

THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE

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Editorial

“REJOICE . . . PRAY . . . GIVE THANKS”

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

IT HAS BEEN SAID that these three words constitute the standing orders of the Christian Church.

(i) The believers at Thessalonica probably lacked many things on which most people rely for happiness, yet they possessed a deep and abiding joy in Christ. We can rejoice because of what God has done for us and for His promises which never fail.

(ii) We are to live constantly in the spirit of prayer and should have the habit of referring everything to the Lord. Some of the most powerful prayers recorded in the Bible are very brief, like that of the Syrophoenician woman – “Lord, help me.” Resolve to be regular in prayer.

(iii) The obligation to thankfulness is often neglected. We frequently forget to thank God for answers to our prayers; we take so much for granted. The Christian ought to be constantly lifting up his heart to God with gratitude for preservation and all the blessings of this life.

How well do we fulfil our standing orders?

A Desperate Situation Transformed

A Sermon by the Editor

*"And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue,
Jairus by name; and when he saw him he fell at his feet"
(Mark 5:22)*

WE KNOW NOTHING of Jairus apart from what we read here in this very moving incident in the Gospel. We know that he was a man of some social and ecclesiastical standing, for he is described as a ruler of the synagogue and, of course, there were not many of his class and rank who sought the help of the Lord Jesus Christ. If the scribes and pharisees were found in Christ's congregation, they were usually there, not as suppliants, but rather as critics, and so it was an unusual thing, and an almost unprecedented thing that one in so high an official position as Jairus should come with such a request and fall at the feet of Jesus.

I want to look at what is a familiar incident and notice –

1. A desperate situation

It was certainly that in every sense of the word. When Jairus' daughter became critically ill, his heart, in effect, became a battlefield where love and pride were brought together. Love suggested an appeal to the great Physician; pride, on the other hand, reminded him of the solemn warnings that had been given in the synagogue concerning the itinerant Preacher from Galilee. So Jairus was in a dreadful state because his little one was dying. The doctors that had been called in had done their level best but they were bound to admit failure, and it cost Jairus a good deal to approach the Lord Jesus Christ. It was much more difficult for him to come for help than it was for the beggars and for those afflicted with leprosy, but Jairus had more to give up. He had to humble himself and come and ask the blessing that he needed. Jairus, too, was one of the chief men in the town, if not the chief. Then, Jairus' friends and colleagues, the scribes and the pharisees, why, they had already taken up an attitude of hostility to Christ and, therefore, for Jairus to seek His help was to invite their hatred and contempt. Do you not see the battle that was going on in his heart and in his mind? But sorrow and need made short work of prejudice for, another look at his child's face with the pallor of death spreading over it and the thought of what his home would be like if she was taken, *that settled it*. He would bury his pride; he would go and ask the great Preacher from Galilee to come and heal his child. Oh! yes, sorrow softens a proud heart and brings the soul humbled into the very presence of Christ. Jairus forgot his dignity. He flung himself at the feet of Jesus – his agony was sore, his anguish of soul was intense, and his need was great – and, says Matthew in his account, he not only came to Jesus, but "he worshipped him" and he sobbed out his requests that the

Lord would come and lay His hand on the little girl. Here is Jairus. He is in an extremity and he comes to Jesus. Affliction quickens reverence and decision; sickness brought him to his knees and, under pressure and great anxiety, he came because Jesus was, literally, his last hope. Do you see how rank does not place a man beyond the reach of sorrow? Jairus was not lacking in wealth, he had got the best medical help that was available in that day – all that money could command – and yet sickness and death came to his house. There are those who still think that riches are a great antidote to sorrow, but riches and wealth cannot secure anyone against sickness and against death, and so Jairus in his extremity turned to Christ, and, happy are they who, in the midst of earth's sorrows, have learned to do likewise. It was certainly a desperate condition.

2. It was an expectant petition

Now it is interesting that some of the great prayers of the Bible are very short indeed – they are remarkable for their brevity. This prayer is only the length of one sentence, but it was an agonised appeal, and desperation made him bold. "Come and lay thy hands on her." But I believe that Jairus was not only driven by despair, but he was also moved by trust. He was sure that Jesus could restore. There is no suggestion of doubt or hesitancy in his prayer. He believed that all that Jesus had to do was to come down, lay His hands on the girl, and she would live. So, do you not see how love throbbed in his prayer? "My little daughter." It is a diminutive that he uses, a term of endearment, and what pathos there is in his appeal! Jesus loved to see faith like that and at once He responded to the cry of distress. He was not too busy or too preoccupied – He would come. How marvellous is the compassion in this promptitude of Christ! There is a phrase we often use in the Collects where we speak of the Lord as being more ready to hear than we are to pray. If ever it was illustrated it is here in the story of the Lord and Jairus.

3. A disturbing delay

The healing of the woman with the issue of blood certainly occasioned delay. As the proverb says, "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick". It was desperate that the Lord came immediately, and, unless succour came at once, it would come too late. If ever there was a time when haste was required, it was now, if she was to be snatched from the jaws of death. But, alas, instead of haste, there was stoppage and delay and to Jairus the minutes must have seemed the length of days, and then the inevitable happened. There came a message from his house saying, "It's all over; trouble the Master no further". And how his heart must have sunk! "Oh," he would be saying to himself, "she might have been saved but for the hindrance of this woman." Did hard thoughts arise in the heart of Jairus concerning Jesus? Did he reproach Him for the delay? Well, the Lord's delays sometimes are quite puzzling, we have to admit that on a human level. We cry urgently to Him in some situation and, instead of hastening to our help, He tarries for His own wise

purpose. You see that wonderfully illustrated in the story of Lazarus at Bethany. You remember in John chapter 11 the two sisters, Martha and Mary, sent an urgent message – “He whom thou lovest is sick” – and they thought that all they needed to do was to acquaint the Lord of the situation but, when Jesus got the message, we read that He stayed there a further two days. Oh! what bitter thoughts must have filled the sisters’ hearts during those days of delay and it fairly bubbled up from them when He did eventually come, because they both said to Him: “If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.” And, similarly, thoughts may have arisen in the heart of Jairus: “Oh, if the Lord had not stayed to heal this woman He might have been in time to save my child!” But Jesus knew his thoughts and turned to the broken-hearted father and said: “Be not afraid, only believe.” “Fear not.” Yes, when there seemed to be no longer any ground for hope or faith. And doesn’t the Lord, in our dark moments, come and say much the same thing to us: “Fear not, only believe.” He says that to us in our dark and troubled days when sorrow threatens to overwhelm us, “when sorrows like sea billows roll” He comes and speaks His own word: “Fear not, only believe.” He comes to us when all hope seems gone, when it is thwarted and crushed and broken beyond recognition. He comes to us and says, “Fear not, only believe”, in the day when our prayer seems to go unanswered. We have to admit that the discipline of delay is hard to bear, but Christ invites and encourages faith at the moment when it seems most hopeless. How preposterous it must have seemed when the storm had blown out the last flicker of light in his daughter to say, “Fear not, only believe”. And so, from a desperate situation and an expectant petition and a despairing delay we come to –

4. A triumphant outlook

What a triumphant one it was too! Jairus doubtless felt that hope ends when death enters. Life was extinct; hope was dead on a human level. But notice how the Lord takes this situation in hand and gives a reassuring word and says: “The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.” Here is a word of revelation which softens the grimness of death. Of course, they misunderstood Him because His view of death was so utterly different from theirs. You remember how He spoke in a similar way concerning Lazarus at Bethany. “Our friend Lazarus sleepeth.” That is what death is for the Christian. It is but going to sleep, closing the eyes on this world and opening them in a better one. The Lord Jesus is the *only One* who really knows what death means for, as the writer to the Hebrews says, “He tasted death for every man”, and He tasted it in all its fulness, in all its bitterness. So the Christian, in a real sense, does not die but sleeps. This is the characteristic way of looking at death.

In the New Testament Stephen, when he made such a magnificent stand and gave such a wonderful testimony, what was the reward he got? He was stoned to death. But this is what it says in the Acts of the Apostles: “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. . . . And when he had said this, he fell asleep.” The physical fact of death

remains, but the whole character of it is changed, because Christ is *Lord of death* and it obeys Him. Listen to those magnificent words: "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25); "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Revelation 1:18). There are those today who speak of death by any other name but its own because they fear it so much. The Christian speaks of death as he does because he fears it so little. "*Sleep*" holds the promise of an awakening. That was the first word He said: "She is not dead, but sleepeth." Then notice verse 40: "They laughed him to scorn." This was the attitude of the professional mourner. They were hired to complete the picture, as it were. They came with their flutes, they came with their wailings and they laughed Him to scorn. Oh! they were of no use. They could not aid Jairus' faith; they couldn't comfort him in his loss, and they showed their entire lack of feeling by laughter and ridicule in the very presence of death. Their artificiality and hollowness and their unreality greatly offended the Saviour. He put them out; they were superfluous; they were not wanted; He put them out but, really, their foolishness robbed them of an inestimable privilege. They might have been permitted to see the Lord raise this little child to life again, but "they laughed him to scorn".

I venture to say to you that that day has not entirely passed, because we live in a day when the Christian faith is very much open to ridicule and scorn. You can hear it on the media day after day. Men talk about the law against blasphemy but they certainly do laugh the Lord to scorn in our own day.

5. "He took her by the hand" (verse 41)

How wonderful! That is exactly what Jairus had said to Him: "Come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live." But, to the great Physician no case was hopeless. She had been certified as dead and, of course, no man could do anything for her now, *but He could*. Christ was not only perfect *Man* – He was perfect *God*. He only uses two words – we have it preserved for us there in the very original – "*Talitha cumi*." Dr. Griffith Thomas says it could adequately be rendered, "My pet lamb"! Oh! what a revelation that is of the heart of Christ. "*Talitha cumi*." "My little lamb." "*Get up*" – the life-giving word went forth, "*Arise*". There was no effort, no excitement, no display and *she was restored*.

6. We are to see in this a pledge of the resurrection

Here is One, the Lord Jesus Christ, who made even death unclutch its bony fingers, for He is stronger than the strong, and He takes captivity captive. He is, as I have already said, *Lord of life and death* and the things that happened in Jairus' house that day are a type and a picture of good things yet to come, because, at the very last day, He will gather together His own elect from north, south, east and west, and He will raise up His own – they will meet to part no more and to die no more, and He that raised up Jairus' daughter *still lives*.

So we come to the end of a very moving and a beautiful incident in the Gospel, and we see how Jairus' faith was rewarded. It was worthwhile to believe. Faith is often tried to the utmost, but we are urged to hold on in days of darkness and if in our darkest day we do hold on we shall ultimately be rewarded, *This, then, was the testimony of the Psalmist* in Psalm 40: "I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry." That was not only the testimony of the Psalmist, but the testimony of Jairus. May it be our testimony too! Meantime, let us wait patiently for the Lord, and He will ultimately hear our cry.

May God add His blessing to our study and meditation in His Word and may we have faith that triumphs over all difficulties and over all obstacles. Amen.

M.H.

For Younger Readers

CARINE MACKENZIE

THE RIGHT CHOICE

YOU ARE PROBABLY not old enough to vote for a Member of Parliament or a Counsellor, but your Mum and Dad, and everyone over eighteen years of age, is entitled to cast their vote for the person of their choice.

For weeks before the election, the candidates will do their best to win votes. They will make promises about what they will do for schools or hospitals or wages or taxes. Many claims are made; many promises are given. Each candidate hopes that the decision will be made to make him or her the new Member of Parliament. The candidate and his agents spend a lot of time and energy in putting forward their case. The Lord Jesus Christ wants us to make a choice. He wants us to choose Him as our Lord and Saviour.

This is not a decision that we can make alone, but God the Holy Spirit works on the heart and the will and enables a sinner to turn from sin and to embrace Jesus Christ who is freely promised in the Gospel.

The Lord Jesus makes many claims too. He is the eternal Son of God; He was born of the Virgin Mary; He lived a perfect sinless life; He was crucified but rose from the dead on the third day; He was seen by many people before He ascended up into heaven. Even now He is making continual intercession for His people.

All Jesus' claims are true. There are no exaggerations or misleading statements from Him.

Jesus gives many promises too. "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

"My peace I give unto you."

"My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

The Bible is full of precious promises made to believers; i.e., people who have made the right choice of believing in Christ.

The Lord Jesus does not make a promises that He cannot keep. There are no broken promises or forgotten pledges with Him.

Many of the election candidates will disappoint us – even the ones who win on the day. They make mistakes; they may be unable to do what they intended; they may even not intend to do what they said they would in order to win the vote.

The Lord Jesus will never disappoint those who follow Him. He is wise, powerful, holy, just, good and true in all He does and says.

PUZZLE

Now it is puzzle time. Look up the following verses and fill in the missing word. The first letters of each of the missing words will spell out another word – "PROMISES".

1. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the _____ of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6-7).
2. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you _____ (Matthew 11:28).
3. Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall _____ them (Psalm 119:165).
4. Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the Lord, _____ shall compass him about (Psalm 32:10).
5. For I will forgive their _____, and I will remember their sin no more. (Jeremiah 31:34).
6. Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will _____ thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness (Isaiah 41:10).
7. For the Lord your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your _____, to save you (Deuteronomy 20:4).
8. Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall _____ thee (Psalm 55:22).

The Law of the Lord

ISA A. BUCKLEY

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward"

(Psalm 19:7-11)

GOD'S PRECIOUS WORD, better than gold, sweeter than honey. Do I find it to be so? Do you?

The Lord's people have known, all down the ages, that in His Word the Lord of heaven and earth is speaking to us from His throne. His Word is settled in heaven, it is eternal truth.

In these days the Bible is under attack both in the Church and in the unbelieving world. The tragic results of men and women turning away from the laws and teaching of Scripture are all around us. May we truly love the Word of God, read it, obey it, rest upon it, as our delight and treasure.

There is no part of Scripture which does not bear witness to the Lord Jesus Christ. Read Luke 24:44-45. Let us ask the Lord to open our hearts and minds to His Word, and to open His Word to our hearts and minds.

"How precious is the Book divine, by inspiration given!
Bright as a lamp its doctrines shine, to guide our souls to heaven.

Its light, descending from above, our gloomy world to cheer,
Displays a Saviour's boundless love, and brings His glories near.

It shows to man his wandering ways, and where his feet have trod;
And brings to view the matchless grace of a forgiving God.

When once it penetrates the mind it conquers every sin;
The enlightened soul begins to find the path of peace divine.

It sweetly cheers our drooping hearts, in this dark vale of tears;
Life, light, and joy it still imparts, and quells our rising fears.

O'er all the strait and narrow way its radiant beams are cast;
A light whose ever-cheering ray grows brightest at the last.

This lamp through all the tedious night of life shall guide our way,
Till we behold the clearer light of an eternal day."

John Fawcett (1739-1817)

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

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

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Salvation Only in Christ

DAVID N. SAMUEL

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15)

THIS IS A TEXT which has been greatly blessed and used in remarkable ways. It was instrumental in the conversion of Thomas Bilney, the reformer and martyr, which led in turn to the conversion of Hugh Latimer and the beginning of the Reformation in England – that great movement of the Spirit of God. Why was this so? Because it contained the essence of God's grace. It shone like a beacon in the darkness of those times. This text was also included by the reformers in the "comfortable words" of the Prayer Book service of Holy Communion to assure those who come of the pardon and peace of God.

First of all, then we see that these words convey the message of salvation in Jesus Christ simply and clearly

Jesus Christ came into the world. Why? To save sinners. "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." The first coming of Christ into the world was not for judgment, but for salvation and deliverance. This was demonstrated in all that our Lord did. He went about doing good and healing all manner of sickness and disease amongst the people. He showed compassion and mercy. He said to the paralytic man let down through the

roof of the house: "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee." And to the woman who touched Him in the throng: "Thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace."

All this was specially relevant to what Paul had to say to Timothy in this epistle. Paul had himself proved the mercy and grace of Christ and His power to save in his own experience. For he had been a persecutor and blasphemer and injurious, but had obtained mercy. This was what the Gospel was all about. He wanted Timothy to understand that the message of the Gospel was of God's grace to sinners who did not deserve it, who had nothing to merit it. The trouble at Ephesus, as in other places, was that there were some who had set themselves up as teachers of the law, who considered that salvation came by obedience to the law. But the law cannot make any man righteous in the sight of God. We can only be justified by faith in Jesus Christ. Paul wanted Timothy to restrain these men and to ensure that only true apostolic doctrine was preached.

There have been many in the Church since that time who have taught the same thing; who have adulterated the Gospel; who have changed the truth of God into a lie. They have taught that Jesus is only our teacher and example, we must try to follow His teaching and obey Him and this way we shall be saved. But in this way they have misrepresented the Gospel and misled many people. Paul says that they have misunderstood the nature of the law itself, for he says in verse 9 that "the law is not made for a righteous man", nor is it the means by which we can become righteous, because we cannot keep it. It is powerless to help us or save us. On the contrary, the law is for the ungodly, the lawless and disobedient, for sinners and the unholy. It is meant to be to them a scourge and a goad to wound their consciences and convict them of sin, to bring home to them their desperate condition before God, and point them to Christ who alone is able to save them by grace alone through faith alone.

The law itself cannot save anyone, because no one is able to keep it and fulfil it. "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Galatians 3:21-24).

Do not look to the law then for righteousness and salvation. You will not find it. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." That way has been closed up by God Himself. Yet how many do not understand this. How many who seek do not find, because they fall in with false teachers, like those at Ephesus, of whom Paul warned the young man Timothy. Bunyan illustrates this very thing, when he speaks of Christian seeking the way of salvation and being sent by Mr. Worldly Wiseman to Mr. Legality, who lived in the town of Morality. But he found there no ease for the burden on his back.

So that is the first thing that Paul wishes to establish, "that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners". There is no other way to be saved except by

simple faith in Jesus Christ. There is no righteousness that can save, but the righteousness of Christ counted freely to those who believe in Him. So Paul wanted Timothy as his representative to rebuke the lawmongers, those who set themselves up as teachers of the law, but did not understand what they said or taught.

Friends, do you understand this basic truth, that you cannot be saved by anything that you do, not by your good works, not by your moral conduct, not by your prayers or tears, but only by the free mercy and grace of God shown to you in the Lord Jesus Christ? It is absolutely fundamental, for without it you cannot take one step on the path of salvation nor make one move in the direction of heaven. If you have not understood it before this, it may not be your fault. The Church of England is supposed to banish and drive away all false doctrine contrary to the Gospel, and it has failed conspicuously to do this. As a result many are in ignorance as to the way of salvation. But our text makes it abundantly clear. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." If they could have saved themselves by works of righteousness, He need never have come into the world at all.

Then, secondly, Paul says "this is a faithful saying" – that is, it is absolutely trustworthy; you may depend entirely upon it

If we say of someone that he is a faithful friend, we mean that we can rely upon him, come what may, he will always be true. He will not let you down whatever happens. So you may depend upon this saying of God's Word, this truth that He utters. He will stand by what He has said. He who trusts in Christ shall be saved; that is why He came into the world. To return to Thomas Bilney and his experience of these words: he believed them and found peace and security. He said of them: "O most sweet and comfortable sentence to my soul." These words were a balm to his wounded conscience, to his stricken soul. But in those harsh times he was persecuted for his new found faith in Christ. The Church taught differently, that you were saved by the Church and by the sacraments and by your own good works. Bilney was forced to recant and to bear a faggot at Paul's Cross. He was a broken man and his peace left him. Only as he returned to this word did he recover his faith and his peace. He proved it to be a faithful saying, and he resolved never afterwards to forsake it, even though it meant suffering and death.

We live in times when we see the word of men failing, their teachings and philosophies crumbling and falling into ruin. We have witnessed the collapse of communism as a creed and a system, something which many thought had come to stay; an ideology that held half the world under its sway; which men thought would be the dominant system of the future. We have seen it collapse. The sayings of Marx and Lenin proved faithless. They mocked those who had trusted in them. The same is true of all human systems and philosophies. People are wondering if there is anything in which they can believe. Is anything trustworthy and reliable? There is a moral and ideological vacuum in our society. Is anything truly stable?

Yes, there is: "Thy word is truth"; "This is a faithful saying." This we may believe and we shall never be disappointed of our hope. This outlives all human systems and philosophies. He who trusts in this Word will not be ashamed or confounded.

"In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time.
All the light of sacred story,
Gathers round its head sublime."

When the apostle Paul was old he found himself a prisoner, and he wrote from prison to Timothy these words: "For the which cause [i.e., for the Gospel] I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Timothy 1:12). What a wonderful testimony this is to the truth of the words that the same apostle had written in his former letter to Timothy. Paul was not ashamed of what he had earlier stated. He had no reason to go back on it. It was indeed a faithful saying, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and to save them to the uttermost.

So dispel all doubt from your mind on this matter of your salvation in Christ. When all else about you may be giving way, you may be sure that this will not, for God's Word is certain. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Here we have a faithful saying, "that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners".

Finally, these are words "worthy of all acceptance"; that is, this truth deserves to be received by all

It is not confined to any one class or group of people. It is for all men, whatever their class or race may be. The word "all" is used in many different ways in the Bible. Here, as in many other places, it means all classes or groups or people. Paul means particularly that it must not be thought of as simply for the Jews. It was a message for the Gentiles too, for the whole world.

First, because all men are sinners and in need of a Saviour. "The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ [is] unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Only those are excluded who exclude themselves; that is, those who do not think themselves sinners, who are too proud to acknowledge and confess themselves such; who think themselves self-sufficient and that they can live without God. "They that are whole have no need of a physician," said our Lord. He did not mean that they were whole, but that they thought themselves whole, and did not need to be saved. Like the pharisee in the temple who thanked God that he was not like other men, that he fasted and gave alms and did all that God required of him and more.

This message then is for every race and class of men who know their need of God's grace. All may come; it is worthy of all acceptance, by all sorts and conditions of men.

Secondly, because of the fulness of the provision. It is sufficient for all. It is efficacious for all sins. "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from *all sin*." From all manner of sin, even the very worst. Was not Paul himself an example of this, as he says, a persecutor, blasphemous and injurious? "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am the chief" – or the foremost. Paul considered himself to be the least deserving of mercy, yet he found it. He testifies to it here in order to be an encouragement to others, in order for them to see that they are not excluded.

And as it covers all manner of sins, even the worst, so also it covers all our sins, all the sins of those who believe whether past, present or future. As long as we are in the body we shall not be perfect and we shall sin, but the efficacy of Christ's blood and atonement covers all the sins of the believer. He is a perfect Saviour, for He saves to the uttermost. As John puts it: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins."

So there is none who is excluded by the terms of this salvation which Christ Jesus came into the world to bring. None is excluded by race, merely because they are not Jews, nor by sex, simply because they are not male, nor by age, because they are too young or too old, nor by merit, because they are too sinful and unworthy. That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners is worthy of all acceptance. If you have never believed in Jesus Christ, you will see that there is no reason why you should not do so. And if you have already believed in Jesus Christ, then you will see that your faith is based upon that which is eternally firm and secure. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."

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What is True Worship?

STAN EVERS (Potton, Beds)

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24)

WHAT IS TRUE WORSHIP? Jesus answers this vital question in His conversation with a Samaritan woman at a well in Sychar.

What is worship?

What did Jesus mean when He used the term worship? The original Greek word comes from two words which mean "towards" and "kiss". In worship, we express our love towards God. Worship is the enjoyment of God. The English word "worship" was originally spelt "worthship" and means to acknowledge the worth of God. At the heart of true worship is the adoration of God. We adore Him for His greatness and for His grace.

Who may worship?

Jesus in His conversation with the Samaritan woman speaks first about the way to God before He answers her questions about the worship of God. In verses 16-18, Jesus exposes the woman's immoral lifestyle. Therefore she is convinced that the stranger at the well is a prophet because, to quote her own words, "He told me all that ever I did" (verse 39). Then she grasped that the prophet is the Christ, promised in the Scriptures (verses 19 and 29). Later the men of Samaria, and presumably the woman herself, go a step further and declare that "this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world" (verse 42). Now she understood Jesus' words about "a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (verse 14). Now her impure heart was washed clean!

Who may worship God? Only those who, like this woman of Samaria have met Jesus, the Prophet, the Messiah and the Saviour. True worshippers are those who have drank the water of life; they have found real joy and lasting satisfaction in Christ Himself. He died to open the way into God's presence (Hebrews 10:19, 22).

How should we worship?

1. *With simplicity*

True worship is not tied to holy places, sacred buildings or elaborate rituals. In verse 23, Jesus predicts the passing of the old Jewish ritual. Simplicity marks New Testament worship.

Is the woman's comment in verse 20 an attempt to change the subject or a serious problem concerning worship? A. W. Pink thought that the woman expressed a real problem. "What was she to do with her sin? – how could she be saved? What relief could places of worship afford her burdened heart and guilty conscience? Could she find salvation in Gerizim? Could she procure peace in Jerusalem's temple? Could she worship the Father in spirit and in truth in either one or the other? Was it not plain that she needed salvation before she could worship anywhere?" Our Lord tells the troubled woman that true worship depends not on the place of worship but on the condition of the heart (verse 21).

2. *With scriptural authority*

Notice the woman's appeal to "our fathers" in support of the Samaritan's rival temple on Mount Gerizim (verse 20). Jewish worship was based on God's

Word whereas men devised Samaritan worship; this is the point Jesus makes in verse 22.

True worship is not dictated by what we like or what may attract a crowd but by what God says in His Word. The Samaritans' traditions of worship replaced God's Word. Be alert to the trap of tradition! (Mark 7:13).

3. *With sociability*

We cannot honestly worship God without feeling some affection for the people of God. We are to love all those whom God loves. Our concern should spread beyond our own local Church to believers in other Churches and to Christians in different parts of the world. The Samaritan woman speaks of "our fathers" but Jesus talks about "the Father" (verse 21). God is the common Father of all believers who are drawn from many nations and who will worship in many places throughout the world. It is true that "salvation is of the Jews" (verse 22) but it is not exclusively for that race because Jesus the Jew became "the Saviour of the world" (verse 42).

4. *With sincerity*

The reason why true worship is not restricted to certain buildings or particular geographical locations is because "God is Spirit" (verse 24), which means that God is invisible. He has no body, therefore, in the words of Stephen: "The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands." Stephen quotes Isaiah 66:1, where God says: "Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool; what house will ye build for me?" (Acts 7:47-49). Because "God is Spirit" we are forbidden in the Second Commandment, to make images of God or use pictures of Christ, God's Son, in our worship. Furthermore, because "God is Spirit" we are to "worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24), that is, with sincerity and truthfulness. This is how we "*must* worship" (verse 24) and when we do our worship is pleasing to God "the Father" who "seeketh such to worship him" (verse 23). God does not wait for us to seek Him; He seeks you and me, just as He sent His Son to seek the Samaritan woman!

How does the woman of Samaria respond to the stranger by the well? She longs to know the Messiah! Imagine her joy and surprise when Jesus says to her: "I that speak unto thee am he" (verses 25-26). Has He revealed Himself to you? If not, then you cannot offer him true worship. "Seek the Lord while he may be found."

"Just in the last distressing hour
The Lord displays delivering power,
The mount of danger is the place
Where we shall have surprising grace."

Isaac Watts

No Condemnation!

JOHN APPLEBY (Banbury, Oxon)

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1)

IT IS PROBABLY the year AD 57, or perhaps 58. Paul the apostle is in Corinth, staying in the home of a wealthy Christian whose name is Gaius. Paul will soon be leaving Corinth, on his way to Jerusalem, to take the gifts collected for the believers in Jerusalem from the Churches in Galatia, Macedonia and Greece. The Jerusalem believers were suffering from great poverty because of famine. But Paul wants to visit Spain, and, on the way there, to meet the Christians in Rome (Acts 19:21; Romans 15:23).

Rome was the hub of all trading routes, and as all roads led to Rome, so all roads led away from Rome, and the news of that Church spread widely. Paul, hearing about the Church in that pagan city, says their faith was being reported all over the world (1:8). It wasn't merely that he wanted to introduce himself to the believers in Rome. Paul knew the Church in Rome – perhaps founded after the astonishing Pentecost of years before – was a Church which had not yet received any apostolic teaching. Paul wanted to correct that defect and to pass on some spiritual gift, to make them strong (1:11).

Now Paul has suddenly heard about a Greek woman, Phoebe by name, a leader and great supporter in the Church in Cenchrea, six miles from Corinth, who is about to travel to Rome (Romans 16:1-2). So here is an excellent opportunity to write to those believers, and have the papyrus taken there by hand. Paul puts aside his tent-making for a while – no need to make tents at the moment anyway, since he is guest of Gaius, and so there is time to write to Rome. In the room beside Paul was a man called Tertius, a secretary by profession (Romans 16:22). He is ready with his reed pen and his strips of papyrus. Paul begins to dictate: *"To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints."* In his mind's eye, Paul could see friends he knew, who were already living in Rome – Priscilla and Aquila were there, Epaphroditus, Mary, Andronicus and Junias, Rufus and his mother, who had been like a mother to Paul himself, Tryphena and Tryphosa – women who worked hard in the Lord; they, and others too, are all mentioned, before Tertius can put down his pen and roll the papyrus together.

For a while, as he spoke and Tertius wrote, Paul forgot what was going on in the great world outside. There was the infamous emperor, Nero, on the throne of the Roman empire, and the Roman army fighting in a fierce war on the eastern edge of the empire. About this time an Egyptian warlord claimed to be the Messiah, and led his terrorist army of four thousand Jews to attack Jerusalem (Acts 21:38) and the Roman army mercilessly slaughtered them (Josephus).

PAUL'S CONCERN FOR THE CHURCHES

Paul, learning there were threats against his own life, needed to change his travel plans, and not take the direct route from Corinth to Jerusalem (Acts 20:3). The world was in turmoil, and Christians were clearly going to suffer, but *none of this was on Paul's mind*. Paul has in mind the troubles of the Churches in Galatia where certain orthodox Jews had come and deceived these young Churches, teaching that Christians must keep the law of Moses as well as believe in Christ, to please God. And judging by the way in which those teachers caused such havoc in the Galatian Churches, the same poisonous ideas could affect other Churches too. The great truth that believers are justified by faith alone in Jesus Christ was in danger of being lost. Paul knew he must write about that. He also had in mind the troubles of the Church in Corinth where the problem was not so much with their beliefs, but more with their behaviour. It was almost as though they were beginning to suggest that if individuals are justified by faith, then it doesn't matter how they live – sin boldly, brother, sister; are you not safely justified? Anyone so richly blessed with spiritual gifts, as the Corinthians were, can surely be free from common morality! The great truth of holy living was in danger, and Paul knew he must write about that.

Those two great themes, then, trust in Christ being the *only* requirement for salvation, and holiness of life being *essential*, without which no one sees the Lord, Paul explains in detail as he moves through what he wants to say in this letter to believers in Rome. If they are to resist the two heresies so affecting other Churches, they must fully understand these two truths – justification by faith alone and the need for sanctification, or spiritual-mindedness in daily life. The letter to the Roman believers chiefly explains those two truths, how we are justified and how we are sanctified. But, of course, it wasn't just Paul's own thinking being written down as he spoke, was it? The Spirit of God was speaking through Paul. What Paul wrote was to be God's Word *for all time*, because the Church in all times would need to be aware of how to combat such heresies. What Paul dictated was what God intended written, and is still valid today, for the same two heresies are still with us today. There are still those who hold that simple faith alone in Christ as Saviour is not enough, saying there must be other experiences, other ceremonies as well, to be a proper Christian. And there are still those whose notions of what is spirituality bear little likeness to biblical holiness.

NOT GUILTY

I suggest the *first* part of this letter is a study of how faith in Christ, and nothing else, saves believers from the guilt of their sinfulness. The *second* part of the letter, from chapter 12, is a study, in practical detail, of how such justified Christians should now live. And the central point in the letter, the hinge, where Paul turns from *the first subject* of how sinful people are made right with God by

Christ, to the *second subject* of how such believers should now live, occurs as we enter chapter 8. That's where he begins to describe living according to the mind of the Holy Spirit. And see in what a dramatic way he introduces life by the Spirit! The passage in our Bibles begins, "*There is therefore now no condemnation*". As Paul dictated it, the negative word "not" came first in his sentence. *Not therefore now, condemnation*. . . . To put the "not" first in that manner was the way of putting emphasis on the negative nature of the sentence. And it wasn't just a simple "not". Paul put two words together, literally to mean, "Not *one* condemnation". It is though the word "not" was shouted, excitedly, boldly, triumphantly: *Not the least* condemnation – *in no way* guilty! Isn't this the same thought which lies behind Wesley's daring words:

"Bold, I approach the eternal throne
And *claim* the crown, through Christ my own!"

Every believer is a *not guilty* believer! If you are in Christ, you have royal privilege. Yours is the right – yes, through Christ, *the right* – to a crown of honour, as a royal priest of God, free from any condemnation. Who can condemn you? "*It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us*" (verse 34). Where, then, is condemnation if Christ is interceding for you? His prayers are never refused! The word "condemnation" Paul uses here is a significant word. It means far more than merely a condemnatory pronouncement. I say that because of the use of a form of the same word "condemned" in the end of verse 3. When Christ condemned sin in the flesh, He did far more than simply pronounce a judgement on it as being wrong. The Bible tells us He destroyed its power. This strong word "condemn" in the New Testament means "consigning to destruction", not just "pronouncing condemnation". So if there is no condemnation for believers, then the clear implication is there is no possibility of their destruction. I want to come back to that thought.

Meanwhile I wonder sometimes whether we would fall into sin less if we appreciated more fully what our true status is, as *for ever* not guilty believers. How could I so easily fail Him who is my Saviour and Lord if I did but realise better the *permanent* nature of the sonship He has given me? How could I ever be ungracious to anyone again, if only I realised more deeply how much I am indebted to His *everlasting* graciousness to me? Should not the astonishing dignity of being God's not guilty child make me more careful to behave like one? Doesn't the evil one sometimes whisper in your ear, "Has God said, you are not guilty?" and we begin to lose the sense of trembling joy that we ought always to have, as not guilty children of God. That's a sad loss, for it belittles the divine splendour of our salvation. I heard it said that we will not obey the *imperatives* of the Gospel until we have grasped the *indicatives* of the Gospel. In other words, once you lose the wonder of what the Gospel *is*, you will not obey what it

commands. You will not live as a child of God ought, unless you are first overwhelmed that God has made you His child!

THE REASON WE ARE NOT GUILTY

Notice this negative depends on a *therefore*. *No condemnation* clearly depends on something elsewhere in Paul's argument. The question is, On what does it depend? Paul, in the early chapters, has been talking about Christ, who in his life and death, has taken the guilt which belongs to us as sinners, and, in giving us instead His perfection, has justified us. We are guilty no longer, if our whole trust is on Christ.

We are then, in God's sight, regarded as "in Christ". Believers are related to God through Christ. Is that why we are no longer condemned? Many do understand the *therefore* in that way, suggesting the basis for the absence of condemnation in chapter 8 is in the earlier chapters 3-5, and that Paul is bringing the argument of those chapters to a conclusion. Since believers are free from guilt by Christ's life and death, we are no longer under the condemnation of God's holy anger against us as sinners. We are members now of His great family of children. But I suggest there is more to say and the reason lies in the next verse. You will notice verse 2 begins with a *for*, or a *because*. In other words, the Christian is free from condemnation now "*For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death*". Believers are not merely related to God through Christ; but now, Paul is saying, they are also related to God through the Holy Spirit of life who is in them. There is this double reason for there being no condemnation: Christ died for them; the Holy Spirit lives in them!

This is why I think of this verse 1 as a hinge – the thought here begins to swing between being related to God through Christ, in the previous chapters of the letter, and moves now into the experience of living by the Spirit, in the following chapters of the letter. The freedom which the believer enjoys is not merely freedom from the guilt of sin, through Christ, but also – and just as importantly – freedom from the *power* of sin, by the Spirit's presence in the believer. For that's what it means to be free from the *law of sin and death*. Paul is talking about a freedom from the enslaving power of sin. Believers are not now under *irresistible compulsion* to sin; we are free from that slavery by *the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*. Sin shall not now be our master – neither by its guilt nor by its power; isn't that something to sing about? O yes, we do still sin; sadly, none of us can deny that.

I am not saying that we become sinless in this life; but I am saying that believers do not come under condemnation when they sin – in the sense that condemnation here means destruction. This is the point I made earlier; believers are judged; they are disciplined; they know grief; they are chastised by a loving heavenly Father; but they are not disowned by the Father. *There is therefore now no condemnation!*

THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE

We ought to take a moment or two to understand what is meant by *the law of the Spirit of life* and *the law of sin and death*. What are these two laws? The term "law" is understood in more than one way. And Paul uses the term in several different senses in his letters. For example, our Parliament makes laws; that is "law" as an instruction to be obeyed – a commandment, an order. There is also "law" in the scientific sense. If I drop a book, I know it will fall to the floor. That is the law of gravity. In this scientific sense "a law" is some form of behaviour *which always happens* – it is a force, a power, an influence which is always there.

The term "law" here is used by Paul to mean something which always happens. We can understand that by looking back, for example, in chapter 7:21: "*I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.*" So Paul is not talking about "law" as instruction or commandment, but in the other sense – as something which always happens. This law is a compulsive force that *works* in him. He is conscious that, though he wants to do good, there is another influence, another power, which always jumps up to hinder him. It is a law, like the law of gravity – an influence which is always there. We must understand *the law of the Spirit of life* in the same way, as the influence or the power of the Holy Spirit, since the term "law" there is used in comparison with *the law of sin*. So there are two powers, two laws, at work in the believer. Paul is telling us the influence, the power, of the Holy Spirit acts in believers to make it possible for them to resist the compulsive power of the *law – the influence – of sin*, and so to live according to the Spirit. The power of sin has no genuine claim over believers now, for believers are no longer compelled to sin, as unbelievers are, *unless they foolishly give back to the influence of sin, the authority which it no longer properly has*. Instead, it is the energy of *the law of the Spirit of life* which now has prior authority over them, as believers united to Christ. And that is the spiritual energy which they can use to work out how to live in a spiritually minded way.

FREEDOM

It must be obvious *the law of sin and death* has no redemptive power to help us. All *that influence* can do is to deceive and destroy us (verse 3). And our own weak, sinful nature cannot resist the persuasive influence of that at law. What a stunning mercy it is that God Himself should do for us as believers in Christ what we could not do for ourselves! Our guilt as rebels against God is gone, in Christ; the Holy Spirit in us breaks the controlling power of sin. Every conceivable source from which condemnation could come against us is silenced, through Christ and the Spirit together. *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because the law of the Spirit of life has made us free!* O believer! What a privileged person you are! Not guilty of sin; and freed from the irresistible power of sin as well!

We must finish in verse 4. God has done what He has done in Christ for us *in order*, says Paul, *that the righteous requirements of the law might be met in us*. Here, you notice, Paul speaks of *the righteous requirements of the law*. In other words, he is speaking here not of "law" as an influence or power as in verse 2, but *now* of "law" as commandment, as regulation, as the requirements of God's will to be obeyed. We have been delivered from the total power of sin over us *so that*, by the power of the Spirit, we may live as God requires His people to live. The fact that our sin was taken from us at the cross, must now be obvious in all our behaviour, as we are so obviously controlled by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Don't overlook the words *fully met* in verse 4: "*That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled [fully met] in us.*" Doesn't that give us pause for thought? There were no half measures in what God did for us in Christ, were there? Surely everything required was *fully met* to them? Not just to justify us, in a legal sense, but also to break the practical power of the sin which still remains in us, as long as we live, so we do not *have* to be slaves to it. God looks to see that all His will requires *is fully met* in us. Paul is talking about daily life, a theme which he develops from chapter 12 to the end. We are to live according to the true and full plan of God's will for His people. O believer! Don't you want to thank God from the bottom of your heart *the power of the Spirit of life* is in you now, to steady your steps as you walk before God?

I'm sure you will have seen those pictures of people when released from prison after a previous miscarriage of justice had taken place. *At last* their name is cleared. The excitement, the extravagant waving, the shouts of relief, after years of waiting! They fall to the ground and kiss the soil on which they can now walk as free people, and the media are here to see the sight! But believers are surely *freed*, not from a miscarriage of justice, but from a condemnation fully deserved! Isn't that even more astounding? So, I sometimes wonder, where is *our* joy?

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The Last Judgment

RON SHIPTON (Dunstable, Beds)

2 Corinthians 5:9-11

JUDGMENT is the ongoing work of God in His plan for the world, an activity He has exercised throughout the history of mankind. Sometimes God's judgments are manifest, such as the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, at other times they are unseen. All these judgments foreshadow a last great Judgment which is not identical with God's providence in history. When teaching about the final

Judgment the Bible emphasises a definite single event that will occur at the end of the age when Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, will return to the earth to judge the "quick" (living) and the "dead" (2 Timothy 4:1).

It has been suggested that there will be three or more judgments: (a) a secret judgment of believers at the first appearing of Christ at His Bema Seat (2 Corinthians 5:10); (b) a later judgment of Gentile nations (Matthew 25:41-46); (c) another judgment of the wicked dead before Christ, at the Great White Throne, a thousand years later than other judgments (Revelation 20:11-14). Others regard the final judgment as unnecessary as each person's eternal destiny will be determined (or has been, in the understanding of some) at the time of their death. A believer in Jesus is saved for all eternity; an unbeliever is lost for all eternity; and, since the matter has already been decreed, there is no need for any further judgment.

To all these, and other novel ideas, we say a *definite No!* and state quite categorically that the Bible plainly teaches that, at the end of the age, the end of time, there will be one final Judgment. It is generally agreed by the most reformed commentators that the prelude will be the awesome and glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus in the skies in an instant, "and then shall appear . . ." (Matthew 24:30) – an event, as to day and hour known only by our Father in heaven.

The holy angels will have a part

The Lord will "send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity" (Matthew 13:41). The angels will also gather His elect people. "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matthew 24:31).

The saints also will assist Christ in His judgment. In what sense it is difficult to assess, but Psalm 149:5-9, 1 Corinthians 6:2-3 and Revelation 20:4 plainly indicate that believers will participate actively in the last Judgment.

The Lord will bring with Him "the spirits of just men made perfect" (Hebrews 12:23). "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him" (1 Thessalonians 4:14). All the graves will be opened, the believing dead will receive incorruptible and immortal bodies which will be joined with their spirits. Living saints will be translated (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17) and meet the Lord in the air. What kind of bodies unbelievers will have we are not told.

The Lord, upon coming to the earth with His people, will immediately inaugurate the general and final Judgment. It may be that believers will be judged first as suggested in Matthew 25:34, and then join the Lord as joint-heirs with Christ in the judgment of unbelievers.

Who is going to be judged?

The second aspect of the Final Judgment is that every member of the human race, both believers and unbelievers, will be included (2 Corinthians 5:10). Ecclesiastes

12:14 teaches clearly this truth: "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Very many other scriptures support this.

Who will exercise judgment?

It is abundantly clear that the honour of judging all rational creatures has been conferred on the Lord Jesus Christ, because He has equal honour and authority with the Father, and because of His humiliation and mediatorial work. This is one aspect of His exaltation and exercise of His power over all creatures. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18).

What will take place at this last great assize?

The Lord will be seated on His Judgment Seat (Bema) which at one time was the raised dais or platform from which Greek and Roman magistrates delivered their verdicts, but it gradually came to refer to the seat on which they sat. With regard to the Lord, the picture is of a throne set on a raised dais from which He will pronounce His final and infallible judgment. The judgments of the Lord will not be for the purpose of determining the destiny of men and women, but merely to manifest them. The word "appear" in 2 Corinthians 5:10, "For we must all *appear* before the judgment seat of Christ", may be misleading – it actually means to be "manifested" or "revealed" in one's true character, rather than just "appear" in the sense of "being present". It is the same word expressed about the Lord's return. He will not merely "appear" or "be present" but He will be *revealed* and *manifested* in all His glory, majesty and power (1 Peter 5:4; 1 John 2:28).

All will appear before the Judgment Seat or Throne of Christ and it will be plainly manifested what they are before the whole world of men and angels, so that all may see what they really are and have been in the sight of a holy God – nothing shall be hidden. Of course, human judges try to discover the truth in their courts but rarely succeed because of lies, half-truths and the cheating and connivance of lawyers and friends. But, before the omniscience of a divine, holy and righteous Judge *all* will be revealed and manifested.

What are the things that are going to be judged?

"The things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10). Throughout the Bible we are taught that men shall be judged according to their works or deeds. "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:14). Also in Matthew 25:34-46 the Lord teaches about the works of the sheep – believers – and the works of the goats – unbelievers. The works of believers are presented in 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 and in Revelation 20:11-15 the works of believers and unbelievers. In 2 Corinthians 5:10 we read "that every one may receive the things done in [or by] his body". The word "receive" means "to take back" or "to recover" or "to take to oneself" the things done by means of the

body. The same sense is found in Matthew 25:27. The wicked servant did not invest the one talent given to him by his master so that "at my coming I should have *received* mine own with usury". The same thought is expressed in Ephesians 6:8: "Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he *receive* of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." Also Colossians 3:25: "But he that doeth wrong shall *receive* for the wrong which he hath done."

The thought is, what each person has done through the body is decreed by the Judge to be his own so that he may take and carry it away together with all its consequences. Thus, when a human judge sentences a murderer to death, the condemned prisoner carries his crime away with him to his death. A person who is found not guilty and acquitted by the judge carries his innocence away with him to release and freedom.

With regard to *unbelievers* when they are judged they will be shown that all their works are sinful. Even their so-called good works will be shown to be "filthy rags" before the Lord (Isaiah 64:6), because they flow from an evil heart of unbelief, and are an affront to Christ and His holiness and mercy. *These are sins of commission.*

In Matthew 25:43 the Lord condemns unbelievers because they have neglected to love *Him* in that they have not loved His people – even the least of His brethren. This neglect proves they have not believed in the Son of God which leads to their condemnation – *sins of omission*. The former sins – positive works from unbelief, the latter sins – lack of works – negative works from the same source – unbelief.

One hesitates to say anything about the result of condemnation except to read the Scriptures. Matthew 25:41: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." And verse 46: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." Revelation 20:15: "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire". See also 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 and John 5:29.

Degrees of punishment

The Lord in Luke 11:31-32 taught the Queen of the South and the city of Nineveh will be present at the final Judgment and condemn those who during His life rejected Him and His ministry.

Speaking to His disciples prior to sending them out to preach to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" He says in Matthew 10:15: "Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city" that rejected the preaching of the disciples.

The same principle applies to Capernaum, Chorazin and Bethsaida and no doubt other places in Israel who came under the ministry of the Lord. He says of them: "It shall be more *tolerable* for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been

done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more *tolerable* for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee" (Matthew 11:22-24).

These ancient cities will testify against Israel on the Day of Judgment. They will receive a lesser, a more tolerable degree, of punishment, whatever, in the holiness and wisdom of God, that might be.

Believers

There are a number of different views concerning the judgment of believers. One is that all the sins a believer has committed will be revealed and displayed to the watching creation (both men and angels) though pardoned, in order that God's grace may be the more manifested and magnified in His forgiveness of them. Reference is made to Matthew 12:37: "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." In context the Lord has already condemned the pharisees for attributing His work of casting our demons, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to Satan ("idle words" of verse 36). He teaches about the unpardonable sin and says in verse 35: "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." The Lord indicates that, for every blasphemous, evil and hurtful word, men shall give an account on the Last Day, because it comes from an evil heart of unbelief. What is in the heart is evidenced by what is spoken by the mouth and will bring justification or condemnation. The Lord is enumerating a general principle.

Of course, believers say things that can be hurtful and displease the Lord and, sadly, even sin presumptuously, but these and other sins have been efficaciously dealt with by our Saviour at Calvary. True believers will not speak evil, wicked and blasphemous words because their words flow from the good treasure of their hearts. Yet we must guard our tongue and seek to honour the Lord in every aspect of our lives. There is so much teaching in the Bible about the sins of the tongue.

Another reference to show believers' sins will be manifested is found in Romans 2:16: "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." We need to consider the context as this refers to unbelievers, both Jew and Gentile. Their condemnation before God will relate to their obedience to the law – written in ink for the Jews and in their consciences for the Gentile.

God, in His Son, will judge the secrets of men – all men – but for believers the secret sins and failures have been dealt with in Christ. We have renewed consciences: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Hebrews 10:19-22).

One more reference (1 John 2:28) needs to be examined. "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." We are told by some that believers are exhorted, "not to be ashamed before him at his coming", but in context John is writing to believers to encourage them to abide in Christ. A person who professes faith in Christ and falls away or turns back on Him (does not abide) *will* be ashamed at His coming. If people have been truly anointed, as described in verse 27, then you will "abide in him" and therefore *not* be ashamed at the coming of the Lord – rather, the true believer will rejoice with joy unspeakable.

Believers are to make their calling and election sure. 2 Peter 1:10: "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." How are believers to do this? In the context of what we have been considering, by guarding the treasure in our hearts, by being watchful over our hearts, mouths and anointing. As Matthew Henry writes: "Believers as they grow in grace should have improved faculties of reason and speech." It takes time for the treasure to accrue in our hearts – we are being conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus and He will take into account our talents, abilities, gifts, background, physical and mental attributes, obedience, etc., when we stand before Him.

We cannot subscribe to the thesis that all believers' sins will be displayed for all the world to see

Jeremiah 31:34, Hebrews 8:12 and 10:17 teaches: "For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." As believers are forgiven now and the precious blood and death of our Lord and Saviour has obtained pardon for all our sins, it seems almost impossible to imagine that, when we stand before Him in our glorified bodies, we shall be utterly ashamed because He has displayed our sins before a watching creation. Surely the Lord will be the more glorified as He manifests to the world the "riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints", and the greatness of His wisdom, love and power manifested in the saving work of His dear Son. We might ask the question, Has our God remembered the sins of His people or not? According to Jeremiah He has not, and never will, since they have all been laid on Jesus (1 Peter 2:24). Micah 7:19 states: "He will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." And Psalm 103:12: "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." Will God now bring these sins back out of the sea or draw them back from where He has cast them? *We think not.*

But we shall receive from the Lord according to what we have done through the body

The sense is what we are before Him – according to our faithfulness and stewardship of what the Lord has given us, in other words, degrees of reward as there are degrees of punishment. Our sins are forgiven, but our good works will

be manifested to the praise and honour of Christ, done in Him and by the power of the Holy Spirit. According to the level and quality of our faithfulness, so we shall suffer loss or receive reward. 1 Corinthians 3:11-15: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire: and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." Yet we shall be *supremely happy* with what the Lord gives us.

In the parable of the talents the Lord commends both servants who double their master's talent and pronounces His blessing on them: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:21, 23).

Let us now consider the application of all this

(a) We are not to sin presumptuously against God because of His grace in forgiveness or because sins will not be manifested. To continue to sin wilfully is a contradiction of all that Christ is and has done for us. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:1-2).

(b) As Paul teaches in 2 Corinthians 5:9: "Wherefore we labour [we make it our ambition], that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him." The thought of approaching nearer and nearer to meeting the Lord and soon seeing Him, should make us unwilling or ashamed to do, think or say anything that displeases Him, and it should spur us on to do everything that "we may be accepted of him" (well pleasing to Him). These words contain the sense of love, devotion and submission to the Lord.

(c) "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (2 Corinthians 5:11). It seems best to understand the "terror" of the Lord as "reverential fear" and awe of God as a controlling motive of life, not a fear, or being afraid of His power and righteous judgment and punishment, but a fear of displeasing Him. Only God's people can have this kind of fear. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (1 John 4:18). This fear is to be distinguished from the kind of fear the ungodly will experience when they stand before the Lord in all their sin and guilt. The godly fear that Paul and other believers have causes them to "persuade men" concerning the truths of the Gospel, not "enticing words of man's wisdom" (1 Corinthians 2:4) but with the greatest persuasive force men have ever used – the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness

of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, **The just shall live by faith**" (Romans 1:16-17).

May we, like Paul, in the light of eternity, ever seek to please God our Saviour "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him" (2 Corinthians 5:9) and witness to the saving power of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and grow daily in holiness and His likeness, for the praise of His glorious Name!



Studies in Second Chronicles: Zedekiah – the Son who was Blinded

PETER KING (Stanford, Beds)

"For the cedar is fallen; because the mighty are spoiled"

THE BABYLONIANS have all but destroyed the beautiful city of Jerusalem and only the poorest people are left to scrape a living from the land. Nebuchadnezzar, having carried Jehoiachin to Babylon repeats the practice of the Egyptians with Jehoiakim and sets up Mattaniah as the puppet in Judah, changing his name to Zedekiah, as a proof of serfdom. Jeremiah continues to warn the people in his twelfth sermon recorded in chapter 27 of his prophecy, saying: "I spake also to Zedekiah king of Judah according to all these words, saying, Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live." The prophet saw the captivity as divinely ordained, so the opportunity seized by Judah when other states tried to revolt against Babylon was not supported by Jeremiah. Zedekiah went to Babylon in 593 BC to allay suspicion of their dissent, returning to a desperate city. The situation was hopeless, with no possible way of escape, so the only thing to do was submit to Babylon and save what they could of their culture and possessions.

Sadly even in this extremity the people lived up to their stiff-necked reputation and rebelled against their oppressors. The inevitable happened and a great slaughter followed, and the Chaldeans "slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand" (2 Chronicles 36:17). The city was sacked and Zedekiah, trying to escape, was captured in the plains of Jericho, taken to Tiblah in Hamath, and had to witness the death of his own sons. Then the princes of Judah were killed and Zedekiah

blinded and put into prison where he remained until he died. The king had seen terrible suffering in Jerusalem for the famine caused by the siege was severe (Jeremiah 52:6), and after the walls were breached the Chaldian army led the rest of the people into captivity. The destruction was total, with all the implements from the temple removed and the priests, Seraiah, Zephaniah and the three doorkeepers lost their life at Riblah also. Zedekiah's nephew lived through all this in comparative comfort in Babylon, perhaps ignorant of the fate of his relatives.

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A Sacramental Meditation

AUGUSTUS M. TOPLADY

(one-time Editor of The Gospel Magazine)

"Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices" (Song of Solomon 8:14)

EVERY SERIOUS and sensible Christian considers the Book of Canticles as a storehouse of inward religion, and a treasury of holy experiences. In no part of the Scriptures is the work of the blessed Spirit, on the souls of men, more strikingly and more exactly delineated. If some unhappy persons consider this sacred poem in any other view, it is because they are unacquainted with the power of godliness and have not experienced that renewal in the spirit of their minds which can alone qualify lost sinners to contemplate, with advantage, the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

The Church addresses the passage quoted above to the Saviour, who has redeemed her by His blood. She styles him her Beloved; the object of her supreme affection, and the meritorious procurer of all her happiness. She prays for the manifestations of His spiritual presence; and that those manifestations may be speedy: "Make haste, my beloved! and be thou", in the swiftness of Thy approach, "like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices." Rapidly as those lively, expeditious animals spring from hill to hill; nimbly as they bound, instantaneously as they leap, on the fragrant mountains of the east; so swiftly do Thou lift up the light of Thy countenance on Thy waiting people and cheer them with such tokens of Thy grace and favour as are more reviving to the soul than all the odours of the spicy mountains are to the fainting traveller. On the other hand, a formal professor does not look upon ordinances as a means of inward religion, and as steps to communion with God, through the Spirit; but having skimmed the surface of outward duties, he sits down satisfied with externals, and aims at nothing higher.

Not so are the conduct and views of one whose heart God hath touched. The truly awakened soul considers all the exterior means of grace but as channels through which grace itself, and the comforts of it, are (in a way of sovereignty and freeness) communicated to them that hunger and thirst after the righteousness of Jesus Christ. And as it is not the mere channel of conveyance, but the water conveyed, which can satisfy thirst; so the Christian is sensible that, not a bare attendance on outward duties, but the presence of God enjoyed under those duties, is that which nourishes the believing soul and renews the believer's strength. Hence his heart's desire and prayer are similar to the verse immediately preceding the text: "Thou that dwellest in the gardens" – Thou who condescendest to be constantly present in the hearts and assemblies of Thy people, "the companions hearken to thy voice"; the Church above, and the Church below, with whom Thou hast vouchsafed to contract a gracious intimacy, are delighted with hearkening to Thy voice of love: O cause me to hear it! Make me also glad with the joy of Thy salvation! Give me to see the felicity of Thy chosen, and to drink deep of that river, to experience much of that unspeakable fellowship with Thyself, which makes glad the city of God both in earth and heaven. Then follows the supplication, "Make haste, my beloved . . ." with which we began, from all which it appears that Jesus is the object of His people's love.

And whom should we love, if not Him who loved us and gave Himself for us? If the bliss of even of angels and glorified souls consists greatly in seeing and praising the Son of God; surely to love, to trust, and to celebrate the Friend of sinners must be a principal ingredient in the happiness of saints not yet made perfect. Solomon, whose experience of grace was lively and triumphant when he wrote this Song of Songs, declares in the fifth chapter that Christ "is altogether lovely". Other objects may be overrated and too highly esteemed, but so transcendent, so infinite, is the excellency of Christ, that He is, and will be to all eternity, more lovely than beloved. Yet though all the love possible for saints and angels to show falls, and will always fall, infinitely short of the Saviour's due: still it is a blessed privilege to love Him at all, though in ever so faint a manner and in ever so low a degree.

They that love Him at all wish to love Him more: and more and more they shall love Him, through the ages of endless duration in heaven, where they shall be like Him, and see Him as He is.

"The Gospel bears my spirit up;
A faithful and unchanging God
Lays the foundation for my hope
In oaths and promises and Blood."

Isaac Watts

God's Glory Returns to the Temple

CHRISTOPHER B. HOLDSWORTH

"The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former . . . and in this place will I give peace" (Haggai 2:9)

THE REBUILDING of the temple of God at Jerusalem about 537 BC met with early discouragements and setbacks. It is in this context that we first hear of the prophet Haggai (Ezra 5:1) – and indeed the whole of his short canonical book is dedicated to this subject as by exhortation and encouragement the prophet again and again lifted up the drooping hands of the workmen.

The first exhortation (1:4) is on account of the fact that whilst people were adorning their own houses, the house of God was lying waste. This is reflected in our contemporary age when people put their own interests first, leaving the cause of Christ with the loose change! Whatever happened to "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33) as a motto for life and for living? Or to the apostolic exhortation to stir up grateful and cheerful giving: "Let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him" (1 Corinthians 16:2). The rebuke echoes through the centuries when Church buildings lie in ruins; or when we fail to support the true building of God, even the Church, the people and the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses. And this house lie waste?" Is it time for us, brethren, to be squandering the Lord's gifts while the Church wilts in our land?

The second exhortation (2:3) arose in face of the awful suddenness of a new temptation which almost overwhelmed the builders. Now they had begun the work, the people began to lose heart as they compared the old temple of Solomon with this new temple. What they failed to realise was that God was thereby gradually weaning them from the temporal to the spiritual. As we grow in the knowledge of God we too must realise that what we need is not more outward form, more ceremony – but less: Jesus Himself carried the lesson to its conclusion with the Samaritan women when He saith: "The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father" (John 4:21). The day must come for everyone of us when the shadows give way to the inner reality, when the letter gives way to the Spirit.

The first encouragement is that we should be strong in doing the work of the Lord – building God's house – because God is with us (2:4). How often we need to be reminded of the One who has promised, "I will never, never, never, never leave you nor forsake you". Daniel reminds us: "The people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits" (Daniel 11:32).

The second encouragement is a reminder that our God is a covenant God (2:5a). The same God who "visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children

unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate me" (Exodus 20:5) is the same God who "shows mercy unto thousands (*of generations if we rightly understand the Hebrew of the above*) of them that love me and keep my commandments" (Exodus 20:6).

The third encouragement arises from the living reality of God's Holy Spirit in our midst (2:5b). Was the Lord in His holy temple as in Habakkuk 2:20, or had He departed? Well, of course, He had departed in Ezekiel's day when the glory of the Lord departed by way of the threshold, the east door of the temple, the east gate of the city and into the mountains beyond. But, "know ye not that *ye* are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in *you*?" asks Paul of the Church (1 Corinthians 3:16). This fact has enormous inferences for the Church and for the people of God!

The fourth encouragement to the labouring Jews and to the discouraged Church in our age, comes in the form of a promise: that there would be, and will yet be, a gathering of the nations under the sound of the Gospel (2:6-8). This is one department of Old Testament prophecy which has certainly seen a measure of fulfilment in the coming of Christ – but is there not an aspect of it that remains as yet unfulfilled? Is Christ yet seen to be God's salvation unto the end of the earth (Isaiah 49:6)? Has the full beam of His light yet fallen upon the Gentiles, and His glory yet been revealed to Israel (Luke 2:32)? No doubt the "desire of nations" (verse 7a), i.e. the *wealth* of nations, came to Him, representatively, when the wise men came from the east, but Psalm 72:11 tells us, "all kings shall fall before him: all nations shall serve him". The symbolical gifts are owned by God (verse 8), but perhaps only as the firstfruits of that plentiful harvest when "all nations shall call him blessed" (Psalm 72:17). "Then shall the earth yield her increase" (Psalm 67:6).

The fifth encouragement pertains to the One who, according to another line of interpretation, is "the desire of nations" (2:7). The promise goes on to speak of God filling this house with glory. This poor, sad, feeble imitation of the once glorious temple of Solomon. This house deserted by God in Ezekiel's vision. (This Church which has grieved the Holy Spirit away. This once Christian nation, which has turned her back upon the God of her fathers – dare we surmise?) "I will fill this house with glory." How so? Malachi tells us: "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple" (Malachi 3:1). For the Old Testament saints this was the promise of Christ, who did come and who purged His temple. And what if the Spirit of Christ were to return today? When we pray for revival, are we ready to face the cost ourselves? Are we ready to be purged? Judgment must begin, now as ever, at God's house.

Finally it remains in our text to consider the *excellency* of those spiritual blessings which appeared when Christ was revealed. *Now*, the spiritual replaces the temporal: "Those that worship me, worship in spirit and in truth." The shadows pass away for the reality. The glory of Christianity far outshines the glory of Moses and of all the prophets, the glory of the temple and even of the

whole Old Testament culture – as the Epistle to the Hebrews so eloquently and convincingly testifies. *Not only so*, but God says to the Jews of Haggai's day: "In this place will I give peace" (2:9). Peace? In Jerusalem? How so? "Peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1); "The peace which passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7); Gospel preaching emanating from Jerusalem (Micah 4:1-5). "Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men" (Luke 2:14).

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“The Lord our God hath shewed us His glory”

Deuteronomy 5:24

C. H. SPURGEON

GOD'S GREAT DESIGN in all His works is the manifestation of His own glory. Any aim less than this were unworthy of Himself. But how shall the glory of God be manifested to such fallen creatures as we are? Man's eye is not single, he has ever a side glance towards his own honour, has too high an estimation of his own powers, and so is not qualified to behold the glory of the Lord. It is clear, then, that self must stand out of the way, that there may be room for God to be exalted; and this is the reason why He bringeth His people oft-times into straits and difficulties, that, being made conscious of their own folly and weakness, they may be fitted to behold the majesty of God when He comes forth to work their deliverance. He whose life is one even and smooth path, will see but little of the glory of the Lord, for he has few occasions of self-emptying and hence but little fitness for being filled with the revelation of God. They who navigate little streams and shallow creeks, know but little of the God of tempests; but they who "do business in great waters", these see "his wonders in the deep". Among the huge Atlantic waves of bereavement, poverty, temptation and reproach, we learn the power of Jehovah, because we feel the littleness of man.

Thank God, then, if you have been led by a rough road; it is this which has given you your experience of God's greatness and lovingkindness. Your troubles have enriched you with a wealth of knowledge to be gained by no other means: your trials have been the cleft of the rock in which Jehovah has set you, as He did His servant Moses, that you might behold His glory as it passed by. Praise God that you have not been left to the darkness and ignorance which continued prosperity might have involved, but that in the great fight of affliction, you have been capacitated for the outshinings of His glory in His wonderful dealings with you.

Book Reviews

***What Happens When I Pray?* Thomas Goodwin and Benjamin Palmer. Grace Publications. pp. 128. £3.95.**

This addition to the *Great Christian Classics* series contains updated and abridged versions of two books on prayer. Thomas Goodwin, a 17th century English Congregationalist, and advisor to Oliver Cromwell, wrote *The Return of Prayers*, and Benjamin Palmer, a 19th century American Presbyterian, authored *The Theology of Prayer*.

The Puritan's original book consisted of three sections; this edition simplifies, in ten chapters, the first portion only, using the NIV, and is the work of David Harman, a retired Baptist pastor. The other work by Palmer, is more of a rewrite, in sixteen chapters, than an abridgement, by Dr. Nick Needham, a Baptist minister and an established author, and is based on the New King James Version. Needham has added thought-provoking questions at the end of each chapter. The chapters in both parts of the book are short and readable.

By *Return* Goodwin meant answers to our prayers; but why are some prayers unanswered or delayed in returning to us? The Puritan deals with these questions in a most helpful manner. Palmer, on the other hand, develops various aspects of prayer, which are normally overlooked. For example, he shows how each Person of the Trinity hears our prayers and explains the value of Christ as Prophet, Priest and King when we pray.

This book deserves a wide readership and ought to do much to encourage God's people to pray with more understanding and urgency.

S.K.E.

Daniel Allen. Australia's Particular Baptist Heritage – Series 4. Compiled and edited by J. Roe. C.B.O. Publications, 21 Queen Street, Ossett, W. Yorks. WF5 8AS. pp. 86 paperback. £3.00 including P&P.

The story of the growth of a soul, much of the first part, being autobiographical, tells of a child bereft of his mother as a toddler, abandoned by his father at the age of nine and placed in a workhouse with his older sister.

There follows a harrowing account of the cruelties inflicted upon child labourers in Victorian Britain.

At the age of twenty-five Daniel Allen migrated to Australia, becoming a consecrated believer under the ministry of Pastor Dowling of Tasmania (*H. Dowling, Series 1*). Allen went on to become a powerful preacher to the "diggers" of the South Australian goldfields before proceeding to the pastorate of Castlereagh Particular Baptist Church, Sydney. It was here that he preached to as many as 20,000 souls in open air meetings each Lord's Day. This aroused the enmity of the Roman Antichrist when he suffered violent attacks by priest-incited mobs.

After a distinguished ministry of over forty years he passed to his reward in 1891 at the age of 68. Truly a spiritual giant moulded in the furnace of affliction and triumphant in an adored Saviour.

“Elijah’s example declares,
Whatever distress may betide,
The saints may commit all their cares
To Him who will surely provide.
He ravens and lions can tame!
All creatures obey His commands!
Then let us rejoice in His Name,
And leave all our cares in His hands.”

J.C.B.

***Daily Readings from all Four Gospels.* J. C. Ryle. Compiled by Robert J. Sheehan. Evangelical Press. pp. 736. £14.95.**

In publishing his *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels*, from which *Daily Readings* are taken, Ryle said he had a three-fold purpose in view. He hoped they would be of use at family worship, in pastoral visitation and in private reading. They were first published in 1856 when he was rector of Helmingham and have stood the test of time.

Bishop Ryle was undoubtedly gifted in expository ministry. He is always easy to read and in so doing the mind is informed and the heart warmed.

Mr. Sheehan has done an excellent task in compiling these readings and in providing a closing meditation for each day.

The book is beautifully produced in hard cover with an attractive design. It would make an excellent and worthwhile gift and we are glad to commend it to our readers.

M.H.

***Give Me That Joy (Meditations for Spiritual Maturity).* John Tallach. Christian Focus Publications. pp. 157. £6.99.**

The author’s introduction is from Psalm 85:6: “Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?” As we read the Book of Acts, especially the first nine chapters, the joy that was characteristic of the believers emanates from their continuous filling by the Holy Spirit.

Each short devotional chapter contains “*Think about it*” and “*Pray about it*”. The reader is challenged to search his heart and respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

John Tallach concludes most of the sections with telling illustrations. His headings too are helpful as he moves from Luke to Acts: “The Descent of the Spirit”, “The Church Moves Out”, “Pictures of the Early Church”.

John Tallach is a past editor of the *Gospel Magazine*. Among those commending this excellent book is the late Rev. William Still of Aberdeen and Derick Bingham of Belfast. I add my own appreciation.

J.C.

***Child of a King – What Joining God's Family Really Means.* Mark Johnston. Christian Focus Publications. pp. 192. £5.99.**

This excellent book slots into the *Focus on Faith* series which explain the doctrines of the Westminster Confession of Faith. The minister of Grove Chapel, Camberwell, in south-east London, clearly and warmly opens up the theme of adoption into God's family, using the New King James Version of the Bible. The book's title comes from a beautiful hymn in Sankey's, quoted on page 12.

Mr. Johnston traces the Fatherhood of God in the Old Testament through to the fuller understanding given in the New. Then he shows how Father, Son and Holy Spirit are involved with those who are redeemed before dealing with the benefits we receive from these relationships. The chapter on the Holy Spirit's role in adoption is one of the most encouraging chapters in this book. Another chapter reminds us that privilege brings responsibility towards other members of God's family. Some of the author's comments in this chapter probe deep into the causes and the disgrace of our disunity and in the tenth and final chapter the author looks forward to the eternal enjoyment of God our Father.

S.K.E.

Please obtain any books reviewed or advertised from your local Christian bookshop, as we regretfully are not in a position to supply your requirements.

FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK

Just a reminder to readers that where subscriptions are due in May 1999, and have not been paid by 15th April 1999, an invitation to renew is included with the Magazine. Kindly respond as quickly as possible to avoid a reminder later in the year.

Friends who have not renewed subscriptions are reminded to do so as soon as possible.

Cheques and Postal Orders must be made payable to *The Gospel Magazine*.

Thank you to all friends who send gifts and amounts in excess of the nominal subscription. Details on subscriptions and mailing are shown opposite.

Church and Chapel groups are long established on our mailing list, both at home and abroad, and we would encourage readers to promote this and so extend the ministry. You may wish to consider giving the magazine as a gift to a friend.