned from missionary work in India. The Abbe's complaint is that the local people cannot equate the claims of the Christian faith with the actions of Westerners who profess to be Christians. The result is that the missionaries make no progress. The Editors then express themselves at length on the futility of missionary work, believing that contemporary efforts were founded on a false gospel (millions for whom Christ had died were perishing for want of preachers, was the claim of some), and were being carried out in human strength alone. This leads them to a disparaging review of a sermon preached on the subject of missionary work.

The Life of Thomas Scott is reviewed, at very great length, and in almost completely negative terms. Other titles are reviewed.

The December issue begins with thoughts on the faithfulness of Israel's wonder-working God. John Gill's comments on eternal justification are reproduced to satisfy an earlier request. A writer considers the positive, comparative and superlative songs due and given to the God of all grace in Scripture. The writer of the piece entitled, 'The Believer in a sinless state', reviewed in February, takes issue with his reviewer. Zion's Pilgrim continues his account of his life in his seventies. A writer answers the question posed by William, concerning real causes for saints to doubt or fear. There is, says the writer, no *real* cause to doubt or fear. An earlier query about the suitability of 2 Timothy 2:10 (here incorrectly put as 3:10) to prove the doctrine of election is answered. Notes of a sermon preached at the opening of a chapel, and notices of new publications, conclude the year.

### 100 years ago: November & December 1923

The Second Coming is the subject of the opening sermon. The critique of so-called Liberal Evangelicalism continues with the subject of eternal punishment, which they deny. Wellsprings takes Psalm 20:5, rejoicing in the day of trouble. A sermon on three divine Beholds is followed by the conclusion of the piece on parallel passages.

A writer draws attention to the difference between the preacher and the sermon. Some act as if they would have been better served by hearing one or other famous historical preacher. The writer points out that the effect of sermons is the work of the Holy Spirit, and illustrates his point from Scripture. The testimony of a Mrs Adams from the Isle of Wight, and a piece on Olney and its associations, lead to Jottings in Troublous Times, being brief quotations from the writings of so-called High Churchmen, showing the grave danger of that school.

Quotations from the formularies of the Church of England, and from leading Reformers, are given to show the doctrinal Calvinism of that denomination on the subject of Salvation by Grace. Prayer is coveted concerning the *Magazine's* parlous finances. Various accounts of recent deaths precede the Protestant Beacon, which this time deals with Prayer Book revision. November dates that ought to be important to Protestants are highlighted. Two brief pieces end the month.

The December sermon is entitled, 'We have', and takes seven things we are told we have in Scripture. Liberal Evangelicalism's attitude to worship and worldliness is examined. Wellsprings considers the resurrection from Isaiah 26:19. A sermon on watching from Mark 13:37 is followed by thoughts on Aquilla and Priscilla. Civil unrest in China is highlighted in quotations from a letter, as it affected missionary work. Readers are

given comfort from their status as God's peculiar people, and they are warned against murmuring in another article. Further Jottings in Troublous Times are followed by further quotations from the formularies of the Church of England, and from leading

Reformers, on the subject of predestination and election. Among the remaining pieces, the Protestant Beacon brings the reservation of the sacrament to the light of the New Testament. The practice is found wanting. Reviews conclude the issue.

*TO BE CONTINUED*

---

## The Protestant Beacon

### Ecumenism

THE World Evangelical Alliance has published an editorial, concerning a recent event. The General Secretary and CEO of the WEA, Bishop Dr Thomas Schirrmacher, was one of a number of individuals invited to a 'prayer vigil' by the present Bishop of Rome. In the editorial Dr Schirrmacher writes,

Billy Wilson of the Pentecostal World Fellowship, Elijah Brown of the World Baptist Alliance, and I prayed together with 17 other global Christian leaders from non-Catholic churches for the future of the world, the future of the church of Jesus Christ, and the upcoming synod of the Catholic Church. Of the Christian leaders present, roughly half represented the wider Protestant and Evangelical wing of Christianity, the other half the Orthodox and the Old-Oriental churches. Each of us prayed in our mother tongue.

He continues, 'Often, when I attend events like these, controversy arises.'

The editorial then goes on to explain that, among Muslims for instance, differences between Christian churches and denominations are meaningless. The Bishop explains.

To give any of them the impression that we are not part of world Christianity by distancing ourselves from other churches, and by refusing even personal friendship with their leaders, as some sects and cults do, might have devastating effects on our work for Christians suffering discrimination and persecution. On the other hand, we don't treat this grouping of Christian communities as synonymous with what we understand as the true body of believers. We continue to have a distinct understanding of the gospel. Church membership is not to be confused with being saved.

This surely begs a very important question. If 'this grouping of Christian communities' is not 'synonymous with what we understand as the body of true believers', what is it? We understand the distinction between the two, and we readily agree that just because an organisation calls itself a church, that is not enough for it to be counted as one. More is required. Formally, we expect a church to look like one – that is, for it to be ordered on biblical principles, to be completely under the authority of God's written

word, to administer the sacraments as they are set forth in Scripture, and to preach, instruct and discipline the members (where discipline is, first, discipling, and only when necessary is it what we usually understand by that word). Churches have, or certainly ought to have, confessions of faith. The Apostles' Creed is a good, ancient, statement of faith – but it is a baptismal creed and not a Confession of Faith. It only speaks to a restricted number of (very important) points. As such, it cannot be taken as the basis for unity. The Protestant Reformation saw the drawing up of many confessions of faith, and these display a remarkable and wonderful degree of agreement with each other, particularly in the way the gospel is set out. The Roman Catholics chose to resist the Reformation at their Council of Trent, and their decrees anathematised the glorious gospel truths recovered at that time. What unity can Protestants have with Rome?

What of the worldwide mainstream denominations? Some are very ancient, having traditions and histories that stretch back centuries. Where they have succumbed to error and have not set about the task of reformation, their antiquity has no value.

The justification for such united prayer is that it provides a united front to the persecutors of Christians in some parts of the world. We should not underestimate the truth in this argument, but neither ought we to overestimate it. If the leaders of these organisations and 'Christian communities' truly love the Lord Jesus Christ, and if they truly trust in the means of grace, the better course of action is obvious. The need is for those who know the truth to preach it to those who do not. This includes both those parts of the 'grouping of Christian communities' that may not be 'synonymous with what we understand as the body of true believers' and

of those who are clearly outside. If the early church had refused to preach to the persecutors, would it have survived? One hardly dare think so.

The ecumenical movement has succeeded in sapping the old Protestant opposition to the Church of Rome. Of course, it has not done so single-handedly. We know that there has been a shift away from the Reformation view of the pope as antichrist, and from Rome as being the harlot or Babylon. The decline in Protestant conviction has opened the door to ecumenism, and it has been shouldered wide open. Claims are made that joining with Rome to campaign on moral issues is acceptable, as if our theology and hers agree on these matters. In truth, it is doubtful many Protestants have a theology of abortion, or euthanasia, or any one of a list of issues. Rome does have a theology of these matters, which gives her a certain strength in facing the challenges. If so-called Protestants are hiding behind Rome's apron, they are being unwise in the extreme.

There is an ecumenism we ought to foster. There ought to be evident demonstrations of unity among Protestant believers. Some of the Societies provide a forum for genuine unity, and it is a joy to see brethren dwelling together. We all look to the same Protestant martyrs, and those Societies that, perhaps more than others, commemorate the martyrs and the reasons why they died, ought to be better supported than they often are. Where there is a genuine unity, what better way is there of expressing it than in prayer? We pray, 'Our Father...', for in Christ we have one Father.

Prayer is the communion of the believer, the family, or the congregation, with our God through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is not given so we can pretend to a unity that does not exist. Let our unity be in Jesus Christ. ¶

# BOOK REVIEWS

## The Character of Christ

Jonathan Landry Cruse

*Banner of Truth*, 2023. 173pp, £6.00 pbk. ISBN 978-1-80040 332-1

The author of this useful book is the pastor of a Presbyterian church in Kalamazoo, Michigan, USA, and the text is based on a series of sermons preached to his congregation. It has the subtitle ‘The Fruit of the Spirit in the Life of Our Saviour.’ The book is based on Paul’s list of virtues comprising the fruit of the Spirit as given in Galatians 5. The author’s aim, set out in the introductory chapter, is to show that this is not a list of things, in effect works, that we need to do in order to enhance ‘our standing with God’ but rather ‘things that are done for us and in us by the Spirit.’

There follow detailed considerations of Love, Joy, Peace, Endurance (with long-suffering), Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-control. These are all examined as they are ‘made manifest’ in the life of Our Lord, so that, for instance, in the case of Love, we are shown that Jesus’ love is willing and ready, sacrificial, gracious and merciful. In this way the author aims ‘to put forth the matchless beauty of Christ.’

Mr Cruse quotes from a wide range of Christian authors in exploring his topic, including those from the Reformed and Puritan era (eg Thomas Brooks, John Owen), 18th and 19th century writers from both sides of the Atlantic (Isaac Watts, Jonathan Edwards, Ryle, Warfield) and numerous contemporary sources too. Some authors cited such as G. K. Chesterton, J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis may raise a few eyebrows but for the most part the references chosen are sound and helpful. In his concluding chapter, the author quotes George Herbert’s poem, Aaron, to illustrate the Holy Spirit’s role in bringing ‘us to the Great High Priest in order to conform us to him... Whereas at one time we were conformed to the ugliness of the world, the Spirit conforms us to the glory of Christ (1 Peter 1:14).’ Most of us will be conscious that we have some way to go in this process of conformation but this little book will certainly help us in our journey.

It concludes with a series of questions ‘For Further Study and Discussion’ and so would be suitable for use in groups.

Biblical quotations are largely taken from the English Standard Version.

JBD

## Beholding his glory

J. K. Popham, Edited by Dr. M. Hyde

98pp pbk (new edn 134pp), 1st pub 2012, new expanded edn 2023,

The Ettrick Press, 98 The Brow, Brighton, West Sussex, BN2 6LN

This book was first published some few years ago by the editor, Dr. Matthew Hyde and has been out of print for a number of years. We understand that a new edition with additions is now planned and should be available by the time this review is published.

There are nine addresses and sermons each of which speak of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ in His incarnation and his sufferings. It begins with a prayer meeting address on John 1:1-18, which is followed by a series of three sermons, again, preached from John 1:14. There is a further sermon from John 1:16 'Of his fulness have all we received.' Other sermons are Colossians 1:19 and John 3:30. Two further sermons have been added to this book from Psalm 45:2 and John 13:31,32.

These sermons are well worth reading even though they were preached many years ago. Space forbids extensive quotations, so we restrict our review to just two short passages taken from the sermons added to this book. They speak of his birth and also of his death:

How is he the Son of man? By the Holy Spirit's mysterious and solemn overshadowing of that maiden Mary, and his creating in her the body designed for the Son of God. 'And she brought forth her firstborn son.' This makes him, in the first place, 'fairer than the children of men.' No other man was ever born as was Jesus Christ; no other man ever will be so born. Therefore there is a sinlessness, an impeccability, a beauty, an innocence in the human nature of this blessed one, Jesus Christ, that no other man ever had (p 67).

[W]e have before us, in the first place, to show how Christ was glorified in his death. How was he glorified, in what way? Even by God his Father, in his death. ... He was glorified in this, that his Father had appointed him to die, commanded him to lay down his life. None took it from him, but he laid it down of himself. He tells us he had received commandment of his Father so to do (John 10:17, 18). It was a great thing that the Son of God, God's Equal, being also the Son of man, united to his brethren therefore and thereby, and having their sins imputed to him, should have received a commandment from his Father to come under the law, that he might 'redeem them that were under the law' (Galatians 4:4, 5). And what the eye of God saw in that infinitely valuable death, that vicarious, meritorious death of his only beloved Son, our hearts are not sufficient to grasp. Very little of this glorifying of Christ can we enter into, very little of the weight of that glory can we bear in our present state: that he who knew no sin, was without it, did it not, yet should be made sin so really and truly that it was right his Father should punish him for it. And what his Father saw in his willingness to die, and obedience unto death, we can bear to see but little of. The vail may be just lifted, that we may look a little into it (p 110).

Mr Popham was Pastor of Galeed Chapel, Brighton for over fifty years. His sermons were published monthly. However, the sermons in this book are taken from a stenographer's type-scripts which have not been previously published. It is an appropriate book for wide circulation at this season of the year.

This reviewer has valued Popham's sermons for a number of years and we are happy to welcome this book, to recommend it to the readers of *The Gospel Magazine* and wish it a wide circulation.

JEN

## MINISTRY

**BIDEFORD, DEVON:** *North Road Chapel*. Consecutive Expository Ministry. AV, *Christian Hymns*. LORD'S DAY 10.45 am and 6.30 pm. *Minister:* Mr R.J. Steward. northroadchapel.org. nrcbideford@gmail.com.

**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.

**LANDFORD WOOD, WILTSHIRE:** *Landford Wood Mission Hall*, Stock Lane, Landford Wood, SP5 2ES (off A36). Weekly Service on each Lord's Day at 3 pm, (God

willing) from February to December. Conservative Evangelical Worship using the AV at all services. Elder: J.E. North, phone 07500265419

**SUFFOLK:** *Wattisham Chapel*. Evangelical and Reformed services each LORD'S DAY 10.45 am and 6.30 pm. Metrical Psalms and hymns. AV only used. Pastor Elisha John Masih. Tel. 07737031749. wattishambaptist.org

**WOLVERHAMPTON** *St Silas Church of England (Continuing)*, 49 Long St, WV1 1HU. Lord's Day, MP 11 am. Holy Communion as notified. AV and BCP, *Christian Hymns* and *Anglican Hymn Book* used. Contact Paul Hooper, 07477 704921.

## AUDIO MINISTRY

**FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND (CONTINUING)** *Audio ministry*. For the latest CD list contact Donald Morgan, 7 Cearn Sheileidh, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, HS1 2YW, or email donaldmorgan186@googlemail.com

# BRITISH CHURCH NEWSPAPER

*A Protestant Newspaper, founded 2002*

NON-DENOMINATIONAL • FORTNIGHTLY\* • 16pp

*Ring, write or email us for a sample copy of our latest issue*

--- • ---

£36.00 for 12 months \* £20 for 6 months. BCN is issued every three weeks

Cheque to: 'British Church Newspaper'

*Subscriptions:* Mrs Jackie Edwards, Office Manager, BCN, Poets Corner, East Lydford, Somerton, TA11 7HA [eline7tansy@gmail.com](mailto:eline7tansy@gmail.com). Tel: 01963 240845

*Editor:* Mr Tony Bennett, 14 Kingswood Rd, Shrewsbury, SY3 8UX. [ajsbenett@btinternet.com](mailto:ajsbenett@btinternet.com)  
Tel: 01743 249284 or Mobile 07835 716537

The Protestant Truth Society  
2023 CAMBRIDGE LECTURE

30th November  
2023, 7.30 pm



*John Edwards (1637–1716)*  
*of Cambridge,*  
*Reformed Protestantism, and the*  
*battle for Church of England orthodoxy*

A lecture by **Dr Jake Griesel** – *Lecturer in Church History and Anglican Studies*  
*George Whitefield College, Cape Town, South Africa*

*Venue:* The Round Church, Bridge Street, Cambridge, CB2 1UB

## *My Pocket Companion 2024*



- Bible texts (AV) for every day
- **WEEK TO VIEW** layout – 120pp
- devotional pages
- 2025 engagement pages to March
- handy pocket or handbag size
- available in a choice of two gloss laminated cover designs
- 109th year of production

**£2.80 (£3.50 posted)**

**10 for £28 (post free)**

**20 for £40 (post free)**



**Available now**

Call 020 7405 4960 or email [bookshop@protestant-truth.org](mailto:bookshop@protestant-truth.org) to order  
or visit us at 184 Fleet Street, London, EC4A 2HJ