

The Journal
of
The Church of England
(Continuing)

*Jesus Christ the same
yesterday, and today,
and forever. Heb. 13:8*



Issue No: 25
April 2003

The Association of the Continuing Church Trust. Registered Charity Number 1055010

CONSTITUTION

- 1 **Doctrine:** The doctrine of the Continuing Church shall be that of the 39 Articles of Religion understood in their original, natural and intended sense.
- 2 **Worship:** The worship of the Continuing Church shall be generally according to the Book of Common Prayer (1662).

The Authorised Version of the Bible shall be the only version used in the lectern and the pulpit and in public readings and expositions at all meetings of the Continuing Church.
- 3 **Ministry:** The consecration and ordination of ministers shall be according to the Ordinal of the Book of Common Prayer (1662). The Continuing Church believes in the ministry of women according to Scripture which does not permit them to teach or exercise authority, particularly as bishops, priests, and deacons.
- 4 **Discipline:** The church shall be episcopally governed. A general assembly shall be held not less than once a year consisting of the bishop and the ministers of the church and representatives of the local congregations to transact the business of the denomination and for mutual encouragement and edification.
- 5 **Membership:** New churches may apply for membership of the Continuing Church on the basis of their agreement with the doctrine, worship and discipline of that body.

Membership of the local church shall be on the basis of baptism and confirmation and approval by the local presbyter.

Any matters incapable of resolution shall be referred to the Ordinary.

The Continuing Church publishes a prayer letter, "Intercessions." It is available free of charge to those who would like to receive news and to pray for the various needs.

Please write to
Rev. E. J. Malcolm, The Parsonage, 1, Downshire Square, Reading,
RG1 6NJ.

Would contributors please note that they can send their news via email, to
edward@macmail.com

Contributions toward postage costs are gratefully received.

From the Presiding Bishop, Edward Malcolm

15, Bridge Street
Knighton
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LD7 1BT

Dear Friends,

Greetings to you in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and especially to those joining us in Frinton-on-Sea. The opening service on Saturday 29 March was conducted by the Reverend John Shearer, and the attendance was encouraging. The Sunday ministry was led by the Reverend Andrew Price.

On Sunday 29 June at 11.00 am, by the kindness of the Minister and Wardens of St Mary's Castle Street, Reading, there will, DV, be the ordination to the diaconate of Mr Peter Ratcliff of St John's, South Wimbledon. If you are thinking of attending, please contact the Wardens in writing, care of 41 Mansfield Road, Reading RG1 6AL. Lunch will be served after the service.

In any case we look forward to seeing many friends at our Annual Assembly at Benson, on Saturday 12 July, DV. It is an opportunity to catch up on news, to bring children for the games after lunch, and to hear Bishop David Samuel give the main address.

Amongst his many excellent publications is one entitled 'The Queen's Jubilee, What Next?', which has been sent to all Members of both the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament, to Regional Assembly Representatives, and to many others in leading positions. If you would like a copy, either for yourself or to give away, please contact Mr Dave Mansell, whose details appear on the inside back cover.

The war in Iraq and the ransacking of Baghdad bring to memory President Abdel Nasser's disappointment in his book *The Philosophy of Revolution*, after his junta's overthrow of King Farouk.

"Endless crowds showed up, but how different is the reality from the vision... If I were asked then what I required most, my instant answer would have been 'To hear but one Egyptian uttering one word of justice about another, to see but one Egyptian not devoting his time to criticising wilfully the ideas of another, to feel that there was but one Egyptian ready to open his heart for forgiveness, indulgence and loving his brother Egyptians'." (Canon Kenneth Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*)

War cannot answer or hold back Islam. Dr Lamin Sanneh of Yale Divinity School Missions, and an Islamic scholar, says,

“The challenge of Islam is that they see Christianity being trivialized and taken advantage of and moved in to fill the vacuum... Islam flourishes in the modern world of difference and diversity. Islam cannot separate religion and politics... Islam is not containable. Islam has the ability to overcome obstacles, to overcome defences. It is only a thin secular wall that prevents the Islamic tide from sweeping over the West, it is the only thing that prevents a pan Islamic global triumph. The religious West has suppressed its own religious heritage.”

Let all who really love our lands gather to our banner. Much defence of Christianity is fleshly, as is much else that goes on in churches. Someone joining us recently said to me, “I can see that you all take your religion seriously.” We do, we love our Lord and His lost world. If you feel like that, come with us.

When Crusade fever swept Europe in the Middle Ages only two men spoke out and said the use of the sword was disobedience to the command of Christ to love our enemies. One was John Wycliffe, the other a Sardinian courtier named Raymond Lull, who was expelled by the Muslims for preaching Christ and told that if he returned they would kill him. As an old man he wrote, “He who loves not lives not”, and returning, was stoned to death for preaching Christ.

Your friend and Bishop,



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THE GOSPEL IN THE PRAYER BOOK

By David N. Samuel

When we consider this subject, we must remember the circumstances in which the Book of Common Prayer was compiled. It took shape in the crucible of the Reformation. A new light had dawned from the Scriptures. That light was the message of salvation which had lain hidden for centuries previously in the dark ages of the Church in Europe.

It is difficult for us today to appreciate what really happened, and how new this all seemed to the Reformers, both on the Continent and here in England. The way of salvation in the Church of the Middle Ages was that of good works. Good works, it was taught, made a good man, made a righteous man. Good works made it possible for you to stand before God and to be accepted by Him. However, in order to do those good works you had to receive grace to strengthen you. Grace, at that time, was thought of as a sort of thing or substance that you received automatically (*ex opere operato*) through the sacraments, through baptism, through the mass, through penance, and through the prayers of the saints. It was unlikely that anyone would go directly to heaven because he would not be good enough (only a few, exceptional ‘saints’, might do that), and therefore every baptized Christian would have to spend time, a very considerable time, thousands of years, in purgatory after this life, where his sins would be purged out by fire.

That was broadly the scheme of salvation taught by the medieval Church. Then came the dawn of the Reformation. That dawn came from the great light that shone from the Bible. It was as if a bright light suddenly illuminated a room that had formerly been in darkness. The central message of the Scriptures, which the Reformers discovered, was this, that we are justified by grace, that is, the free mercy of God; not by our works, or our merits. We are justified, that is, declared righteous before God, by grace through faith alone, not by works, lest any man should boast.

This is the great emphasis of the New Testament. The Reformers rediscovered it. They found, by reading the New Testament in Greek, that ‘to be justified’ does not mean ‘to be *made* righteous in ourselves’, which is what the Latin translations seemed to imply, but rather ‘to be *counted* righteous’ before God, for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. That put an entirely different complexion on things. ‘He [that is Christ] is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption’ (1 Corinthians 1:30). At the heart of the Gospel message is the concept of ‘the great exchange’. Christ, as the innocent and righteous One, came into the world to take our place as the guilty,

condemned sinner and we, by the mercy and free grace of God, take His place, and are seen in the eyes of God as justified and righteous.

Let me quote from a passage by Martin Luther in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians which, I think, sets this forth so vividly:

“The doctrine of the Gospel speaketh nothing of our works or of the works of the Law, but of the inestimable mercy and love of God towards most wretched and miserable sinners; that our most merciful Father sent His only Son into the world and laid upon Him all the sins of all men, saying, ‘Be Thou Peter that denier, Paul that persecutor, blasphemer and cruel oppressor, that sinner which did eat the apple in Paradise, that thief hanged upon the cross; briefly be Thou the person which hath committed the sins of all men. See, therefore, that Thou pay and satisfy for them.’ Now cometh the Law and saith: I find Him a sinner, One that hath taken upon Him the sins of all men, and I see no sins but in Him, therefore let Him die upon the cross; and so it setteth upon Him and killeth Him. By this means the whole world is purged. God would see nothing else in the whole world, if it did believe, but a mere cleansing and righteousness.”

Now that is the Gospel as set forth in the Scriptures, especially in the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians. That is the Gospel that our Reformers, Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, also rediscovered in the Bible: ‘The Lord our Righteousness’, for we have no righteousness of our own. “He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness” (Isaiah 61:10). This is the robe of Christ’s imputed righteousness, counted to us who are sinners. We are still sinners even when we are saved, we are still sinners in ourselves, but we are righteous in the sight of God, because Christ’s righteousness is credited or imputed to us by faith.

Now that is the teaching of the Thirty-Nine Articles, and of the Book of Common Prayer. When Cranmer and the other Reformers found afresh this teaching in the Bible, they incorporated it into the official teaching of the Church of England. Article XI *Of the Justification of Man*, one of the fundamental articles, on which hinges the doctrine of the Church of England, as reformed and catholic, states,

“We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith, and not for our own works or deservings: Wherefore, that we are justified by Faith only is a most wholesome Doctrine and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the Homily of Justification.”

If you refer to the Book of Homilies, you will find that the title is in fact not the Homily of *Justification*, but of *Salvation*. Did Cranmer make a mistake in calling it the Homily of Justification? No, but by so naming it he intended to show that salvation is justification by faith, and justification by faith is salvation. They are

one and the same thing. Justification by faith is not a *part* of what it means to be saved, but the whole thing. Justification by faith is not just the entrance or beginning of the Christian's life, it is the whole of it from beginning to end.

Iain Murray, in his biography of Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones, writes that on one of the last occasions he saw Dr Lloyd-Jones, when he was dying, he said to Mr Murray: "I am nothing but an old sinner saved by grace." He was quoting the words of Daniel Rowlands, which underline this experience of the saints, that salvation is of grace, through faith, from beginning to end.

This salvation which was effected by our Lord Jesus Christ—by His perfect life of obedience to the will of God, and by His death upon the cross, when He answered not for His own sins (for He had none), but for our sins—this objective work of redemption must be subjectively appropriated by us. We must make it our own. But how are we to do that? By repentance, by turning from sin, by turning from our own works, however good we might think them to be, and trusting wholly in Christ, in His righteousness and atoning death. "He that glorieth," says the apostle, "let him glory in the Lord" 1 Corinthians 1:31. If a man thinks he has any good works in which to glory, it is clear he is still trusting in himself. Let him rather trust in the Lord. So faith and repentance mean turning away from ourselves. Faith is turning wholly to Christ and cleaving to Him, and holding fast to Him alone as Saviour and Lord.

We might define faith as a recumbency, that is, leaning upon something with the confidence that it will support you, and hold you up. This is what the believer does when he trusts in Jesus Christ. And what ultimately is this repentance and faith? From whence does it come? Well, it is the work of God's Holy Spirit, it is not "of ourselves"; it is the work of God's Holy Spirit in our hearts. He alone can quicken dead souls. "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins..." (Ephesians 2:1). He has made us alive, "together with Christ."

Those who are spiritually dead cannot exercise repentance or faith, because they are spiritually dead. But the Holy Spirit gives them new spiritual life. He regenerates them, gives them the new life of God; opens their eyes, the eyes of their understanding. They see the Lord Jesus Christ in all His beauty and desirability (something which they had never recognised before) and they turn from themselves and fly to Him for refuge.

So faith is not a mere intellectual assent of the mind. It is that, it is true. But it is much more. It is a trust and confidence in Jesus Christ and His power to save. If we have this living faith in our hearts, then it will express itself in good works, in the way we live. The Bible teaches us that good works are the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Whereas before a man was regenerated, before he was changed in this way by the grace of God, he found the Commandments of God irksome and

hard; now he has a desire to please God and to do His will and walk in His ways.

Now that is very briefly a sketch of what the Gospel—the Good News—according to Scripture is. Where do we find it in the Prayer Book? Well, we find it throughout the Prayer Book, everywhere in the Prayer Book, because the Reformers were Bible men, and their great desire was to see this doctrine of justification by faith alone, this Biblical teaching of salvation, expressed throughout the liturgy. A noted liturgiologist, (who was not an evangelical), said some time ago that the service of the Lord’s Supper, or the Holy Communion, in the Book of Common Prayer, was the only effective attempt ever made to give liturgical expression to the doctrine of justification by faith alone. What we find in the Holy Communion service, we may expect to find throughout the whole of the Book of Common Prayer. Let me, then, attempt to illustrate this great doctrine of salvation in terms of the Prayer Book generally.

Let us begin with Holy Scripture. The light of truth and saving grace dawned upon the minds of the Reformers from the Bible, and they were, therefore, confident of this one thing: that if salvation was to be expressed through the liturgy, then the Book of Common Prayer had to contain a great deal of the Bible, indeed, all of the Bible. We are “born again,” says the apostle Peter, “not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever” (1 Peter 1:23). Our Reformers wanted to see a living Church of England, one that was spiritually alive. How could they help to bring that about, but through the instrumentality of the Word of God, the Scriptures? Those Scriptures had to be incorporated into the Book of Common Prayer.

Now in the Middle Ages not much attention was paid to the Scriptures in worship. We know that, in particular, from Cranmer’s witty introduction to the Prayer Book, entitled *Concerning the Service of the Church*. In that essay he wrote this:

“But these many years passed, this godly and decent order [of reading through the books of the Bible] of the ancient Fathers hath been so altered, broken, and neglected, by planting in uncertain Stories, and Legends, with multitude of Responds, Verses, vain Repetitions, Commemorations, and Synodals; that commonly when any Book of the Bible was begun, after three or four chapters were read out, all the rest were unread.”

Then he went on to say, as you will remember, that rather amusing thing: “Moreover, the number and hardness of the Rules called the Pie, and the manifold changings of the Service, was the cause, that to turn the Book only was so hard and intricate a matter, that many times there was more business to find out what should be read, than to read it when it was found out”. Such was the intricacy of the medieval services! Such was their neglect of the Scriptures! But Cranmer was determined to restore the Bible to the services in an intelligent and intelligible way.

He arranged that the Old Testament should be read through once in the course of the year, and the New Testament twice. The Psalms would be read through every month. Besides that, the Canticles in Morning and Evening Prayer, and the verses and responses are all taken out of Holy Scripture, with just one or two exceptions.

Therefore, we might say that the Book of Common Prayer is as full of the Bible as an egg is of meat. In this way the Reformers sought to ensure that the living Word of God was brought to the people in the parishes, for they knew and believed, that “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). Perhaps there is no better and more lovely collect than that of Advent II for expressing this truth.

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

So that was the first object of the Reformers; to see that the Scriptures were there in the liturgy of the church. Without the Scriptures the services of the church are of no use in bringing the knowledge of salvation to the people; and without the knowledge of salvation, how can they truly worship and serve God?

Secondly, Repentance. As I have already mentioned, a proper understanding of the nature of repentance is a necessary part of our salvation. We must recognise and acknowledge the sinfulness and wickedness of our hearts. We dare not minimise our sins before God, nor cover them over lightly. If we are superficial in the way that we deal with ourselves, and if we do not understand the gravity of sin, and its seriousness in the sight of God then, of course, there is no hope of our being saved by the grace of God. And so the liturgy, if it is to be a Gospel liturgy and faithful to the Bible’s teaching, must set out our sins in their true colours, so that we see clearly what sort of people we are in the sight of a holy God. That, indeed, the Prayer Book does most faithfully, especially, of course, in the Confession that we have in Morning and Evening Prayer: “We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep..., We have offended against thy holy laws, We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, And we have done those things which we ought not to have done, And there is no health in us”. That means there is no soundness, no wholeness in us at all. That is what we must confess when we come before God, for that is our true condition, morally and spiritually. It is clearly described for us in the Scriptures, which tell us that “all we like sheep have gone astray”, (Isaiah 53:6) and, “There is none righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:10), and all that is clearly and faithfully reflected in the Prayer Book.

The modern services which have been introduced in recent years are far too superficial and inadequate in this respect. The confessions are brief and perfunctory. The reasons for this are many, but pervading them is undoubtedly a misunderstanding of the nature of worship which is common today. Modern people are taught to think of worship as a species of therapy, they seek emotional satisfaction, and consequently they concentrate on themselves rather than God. The Prayer Book does the very opposite; it concentrates our minds upon God; and that is because it follows the Scriptures which are God-centred rather than man-centred.

It is worth recalling that the confession was something new in our Prayer Book when Cranmer compiled it. In the preceding services of the church there was no confession, such as we have in the 1662 book. It was first introduced by Cranmer in 1552, and we have the same confession and absolution now in the services of the 1662 book. This penitential note is reflected also in the Holy Communion service.

How does the service of Holy Communion begin? Well, as you know, it begins with the Collect for Purity: "Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid". It invites us immediately to look within our own hearts, to see ourselves spiritually as in the sight of God, as He views us. Later, we go on to the full confession, in the Communion service, and say, "The remembrance [of our sins] is grievous unto us; The burden of them is intolerable." There are people today who say it is unnecessary to speak like that, because they do not feel their sins to be an intolerable burden. The answer is, "Well you should; that is how you ought to feel, if you were spiritually alive and truly understood your condition, and viewed your offences in the sight of God and His holiness."

These confessions that we are invited to make in the Prayer Book services are not intended to be mere formalities. The words in which we are invited to confess make that very clear. We are bidden to come with "a humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart"; and if the Holy Spirit is at work in our hearts, if He has opened our eyes to see ourselves as we truly are, we shall understand that we are lost, miserable, helpless sinners in God's sight, and that we must turn to Him for grace and salvation.

Thirdly, the Declaration of Forgiveness of Sins. This too is clearly set out in the Prayer Book, and it is done by setting forth for us the Lord Jesus Christ in all His attractiveness and beauty, as the all-sufficient Saviour of men and women, who by His death has purged our sins, and reconciled us to God. We find all this most gloriously set out for us in the Holy Communion Service, especially in the prayer of consecration, in the words, "Who made there, [that is, upon the cross], (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a full perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world". An all-sufficient Saviour who meets every need of sinful men and women!

We find this truth again compellingly set forth in the ‘comfortable words’ of the Holy Communion Service. After the absolution there are four quotations from Holy Scripture, called the ‘comfortable words’. They are put in that place in order to reassure us, to impress upon us, that it is by the Word of God, received in faith, that we are absolved from our sins, when we have come and have truly repented, and turned to God with all our heart, then we hear these words assuring us of God’s mercy and forgiveness, and that He has indeed blotted out our sins, and has set them as far from us as the east is from the west.

Listen to one of these sentences, “This is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”. These words are forever associated in my mind with Thomas Bilney. He was called ‘Little Bilney’. He was a man from Norfolk and was a Fellow of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, in the early days of the Reformation in England. He was a man who was not at peace with God, but he found peace. He found it through reading the New Testament, in the recently published, elegant translation into Latin by Erasmus. His eyes lighted upon these words: “This is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15). The truth came home to his heart. He was at peace with God. He was saved, and he was instrumental in bringing about the conversion also of Hugh Latimer, the greatest preacher of the English Reformation, indeed, possibly in the English Church of all time.

We find the Gospel of God’s grace and forgiveness set forth so clearly and plainly, and so authoritatively in the very words of Scripture in the Book of Common Prayer. There are some beautiful words in the Litany, which set out the sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation.

“By the mystery of thy holy Incarnation, by thy holy Nativity and Circumcision; by thy Baptism, Fasting, and Temptation, *Good Lord, deliver us*. By thine Agony and Bloody Sweat; by thy Cross and Passion; by thy precious Death and Burial; by thy glorious Resurrection and Ascension; and by the coming of the Holy Ghost, *Good Lord deliver us*.”

When those words were read out in the Parish Church of Llangeitho, in the eighteenth century, by the curate, Daniel Rowlands, there was an intense feeling, something almost electric in the congregation, and there came a sense of the grace and mercy of God upon the people present. Daniel Rowlands, himself, broke down at the reading desk. That was part of the great awakening of religion in this country in the eighteenth century.

Charles Simeon, the Rector of Trinity Church, Cambridge, used to say that he never felt nearer to heaven than when he was at the reading desk, reading the liturgy of the Church of England. So you see how the Prayer Book sets out the

fullness of the Gospel of the grace of God and the remission of sins, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Fourthly, Faith. We have said that although Christ accomplished an objective salvation for us upon the cross, we need to appropriate it; that is, we need to make it our own by faith, by laying hold upon the promises of Scripture, and thereby personally appropriating the benefits of Christ's death upon the cross. Our Lord, when He yielded His spirit up upon the cross, did not die involuntarily, in the sense that He was compelled to die. He died as an act of priestly offering. He was active in His death. He did not die passively upon the cross. When He died He said, "It is finished." He offered Himself for our sins, and for the sins of the whole world.

We must respond to that by resting upon His finished and completed work of redemption. That is the very nature of faith. Faith is a recumbency, a resting, a leaning upon Christ, knowing that He will sustain and support you. The Book of Common Prayer gives us ample opportunity actively to exercise that faith. We have the three great creeds: the Apostles' Creed, said in Morning and Evening Prayer; the Nicene Creed, said in the Holy Communion Service; and the Athanasian Creed, said on Trinity Sunday. All these are opportunities publicly to express our faith.

Notice the point in the service at which the Apostles' Creed comes—after hearing the Word of God in the Old and New Testaments. The Word of God's salvation has been read, declared to us; then we stand, and together make a corporate response of faith—"I believe in God the Father Almighty... And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord... I believe in the Holy Ghost..." By faith we appropriate and claim all the blessings of God's salvation in Jesus Christ, accomplished by His death and resurrection.

Again, if you look carefully at the Canticles of Morning and Evening Prayer, you will see the opportunities afforded for the response of faith to God's Word, particularly in the Song of Simeon, *Nunc Dimittis*, for example. Think of Simeon, who was an aged man and who had been waiting in the Temple at Jerusalem for "the consolation of Israel". He had been waiting and expecting the coming of the Messiah, who would redeem God's people, when Mary and Joseph came into the Temple with the child Jesus. Simeon took the child in his arms and said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace: according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people." Here was a man who took Christ in his arms and received the Redeemer and Saviour of the world. Now think of this: when we have heard the Word of God's salvation read in the New Testament lesson, we can join together in the very same words of Simeon, and make our response of faith to what God has done for us in Jesus Christ, His Son our Saviour. We also can say, "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation." We can make that response of faith which Simeon made, and receive Christ as our own Saviour.

Fifthly, and lastly, Good Works. Good works are essential to the Christian life but, as I said at the beginning, their place in the order of salvation is after repentance and faith. They are the fruit of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Until we have received the Holy Spirit we cannot do any good works, nor anything that is pleasing in God's sight. "A good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit: neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit... A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good: and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh" (Luke 6:43 & 45). First, the tree must be made good, if it is to bear good fruit (Matthew 12:33). And so also the life of the individual must be renovated and made good by grace, if he is to do works pleasing to God. So, when we have experienced God's mercy and grace in Jesus Christ, and know what repentance and faith in Christ mean, then, in the order of salvation, there is the place for good works. And these good works in the life of the believer are not to justify him before God, for that they simply cannot do. There are still many faults that cling to him and to his works. But they are the outward signs of an inward renovation. They are an expression of the grace of God at work in the life of the believer, and evidence to others of the justification we have received by faith in Jesus Christ.

Now we find this teaching expressed throughout the whole of the Book of Common Prayer. Take, for example, Morning and Evening Prayer. In the words of the absolution we read: "Wherefore, we beseech him [Almighty God] to grant us true repentance and his Holy Spirit, that those things may please him which we do at this present, and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy." And in the Litany, "That it may please thee to give to all thy people increase of grace, to hear meekly thy Word, and to receive it with pure affection, and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit." And at the conclusion of the post-communion prayer in the Lord's Supper we say, "that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as thou hast prepared for us to walk in." So you see, the Book of Common Prayer is full of the grace and salvation of God. It expresses clearly the Biblical Gospel, the Gospel of justification by grace through faith alone. The Book of Common Prayer is no random sequence of prayers and devotions, but through it all, undergirding it, informing it, and structuring it, is the Gospel of the free grace of God to us, in Jesus Christ. As a body is supported by its frame, by the bones, by the skeleton, which give it shape, beauty and strength; so it is with the Book of Common Prayer and its Biblical doctrines. It is the doctrines of grace that give it its real beauty, strength, and power. I am fully aware that it is composed in very beautiful language, and this has a special appeal, but its real strength and beauty, its lasting power, reside in the doctrine that informs and shapes it. The Book of Common Prayer and the true message of God's salvation in Jesus Christ are closely and inseparably conjoined.

Notice is hereby given of the

9th General Assembly

of the

Church of England (Continuing)

to be held on

Saturday 12th July 2003

at

**The Parish Hall, Benson,
Oxfordshire**

10.30 am *Arrive.* Coffee and biscuits will be served.

11.00 am *Opening devotions,* the Rt Rev Edward Malcolm.

11.30 am *Address* by Bishop David Samuel—'A Biblical Roadmap From Here to Eternity' (2 Peter 3:3-14).

12.30 pm *Lunch.* Please bring your own, with a drink. Indoor and outdoor eating is possible, depending on the weather. Childrens' games will take place after lunch.

2.30 pm *Business meeting.* (All business must be notified in advance)

2.45 pm *Evening Prayer.* The Rev John Dunn, Vicar of St Martin's, Tipton, will preach, DV.

3.45 pm *Tea and biscuits, disperse.* There will be a retiring collection.

*Directions from the Rev EJ Malcolm, 1 Downshire Square, Reading,
Berkshire RG1 6NJ. (0118) 959 5131.*

CHARLES SIMEON—MAN OF PRAYER*

by Brian Garrard

Charles Simeon was born in Reading on 24 September 1759. He was sent to be educated at Eton when nine years old, and then at nineteen went to study at King's College, Cambridge. In due course he succeeded to a Fellowship of the College, holding this until his death. He was ordained deacon in 1782 and then presbyter in 1783. He was Vicar of Holy Trinity for fifty four years and died in his rooms at King's College on 13 November 1836 in his seventy-seventh year.

Charles Simeon was a single-minded man, devoted to 'one thing'. In his biography of Simeon, Dr. HCG Moule says of him, "Simeon passed his seventy-seven years very much more as a giver than a receiver of influence."

In his day he was the 'uncrowned king' of Evangelical Anglicanism and ultimately did much to build up a body of Evangelical ministers in the Established Church. Simeon was a preacher, counsellor, and lecturer. At the same time, he was patron of many fine Societies and a founding member of some, such as the Church Missionary Society, and the British and Foreign Bible Society.

As we survey the life of this saintly minister, our concern will be to reveal him primarily as a man of prayer and meditation. From this double-headed spring, many streams were to flow and become rivers of blessing.

Prayer and New Life

During the American War of Independence, in 1776, a national Fast Day was called and Simeon spent it in prayer and fasting. He became troubled, feeling that God was displeased with him and this in turn produced a humble spirit in the young man. He 'became peculiarly strict from that period', not unlike the Wesleys and others before him. Yet Simeon failed to live as a believer should, no doubt influenced in part by the poor moral and spiritual state of Cambridge and the colleges.

Three days after entering King's College Simeon was told that he must attend Holy Communion. In those days this was required of all undergraduates. He was troubled, for he was in no fit state to partake, believing that the Devil himself was just as qualified. Wisely, Simeon decided to prepare himself and read a book

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called 'The Whole Duty of Man', by Bishop Thomas Wilson of Sodor and Man. This was read carefully and it prompted the young man to remember his past sins and cry to God for mercy. Reading, fasting and prayer made him quite ill, especially as he searched his heart and mourned over what he called 'the numberless iniquities of my former life.' He obtained and read books on the Lord's Supper, but his mind was greatly oppressed. Simeon speaks of envying the dogs and wishing to be blessed with their mortality and they cursed with his immortality. Trying to reform and perform great self-denial, he continued in distress of mind for three months.

In Easter Week Simeon read Bishop Wilson's book on the Lord's Supper. Coming to a particular passage he noted the following, "The Jews knew what they did, when they transferred their sin to the head of their offering." This prompted Simeon to reflect. May he also transfer all his guilt to another? Had God provided an offering for him, so that he may lay his sins on that blessed head? This finally brought him to lay his sins on 'the sacred head of Jesus', as he described it. This he did, resolving no longer to bear them in his own soul a moment longer.

Assurance of forgiveness increased through the week, until early Easter Day 1779 he exclaimed, "Jesus Christ is risen today! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!" From then on peace flooded his soul. Looking back, he always regarded it as a special season when he was converted.

Simeon's life changed and especially in relation to prayer. This was no longer dead and formal but alive and real. Even the Liturgy became meaningful and he later wrote, "I know from my experience at this hour that no prayers in the world could be better suited to our wants or more delightful to our souls."

Simeon began to speak of Christ to others in College and held a Bible class on Sunday evenings for College chamber maids. At these meetings he also prayed, using the Book of Common Prayer. During the vacation he returned home and instituted prayers with the servants morning and evening, with one of his brothers joining him. Simeon gradually grew in grace, despite some lapses, such as attending the races, and not keeping the Lord's Day properly. Through self-examination he endeavoured to walk with God.

Prayer and Calling to the Ministry

Charles Simeon was ordained deacon in Ely Cathedral on Trinity Sunday, 26 May 1782. He was still an undergraduate and at the time had not been appointed to an incumbency. He preached for seventeen Sundays at St Edward's, Cambridge, and subsequent blessing resulted. The building became so full that numbers overflowed the pews into the aisles.

During the holiday he ministered at the death bed of his eldest brother Richard, and was able to see him, as he described it, “depart in the peace of Christ.” His two other brothers were later converted but his father showed no outward signs of new life. Simeon almost resigned his studies and returned home in order to fill his brother’s place in the family. The situation looked doubly bad when his father ordered him to break off the friendship with the godly William Cadogan, Vicar of St Giles in Reading. It was at about this time that the call to a pastoral charge was given, and he was appointed Vicar of Trinity Church, Cambridge, a parish of approximately fifteen hundred people.

Throughout this period Charles Simeon remained very prayerful and this proved most necessary, especially in the light of the conflicts that were to come. Although the bishop had consented to his appointment, the parishioners were opposed. They wanted their existing curate as incumbent, not Simeon. It was a testing time for the young man, but he went to prayer again and this became the established practice all through his life. He had the legal right to the living but offered to decline it if this would bring peace. Simeon’s gracious treatment of the parishioners was not met with kindly, and they continued their opposition. The worthy bishop stood firm and told Simeon that the living was his if he would accept it. Furthermore, should he decline the living, the bishop was not minded to offer the charge to the resident curate. In the light of this, Simeon accepted the church and preached his first sermon on Sunday 10 November 1782.

The appointment was an unpopular one and life was made as difficult as possible for Simeon and his faithful hearers. Trinity Church had the custom of an afternoon lecture every Sunday and the minister appears to have had no control over this. The curate was appointed to lecture which meant that Simeon only had use of the pulpit in the mornings. After five years another curate was appointed to the task, and continued for a further seven years. It was not until 1794 that Charles Simeon was chosen to give the lectures. Throughout this period of twelve years he manifested much patience and self-restraint.

Opposition was not restricted to such pettiness. Worse was to come. Pew doors were locked, leaving only the aisles for hearers. Few were in attendance on the first Sunday, but after that, ‘multitudes’ came. Forms and seats were placed in the aisles (the latter at Simeon’s own expense) only to be pulled down and thrown into the churchyard by the Wardens! Simeon met all this with faith and patience, choosing to pray and submit to God’s dealings. A particular verse of Scripture was his watchword; ‘The servant of the Lord must not strive.’ After some months Charles began an evening service and large numbers attended immediately. Some Sundays later the Wardens went off with the keys, and the people were left waiting in the streets, making it necessary for Simeon to call a locksmith. He thought better of it next time, but it was sadly ten years before he succeeded in

restarting evening services. All the while the congregation was growing in number, packing the aisles and any convenient place.

Prayer and Ongoing Ministry

Godly friends welcomed Simeon's appointment and they became an ever-growing circle, from men like John Newton to Henry Venn, and his son John. HCG Moule believes that Simeon lacked moderation and discretion in those days. It was, therefore, good to have practical and wise counsel from brethren in the ministry. As we have seen, Charles was a willing and quick learner.

Many seekers after Christ came to him and the numbers were so large that it became necessary to hire a room in order to house them all. This was done in another parish. Simeon was aware that this could be seen as irregular and committed the matter to God, praying earnestly that no persecution would arise because of it. Thankfully, none came. The meeting became so large that it was divided up into six smaller ones!

At this point we can summarise by saying that for many years Simeon's pastoral life was one of difficulty and trial. Moule says that 'false accusations were his frequent portion.' In later years his parishioners exhibited great warmth and love towards him, no doubt in response to the love he bore for them.

Simeon was very active outside the parish. In his younger days he itinerated a great deal, even preaching in barns to farm servants. Second to his parish work, though, was his influence in the University. He took part in the administration of the College, held Deanships at various times, and became Dean of Divinity in 1798. Yet for many years he was slandered, ridiculed and isolated within the College, and few leaders of the University would support and agree openly with him. Indeed his colleagues were cold towards Charles, and had what was called 'half expressed contempt' for him.

The services at Trinity suffered from rowdy students who caused disturbances. Worshippers were also insulted, windows broken and then the streets outside subject to so-called 'disgraceful tumults' from the students leaving Charles' services. All was met by him with prayerful restraint and patience. Like all godly men he expounded Scripture faithfully and clearly, and then applied it to the conscience and will of the hearers. His three great aims in preaching were, 'To humble the sinner; to exalt the Saviour; to promote holiness.' Every effort of his was watered by prayer, and in time fruit appeared. Even some of his worst critics and trouble-makers were converted, becoming useful men of God and his closest friends.

Simeon's hearers suffered also. One observer wrote, "Those who worshipped at

Trinity Church were supposed to have left common sense, discretion, sobriety, attachment to the Established Church, and love for the Liturgy, and almost whatever else is true and of good report, in the vestibule.” To be a ‘Simeonite’ was meant as a derogatory term among many and this slur continued for at least thirty to forty years after the great man’s death.

Ten years passed before the storms of opposition abated, yet even then he could still be, according to Moule, the object of ‘coarse abuse’ and hootings from ‘idle undergraduates’. In 1788 there was little bread to be had in the country, and in the providence of God this was turned to Simeon’s advantage. Many of the poor, especially in the local villages, were suffering, and Charles raised large amounts of money for the needy—a considerable amount coming from his own slender means. This made a great impression upon the university and eyes were opened to his real character.

Simeon was called upon to preach before the University for the first time in 1786, to a large and critical audience. He spent much time in prayer and humility before God concerning it. A further comment here upon his prayer life will not be wasted. He believed the Minister had to learn three lessons, applicable to all Christians as well.

1. Humility
2. Humility
3. Humility

Simeon saw this as the important factor in all service and prayer. He learnt early in life that ‘prayer is work’, labouring often in secret prayer. He arose every morning at four o’clock, in summer and winter alike, and devoted the first four hours of each day to private prayer and the study of the Scriptures. He would later engage in family prayers with the servants and friends staying. ‘Here was the secret of his great grace and spiritual strength’, wrote Moule, but it was not easy for him to grasp and learn. It needed to be acquired and fought over with undying effort.

Prayer and a Wider Ministry

Simeon was careful and painstaking in his sermon preparation, and at the same time worked hard to be earnest, interesting and accurate in his preaching. It was said of him that he was never a dry, lifeless preacher, but one of power, earnestness and vigour. No wonder that he was much in demand as an expounder of God’s Word. He paid various visits to Scotland, speaking in a number of Presbyterian pulpits to great spiritual effect and blessing. One notable time, he preached at a Communion service with almost one thousand communicants present.

In the evening, Simeon met Alexander Stewart, Presbyterian minister of the

parish of Moulin. Stewart complained of his unprofitableness in the ministry and opened his heart further to Simeon. They talked and prayed together into the night and the time proved to be a turning-point for Stewart. Simeon soon discovered that the young minister was very defective in his understanding of the Gospel and knew little of its power in his life. The situation changed, and a few days later there was a religious awakening in Moulin, directly due, under the hand of God, to the spiritual change in the minister and his altered preaching.

Besides the visit to Scotland, Simeon maintained a great interest in the work of foreign missions. India was particularly close to his heart, and he was instrumental over the years in sending out chaplains to minister there. Indeed, he was able to say towards the end of his life, 'Almost all the good men who have gone to India these forty years have been recommended by me.' This was not boasting on his part, just a statement of fact, and he recorded this with both surprise and thankfulness. This strong influence in the choice of chaplains to India was exercised by Simeon for another ten years, making it nigh on fifty years of prayerful concern for that vast land. Henry Martyn was one of his first recommendations and by the grace of God others followed, many as a direct result of Charles' preaching and influence.

Reference was made at the beginning to the notable part played by Simeon in the birth of the Church Missionary Society and the British and Foreign Bible Society (both very different in those early days) but he also laboured much to see that the Gospel was preached to the Jewish people.

Prayer and Health: Continuing Work and Final Days

After twenty-five years of intense work of the Gospel, Simeon's health failed and he was very much an invalid for thirteen years. The symptoms may well have been akin to the modern ME virus, and was extremely debilitating. Charles was just forty-seven. We do not find any record of his reproaching the Lord or growing bitter. Instead he continued to serve the Lord with what little strength he had. On reaching nearly sixty, the symptoms suddenly passed without, we are told, 'any evident physical cause'. As a result, Simeon wrote, God 'doubled, trebled, quadrupled' his strength and he was able to serve the Lord with amazing energy until seventy-seven years of age.

What was Charles' secret, if such exists? The only obvious answer is that which has been given already; prayer. As if to underline the exercise of this grace, Moule relates how Simeon used to walk up and down a narrow, open airway. This ran from his attic to the roof. It was a walk-way he used for prayer, and here he was high up and out of the reach and sight of men.

Simeon's closing years are described as 'bright and peaceful.' Gone are the trials

and tribulations of earlier years. Instead, he was the object of great personal respect in his church, in the University, and in the Church at large. In 1831 he preached before the University for the last time. The place was crowded with Heads of College houses, Doctors, MAs, BAs, undergraduates and townspeople, as he preached on Romans 8:9, “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” By 1833 his works of twenty-one volumes were published, and in June he was received in private audience by King William IV.

After a period of illness, borne well and prayerfully by Charles, he passed into the Lord’s presence on November 13 1836. More than fifteen hundred gownsmen attended, plus University dignitaries. Many shops in Cambridge closed for the day—a fitting contrast to fifty years earlier!

Charles Simeon was an extraordinary gift of God to the Church and as such, was unique. Even so, his life teaches us what can be wrought through prayer. Here is the antidote to spiritual fruitlessness; frequent communion with God in prayer. May God give us to know the true meaning of prayer, and something of the experience that Charles Simeon enjoyed.

Lessons from the Life of Charles Simeon

1 True prayer is communion with God

It is not the offering up of a shopping list. Simeon’s four hours of prayer and Bible study a day must have been precious and even a delight to his soul and through it, God opened up the depths of His love to His servant. It may not be possible for us to give as much time as Simeon, yet we ought to aim at times of spiritual quality with God. Prayer is not a legalistic requirement, but ought to be a happy duty, where we meet with the Lord and carry something of the fragrance of His presence back with us into the world.

2. True prayer is born out of a relationship with God

Do we know the Godhead through knowing Christ? Are we truly born of God and exercising the graces of repentance and faith? Is the spirit of Sonship in us? If so, then we have a child’s heart that is able to pray and commune with our heavenly Father. Such periods can be of great joy and assurance, when we know something of the Spirit of adoption in our hearts, moving us to cry Abba, Father (Romans 8:15)

3. Prayer is life-changing

The more we are with Christ, the more we grow to be like Him. After Moses was with the Lord in the mount, he came down to the people and the glory of God was upon him. May we know something of this, or rather, may other people know it, as they witness the likeness and beauty of Christ upon us.

4. Prayer makes us fruitful

This was the case with Simeon. In his times with the Lord the Spirit of God filled him and rivers of living water flowed out to God's glory and the profit of the souls of others. Pray God that shall be our experience also. In addition, when others are blessed, we are ministered to at the same time.

5. Strength and help come through prayer

Prayer is the medium that God employs to bless His people. This is why it is vital that we pray. Could it be that we are spiritually impoverished because we do not ask? Because we do not ask, we do not receive. 'Ask and it shall be given you,' said the Lord.

6. Prayer makes us effective far beyond our own strength and ability

Simeon's ministry in church and University, plus his interest in foreign missions is an example of this. What of ourselves? Do we say, 'What can I do? What good am I?' Exercise the grace of prayer and God will answer. His ways may be amazing and unexpected, but He will certainly hear us.

7. Prayer changes situations and people

Enemies are made friends, curses are turned to blessings, dry places become rivers, and death is transformed into life. Through prayer tremendous influence is brought to bear upon others—at times, even after our passing!

8. Prayer sanctifies the disappointments of life

Consider Simeon's illness, whatever it was. It was a trial, yet God blessed it to him and in His mercy restored him in due time.

9. Prayer can fill our days with joy and peace in believing

Whether as a child, adult, or in middle years or autumn days, we prove that the joy of the Lord is our strength. This is especially so as we approach heaven and our eyes are open to see the land that is afar off. We realise it is not so distant after all! Sorrows come, but the Lord does not leave us.

10. Prayer is dwelling in the secret place

Prayer is converse, and simply being with our heavenly Father. He delights to hear and have us near Him. May this be our constant delight as well.

AN HOMILY FOR GOOD-FRIDAY

Concerning the Death and Passion of our Saviour Jesus Christ

It should not become us, well-beloved in Christ, being those who are redeemed from the devil, from sin and death, and from everlasting damnation by Christ, to let this time pass without any meditation and remembrance of that excellent work of our redemption, wrought through the great mercy and charity of our Saviour Jesus Christ, for us wretched sinners, and his mortal enemies. For if a mortal man's deeds, done to the good of others, are remembered by us, with thanks for the benefit and profit which we receive thereby; how much more readily should we have in memory this excellent act and benefit of Christ's death, whereby he hath purchased for us the undoubted pardon and forgiveness of sins; whereby he made the Father of heaven at one with us, in such a way, that he taketh us now for his loving children, and for the true inheritors, with Christ his natural Son, of the kingdom of heaven? And verily so much more doth Christ's kindness appear unto us, in that it pleased him to deliver himself of all his godly honour, in which he was equally with his Father in heaven, and to come down in this vale of misery, to be made mortal man, and to be in the state of a most low servant, serving us for our wealth and profit; us, I say, which were his sworn enemies, which had renounced his holy law and commandments, and followed the lusts and sinful pleasures of our corrupt nature. And yet, I say, did Christ put himself between God's deserved wrath and our sin, and rent that obligation, wherein we were in danger to God, and paid our debt. Our debt was a great deal too great for us to have paid. And without payment, God the Father could never be at one with us. Neither was it possible to be loosed from this debt by our own ability. It pleased him therefore to be the payer thereof, and to quite discharge us.

Who can now consider the grievous debt of sin which could none otherwise be paid, but by the death of an innocent, and will not hate sin in his heart? If God hateth sin so much, that he would allow neither man nor angel for the redemption thereof, but only the death of his only and wellbeloved Son, who will not stand in fear thereof? If we, my friends, consider this, that for our sins this most innocent lamb was driven to death, we shall have much more cause to bewail ourselves that we were the cause of his death, than to cry out of the malice and cruelty of the Jews, which pursued him to his death. We did the deeds wherefore he was thus stricken and wounded; they were only the ministers of our wickedness. It is meet then we should step low down into our hearts, and bewail our own wretchedness and sinful living. Let us know for a certainty, that if the most dearly beloved Son of God was thus punished and stricken for the sin which he had not done himself; how much more ought we sore to be stricken for our daily and manifold sins which

we commit against God, if we earnestly repent us not, and be not sorry for them! No man can love sin, which God hateth so much, and be in his favour. No man can say that he loveth Christ truly, and have his great enemy—sin, I mean, the author of his death—familiar and in friendship with him. So much do we love God and Christ, as we hate sin. We ought therefore to take great heed, that we be not favourers thereof, lest we be found enemies to God, and traitors to Christ. For not only they, which nailed Christ upon the cross, are his tormentors and crucifiers, but all they, saith St Paul, *crucify again the Son of God*, as much as in them, which do commit vice and sin, which brought him to his death. If the wages of sin be death, and death everlasting, surely it is no small danger to be in service thereof. *If we live after the flesh*, and after the sinful lusts thereof, St Paul threateneth, yea, Almighty God in St Paul threateneth, that we shall surely die. We can only live to God by dying to sin. *If Christ be in us, then is sin dead in us: and if the Spirit of God be in us, which raised Christ from death to life, so shall the same Spirit raise us to the resurrection of everlasting life.* But if sin rule and reign in us, then is God, which is the foundation of all grace and virtue, departed from us: then hath the devil and his ungracious spirit rule and dominion in us. And surely if in such miserable state we die, we shall not rise to life, but fall down to death and damnation, and that without end. For Christ hath not so redeemed us from sin, that we may safely return thereto again: but he hath redeemed us, that we should forsake the motions thereof, and live to righteousness. Yea, we be therefore washed in our baptism from the filthiness of sin, that we should live afterward in the pureness of life. In baptism we promised to renounce the devil and his suggestions, we promised to be, as obedient children, always following God's will and pleasure. Then if he be our Father indeed, let us give him due honour. If we be his children, let us shew him our obedience, like as Christ openly declared his obedience to his Father, *which*, as St Paul writeth, *was obedient even to very death, the death of the cross.* And this he did for us all that believe in him. He was not punished for himself, for he was pure and undefiled of all manner of sin. *He was wounded*, saith Isaiah, *for our wickedness, and striped for our sins*: he suffered the penalty of them himself, to deliver us from danger. *He bare*, saith Isaiah, *all our sores and infirmities upon his own back.* No pain did he refuse to suffer in his own body, that he might deliver us from pain everlasting. His pleasure it was thus to do for us; we deserved it not. Wherefore the more we see ourselves bound unto him, the more he ought to be thanked of us, yea, and the more hope we can take, the more we shall receive all other good things of his hand, in that we have received the gift of his only Son, through his liberality. *For if God*, saith St Paul, *hath not spared his own Son from pain and punishment, but delivered him for us all unto the death; how should he not give us all other things with him?* If we want any thing, either for body or soul, we may lawfully and boldly approach to God as our merciful Father, to ask what we desire, and we shall obtain it. In his name whatsoever we ask, we shall have it granted us. For so well pleased is the Father with Christ his Son, that for his sake he favoureth us, and will deny us nothing. So pleasant was

this sacrifice and oblation of his Son's death, which he so obediently and innocently suffered, that he would take it for the only and full amends for all the sins of the world. And such favour did he purchase by his death, of his heavenly Father for us, that for the merit thereof, if we be true Christians indeed, and not in word only, we be now fully in God's grace again, and clearly discharged from our sin. No tongue surely is able to express the worthiness of this so precious a death. For in this standeth the continual pardon of our daily offences; in this resteth our justification; in this is purchased the everlasting health of all our souls. Yea, *there is none other thing that can be named under heaven* to save our souls, but this only work of Christ's precious offering of his body upon the altar of the cross. Certainly, there can be no work of any mortal man, be he never so holy, that shall be coupled in merits with Christ's most holy act. For no doubt, all our thoughts and deeds were of no value, if they were not allowed in the merits of Christ's death. All our righteousness is far unperfect, if it be compared with Christ's righteousness, for in his acts and deeds there was no spot of sin, or of any unperfectness. And for this cause they were the more able to be the true amends of our unrighteousness, where our acts and deeds are full of imperfection and infirmities, and therefore nothing worthy of themselves to stir God to any favour, much less to challenge the glory that is due to Christ's act and merit; *For not to us, saith David, not to us, but to thy name give the glory, O Lord.*

Let us therefore, with all reverence glorify his name, let us magnify and praise him for ever. For he hath dealt with us according to his great mercy; by himself hath he purchased our redemption. He was nothing moved with the intolerable pains that he suffered in the whole course of his long passion, to repent him thus to do good to his enemies: but he opened his heart for us, and bestowed himself wholly to ransom us. Let us therefore now open our hearts again to him, and study in our lives to be thankful to such a Lord, and evermore to be mindful of so great a benefit; yea, let us take up our cross with Christ, and follow him. His passion is not only the ransom and whole amends for our sin, but it is also a most perfect example of all patience and sufferance. For if Christ had thus to suffer, and to enter into the glory of his Father, how should it not become us to bear patiently our small crosses of adversity, and the troubles of this world? *For surely, as saith St Peter, Christ therefore suffered, to leave us an example to follow his steps. And if we suffer with him, we shall be sure also to reign with him* in heaven. Not that the sufferance of this transitory life should be worthy of that glory to come; but gladly should we be contented to suffer, to be like Christ in our life, that so by our works we may glorify our Father which is in heaven. And as it is painful and grievous to bear the cross of Christ in the griefs, and displeasures of this life; so it bringeth forth the joyful fruit of hope in all them that be exercised therewith. Let us not so much behold the pain, as the reward that shall follow that labour. Nay, let us rather endeavour ourselves in our sufferance to endure innocently and guiltless, as our Saviour Christ did. For if

we suffer for our deservings, then hath not patience his perfect work in us: but if undeservingly we suffer loss of goods and life, if we suffer to be evil spoken of for the love of Christ, this is thankful afore God; for so did Christ suffer. *He never did sin, neither was there any guile found in his mouth. Yea, where he was reviled with taunts, he reviled not again; where he was wrongfully dealt with, he threatened not again, nor revenged his quarrel, but delivered his cause to him that judgeth rightly.* Perfect patience careth not what, nor how much it suffereth, nor of whom it suffereth, whether of friend or foe; but studieth to suffer innocently, and without deserving. Yea, he, in whom perfect love is, careth so little to revenge, that *he rather studieth to do good for evil, to bless and say well of them that curse him, to pray for them that pursue him,* according to the example of our Saviour Christ, who is the most perfect example and pattern of all meekness and sufferance, which hanging upon his cross, had such compassion for his persecutors, that he prayed to his Father of heaven for them, and said, *O Father, forgive them; for they wot not what they do.*

Thus, good people, should we call to mind the great examples of charity which Christ shewed in his passion, if we will fruitfully remember his passion. Such charity and love should we bear one to another, if we will be the true servants of Christ. *For if we love but them which love and say well by us, what great thing is it that we do?* saith Christ. *Do not the pagans and open sinners so?* We must be more perfect in our charity than thus, *even as our Father in heaven is perfect, which maketh the light of his sun to rise upon the good and the bad, and sendeth his rain upon the kind and unkind.* After this manner should we shew our charity indifferently, as well to one as to another, as well to friend as foe, like obedient children, after the example of our good Father in heaven. For if Christ was obedient to his Father even to the death, and that the most shameful death, as the Jews esteemed it, the death of the cross; why should we not be obedient to God in lower points of charity and patience? Let us forgive then our neighbours their small faults, as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us our great. It is not meet that we should crave forgiveness of our great offences at God's hands, and yet will not forgive the small trespasses of our neighbours against us. For if we will not put wrath and displeasure forth of our hearts to our Christian brother, no more will God forgive the displeasure and wrath that our sins have deserved afore him. For under this condition doth God forgive us, if we forgive other. It becometh not Christian men to be hard one to another, nor yet to think their neighbour unworthy to be forgiven. For howsoever unworthy he is, yet is Christ worthy to have thee do thus much for his sake: he hath deserved it of thee, that thou shouldest forgive thy neighbour. And God is also to be obeyed, which commandeth us to forgive, if we will have any part of the pardon which our Saviour Christ purchased once of God the Father, by shedding of his precious blood. Nothing becometh Christ's servants so much as mercy and compassion. Let us then be favourable one to another, and pray we one for another, that we

may be healed from all frailties of our life, the less to offend one the other; and that we may be of one mind and one spirit, agreeing together in brotherly love and concord, even like the dear children of God. By these means shall we move God to be merciful to our sins, yea, and we shall be hereby the more ready to receive our Saviour and Maker in his blessed sacrament, to our everlasting comfort and health of soul. Christ delighteth to enter and dwell in that soul where love and charity ruleth, and where peace and concord is seen. For thus writeth St John, *God is love; he that abideth in love, abideth in God, and God in him. And by this, saith he, we shall know that we be of God, if we love our brethren. Yea, and by this shall we know that we be shifted from death to life, if we love one another. But he which hateth his brother, saith the same apostle, abideth in death, even in the danger of everlasting death; and is moreover the child of damnation and of the devil, cursed and hated of God and all his heavenly company. For as peace and love make us the blessed children of almighty God, so doth hatred and envy make us the cursed children of the devil.*

God give us all grace to follow Christ's examples in peace and in charity, in patience and sufferance, that we now may have him our guest to enter and dwell within us, so as we make in full surety, having such a pledge of our salvation! If we have him and his favour, we may be sure that we have the favour of God by his means. For he sitteth on the right hand of his Father, as our advocate, pleading and suing for us in all our needs and necessities. Wherefore, if we want any gift of godly wisdom, we may ask it of God for Christ's sake, and we shall have it. Let us consider and examine ourself, in what want we be concerning this virtue of charity and patience. If we see that our hearts be not inclined thereunto, in forgiving them that have offended against us, then let us recognise our need, and pray to God to have it. But if we want it, and see in ourself no desire thereunto, verily we be in a dangerous case before God, and have need to make much earnest prayer to God, that we may have such an heart changed. For unless we forgive other, we shall never be forgiven of God. No, not all the prayers and merits of other can pacify God unto us, unless we be at peace, and at one with our neighbour. Nor all our deeds and good works can move God to forgive us our debts to him, except we forgive to other. He setteth more by mercy than by sacrifice. Mercy moved our Saviour Christ to suffer for his enemies: it becometh us then to follow his example. For it shall little avail us to have in meditation the fruits and price of his passion, to magnify them, and to delight or trust to them, except we have in mind his examples in passion to follow them. If we thus therefore consider Christ's death, and will stick thereto with fast faith for the merit, and will also frame ourselves so as to bestow ourselves, and all that we have by love, to the benefit of our neighbour, as Christ spent himself wholly for our profit, then do we truly remember Christ's death. Being thus followers of Christ's steps, we shall be sure to follow him thither, where he sitteth now with the Father and the Holy Ghost: to whom be all honour and glory. Amen.

“DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME”

by Edward J. Malcolm

When the Lord Jesus instituted the memorial meal we know as the Lord’s Supper or Holy Communion He gave a gracious gift to the Church. The words of the Prayer of Consecration in the Book of Common Prayer, taken from I Corinthians 11:23-26, show us that what we do at Communion is taken directly from the example of Jesus Himself. It is a prayer to which none can object in good conscience, for it is such a scriptural prayer. That in itself, however, may not help us to answer a most important question; what do we do in remembrance of Christ, and how do we remember Him?

The rule to be followed in trying to understand what the Bible means in any given point is to look at the context—what were the circumstances surrounding Jesus’ actions and words? Two things are clear.

The first is that Jesus and His disciples had come to the end of a meal. This meal was of course the Passover meal, ordained by God, and commanded as a memorial for Israel. The second thing was that Jesus was about to be taken, tried, and put to death. Whatever He said or did in the days and hours before He died were bound to be highly significant, especially as He had foretold the event, and so was clearly prepared for its coming.

We must think about the Passover itself for a moment. This was the occasion, recorded in Exodus 12, when Israelite families in Egypt were commanded to take a lamb, to kill it, to daub its blood on the door posts and lintels of their houses, and to roast the carcass and eat it. Further, they were to do this dressed for a journey, ‘And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord’s passover.’

This meal, then, served two purposes. The primary purpose was as a sacrifice, in order to propitiate the wrath of God as He passed over the land to smite all the first-born of the land of Egypt, both man and beast. Those who were sheltered under the blood were spared, for the blood was counted as a token upon the houses where they were. The fact that it was a sacrifice is demonstrated by the command that the lamb had to be without blemish. Those who offered the sacrifice acted in faith, believing that God would visit the land, and that He would destroy the first-born in each house where the blood was not to be found. Further, they believed that by obeying God in this matter, He would spare them

in mercy.

The second purpose of the Passover meal was to provide food for the travellers. They were to eat it as ready for the journey. The journey before them was arduous. They would need food for strength in order to complete it. So they were partakers of the sacrifice, striking the blood on their door-posts, and eating the roasted animal as commanded. They derived physical and spiritual benefits from it. Their bodies were saved from death, and their bodies were strengthened for travel. Their faith was strengthened through obedience, and their faith was strengthened through receiving the mercy of God.

When we consider the death of the Lord Jesus, we know that He died as the Lamb of God, given for the sins of the whole world. That He died on the feast day, in spite of the desire of the Pharisees that He should die some other time, is highly significant, for God was offering another Lamb, equally without blemish, and for much the same purpose as the Passover lamb. That lamb saved the first-born in each family from death; this Lamb saves the world from death. That lamb was the means by which Israel went out of Egypt with all that nation's wealth, to enter the Promised Land; this Lamb is the means whereby all may escape death through the promise of resurrection, to receive the rich blessings of God's mercy, and to be assured of eternity in God's kingdom.

If we look back at our question, What do we do in remembrance of Christ? it is clear that we both break bread and drink wine together, as He did with His disciples, and also that we do so in the full knowledge of the deliverance that is ours through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Israelite who ate the meal, but gave no thought to the facts of the passover and exodus, simply ate a meal, for no spiritual benefit. The Israelite who remembered the passover and exodus, but who did not eat the meal, did not remind himself of the sacrifice, or of the strengthening of faith and body that the lamb provided. Both eating and remembering are needful.

The meal we eat in the Lord's Supper is not an aid to physical strength as the Passover meal was, because our journey is not physical in that sense. However, it is a source of spiritual strength. As with the Passover, it is faith that is aided. "Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving." We are called to do three things.

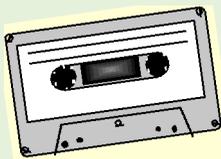
Firstly, we are called to eat in remembrance that Christ died for us. Note that this is stated personally—'for thee'—not generally—'for all'. Therefore a true partaking is only possible for those who believe, who are partakers in Christ's death and resurrection. When we consider what the blood of the lamb purchased for the people by way of deliverance from God's judgement, and that the way to

the Promised Land was open as a consequence, we see that the blood of Jesus, delivering us from the wrath of God, opens to us the way to God's kingdom.

Secondly, we are called to feed on Him in our hearts by faith. Since the bread and wine will not sustain physical life, we must view them as spiritual realities. Faith is strengthened by a consideration of Jesus' death and resurrection, of the fact that He is the "full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." We know that we have in Jesus the only way to the Father, and that His blood-shedding has covered us from God's wrath towards sin. Faith is strengthened by a regular and frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper, for faith, like the body, needs regular food. It is not the celebrating act that strengthens, but a right understanding of what it signifies, and a hearty acceptance of Christ as Saviour that causes us to be fed in this manner.

Thirdly, we are to feed on Him with thanksgiving. Given all that has been said so far, it is surely inconceivable that we should feed in any other way. Rejoicing is the only state in which we can feed, for when we consider the benefits that are ours, with regard to sins forgiven, the assurance of eternal life, and the promise of the kingdom of God, we can do no more or less than to rejoice with humble, thankful hearts. May we learn truly to feed on Him who is our Saviour, whenever we have opportunity to come to His Table, to partake of His Supper, in the manner He has laid down.

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Boston Protestant Reformed Church. Meeting at 4 Charles St, Boston, Lincolnshire. Services 11.00 am and 6.30 pm. *Enquiries* Mr Alistair Turner, 01205 311082

Nuffield Congregation meeting with Nuffield Parish Church, near Henley-on-Thames, the Rev John F Shearer. Sunday Services: 11.00 am Morning Prayer, 6.30 pm Evening Prayer. Lord's Supper 8.00 am first Sunday, 6.30 pm third Sunday. Bible Study Wednesday 8.00 pm. *Enquiries* 01491 641305.

St. John's Church, South London. Meeting at the Shaftesbury Home, Trellis House, Mill Road (off Merton High Street), Colliers Wood, SW19, for 11.00 am Morning Prayer and 6.30 pm Evening Prayer. Midweek as intimated. *Enquiries* Rev AR Price, 0208 642 7885 or 0208 742 0151

St. Mary's Castle Street, Reading. Sunday Services: 11.00 am Morning Prayer (first Sunday Lord's Supper), 6.30 pm Evening Prayer (third Sunday Lord's Supper). Tuesday 8.00 pm Bible Study. *Enquiries* Rev EJ Malcolm 0118 959 5131. www.castlestreet.org

St. Silas Congregation, Wolverhampton, meeting in St. John's Cloisters Chapel, St. John's Square (A-Z p29 H2). 11.00 am Morning Prayer (1st Sunday Holy Communion); 6.30 pm Evening Prayer (3rd Sunday Holy Communion). Tuesdays in term time 7.00 pm Bible Study; 7.45 pm Prayer Meeting. On-street parking. *Enquiries* Rt Rev E Malcolm 01547 528815. Hon Curate Rev IR Budgen, 01902 656514.

Holy Trinity Church, Frinton-on-Sea. Sunday 11 a.m. Morning Prayer—Room 5, The Frinton Community Centre, Soken House, The Triangle, Frinton-on-Sea, Essex. Sunday 6.30 p.m. Evening Prayer, Tuesday 8.00 p.m. Bible Study and Prayer Meeting—1, Chaplins, Frinton-on-Sea, Essex For more information please contact Mr Philip Lievesley Tel: (01255) 679572.

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