

NOVEMBER–DECEMBER 2017

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The Gospel Magazine

Is it right to pray for revival? • 'The word of the Lord tried him' • 'Behold, thy King cometh'

Contents

161	Editorial.....	<i>The Editor</i>
163	Christ's Humiliation—A sermon on Philippians 2:7.....	<i>Thomas Manton</i>
168	Remember to be thankful.....	<i>Carine Mackenzie</i>
170	Christ and Belial.....	<i>The Rev P Los</i>
171	Is it right to pray for revival?.....	<i>Brian Garrard</i>
173	The Word of the Lord tried him.....	<i>Samuel Turner</i>
174	'Behold, Thy king cometh'	<i>Martin Luther</i>
178	Nicholas Ridley	<i>E Malcolm</i>
181	The Problems Paul Addresses in Romans 9-11	<i>William T. Foley</i>
186	Studies in II Peter	<i>E Malcolm</i>
188	Book Reviews	<i>EJM</i>
190	Poetry.....	<i>James Hervey</i>
191	Index	

1766–2017

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

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

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

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

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

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

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THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE

Incorporating the Protestant Beacon and the British Protestant

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

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EDITORIAL

THE beginning of November brings with it that annual reminder of the time, the appearance of the red poppy on the lapels of many whom we pass. Remembrance Day, with its two-minute silence, is an opportunity to reflect on the recent history of our nation, and of Europe as a whole—and perhaps even further afield. It is not, as some falsely claim, a time for militaristic triumphalism, but a chance to give thanks for the freedoms we enjoy today because of those who gave their lives.

War has been an occupation for man from the earliest times, and when there are winners there are also losers. Not all who lose, however, have reason to complain too loudly. Would Germany, for instance, have done better had she won the war than she did by losing? What of Japan, which became an industrial powerhouse thanks to American involvement in the defeated nation? Sometimes the price of defeat is worth paying.

Many of us have been remembering, and even celebrating, the five hundredth anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. It is true that what happened on 31 October, 1517, was not the Reformation, nor even Protestant and biblical, as any will know who have read the

Ninety-five Theses. It was, however, the first hammer blow against the superstition, errors and heresy of the Roman Catholic Church. The ripples that spread out from Wittenburg would create a tidal wave that would engulf so much of Western religion, thought, politics and society, washing away the filth and restoring a purer religion in its place.

What is our symbol of remembrance? We have no poppy, no immediately identifiable mark of the event or of our noting it. But we do have something, and it is the most necessary identifier we can display in our present, godless society.

We will all be aware of the scandal sweeping through Westminster, as individuals come forward with accounts of improper and even criminal activity from colleagues. One of the first people to be named was the Conservative MP, Stephen Crabb. It was noted by one commentator that the reports began with the fact that he is a family man and a committed Christian, before launching into a lurid account of his sins. It was as if, the commentator said, we were being told that Mr Crabb is a hypocrite, and forgetting that even Christians are human beings, sinners who cannot keep God's law.

So far so good, we might think. But the article went on to say that this is all the fault of Martin Luther. He made two outrageous claims; 'if you were saved, you would not only feel the absolute certainty of salvation (something the church had never previously done), you would behave righteously as proof' (*The Spectator*, 30 October, 2017).

Such a claim cannot go unanswered. In the first place the Church has taught the doctrine of assurance, since it is found in the pages of Scripture. If the author means that the Roman Catholic Church has never taught such a doctrine, we reply, Indeed, and she has failed to teach much more that is contained in Scripture, and in the writings of the early Fathers. It was later that the Church corrupted the pure gospel, and heaped heresy on heresy to the point that she created a system of salvation so far divorced from the doctrine of Christ as to be unrecognizable.

As for the matter of righteous living, there are two errors here. First, behaving righteously is not the same as being righteous in a legal and declarative manner. The whole point of justification by faith alone through grace alone in Christ alone is that the sinner is declared to be just, or righteous, while still being a sinner. Our heavenly Father does not wait for us to overcome sin, and to learn to obey every detail and nuance of his perfect law before he is willing to call us just. Were this the case we would be without hope, since all have sinned, and do fall short of the glory of God.

Secondly, the righteousness which is evident in the believer is that which comes as the fruit of faith. Faith is the bride, and good works are the train which follows behind her, to use an illustration from one of the Puritans. No Protestant Church Confessions or Articles teach otherwise. Rather, all teach that our works are subject to the judgment of God, being imperfect. They are only pleasing in his sight in so far as they are the fruit and evidences of faith. All who are brought to faith in Jesus Christ are regenerate. As new

creatures (new creations) we are now children of our heavenly Father, and display, and learn to display, the family likeness.

To suggest, therefore, that Martin Luther was teaching something unreasonable, is as much as to say that there is no such thing as the new birth.

This, then, gives us that marker, that sign to others, that we are born again; 'We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not' (1 John 5:18). Yet this is the same John who declared earlier, 'My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world' (1 John 2:1–2). John knew the truth about us as children of God; while we are in the flesh we sin. As children of God, however, we come to Christ for his forgiveness, trusting in his shed blood. His sacrifice has made us accepted with the Father through faith in his blood, and that precious blood avails for the washing away of all our sins.

The children of God, those who know the truth rediscovered at the Protestant Reformation, have cause to ever give thanks for that great movement of God's Spirit. As such we need both to live as the redeemed of Christ, and we need to draw attention frequently to the blessings and benefits of the Reformation. It may have begun five hundred years ago, but it did not end then. By the grace of God it has not yet ended, and we should pray that our heavenly Father will grant us to see further evidences of it in our lifetime. It is, after all, only the ordinary consequence of gospel preaching attended by that unction from above. Do we expect less today? Our God is able. Our Saviour reigns. Our Comforter has been given. Let us press on with joy, boldly declaring Christ to all we meet, as the righteousness of our lives bears testimony to saving grace. ¶

CHRIST'S HUMILIATION

A sermon on Philippians 2:7

THOMAS MANTON

But made himself of no reputation

The apostle, to cure their pride, which was the cause of their divisions, urges Christ's example. His lowliness and humility is set forth by two things—*terminus a quo* and *ad quem*, or the height of elevation wherein he stood, and the depth of humiliation to which he condescended. The former, v.6, the latter in the 7th and 8th verses.

1. The height wherein he stood: v.6, 'Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God.' That phrase is to be noted, 'being in the form of God.' By the form of God is meant the divine essence, as clothed with glory and majesty. As the form of a servant is really a servant, so his being in the form of God shows that he was from all eternity true God, adorned with divine splendour, glory, and majesty. The other phrase, 'he thought it no robbery to be equal with God,' signifies that this justly and naturally belongs to him, and was not usurped by him. The devils were thrown out of heaven for usurping divine honour: 2 Peter 2:4, 'God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;' and Jude 6, 'And the angels, that kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved to everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.' They were not contented with the place they were in, but would be independent of themselves, equal to God, by usurpation and robbery; and so, instead of angels, became devils. But Christ is not God by usurpation, but God by nature; he was not thrust down, but came down.

2. His humiliation and abasement, which is (1) Generally set forth; (2) Particulars are mentioned.

[1.] Generally, 'He made himself of no reputation'; in the text, 'He humbled himself', v.8.

[2.] The particulars are his incarnation, mean life, and accursed death. Let us stand a little, and consider this condescension by comparing the terms. That the creator should stoop so low as to become a creature, and go down from the form of God to the form of a servant, from equality with God to subjection to men, from being Lord of all to a state of obedience, and that obedience carried on in the way of the most perfect self-denial, 'Obedient to the death,' and that death clothed with all the circumstances that might make it grievous, it was painful, ignominious, and accursed.

I shall insist only on the general description of it, 'He made himself of no reputation;' 'emptied himself, lessened himself'; in the next verse, 'humbled himself.'

Doctrine: That the Lord Jesus did for our sakes empty, lessen, and humble himself;

I shall open three things—(1) How far Christ was lessened; (2) That this was his own voluntary act; (3.) That this was for our sakes.

I. How far Christ was lessened. It chiefly lies in these two things—(1) Obscuring his godhead; (2.) Abatement of his dignity.

1. His godhead was obscured by the interposing veil of our flesh. He did empty himself of that divine glory, splendour, and majesty which before he had; not by ceasing to be what he was, but by assuming something

to himself which he was not before, viz., the infirmity of the human nature, which did for a time hide his divine glory, so that little of it did appear; and that to some few only that narrowly observed him: John 1:14, 'We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father.' To the generality it was otherwise: Isaiah 53:2, 'He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground, he hath no form or comeliness, and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.' As the covering in a dark lantern hides the light from shining forth, so did the human nature obscure his divine glory; for he assumed not this nature as it shall be in heaven, perfectly glorified, but as it is now since sin entered into the world, clothed with manifold infirmities. He came in the form of a servant, not of a glorified saint. The apostle, Romans 8:3, calls it, 'The likeness of sinful flesh.' The estate and condition of his assumed flesh was exposed to all those infirmities which in us are the punishment of sin. Though he continued still infinite, eternal, and omnipotent, and in his greatest abasement was still the Lord of glory, yet his external habit and appearance was that of a mean afflicted man; and the divinity, though not separated, withheld its influence, to leave the human nature to suffer whatever the humanity was capable of. As it exposed the soul to desertion; so the body to all manner of sufferings, and death itself.

2. His dignity was lessened, and there was a depression of the glory of his former state, a lessening of state and condition. The eternal Word set himself at nought, lessened and humbled himself from the condition of being Lord of all to that of a subject and ordinary man: Galatians 4:4, 'But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son; made of a woman, made under the law.' From a judge of the world he became a party. It was a condescension of God to take notice of man's misery: Psalm 113:6, 'Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth.' Much more to make a party in it,

and to be found among the miserable.

Three steps of condescension we may eminently take notice of:

[1.] That Christ, 'who thought it no robbery to be equal with God' is made less than God: John 14:28, 'My Father is greater than I; compared with John 10:30, 'I and my Father are one.' As mediator incarnate, he undertook an office designed him by God; and obeyed him in all things. They are one in essence, yet the Father was greater than he; not as he was God, but man and mediator; and in his present state of humiliation. For he brings it there to prove that, by departing out of the world then, he should be exalted to a more glorious estate than that in which he was during his abode upon earth, because the veil should then be laid aside, and that glory which he had with God before the world was made should fully appear: John 17:5, 'And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.'

[2.] That he was not only lesser than God, but lesser than the angels, Hebrews 2:7, 'Thou madest him a little lower than the angels,' or for a little time, the time that he spent here on earth. Man is inferior to an angel, as man, in the order of being; much more as mortal, for the angels never die; therefore his very incarnation and liableness to death was a great lessening of his dignity. Though the incarnation of Christ was the exaltation of our nature, yet it was the depression and humiliation of the Son of God. God could stoop no lower than to become man, and man could be advanced no higher than to be united to God.

[3.] That in the human nature he was depressed beyond the ordinary condition of man. For he came in such a form and course of life as was beneath the ordinary rate of mankind: Psalm 22:6, 'I am a worm, and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people.' So Isaiah 53:3, 'He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs, and we hid as it were

our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not;' as a vile and abominable creature, both despised, and rejected, scarce deemed worthy the name of a man, or to have any converse and fellowship with them. It is the leaving off of a man; as if we should say, the very list and fag-end of mankind; so low and mean that the nature of man can hardly descend lower: Mark 9:12, 'The Son of man must suffer many things, and be set at nought; made nought worth, or nothing. Thus did he appear in the meanest and most abject form of mankind, not in any glorious estate and majesty.

Survey the whole course of his life; he was born of a poor virgin, and, instead of a better place, laid in an inn; which probably being taken up by persons of great quality, he was laid in the basest place of the inn, in a manger. His birth was revealed to poor shepherds, not to emperors and kings, not to Caesar at Rome. Presently after his birth he was banished together with his mother into Egypt; and exposed to the troubles and toils of a long journey into a strange country for refuge. Afterward, till he appeared in his ministry, we read little of him. His supposed father a carpenter, and he himself called so: Mark 6:3, 'Is not this the carpenter?' 'He made yokes and ploughs,' says Justin Martyr. Certainly it is probable that, as he submitted to other parts of the curse, so this: 'In the sweat of thy brows shalt thou eat thy bread.' In the course of his ministry he suffered many affronts and reproaches Surely his life was a life of sorrows. We find him begging water when thirsty, John 4:9; that a fish paid tribute for him, Matthew 17:27. He had little money, and had no certain residence and place of abode, but lived by contribution: Matthew 8:20, 'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.' At his death, never was child of God under so much misery as Christ himself. His own heavens, his own Father, his own godhead, did hide their face and consolation from him. God's

wrath pressed the weight of punishment, with the full power of justice, both upon his soul and body. Those for whom he died despised him. He himself, being emptied of all things which make men respected in the world, was depressed lower than any man; and was as a worm to be trod upon. He was made a matter of common talk and reproach in all men's mouths, condemned by the ruling part of the world, and set at nought by the basest of the people, derided and scorned in his most holy behaviour, his bitter sufferings made matter of sport and laughter, malice feeding itself with pleasure upon his pain and misery, and expressing itself with the basest signs of mocking which disdain could devise, flouting at his saving doctrine, and insulting over him as if he had neither been the Son of God nor an honest man; and all this was counted little enough for satisfaction of justice, exacting of him the due punishment of our sins.

II. That this was his own voluntary act

He made himself of no reputation. You may read that men set him at nought: Acts 4:11, 'This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders.' Nay, we read, Hebrews 2:7, 'Thou madest him a little lower than the angels.' It was an act of God himself; yet on Christ's part it was voluntary, undertaken for the glory of God and the good of men. It was not imposed upon him by constraint, without his consent, or against his will. An act of love and an act of obedience are truly consistent. A punishment is imposed upon us against our will, but here was a voluntary taking on of our burden. None of this was due to him upon his own account, but ours. It was no punishment for his self-exalting, but an act of gracious condescension. This appears in Scripture two ways—

1. In that what he was to do and undergo was proposed to him, and he willingly accepted of the terms and conditions. When no kind of sacrifices and offerings were sufficient to take away sin and save sinners, then

he, said, 'Lo, I come to do thy will,' Hebrews 10:6, 7.

It was told him what it would cost him if he would deliver and save mankind; all was written down in God's book; that he must be made under the law, take upon him the form of a servant, make his soul an offering for sin. How did he like these conditions? 'I was not,' saith he, 'rebellious, neither turned away back,' Isaiah 50:5. No; he refused not the terms, but cheerfully submitted to them: 'I delight to do thy will, O God.' He delighted in the thoughts of it long ere it came about: Proverbs 8:31, 'Rejoicing in the habitable part of the earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.' And when it was to be actually done, he repented not.

2. The scripture assigns this work unto the love and condescension of Christ himself, as the next and immediate cause of his engaging in it, and performance of it: Galatians 2:20, 'I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me;' Ephesians 5:25, 26, 'Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word'; Revelation 1:5, 6, 'Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.' The apostle tells us, 2 Corinthians 8:9, 'Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.' He condescended to a poor and low condition, and suffered therein for our good, that we might be partakers of the riches of the grace of God.

III. That this was for our sakes

Christ hath a double relation—

(1.) As our mediator, redeemer, and saviour; (2.) As the pattern and example of holiness in our nature. Both ways it was for our sakes.

1. As our mediator. So he emptied himself that we might be filled with all grace. He was born of a woman that we might be born of God: Galatians 4:4, 5, 'When the

fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons'; 2 Corinthians 5:21, 'He was made sin for us that knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' He was made a curse that we might have the blessing: Galatians 3:13, 14, 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.' He was forsaken for a while that we might be received for ever. And, to speak to the very case, 2 Corinthians 8:9, 'He was made poor for us, that we through his poverty might be rich.' There are some things in the mediation of Christ which belong to ministry, others to authority. Those which belong to ministry, as to be in the form of a servant, and die; he must be a man for that. Some things belong to authority, as to bring us back to God, to make our peace with God, to convey the Spirit, to vanquish Satan, to raise the dead, to deliver us from hell, to make us everlastingly blessed; he must be a God for that; but so as first that which is necessary to be done by his manhood be done for us; first the merit of his humiliation was to be interposed before we could be acquainted with the power of his exaltation. God took this way, partly because we were to be restored in a way contrary to that by which we fell. We fell by pride, and we must be restored by humility. We would be as God, not in a way of blessed conformity, but cursed self-sufficiency. Therefore, to expiate this pride, God must become like man, take our nature, and suffer in it. Once man, in the pride of his heart, attempted to be like God; and God by a mystery of humility became like man, that he might bring man into a nearer degree of likeness to God. Partly because the honour of his justice required it. Reconciliation supposes satisfaction; for

we are not at peace with God till his justice be appeased. And the Spirit of God had not been sent if God had not been at peace with us, for this is the token of his friendship. And till the Spirit be given to change both our natures and estate, we have no title to the pardon of sin and eternal life. Therefore the merit of Christ's humiliation is at the bottom of all the good we expect from God. Partly because he delights to carry on our salvation by contraries. Christ emptied himself to fill all things; became poor that we might be rich; brought life out of death, covered his glory, wherewith he would enrich the world, under shame and disgrace. In the same way that Christ purchased it we obtain it. A Christian is tossed with tempests, and yet the peace of God preserves his heart. He has nothing, and

yet has all things; was disgraced in the world, and yet approved of God. There was nothing stronger than Christ's seeming weakness; in his lowest abasement he discovered the greatest power of his Godhead. He satisfied the justice of God, overcame death and his Father's wrath, triumphed over Satan, crushed his head when he bruised his heel. The apostle tells us, 1 Corinthians 1:25, 'The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.' The foolish part and the weak part, that which in man's opinion has least wisdom or strength in it. Nothing is such a glorious act of wisdom and power as salvation by Christ dying, Christ abased; as also to bring a Christian to heaven by afflictions, rather than to suffer him to be prosperous in the world.

TO BE CONCLUDED

The meanest Christian is able to conceive of the sublimest principles that are peculiar to the gospel; in that manner the apostle desired his dear saints, to whom his epistles were inscribed, might understand them; that is to say, in a spiritual manner. Strong reason is not necessary to this, though strong grace is needful to a fixed and steady persuasion of them after a spiritual sort. The knowledge of technical terms (the use of which is become necessary, in treating on those subjects, through learned men's subtil and quaint distinctions upon them, not out of love to the truth, but with a desire to curtail, corrupt, or entirely sink it) is not required to a spiritual understanding of them. Philosophy and logic are useless things in this matter: neither are they of that advantage, even when soberly used in the handling of evangelical doctrines, as some suggest they are. They cannot contribute any thing towards the discovery of those truths. The reason is plain; they are no other than an artificial ordering of our conceptions concerning some natural truths, and inferring others from them which naturally follow from thence. And what can that do towards the discovery of supernatural truths, or the nature of those truths? Nothing at all. Persons, who in comparison with others may be accounted babes in the knowledge of earthly things, may have a clear and distinct understanding of the nature of the mysteries of Christianity, though they cannot discourse of them in that artificial way which some with great readiness may do, who are as ignorant of the things themselves, whereof they speak, as a stock or a stone. God knows that human science is a poor foundation for human pride. Philosophy, even in her own sphere, is not so knowing in many instances as her votaries represent her. She often puts us off with ingenious conjectures only, though she vaunts as if she gave us the most undeniable demonstration, and we are so foolish as to grow up into confidence without proof. O mortifying truth!

John Brine

REMEMBER TO BE THANKFUL

CARINE MACKENZIE

When I was a little girl, I was sometimes invited out for tea to a friend’s house or to a party. My mother’s parting shot would always be, ‘Remember to say thank you.’ That was just teaching me good manners, but it was an important lesson to learn. She wanted me to say thank you for food and gifts and for help given.

Saying ‘thank you’ to God is even more important. ‘In everything give thanks,’ Paul tells the Thessalonian Christians, and us, ‘for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you’.

Do we remember to say thank you for all God’s good gifts to us—for food, water, shelter, school, family. But the Bible tells us to give thanks in everything not only the good, happy situations.

I have a friend who put this verse into practice. She made a point of thanking God for every situation she found herself in—finding something to be thankful for even in the problems and difficulties that came her way—a broken plate or a missed appointment. This habit of thankfulness proved to be a great blessing when she faced serious illness. Even in that great trial she was enabled to find things to be thankful for.

The Psalmist tells us that it is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord (Psalm 92:1). We have great reason to give thanks for the Lord is good: for his mercy endureth for ever (Psalm 107:1).

Every time we pray and make our requests to God we ought to do that with thanksgiving (Philippians 4:6)—thanking for the fact that God allows us to pray to him and that he graciously hears and answers. The greatest gift he has given us is his Son the Lord Jesus Christ, the unspeakable gift. We can never thank him enough for that.

It is a serious matter to be unthankful. Paul, writing to Timothy, warns of perilous times to come when evil men resist the truth of God’s word. A long list of awful sins are pointed out and among these is unthankfulness (2 Timothy 3:2–5).

On day Jesus met ten lepers in a village. They all called out to Jesus, ‘Master, have mercy on us.’ Jesus healed them and told them to go to show themselves to the priest to confirm that they were now clean. One of the men, when he realised he was healed, returned to Jesus to thank him. ‘Were there not ten cleansed?’ asked Jesus, ‘but where are the nine?’ Only one of the ten was thankful to Jesus and so gave glory to God.

Daniel never stopped praying to God regularly even when the king’s decree ordered that he should not. Every time he prayed he gave thanks to God as he had always done (Daniel 2:23).

Jonah gave thanks to God from the belly of the great fish, a most uncomfortable and difficult place. He said to God, ‘I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving’ (Jonah 2:9).

David was thankful to God at the very end of his life, ‘Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name’ (1 Chronicles 29:13).

Paul was a prisoner on his way to Rome—not a happy situation. But he was able to be thankful when he met some of the local Christians who came out to meet him (Acts 28:15).

So God’s people can give thanks in persecution, danger, nearing death and imprisonment.

Saying thank you is one thing. Being thankful is another. We may learn just to say thank you as a habit, but God looks on the heart and knows if we are truly thankful. My mothers taught me to say ‘thank you’ but God tells us in his word to ‘be thankful’ (Colossians 3:15).

BIBLE SEARCH

Find the missing verses. The initials of the correct answers will spell out a word from the story.

- 1. For thy mercy is great above the heavens: and thy _____ reacheth unto the clouds. (Psalm 108:4)
- 2. Then on that day David delivered first this psalm to thank the LORD into the _____ of Asaph and his brethren. (1 Chronicles 16:7)
- 3. Giving thanks _____ for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 5:20)
- 4. Now therefore, our God, we thanks thee, and praise thy glorious _____. (1 Chronicles 29:13)
- 5. Daniel ... _____ upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. (Daniel 6:10)
- 6. First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your _____ is spoken of throughout the whole world. (Romans 1:8)
- 7. Thanks be unto God for his _____ gift. (2 Corinthians 9:15)
- 8. And Jesus took the _____; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples. (John 6:11)

CHRIST AND BELIAL

PART V

BY THE REV P LOS

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

LATER the promise was repeated to the patriarchs, to Moses, David and Solomon and to the prophets. The nearer they came to the time that the King would be revealed and the promise fulfilled, the clearer his person, his coming and its goal would be displayed.

At last the King was born in flesh, he who could say, 'Before Abraham was, I am.' He was born of a humble virgin in the little town of Bethlehem. His mansion was a stable, his cradle a manger, so his environment was poor according to the world.

'Is that a King?' the wise of the world asks. 'Is that child the promised Messiah?' the proud Jew says, who expected in earthly glory in him.

'Is that a King?' asks the man of Belial. 'a King in an animal shed? A King on the cross?' And the principal of the children of Belial says: 'Would that be a King? Do not believe it. Rather crucify him. Yea nail him to the cross!' But the devils know that he is a King, and that he is for this purpose anointed from eternity by the Father and that the time is coming when he shall chain them as a Conqueror to his carriage of triumph. Thus they tremble before him. And the angels look at the little Child full of wonder, but

cannot understand the wonder and a multitude of the heavenly hosts came down from the high spheres to earth and in the fields of Ephrathah their song of praise is heard: 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.'

Yes, that was the King, that despised, hated Jesus, the Son of the carpenter Joseph, as many thought. That was he, for whom the religious Israelite had longed. He less than the birds of heaven and their nests, or than the foxes in the burrows; who was caught, as a thief and murderer; who was pulled through the streets of Jerusalem from one court to another and at last ended his career on earth on slave wood.

How despised, a King without possessions, a King on the cross! Who can believe that he is a King, that he has a kingdom and reigneth over subjects? Was it a wonder that the world despised him? Is it then a wonder that his subjects are despised? And what kind of people are they? They are just a mean lot. Just look, harlots, publicans, poor fishermen, lame, crooked and blind follow him. Rich men do not follow him, the rich young man desired him not when he had to become poor in order to be his disciple.

TO BE CONTINUED

There are no saving views of God but in Christ, and there are no gracious views God hath of men but in Christ. If we look on God out of Christ, we are dazzled with an overwhelming, confounding Majesty; if God look on us out of Christ, he seeth hateful and hated sinners. Ephesians 2:12-14.

Robert Traill

IS IT RIGHT TO PRAY FOR REVIVAL?

BRIAN GARRARD (Basingstoke)

No special talent or spiritual discernment is required to understand that these are difficult and perilous times for the Christian Church (*cf.* 1 Timothy 4 and 2 Timothy 3). As a result, the Lord's people could be tempted to depression and discouragement. Some preachers actually encourage this by declaring with confidence that these are the very *last* days. Things are allowed by God to become steadily worse, they say, and so we must be living in the last times. Christ's coming is regarded as being but a brief step away. Some also like to cite the Lord's words in Luke 18:8 'When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?' For them that settles the matter. They see nothing but decline and falling away, sin and worldliness as the order of the day therefore it must be wrong to look for revival. Everything is seen as running down and no more blessing is to be expected for the church. Too many are so fixed upon this mentality that there is no moving them from it.

First of all, then, is it wrong to expect revival? In answer, go back to Luke 18:8 already quoted. Remember that this verse concludes the parable of the widow and the unjust judge. In it the Lord taught *perseverance in prayer* not an encouragement to give up. Also, he showed how God's elect people are under his remarkable care and should not doubt and fear but expect him to intervene. Perhaps the days just prior to the Second Advent may see a serious falling away. Will true saving faith be found on the earth at that time in any real quantity? Yet does that mean that no more outpourings of the Spirit are to be expected before that event? Can it be stated with all certainty that these present times are the very last days before Christ's final appearing?

Those who state that this is the case are making very positive claims. How can they be sure? Have they received a special insight and revelation denied to the rest of the church? Can they prove their case without any doubts whatsoever? The difficulty with such pronouncements is that no one really knows. Besides, history teaches that there have been times of terrible spiritual darkness before and they have gone on for years. Rome maintained her hold on the hearts and minds of countless numbers for a thousand years and many were prepared to believe that Christ was about to return. What happened? The Lord God sent the revival of the Reformation and proved them wrong! So it has been ever since. Years of deadness and the situation becomes desperate; then revival and the church is raised up in power and society changes for the good. The truth is that the Lord may come soon or, on the other hand, he may delay his Final Advent.

Whatever the Lord chooses to do, Christians are to pray and expect revival and blessing, keeping on in prayer and not losing heart (see Luke 18:1-8). While God keeps the exact date of his Son's return a secret, it is the happy duty of all believers to go on in prayer for divine blessing.

God often advances his cause by revival. However, this is not to disparage his ordinary ways of working and Christian believers should be faithful in their daily service to the Master. Even so, *it is not a sin to expect revival.* Consider in the first place Psalm 2. Despite the sin and rebellion of the nations, God is in perfect control and his anointed Son reigns over all. He shall be given the heathen nations and all the earth as his inheritance and deal with them as he chooses; see v.4-12 in

particular. Note Psalm 72 where Christ shall come down like rain and showers and cause the righteous to flourish in his days (v.6 & 7). Lordship and dominion will be Christ's as many acknowledge him (v.8-15). The concluding verses also speak of his blessing and glory continuing, not just at his Final Return but even in this church age (v.16-9). Read Luke 13:18-21 and the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven. Both speak of considerable growth respecting the church and an increase of blessing for God's kingdom. It does not infer decline and death but life and power, blessing and even more blessing! Although this may be an evil 'day', the Christian believer must remember these scriptures and others like them and hope in God!

Matthew 28:18-20 also suggests that Christians must always expect a blessing despite the activities of the enemy and his many temporary victories. Take note of what the Lord says in this passage. All power and authority have been given to him in heaven and earth. Therefore his servants are to go into all the world and make disciples of all the nations. They are to baptise them in the name of the *whole* Godhead and teach them to observe all the Christ has commanded. (See, too, the end of Mark's Gospel. The words there are just as pertinent *and they are authentic*—despite what the modern critics declare!) Again, none of this speaks of decline and decay but is more than suggestive of the power and blessing of God. Recall the final words of Matthew's Gospel (v.20): Christ promises to be with his people even to the end.

Look on to the end of Luke. The Lord tells his apostles that they are to be witnesses of his death and, more importantly, his resurrection. As a consequence, they are to preach the Gospel to all nations beginning at Jerusalem. He also promises to send the Holy Spirit upon his servants and endue them with heavenly power to witness (see Luke 24:45-9). See, too, Luke's sequel in Acts. In chapter 1:5 & 8 reference is made to the promised baptism with the Holy Spirit and the receiving

of power to be witnesses to Christ. You know the subsequent history. In Acts 2 the Spirit came and about 3,000 souls were converted. A little later a further 5,000 (approximately) believed. From then on Acts records a steady number of conversions and the work of God going forward far beyond Israel. True, there were problems and false teachers, defections and many dangers but God's kingdom went forward. This is God's method. Times of deadness and decay set in and it seems as if Satan is having his evil way. Then God intervenes again and his Spirit is poured out in reviving power. I could demonstrate this from many other parts of Scripture and from church history. Yet it is not for Christian believers to cease from prayer and expecting revival blessing. The day for the church to stop praying and looking for God's blessing is the day of Christ's Final Return. Otherwise pray on!

I cite one last reference for the present. Romans 11:25 and the phrase, 'the fullness of the Gentiles'. A time will come when God shall have fulfilled his purposes concerning the Gentiles. This in itself speaks of blessing and going forward. However, read v.26: 'so all Israel shall be saved'. At present, most of Israel is locked up in unbelief but a time is coming when that will change. Remember these things. 'The fullness of the Gentiles', 'All Israel saved'! Here is revival blessing indeed and glorious blessings promised that demand the prayer of faith on the part of God's people.

So, then, is it right to pray for revival? Psalm 85:6 gives a positive answer to that question when the psalmist asks God to revive his people and cause them to rejoice in him. Whatever the state of the world and the church, God's kingdom is to go forward and increase. Despite being locked in a spiritual battle against the world, the flesh, sin and the devil, Christ's church should prevail and go on. Therefore that means first of all prayer and then service. Here, then, is the encouragement not to give up but:

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING. ¶

THE WORD OF THE LORD TRIED HIM

(PSALM 105:19)

An incident in the life of the late Rev. Samuel Turner, Minister, the Cornmarket Chapel, Sunderland, and the High Chapel, Hemsley Moor, Yorkshire.

The great God and Saviour was once 'a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief'; and his followers are described as 'An afflicted and poor people that shall trust in the name of the Lord,' having nothing else to trust in. To this end God strips off every thing in self and others, that we may have no confidence in the flesh, nor put our trust in the sons of men, nor in princes. He makes known to us 'the certainty of the words of truth,' and speaketh unto us 'excellent things,' as our warrant and encouragement to trust in him. Precious faith receives the word of promise, love embraces it, hope springs up upon it; but patience is needed to wait the time of its accomplishment, and submission as to the manner how. Of Joseph it is said, 'Until the time that his word came, the word of the Lord tried him.' There appears in Scripture a two-fold meaning of 'the word coming,' viz., the promise applied, and the promise fulfilled. In the first sense, the fathers of old are said to 'obtain promises', in the latter, 'they received not the promise.' Between these two, that is, the word applied by power and received by faith, and the bestowing of the promised blessings, there has frequently been a long space of time, and many apparently opposite and trying circumstances. The casting into the pit, the selling to the Ishmaelites, and by them sold as a slave to Potiphar, appeared very contrary to the word spoken to him in the vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, that all his Father's house should bow down to him. The advancement in Potiphar's house might revive

his hope; but the false accusation, the dungeon, and the stocks must dash it again. But after all the trials, the word came. Joseph was second ruler over the land of Egypt, and all his brethren bowed their knees to him. Faith gives us the comfort of the word, but it is God's faithfulness secures the performance of it. It is exceedingly puzzling and distressing to us, when, after access in prayer, promises pleaded, faith believing them, hope expecting their fulfilment, and looking to a faithful God for the blessings promised, and then to experience the very reverse. Satan and unbelief takes advantage of the 'clouds and darkness that are round about him,' and hide from our eyes, that 'Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne.' It is just and right for God to do what he hath said, and perform what he has promised.

I was once sorely tried in the way of providence, but frequently much indulged with earnestness, confidence, and access at a throne of grace. This caused me to expect relief and deliverance. But instead, my outward difficulties increased, and the troubles of my heart were enlarged. One Tuesday (our preaching evening) I was much bowed down. Could not think how it was that I should have such access to, and confidence in God, and yet be disappointed. It is preaching night, it was suggested. And what will you do for a text? Your mind is swallowed up with your difficulties and distresses, and you have not thought of preaching. I was almost in despair. I opened the Bible, and this passage arrested my attention: 'Rest in the Lord, and wait

patiently for him.' Ah Lord, said I, the one thou hast enabled me to do, the other I want. Oh, give me patience! The application of this passage relieved my labouring mind. But the relief was soon checked by the thought of its being preaching night. What shall I preach from? Why, take that text, and handle it as applied to you, and it may be for the benefit of others. I did so, and heard a sweet account of one poor man, that appeared to be more comforted by it than even I was.

The above-mentioned passage appears to me to be very similar to this: 'Who is there among you that feareth the Lord, who obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light: let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself upon God.' But we have need of patience. The Lord hath his way in the sea, and his

paths in deep waters. Those who walk in the steps of that faith which our father Abraham had, while yet uncircumcised, must at times, against hope, believe in hope. The father was strong in faith giving glory to God. But very strong fathers have often very weakly children. Yet, they are children though weak; and the covenant runs: 'I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee.' This includes the babes as well as the young men; the weak as well as the strong. Even the worm Jacob is not to fear (Isaiah 41:14). For the strength of Israel has engaged to uphold, deliver, preserve, bless and save. He is a sure guide, even when he leads in paths that we know not. Commit thy way unto the Lord, and he shall direct thy steps, uphold thy goings, and preserve thy feet. ¶

works are. If you would be a Christian you must permit these words to be spoken to you and hold fast to them and believe without a doubt that you will experience what they say. You must not consider it arrogance that in this you are like the saints, but rather a necessary humility and despair not of God's grace but of your own worthiness. Under penalty of the loss of salvation, does God ask for boldness toward his proffered grace. If you do not desire to become holy like the saints, where will you abide? That would be arrogance if you desired to be saved by your own merit and works, as the Papists teach. They call that arrogance which is faith, and that faith which is arrogance; poor, miserable, deluded people!

If you believe in Christ and in his advent, it is the highest praise and thanks to God to be holy. If you recognize, love, and magnify his grace and work in you, and cast aside and condemn self and the works of self, then are you a Christian. We say: 'I believe in the holy Christian church, the communion of saints.' Do you desire to be a part of the holy Christian church and communion of saints, you must also be holy as she is, yet not of yourself but through Christ alone in whom all are holy.

He says: '*Behold.*' With this word he rouses us at once from sleep and unbelief as though he had something great, strange, or remarkable to offer, something we have long wished for and now would receive with joy. Such waking up is necessary for the reason that everything that concerns faith is against reason and nature; for example, how can nature and reason comprehend that such an one should be king of Jerusalem who enters in such poverty and humility as to ride upon a borrowed ass? How is such an advent becoming of a great king? But faith is of the nature that it does not judge nor reason by what it sees or feels but by what it hears. It depends upon the Word alone and not on vision or sight. For this reason Christ was received as a king only by the followers of the word

of the prophet, by the believers in Christ, by those who judged and received his kingdom not by sight but by the spirit—these are the true daughters of Zion. For it is not possible for those not to be offended in Christ who walk by sight and feeling and do not adhere firmly to the Word.

Let us receive first and hold fast this picture in which the nature of faith is placed before us. For as the appearance and object of faith as here presented is contrary to nature and reason, so the same ineffectual and unreasonable appearance is to be found in all articles and instances of faith. It would be no faith if it appeared and acted as faith acts and as the words indicate. It is faith because it does not appear and deport itself as faith and as the words declare.

If Christ had entered in splendour like a king of earth, the appearance and the words would have been according to nature and reason and would have seemed to the eye according to the words, but then there would have been no room for faith. He who believes in Christ must find riches in poverty, honour in dishonour, joy in sorrow, life in death, and hold fast to them in that faith which clings to the Word and expects such things.

'*Thy king.*' Here he distinguishes this king from all other kings. It is thy king, he says, who was promised to you, whose own you are, who alone shall direct you, yet in the spirit and not in the body. It is he for whom you have yearned from the beginning, whom the fathers have desired to see, who will deliver you from all that has hitherto burdened, troubled, and held you captive.

Oh, this is a comforting word to a believing heart, for without Christ, man is subjected to many raging tyrants who are not kings but murderers, at whose hands he suffers great misery and fear. These are the devil, the flesh, the world, sin, also the law and eternal death, by all of which the troubled conscience is burdened, is under bondage, and lives in anguish. For where there is sin there is no clear conscience; where there is no clear

'BEHOLD, THY KING COMETH'

An extract from a sermon on Matthew 21:4

BY MARTIN LUTHER

Christ particularly mentions, '*The daughter of Zion.*' In these words he refers to [...] the true faith. For if he commands that the following words concerning Christ be proclaimed, there must be some one to hear, to receive, and to treasure them in firm faith. He does not say: Tell of the daughter of Zion, as if some one were to believe that she has Christ; but to her you are to say that she is to believe it of herself, and not in any wise doubt that it will be fulfilled as the words declare. That alone can be called Christian faith, which believes without wavering that Christ is the Saviour not only to Peter and to the saints but also to you. Your salvation does not depend on the fact that you believe Christ to be the Saviour of the godly, but that he is a

Saviour to you and has become your own.

Such a faith will work in you love for Christ and joy in him, and good works will naturally follow. If they do not, faith is surely not present; for where faith is, there the Holy Ghost is and must work love and good works.

This faith is condemned by apostate and rebellious Christians, the pope, bishops, priests, monks, and the universities. They call it arrogance to desire to be like the saints. Thereby they fulfil the prophecy of Peter in 2 Peter 2:2, where he says of these false teachers: 'By reason of whom the way of the truth shall be evil spoken of.' For this reason, when they hear faith praised, they think love and good works are prohibited. In their great blindness they do not know what faith, love and good

conscience, there is a life of uncertainty and an unquenchable fear of death and hell in the presence of which no real joy can exist in the heart, as Leviticus 26:36 says: 'The sound of a driven leaf shall chase them.'

Where the heart receives the king with a firm faith, it is secure and does not fear sin, death, hell, nor any other evil; for he well knows and in no wise doubts that this king is the Lord of life and death, of sin and grace, of hell and heaven, and that all things are in his hand. For this reason he became our king and came down to us that he might deliver us from these tyrants and rule over us himself alone. Therefore he who is under this king cannot be harmed either by sin, death, hell, Satan, man or any other creature. As his king lives without sin and is blessed, so must he be kept forever without sin and death in living blessedness.

See, such great things are contained in these seemingly unimportant words: 'Behold, thy king.' Such boundless gifts are brought by this poor and despised king. All this reason does not understand, nor nature comprehend, but faith alone does. Therefore he is called thy king; thine, who art vexed and harassed by sin, Satan, death and hell, the flesh and the world, so that thou mayest be governed and directed in the grace, in the spirit, in life, in heaven, in God.

With this word, therefore, he demands faith in order that you may be certain that he is such a king to you, has such a kingdom, and has come and is proclaimed for this purpose. If you do not believe this of him, you will never acquire such faith by any work of yours. What you think of him you will have; what you expect of him you will find; and as you believe so shall it be to you. He will still remain what he is, the King of life, of grace, and of salvation, whether he is believed on or not.

He *'cometh.'* Without doubt you do not come to him and bring him to you; he is too high and too far from you. With all your effort, work and labour you cannot come to him, lest you boast as though you had

received him by your own merit and worthiness. No, dear friend, all merit and worthiness is out of the question, and there is nothing but demerit and unworthiness on your side, nothing but grace and mercy on his. The poor and the rich here come together, as Proverbs 22:2 says.

By this are condemned all those infamous doctrines of free will, which come from the pope, universities and monasteries. For all their teaching consists in that we are to begin and lay the first stone. We should by the power of free will first seek God, come to him, run after him and acquire his grace. Beware, beware of this poison! It is nothing but the doctrine of devils, by which all the world is betrayed. Before you can cry to God and seek him God must come to you and must have found you, as Paul says, Romans 10:14–15: 'How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach except they be sent?' God must lay the first stone and begin with you, if you are to seek him and pray to him. He is present when you begin to seek. If he were not you could not accomplish anything but mere sin, and the greater the sin, the greater and holier the work you will attempt, and you will become a hardened hypocrite.

You ask, how shall we begin to be godly and what shall we do that God may begin his work in us? Answer: Do you not understand, it is not for you to work or to begin to be godly, as little as it is to further and complete it. Everything that you begin is in and remains sin, though it shines ever so brightly; you cannot do anything but sin, do what you will. Hence, the teaching of all the schools and monasteries is misleading, when they teach man to begin to pray and do good works, to found something, to give, to sing, to become spiritual and thereby to seek God's grace.

You say, however: Then I must sin from necessity, if by my free will I work and live

without God? and I could not avoid sin, no matter what I would do? Answer: Truly, it is so, that you must remain in sin, do what you will, and that everything is sin you do alone out of your own free will. For if out of your own free will you might avoid sin and do that which pleases God, what need would you have of Christ? He would be a fool to shed his blood for your sin, if you yourself were so free and able to do aught that is not sin. From this you learn how the universities and monasteries with their teachings of free will and good works, do nothing else but darken the truth of God so that we know not what Christ is, what we are and what our condition is. They lead the whole world with them into the abyss of hell, and it is indeed time that we eradicate from the earth all chapters and monasteries.

Learn then from this gospel what takes place when God begins to make us godly, and what the first step is in becoming godly. There is no other beginning than that your king comes to you and begins to work in you. It is done in this way: The gospel must be the first, this must be preached and heard. In it you hear and learn how all your works count for nothing before God and that everything is sinful that you work and do. Your king must first be in you and rule you. Behold, here is the beginning of your salvation; you relinquish your works and despair of yourself, because you hear and see that all you do is sin and amounts to nothing, as the gospel tells you, and you receive your king in faith, cling to him, implore his grace and find consolation in his mercy alone.

But when you hear and accept this it is not your power, but God's grace, that renders the gospel fruitful in you, so that you

believe that you and your works are nothing. For you see how few there are who accept it, so that Christ weeps over Jerusalem and, as now the Papists are doing, not only refuse it, but condemn such doctrine, for they will not have all their works to be sin, they desire to lay the first stone and rage and fume against the gospel.

Again, it is not by virtue of your power or your merit that the gospel is preached and your king comes. God must send him out of pure grace. Hence, not greater wrath of God exists than where he does not send the gospel; there is only sin, error and darkness, there man may do what he will. Again, there is no greater grace, than where he sends his gospel, for there must be grace and mercy in its train, even if not all, perhaps only a few, receive it. Thus the pope's government is the most terrible wrath of God, so that Peter calls them the children of execration, for they teach no gospel, but mere human doctrine of their own works as we, alas, see in all the chapters, monasteries and schools.

This is what is meant by 'Thy king cometh.' You do not seek him, but he seeks you. You do not find him, he finds you. For the preachers come from him, not from you; their sermons come from him, not from you; your faith comes from him, not from you; everything that faith works in you comes from him, not from you; and where he does not come, you remain outside; and where there is no gospel there is no God, but only sin and damnation, free will may do, suffer, work and live as it may and can. Therefore you should not ask, where to begin to be godly; there is no beginning, except where the king enters and is proclaimed. ¶

Is thy body, which was once hale and vigorous, now become a crazy, sickly, pained body to thee, neither useful to God, nor comfortable to thee? a tabernacle to groan and sigh in? and little hopes it will be recovered to a better temper. God hath ordered this to make thee willing to be divorced from it. The less desirable life is, the less formidable death will be.

John Flavel

NICHOLAS RIDLEY

EDWARD MALCOLM (Reading)

Ridley's examination and death

A common feature of the experience of the Protestant martyrs was their being subjected to an examination. This was a theological disputation, during which they were made to justify their teachings, with the intention of delivering out of the errors for which they had been imprisoned. Of course, such disputations were pointless, in that the popish examiners were blinded to the truth, and, like the Jews of old who condemned Christ for speaking the truth, unable to judge between gospel truth and their fond errors. The benefit to us is that we have a record of examinations, and so know both what the papists believed, and what the Protestants believed.

The examination opened with Ridley being told off for not removing his cap nor bowing his knee to the three bishops who were authorised to examine him. It is recorded that, at specific points, he did remove his cap, but immediately put it on again. When permitted, he replied that he doffed his cap to the name of Cardinal Pole in that he was of royal blood, but replaced his cap in that he was also the Pope's legate, and Ridley refused to honour him for that. While we may think this amusing and a little farcical, both Ridley and his examiners knew what was at stake; either Cardinal Pole was the authorised representative of Christ's vicar on earth, in which case he ought to be honoured for the Pope's sake, or the Pope was not Christ's vicar on earth, and Pole a mere pretender.

In order to encourage Ridley to accept the Pope's supremacy, he was reminded that he had once accepted that authority without question. Certain expressions and sentiments in his sermons were used to try to demonstrate that he was not so far from Rome as he pretended. Ridley was then given leave to

respond, and did so with a masterful display of knowledge about the history of the papacy, citing the words of St Gregory the Great, a former Bishop of Rome, who said, 'He that maketh himself a bishop over all the world, is worse than Antichrist.' Thus Ridley used Rome against Rome. The examiners then responded with a quotation from St Augustine, to show that the great Latin Father accepted the universal primacy of the Pope, but Ridley replied with the correct quotation, showing that even Augustine limited the Pope's authority to Europe.

Seeing they could not get the better of him with learning, they attempted to return to the main attack, that Ridley taught people to reject the Pope's authority. Many and ingenious were their arguments, and many and intelligent, as well as gracious, were his responses. The doctrine of the Lord's Supper was also a major point of contention.

The articles on which both Ridley and Latimer were formally examined were these:

1. They denied the real, or corporeal presence of Christ in the body and blood of the mass;
2. They denied that a material change took place in the bread and wine in the mass;
3. They denied that the mass is ever a propitiatory sacrifice for the quick and the dead;
4. These views and opinions had all been condemned by scholars since they were published; and
5. These articles were all accurate, and were condemned by all men everywhere.

Ridley was the first to be examined on these, and he was instructed to answer yes or no to the first, but begged leave to go back to his cell, and spend some hours preparing his

answers. The examiners agreed, but invited him to say something to them there and then, which, they assured him, would not prejudice anything he said the next day, and that he would be free to change his opinion whenever he chose. Ridley replied that he had already been made several promises, most of which had been broken, and so he had little confidence in the process. He did, however, answer each of the articles, and in most cases he answered 'yes and no'. That is, in answer to the first, he declared that, in a sense, Christ is present in the Supper, but not in the sense intended by Rome. In answer to the second, he declared that, in a sense, there is a change, in that ordinary bread and wine become 'a lively presentation of Christ's body, and not only a figure, but effectuously representeth his body; that even as the mortal body was nourished by that visible bread, so is the internal soul fed with the heavenly food of Christ's body, which the eyes of faith see, as the bodily eyes see only bread' (Ridley, p274, P.S Ed). Ridley answered a lengthy yes to the third, concentrating on the fact that Christ's sacrifice was 'once offered', and so cannot be repeated. Keen to have the last word, the Bishop of Lincoln replied that, whereas the bloody sacrifice could not be repeated, the mass, being an unbloody sacrifice, could be repeated as often as it may be done. Of course, the fact that there is no such thing as an unbloody sacrifice for sins seemed not to trouble the man.

Ridley answered yes and no to the fourth; yes, they had been condemned, but no, not by anyone who could be considered a scholar. On the fifth and final article, he confessed they were true, in so far as he had just admitted their truth, but he could not say whether they were condemned by all men everywhere since he had not been bothered to canvass the opinions of all men everywhere.

The following day was more of the same. Ridley was asked again to confirm these articles, and again he answered them, this time with more careful preparation, thanks to the

reading and writing materials with which he had been supplied. The examiners had no intention of debating with him, only of justifying their condemnation of him. After a futile plea to him to save his life by turning, Ridley was condemned, and degraded from his holy orders.

The degradation began with a command to him to remove his cap, which he refused to do. It being forcibly removed, he was dressed, against his will and in spite of his protests, in the vestments of a massing priest. That they did not begin with episcopal robes was because they denied that he had ever been a true bishop. He would not hold the chalice and wafer, so one was appointed to hold them in his hands. The same individual held a book in his hand while his licence to preach was revoked. All the while Ridley prayed, 'O Lord God, forgive them this their wickedness.'

After the degradation was over Ridley attempted to speak to the prelates, but they said they were not permitted to speak with an excommunicated person. Ridley then pleaded with the bishops to remember the poor in their official capacities, especially his sister and her husband, who had lost everything because he, Ridley, was condemned.

At this point it is worth mentioning a matter of which Foxe makes much. When King Edward VI came to the throne one of the first acts of his government was to remove from office certain bishops who opposed the Reformation. Among these was Bonner, Bishop of London, whom Ridley succeeded. With Bonner gone, his mother and sister fell on hard times, and Ridley kept places for them at his table, twice a day, seven days a week. Even when members of the Privy Council were present, they were required to give way to 'Mother Bonner.' But when Bonner was returned to office by Mary, he would not acknowledge Ridley's kindness, nor return it to his sister and her husband, but did everything in his considerable power to ruin them utterly, in which wickedness he

was largely successful. Ridley seems to have had knowledge of this, hence his plea now.

As they were leaving Ridley cried out that he had this testimony, that none could lay any serious sin against him—for if they could, they surely would have done so!

That evening, Ridley sat down to his last supper, and he called it his marriage supper, for, he said, ‘tomorrow I must be married’. After the meal, which by all accounts was a merry affair to him, if not to all present, his brother-in-law offered to watch the night through with him. ‘No, no, that you shall not,’ replied Ridley, ‘For I mind (God willing) to go to bed, and to sleep as quietly tonight as ever I did in my life’ (*Ridley*, p.293, P.S. Ed).

The following morning, 16 October, 1555, Ridley set out on his final earthly journey. Approaching the Bocardo prison, he looked up to Cranmer’s cell, hoping to speak with him. Cranmer was disputing with Friar Soto, and was not permitted to look out. He looked back, and saw old Hugh Latimer approaching. Ridley reached the place of execution first, and when Latimer came along shortly after, he ran to him, embraced him, and kissed him. Foxe states that those standing nearby heard Ridley say to Latimer, ‘Be of good heart, brother, for God will either assuage the fury of the flame, or else strengthen us to abide it.’ There followed prayer together, and some conversation, during which time the executioners stood in the shade.

Enduring a quarter of an hour sermon from one Dr Smith, who had recanted his Protestant convictions, Ridley and Latimer sought leave to speak a few words of reply. Being told that the only words permitted were words of recantation, they forbore, and were tied to the stakes. Ridley had time to hand over any clothing of value to his brother-in-law, and to distribute his few possessions to people near to hand. Some sought keepsakes, even to the point of tearing off pieces of his

clothing.

Being chained to the stake, Ridley once more pleaded for his sister and her husband, the latter supplying two bags of gunpowder to hang around the necks of each martyr. The fire was kindled, and, although doubt is cast on the authenticity of these words now, Foxe records Hugh Latimer as saying to Nicholas Ridley, ‘Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle, by God’s grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out.’

As the flames arose, old Bishop Latimer died quickly and quietly. It was not to be so for Bishop Ridley. The fire was badly made, there being stuff at the bottom that burned fiercely, but overlaid with slow-burning wood. The effect was that Ridley’s legs burnt away under him, while his upper parts remained untouched. He cried to the bystanders to let the fire come to him, but they, not understanding his plight, simply added more wood on top. ‘I cannot burn,’ he cried, between crying, ‘Lord, have mercy upon me.’ At last a bystander understood his cries, and used a hook to pull down the fagots. As soon as he did so, the flames leaped up, and the poor victim was seen to turn himself towards them. The flames touched the gunpowder, and Ridley was seen to move no more.

Conclusion

The death of Nicholas Ridley is a horrible fact of history, and a testimony to the hatred shown by many to the gospel of free grace in Christ. We have a glorious advantage, in that the doctrines for which Ridley died are set out for us in our Book of Common Prayer. He, with Archbishop Cranmer, was the architect of the Protestant Church of England. If we would honour his memory, let us do so by honouring his Saviour, and by standing fast on the same solid and sure Rock on which he stood and died. ¶

THE PROBLEMS PAUL ADDRESSES IN ROMANS 9-11

BY WILLIAM T. FOLEY

In this study we will identify what are the problems in Romans chapters 9 to 11 which Paul deals with. Without doubt this portion of scripture has been perplexing to some expositors who aver that Paul concludes his main argument in 8:39 of this epistle; simply adding chapters 9–11 as an appendix, a parenthesis, or digression. Professor Dodd (1884–1973) too regarded this as the interpolation of an earlier Pauline treatise.

Other notable commentators believe that the doctrinal section culminates in chapters 9–11 and indeed right here is the apex of Paul’s thesis. Dr Baur (1792–1860), ‘made this section of the letter the hermeneutical centre of the whole epistle’ (Kasemann (1906–1998), *Commentary on Romans*, 1980, p.235).

Since the Reformation this section of the epistle has been viewed as a compendium of Pauline theology. The Reformers recognised here the overriding theme being the mercy of God and the doctrine of predestination.

Dr John Ziesler (*Paul’s Letter to the Romans*), defines the main problem like this:

‘if entry into the people of God is solely by faith, and for Jews and Gentiles equally, what happens to the special position of Israel in the purposes of God? Does justification by faith imply God’s rejection of Israel? Put another way, if historical Israel was the recipient of God’s promises to Abraham (vv.4–5), and if God has now rejected her in favour of a new and multi-racial people, does that not impugn the faithfulness and reliability of God?’ (p.234).

The crucial thing for Paul is that he must now find a solution to the problem; for if he does not, then it means that God’s word has

failed (v.6) that his purpose is inconsistent and he is not immutable.

The resounding question is ‘Does the unbelief of Israel signify a failure of God’s promises, or a breakdown of his purpose (cf. Gifford, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* in *The Speakers Commentary*, p.38, 1986).

Paul deals with three specific objections or problems in Romans 9–11.

Firstly, that God has acted unjustly. ‘Is there unrighteousness with God?’ (Romans 9:14). Rendered another way: is God’s election arbitrary and capricious? Paul refutes this by appealing to the freedom and sovereignty of God coupled with the revealed target of his electing purpose (Romans 9:14–29). God will have mercy and compassion on whom he wills based not on human will or effort. He is the potter and all of humanity is one lump and there are vessels of honour and vessels of dishonour, vessels of mercy and vessels of wrath.

Secondly, why has Israel failed to attain the righteousness of God? ‘What shall we say then?’ (Romans 9:30). Paul’s reply is that they stumbled at Christ and this brings into focus human responsibility. Israel’s unbelief has resulted in the magnification of the faithfulness of God in so far as that they were invited, but did not obey the gospel or come. They were disobedient. (Romans 10:1–21).

Thirdly, ‘Did God cast off his people which he foreknew?’ The answer is abundantly clear; God’s election has not displaced Israel. The rejection is partial (Romans 11:1–10) and temporary (Romans 11:11–27). Foreknew in this section does not mean God foresaw in advance but that he loved Israel from eternity (see Deuteronomy 7:6–8). The term foreknew is used by Paul, in Romans

8:29–30, in dealing with the chain of salvation, meaning five aspects; as follows, foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, glorification.

In Romans 9 Paul effectively ‘solves the problem by redefining Israel’; it is now theological Israel or the true spiritual Israel (Galatians 6:16). True Israel is narrower than historical, racial or ethnic Israel. In Romans 10 Paul avers it is because of Israel’s ‘disobedience to the word of God in Christ that she is outside the people of God as now understood’. In Romans 11 as part of ‘God’s long-term strategy, Israel present rejection will ultimately lead to her full reinstatement’ (Ziesler, *Ibid*, p.234).

In Romans 8 (vv. 28–34) Paul set forth the unfailing purpose of God through the gospel, but what about Israel? Did God’s purposes not fail in her case? No, says Paul in 9:6. In the last few verses of Romans 8 (vv.35–39) Paul reached the pinnacle of expression to convey the believer’s eternal security, yet what about Israel’s eternal security? ‘What about those, the Jews, to whom the unspeakable gift was first offered? They have turned their own back on it. They were Paul’s own people, his own flesh and blood. More than that, they were God’s own people’. (Barrett (1917–2011), *Reading through Romans*, p.47).

Chapter 9

At the beginning of Romans 9 you can almost sense Paul asking himself ‘What about my people’; if these things are true and our position in Christ is impregnable, then what has happened to my fellow-countrymen? He knows objections will be raised. Therefore, he then goes on to say that his conscience was bothering him in the Holy Spirit and outlines the sevenfold privileges of Israel: the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the gift of the law, service to God, the promises and Christ’s incarnation. Commenting on this, Barrett (*The Epistle to the Romans*, 1957) writes, ‘Since God has so clearly given Israel a position of unique privilege, does not Israel’s defection

mean that God’s intention has broken down? The word of promise has been proved false by history.’ Paul responds positively by providing an analysis of the meaning of the term Israel. It does not mean only physical descent.

Effectively Paul says, ‘Now this does not mean that God’s word to Israel has failed’ (v.6), because you see there really is a distinction between natural and spiritual Israel. He does not leave the matter there but proceeds to say effectively nor can all Abraham’s offspring be considered truly children of Abraham. (Jesus clarified to the Jews of his day what was meant by Abraham’s children, see John 8:37–58). This is radical because it provides an answer to the perplexing problem of Israel’s unbelief. If Paul did not have this as a solution, then it would mean God was inconsistent. Of course, Paul could not accept this, for if God left Israel go all together, then it would have implications for his own eternal security. How could he trust God to be faithful and keep his promises, if today he says He will keep him secure and tomorrow let him go? How could he trust in a God who plans and promises, but cannot deliver? However, Paul had the answer from the Old Testament. He looked at Abraham (9:7) and recognised that though he had two sons, the one was Ishmael and the other Isaac who was called; he was counted for the seed. Furthermore, the same remains true in the case of Rebecca’s twins, Jacob and Esau (9:10–13) to illustrate God’s elective purpose.

Some may say this is absolutely unfair and unreasonable on the part of God, so it must make him unrighteousness and unjust (v.14); especially in the case of the twins whose origin goes back to the same moment of conception. Not so, says Paul. God’s election stands and is part of his eternal counsels. He is free and absolute. He chooses whom he will, not on the basis of man’s will or man’s effort, (vv.15, 16). Paul directs our attention to divine mercy; God’s mercy is under his sovereign will.

Hold on a moment, someone will say, ‘What about the problem with Pharaoh?’

Therefore Paul proceeds to argue that God used Pharaoh to demonstrate his power and hardened his heart. Where is the mercy in this? We can only conclude that God used him positively and we also know that Pharaoh hardened his own heart in the first place. Dr Morgan (1863–1945) (*The Analyzed Bible*, p.151) puts it well, ‘While it is true that God hardened him, it is first true that Pharaoh hardened his own heart against the Lord; and God’s hardening consisted merely, as it ever does, in his abandoning of the man to the conditions necessarily arising as the result of his own deliberate choice.’

Again, Paul anticipates an objection, ‘Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he find fault? For who hath resisted his will?’ Barrett (*Ibid*, 49) comments

Here Paul can reply, Who is being unfair now? God is not finding fault; he is being merciful to Gentiles, creatures of his who have been rebellious, and spreading abroad the gospel. How could he have sent it to the Gentiles if the Jews had not spurned it first (9:25–29)?

Finally, in chapter 9, Paul appeals to a series of Old Testament prophets, who foretold that God only calls a remnant and not all of Israel, to show that mercy was being extended to the Gentiles too. In particular, Paul shows why Israel stumbled (vv.30–33); they sought to achieve the aim of righteousness by the law and then they stumbled as a nation at Christ when he came.

From chapter 9 we see every step of salvation being based on God’s eternal electing purpose.

Chapter 10

In chapter 10 we have set before us the righteousness of God and the righteousness of man; and Israel’s unbelief being argued as inexcusable.

This (10:1–21) probably makes it the greatest evangelistic and missionary passage to be found in the Pauline writings. In chapter 9

(vv.6–29) we have a defence of God’s sovereignty and divine election, but here we have set before us the greatest mandate to preach the gospel, and in doing so, fulfilling God’s electing purpose. Thus teaching us that human responsibility is built into God’s predestinating purpose.

From a position of intense emotion (v.1) Paul, probably speaking from his own experience (Philippians 3:5–6), states that they have enthusiasm or zeal for God; this can be possibly equated with Judaism and religious duty not being truly based on the revealed righteousness of God, which they appear to be aware of. If Paul was typical of the Jews of his day in terms of religious service, then what he indicates of himself in Philippians would seem useful to us in understanding verse 3. Paul wrote, ‘not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith (Philippians 3:9).

Ziesler (*Ibid*, 256) seems to call into question and displays ‘grave concerns’ about the concept of accruing merit before God as being meant in verse 3. He writes, ‘Building up merit was a concern of the Reformers, but there is remarkably little evidence that it was Paul’s.’ According to him it is unlikely ‘whether Jewish teachers held any such view’ (see his discussion on Romans 3:20, *Ibid*, p.105). But contemporary Judaism is certainly based on works. Furthermore, it seems from Paul’s own testimony in Philippians 3 that he had a great reliance on meritorious works, which he abandoned for knowledge of Christ.

One thing that is clear is that God’s righteousness is perfectly free as a gift through faith to everyone that believes because Christ is the consummation of the law. There is no need to search heaven and earth for life, because Christ has come into this world, or descend into the deep, because he has risen from the dead. This life is to be found in Christ’s perfect life and atoning work through the preaching of the word of God which, after it takes root in the heart, results in a person

believing in the Lord Jesus and his resurrection and then finds expression through the mouth, showing they are declared righteous before God. This life is now granted to Jews and Gentiles alike. We should notice the central importance of preaching in Paul's idea of gospel ministry in chapter 10 (Barrett, *Reading Through Romans*, p.53), and the significance of being sent. Today we need to witness the necessity (vv.14, 15) and the power of hearing the Word of God (vv.16, 17) in preaching.

'Israel's unbelief is her own fault' is thought to begin at verse 14, but Ziesler (Ibid, 265) thinks it begins at verse 19. Certainly verse 19 introduces us directly to the question 'Did not Israel know?' Israel's unbelief and disobedience is in view. The Gentiles are the 'foolish nation' in verse 19 (see Deuteronomy 32 :21), to stir Israel to gospel jealousy. In verse 21 we have the picture of God reaching out in love and mercy to Israel with everlasting arms to a rebellious people.

Chapter 11

In chapter 11 we have the doctrine of the remnant and the unfolding of God's plan; God's plan complete and the praise of God.

Ziesler (Ibid, 268) writes, 'The argument now faces explicitly the question that has been implicitly present more or less constantly since 9:1: has God rejected Israel. The answer is that he has not.' Even the salvation of Paul, who is an Israelite, proves that there is a remnant. Paul uses the case of Elijah (vv. 2–5) to demonstrate that God has reserved to himself a faithful remnant, according to the election of grace. Paul goes on (v.6) to define grace by saying that it is the antithesis of works; both cannot be mixed with each other otherwise they will lose their identity.

There is a shift in emphasis in v.7 by the question 'What then?' The unsaved portion of Israel were blinded, but not cast away. Barrett (Ibid, p.210) states that 'it is impossible here to distinguish between "hardened because of disobedient" and "disobedient

because hardened".' It is probable that judicial hardening and human disobedience are concurrent because they happen simultaneously when the gospel is refused. Obstinate Israel falls into its own snare and trap (v.9).

Because of their 'stumbling' and 'diminishment' salvation is come to the Gentiles and as part of God's strategy it is hoped to provoke them back to fullness. The future conversion of Israel will be greater than their past, certainty greater than Paul had known during his ministry. The term 'life from the dead' would appear to have eschatological significance and may refer to the Second Coming (see v.26). However, every Christian, through being born again, experiences life from being dead in trespasses and sins (see Ephesians 2). Indeed, every Jew or Gentile from Adam to the last soul saved on earth is granted by the Lord life from the dead.

The Gentiles are warned in verses 13–25 not to be high minded. Paul amplifies his thought further by the use of the allegory of the olive tree (vv. 17–24). The root (v.16) stands for the patriarchs (Ziesler, Ibid, p.278), if you link v.28. The wild-olive tree branches must represent Gentile Christians and the branches broken off are unbelieving Jews. The 'good olive tree' (v.24) would seem to represent Christ.

In v.25 we are introduced to the concept of 'the mystery of Israel' and the reality of her partial blindness until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. This means that Israel's current blindness is limited in time to God's completed plan for the Gentiles in terms of their ingrafting into the kingdom. This must be eschatologically related to the lifting of the scales from Israel's eyes (cf. 2 Corinthians 3:14–16) when the Redeemer shall return to Zion.

What does the term 'all Israel' mean in v.26? Does it refer to Israel as a whole or does it mean 'every Israelite'. It probably means the former according to a number of traditional expositors. Barrett (Ibid, p.223) suggests that 'from "all Israel" must be subtracted all Sadducees, heretics, magicians,

the licentious and many more.' But of course the elect cannot lose their salvation.

But does 'all Israel' in the context mean corporate Israel? There are a number of interpretations, which we won't explore here but to draw on an earlier passage, Romans 9:6, which says, 'they are not all Israel, which are of Israel,' which means that Paul envisaged two Israels, one spiritual and one physical (after the flesh). Scofield (1843–1921) the editor of the Scofield Bible tries to restrict this interpretation by saying, 'it is Israel within the nation Israel.' The implication is that only spiritual Israel must be restricted to the nation Israel. But that does not adequately take account of the Gentiles, being the wild olive tree, being grafted in among them, and with them, partaking of the root and fatness of the olive tree (see Romans 11:17).

Romans 9:6 may be rendered like this for clarity, 'they (the Jews) are not Israel (spiritual), which are of Israel (ethnic Israel).' In other words, the doctrine of the spiritual remnant, according to the election of grace, must be upheld in reading Paul here in Romans. Nevertheless, lest we be carried away with 'over spiritualization' we need to put the brake on here to avoid confusion. Clearly within Romans the term 'Israel means Israel' and 'Gentiles mean the Gentiles.' Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles, shows us that there is a distinction in Paul's thinking between the term Gentiles and Israel. Otherwise the passage (Romans 9–11) would not make sense. This needs to influence and guide our thinking, as interpreters, when we come to looking at verse 26, 'and so all Israel shall be saved.' We just cannot change the meaning of Israel in verse 25 and verse 26 and conclude that there is no future for Israel in the economy of God. Israel means Israel in this context, according to the rules of common sense and grammar. (700 times in the Bible the term Israel is used, according to Bishop Ryle, 1816–1900.) Israel's rejection and salvation is the integrating idea of Paul in dealing with Romans

9–11. It is about the riches of conversion of Israel, in the future, after the completed work of God among the Gentiles. God will yet place salvation in Zion for 'Israel my glory' (Isaiah 46:13). The fulness of the elect, within Israel, as among the Gentiles, will only be by incorporation into the body of Christ.

We must be careful to recognise that Israel (children after the flesh) are not the children of God, or the children of promise (Romans 9:8). Furthermore, we need to recognise that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs of the same body as the Jews that are saved, which includes Old Testament and New Testament saints, and that Christ only and exclusively saves all the elect through his atoning and substitutionary sacrifice (see Ephesians 3). There is only one covenant of redemption including all believers in the household of faith, see Hebrews 11. Christ alone is the only way of salvation, there is not one way for Jews through animal sacrifices to be saved and another method for the Gentiles. The Cross of Christ is the alone way. The middle wall of partition has been broken down, between Jew and Gentile, and we are fellow-citizens with the saints and household of God (Ephesians 2:19). What we will see is an enlargement of the Jewish elect prior to the Second Coming of Christ being drawn to Christ and regenerated by the Holy Spirit. There will be an extraordinary number of Jews saved in the future and, with that prospect alone, that should bring forth praise and honour to Almighty God from Gentiles.

As regards election they (the Jews) are beloved for the sake of their forefathers (Romans 11:28). Paul views historical Israel as loved for the patriarchs sake within God's eternal purpose. Ziesler (Ibid, 287) writes, 'Taken together, vv.28–29 say that God's love, seen in his dealings with the patriarchs and especially with Abraham whom God called, remains constant and is not deflected even by the recalcitrance of many Jews.' According to Griffith, (*St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, 304), in verse 29 'we see God's unchangeable attitude to them. His gifts to,

and calling of, Israel are without any change of mind... His Divine love ... has not been annulled by disobedience... This is another way of putting the truth of 9:4, 5 and is a restatement of everything which has been said by the Apostle from 11:11. God is incapable of revoking his word.'

Paul addresses the Gentiles in verse 30 who have gone from a position of disobedience to a place of mercy, through Israel's unbelief. However, Israel, though at present disobedient, will eventually share the mercy which has been extended to the Gentiles (v.31).

Verse 32 puts Gentiles and Jews together in the prison of disobedience that he might have mercy on all. Bruce (1910–1990)

(*The Epistle to the Romans: An Introduction and Commentary* in *The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, Vol. 6) states the case with admirable clarity: 'God's purpose in shutting Jews and Gentiles together in a place where their disobedience to his law must be acknowledged and brought to light was that he might bestow his unmerited mercy on Jews and Gentiles alike.'

Ziesler (*Ibid*, p.288) writes, 'The argument is now complete, and the case has been made. God is faithful, and the only proper response is that of praise to him, vv.33–36.'

To God be the glory forever. Pray for the salvation of the Jews. God is able to graft them in again, v.23. ¶

STUDIES IN II PETER

EDWARD MALCOLM (Reading)

2:18–22. False teachers revealed, pt6

Peter concludes this section with a solemn warning to us all to be on our guard against all such false teachers, since the consequence of falling into their trap is that we become heirs of eternal damnation.

The biggest lie they tell is their promise of liberty—liberty, that is, from the way of holiness, from the need to obey the moral law, from the requirement to be righteous in thought, word and deed. There are, from time to time, those whose love for the corrupt things of this life leads them to teach that Christians can lawfully take part in things against which God has already revealed his wrath. There are some in the United States and elsewhere who teach that, for instance, it is acceptable for Christians to view pornography, or to get drunk, or to use what was once termed 'bad language'. One man, a leader of this sort of thing, has recently been removed

from his ministry in a very large church over accusations that he bullied members, threatened opponents, lied and oversaw mismanagement of church funds. 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' A person who encourages Christians to live like the world is bound to act like the world himself. That man is a slave to the world, and to the lusts of the flesh. Being their slave he obeys their commands, doing whatever they lead him to.

Those to whom the gospel has come in power, ('the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ') have escaped the pollutions of the world. Such 'know the way of righteousness', and are counted among the saved. Yet even among such will be found some who will return to the old, corrupt, cursed life. This is why the doctrine of perseverance is so important; yes, those whom Christ has saved will be brought to eternal life, but not without our submission to God's

will, and our actively pursuing holiness. We are to persevere, as Christ will grant us grace to do so. Those who live with a foot in the world and one on the way of righteousness, who hold corruption in one hand and Christ in the other, are seeking to serve two masters. One must give way to the other. If Christ is forsaken for the sake of the world, then heaven is forsaken also. If the world is forsaken for Christ, then heaven is won. This is a solemn business, because it reminds us that we are not to be like the dog returning to its own vomit, nor like the sow wallowing in the mire after being washed. We must keep our garment unspotted from the world. We must hate the contamination associated with sin, and flee every appearance of it. Therefore we must take careful note of the doctrine we are taught, that we do not allow ourselves to be overcome by the flesh, and so find ourselves its prisoner. That is the way of misery, the way to eternal damnation. That is where false teachers are going. Let us not go with them.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 3

Peter returns to a matter introduced earlier in the Epistle, that of the reason for writing. In 1:12 he spoke of his intention to be not 'negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things' (the strong motivations to godly living outlined in 1:4–11). Indeed, this was his intention in the First as well as the Second Epistles ('both' meaning the two epistles, rather than that he is about to make two points). We need to ever have in mind the words of our Lord and of his prophets and apostles. Note that Peter sees no particular distinction between the two, there being no essential difference between the Old Testament and the New in terms of the truth taught therein.

There are pressing reasons for being clear on biblical teaching. First, there is the promised return of the Lord Jesus Christ. He teaches what are the signs of his coming, vv.3–4; of the certainty of his coming,

vv.5–6; and what will take place in the last days, vv.7–10. Then he concludes by showing how a Christian ought to prepare himself for those last days. First, he asks what manner of people we are to be, knowing that utter destruction is coming, vv.11–12, then, he speaks of the new heaven and the new earth, v.13. Secondly, he asks what manner of life the Christian is to pursue, v.14. Is long-suffering to be accounted gain, v.15? He bears testimony to Paul's doctrine, v.16, and then concludes with a further warning to beware of false teachers, vv.17–18.

We will now expand on this brief outline.

3.1–2—Revisiting the reason for writing

The stirring up of pure minds presupposes the presence of knowledge—something to be stirred up. Peter is not here expecting to lay again the foundation of faith, but to build upon what has already been laid. This teaches us that we have good reason to continue to study God's Word, and to be ever learning the doctrines taught here.

Peter tells us expressly what was his purpose in writing his epistles—'I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance'. To stir up means to awaken out of sleep, as the disciples awoke Jesus, Luke 8:24. The effect of such an awakening can be seen in John 6:18, 'And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew'. It is a word used in classical Greek of the rekindling of a battle once the first burst of force had been expended. So Peter is speaking not just of gently stirring a pot, but of truly putting the wind up his readers. He intends to arouse them to action, and to cause them to come awake and be active after they have allowed themselves to become sleepy. This is ever a problem for Christians.

What Peter intends to stir up is their pure minds. This could be translated 'sincere intentions', since the word pure aims at that which is without deceit, and the word mind has to do with the thinking faculties which lead to action. In short, Peter wants to stir

them into action, to arouse them to live according to the doctrine they profess. If we truly believe what we confess with our lips, then this must reflect in the manner of our living.

In all this, Peter does not stir them up to obey him or his writings, but those of the holy prophets and of all the apostles of Jesus Christ. There is continuity in their doctrine, the one promising, the other declaring the fulfilment of the promise, since all points to and comes from the saving work of Jesus Christ. Note that Peter refers to him as Lord

and Saviour—Lord, in that he is the legitimate authority, and Saviour in that this is the cause of our desiring to know and serve him in righteousness.

In order to do this we must be continually reminded of what we have been told, and we must remind ourselves, in reading the Bible and in turning over in our minds what it says, and what it means.

There are certain specific matters which Peter has in view, and he now begins to state them.

TO BE CONTINUED

BOOK REVIEWS

Editor’s Note: We live, regretfully, in a day when most evangelicals, and most publishers, have abandoned the Authorised (King James) Version of the Bible. Rather, therefore, than ceasing to review most books, we try to warn readers by stating if the book uses other versions of the Bible. The position of The Gospel Magazine is that the AV is the best translation, from the true text, possessing beautiful and formative English, and that it has been an instrument of blessing to the English-speaking church for over four hundred years. That we name another translation does not mean we endorse it.

Daily Thoughts from Samuel Rutherford

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£2.90 Kindle version available from reformationpress.co.uk, lulu.com and amazon.co.uk

We have here another volume of daily readings, this time from one source, Samuel Rutherford. The entries are several to a page, one entry for each day of the year, and are all taken from his published letters.

Entry length varies from a brief sentence (‘Let Christ have a commanding power and a king’s throne in you’ (September 12)) to a longer paragraph; most are of the former sort. Archaic and colloquial words and phrases are explained in square brackets within the text. Given that all theses entries are from correspondence, it is well worth noting just how often Samuel Rutherford pointed his reader to Christ as the answer to their present troubles – and to the fact that a wrong view of Christ is often at the root of those troubles. The realities of life are not glossed over, nor is faith in Christ presented as anything but a painful though blessed path. The thoughts contained in the entries will provide grist for our prayers, as well as encouragements to trust in Christ in all the circumstances of life.

EJM

Daily Readings: The Early Church Fathers

Nick Needham (Editor)

Christian Heritage, 2017: £14.99 394pp pbk ISBN 978–1–5271–0043–5

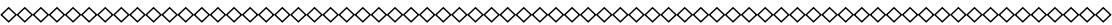
Volumes of Daily Readings are readily available, in a variety of sizes, lengths and styles. This present volume comprises extracts from twelve of the great Fathers of the Church – men whose theological deliberations and writings have shaped the doctrine we hold today. Names such as John Chrysostom, Augustine of Hippo, Jerome, and Ambrose of Milan ought to be sufficiently well known. What they wrote is probably not so well known. In light of the place afforded to these giants of the faith by our Reformers, we ought to know them better. These daily readings are a very good place to begin.

The editorial choice is given in the Introduction, where we are told, ‘Generally speaking, I’ve chosen passages that express the basics about early Church belief about the nature of theology, the mystery of the Trinity, and Christ’s person and work, plus “edifying” passages that the reader can apply to himself or herself in daily life.’ Given the current attacks on the doctrine of the Trinity, and on the equality of the Son with the Father in the eternal Trinity, this is a timely decision.

The volume itself is nicely produced, with a faux-leather cover, rounded corners and a ribbon. The paper is substantial, and the print, although clear, is quite small. The book would fit into a pocket or handbag with ease. The Editor has provided a useful introduction, biographical information about each author, a glossary of theological terms, and an index to the Scripture texts which head each page (these are all from the AV, while the text used in the entries themselves is a translation from that used by the Fathers, and is often from the Septuagint). Occasional footnotes explain things alluded to in the text that may not be immediately obvious – for example, the entry for 2 November mentions ‘the Theologian’, with a footnote explaining that this was a contemporary term for the apostle John. If the price seems a little high, remember that this is a volume that can be used over and over again. We recommend this title.

Companion volumes of Daily Readings from Matthew Henry and from George Whitefield are available, but we have not seen them to give any further information.

EJM



We wish all readers of The Gospel Magazine
a blessed New Year, and pray the Lord’s
grace and mercy on all Christ’s people



POETRY

Supplied by PETER MURCOTT (Douglas, Isle of Man)

304: Since All the Downward Tracts of Time

WILTSHIRE C.M. George Smart, 1776-1867

Offer the sacrifices of righteousness,
and put your trust in the Lord.

[Psalm 4:5]

1: Since all the downward tracts of time
God's watchful eye surveys,
O who so wise to choose our lot,
Or regulate our ways?

2: Good when He gives, supremely good,
Nor less when He denies;
E'en crosses from His sovereign hand
Are blessings in disguise.

3: Why should we doubt our Father's love,
Immeasurably kind?
To His unerring, gracious will
Be every wish resigned.

James Hervey, 1714-58

[The Primitive Methodist Hymnal, 1889, No. 34]

 This hymn was first published in "Reflections of a Flower Garden" (1746).

At one point in his earlier life, James Hervey came under Methodist influence, yet he remained an Anglican and was eventually ordained. He wrote a number of books, some of which created controversy. "Time" and its uses was a matter that troubled him, as the further notes show at the end of this volume. He died at a relatively young age.

INDEX OF SERMONS AND ARTICLES

Title	Author	Page
'Behold, thy King cometh'	Luther, M	174
Charge of sin universal, The	Cooper, E	15
Christ and Belial	Los, P	10
—,	Los, P	44
—,	Los, P	81
—,	Los, P	109
—,	Los, P	109*
—,	Los, P	170
Christ's Humiliation, pt. 1	Manton, T	163
Deceitfulness of sin	Malcolm, E	35
Editorial	Malcolm, E	1
—,	Malcolm, E	33
—,	Malcolm, E	65
—,	Malcolm, E	97
—,	Malcolm, E	97*
—,	Malcolm, E	161
Erasmus and the Reformation	Foley, W	120
Evangelical Religion	Ryle, J	85
—, pt. 2	Ryle, J	114
—, pt. 3	Ryle, J	110*
For Younger Readers— 'Just a touch'	Mackenzie, C	7
—, 'The gift of faith'	Mackenzie, C	78
—, 'Our sure hope'	Mackenzie, C	106
—, 'Peace that endures'	Mackenzie, C	106*
—, 'Remember to be thankful'	Mackenzie, C	168
Four Hundredth anniversary of the Reformation, The	Houghton, T	49
Free offer of the gospel, The	Peregrinus	73
—,	Malcolm, E	104
—,	Malcolm, E	104*
Gleanings from the Gospel Ministry	Peregrinus	60
Grace and Truth	Mackay, W	24
—,	Mackay, W	51
Is it right to pray for revival?	Garrard, B	171
John Frith and the claims of truth	Malcolm, E	55
—, pt. 2	Malcolm, E	90
Law of God in the life of the believer, The	Foley, W	20
Leisure—A biblical perspective	Gaines, K	13
Naaman the Leper	Mackay, W	74
—, pt. 2	Mackay, W	110
Poetry: 'The Lord our Righteousness'	M'Cheyne, R	128
—, 'Since all the downward tracts of time'	Hervey, J	190
Problems Paul addresses in Romans 9–11, The	Foley, W	181
Ridley, Nicholas	Malcolm, E	118
—, pt. 2	Malcolm, E	122*

—, pt. 3	Malcolm, E	178
Sermon on Ezekiel 37:3, A	Mead, M	67
—, pt. 2	Mead, M	99
Sermon on Matthew 26:24–34, A, pt. 3	Luther, M	11
Sermon on Psalm 65:9, A	Malcolm, E	99*
Significant emphasis of the Reformation ... under Zwingli	Foley, W	116*
Solomon, the man of much wisdom, and also much folly	North, J	45
—, pt. 2	North, J	82
Studies in 2 Peter	Malcolm, E	29
—,	Malcolm, E	58
—,	Malcolm, E	94
—,	Malcolm, E	125
—,	Malcolm, E	126*
—,	Malcolm, E	186
Studies in British Church History	Malcolm, E	26
Studies in Ezekiel	King, P	9
—,	King, P	43
—,	King, P	80
—,	King, P	108
—,	King, P	108*
Wisdom and Folly	Malcolm, E	3
Word of the Lord tried him, The	Turner, S	173

INDEX OF BOOKS REVIEWED

Author	Title	Page
Brentnall, J	Calvin for Today	62
Harman, A	Learning about the Old Testament	128
MacLean, D	Seeking a better country—Studies in Hebrews 11	64
Murray, I	J.C. Ryle—Prepared to stand alone	32
Needham, N (ed)	Daily Readings in the Early Church Fathers	189
Rutherford, S	Daily Thoughts from Samuel Rutherford	188
Ryle, J	Steps towards heaven	128*
Simpson, P	Why Noah’s ark is gospel truth	96

* Pages numbers marked with * refer to the September–October 2017 issue, where the page numbering was not updated, but repeated the numbering of the previous issue.

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BIDEFORD, DEVON: NORTH ROAD CHAPEL. Consecutive Expository Ministry. AV, *Christian Hymns*. LORD’S DAY 11 am and 6.30 pm. *Minister:* Mr R J Steward. www.northroadchapel.org. nrcbideford@gmail.com.

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

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