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LAY HOLD ON ETERNAL LIFE

Some years ago, a sea- captain recalled sailing past an island when a cry rang through the ship, "Man overboard!" He instantly seized a rope and threw it over the ship's stern, shouting to the man in the sea to seize it for his life. He did catch it, whereupon the captain took another rope and, making a loop with it, he cast that too at the struggling man, directing him to pass it over his shoulders and under his arms, so that he could be taken up from the perilous waters and drawn safely on board.

Mercifully, after some time, the man was rescued; but it was found that he had grasped the first rope with such tenacity – with such a death grip – that it took hours before his hold relaxed and his hand could be separated from it. With great eagerness, he had so clutched the object that was to save him, that the strands of that rope were actually imbedded in the flesh of his hands.

So it is in the experience of salvation. God brings the sinner to realize his wretched and miserable condition on account of his sin and divine wrath. Made aware of the terrible danger he is in, and deeply affected by it, so that he feels troubled and frightened, he knows that there is nothing to deliver him and secure him. Then, it becomes clear to him that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners, is his only hope; and, in his desperation, he clasps Christ, clings to Him, and holds on to Him, taking Him as his personal Saviour and trusting Him to deliver his soul from death and to bring his soul safely to the shore. Without Christ, he – and all others - must sink and perish eternally.

Therefore, Scripture says, "Cleave unto the Lord your God" (Deut. 4:4). "Trust ye in the Lord for ever" (Isa. 26:3). "Lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim. 6:12). "He" – and He alone – "is able to save to the uttermost" (Heb. 7:25). "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him" (Ps. 2:12).

FELLOWSHIP NEWS

Liz Storey

We have been much in prayer for Heather and the family following the death of Heather's brother, Stanley, and we continue to pray that the Lord will be especially near to them in the days to come. We also continue to pray very much for Graham and Caty as they look to the Lord to comfort them following the death of George Osmond, and as the funeral takes place in the New Year. *"He healeth the broken in heart and bindeth up their wounds."* Psalm 14:3

We were reminded of the Lord's safe keeping of His people when a recent storm brought down a large tree in Eddie and Christine's garden. Although there was some damage to the property and the oil tanks, we were thankful that it was not as serious as it could have been, and that most importantly neither Eddie nor Christine was hurt.

Some of the ladies have enjoyed two informal evenings of Christian fellowship at Grove House over the last couple of months. They have been very happy occasions and we are thankful to Pauline and Abi for planning the evenings and organizing what is hoped to be a regular monthly fixture on the Church calendar.

It is also planned to begin a Men's Prayer Breakfast in 2022, organized by Paul M and Ron M. We are thankful to have these occasions to meet together again after a long time of restricted fellowship due to Covid. May the Lord use these meetings to build us up in our Christian faith and be an encouragement to one another.

Please pray for the on-going work of witness in the local care homes. Several services have been held now at Gracewell Care Home (although we are again restricted to the numbers of members that can attend due to Covid regulations) and please pray that a return to Milford House Care Home will be possible again in the New Year.

John and Margaret Thackway are still much in our prayers, particularly as Margaret undergoes stronger doses of Chemotherapy in the coming weeks,

and anticipates surgery in the Spring. May they know the peace and comfort of our God, “*that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think*” Ephesians 3:20.

The Parent & Toddler Group continues to meet on a Friday morning and can now offer others from outside the fellowship to attend, via a booking system on the Parent & Toddler Facebook Page. They would love to see more attending so please pray that the Lord would bring in new families, and that these contacts would be used for the saving of souls.

Dan Tribe from our own Church and Peter Bruce from Chardsmead Baptist Church, Bridport, have now finished their 3 years of studies at the Salisbury Reformed Seminary. We remember Peter and the on-going work down in Bridport where he is the Pastor, and continue to commit dear Dan, Jenni and the family to the Lord, as they seek to know His leading for their future. Dan has a busy preaching schedule over the next few months, so we remember him in all his sermon preparations and his travelling.

A CATECHISM ON PRAISE

**Alexander Blaikie
(Boston, May 1, 1849)**

PART 1

CHAPTER I. *Praise: The Nature and Duty*

I. What is the praise of God? It is the manifestation of his declarative glory by his creatures (Pss. 69:34; 150:6).

II. Do the Scriptures authorise or command that praise shall be given to God, as an act of worship? Yes, both. All creatures, but especially Christians, are required to render it (Pss. 86:12,13; 138:1; 65:1; 89:5).

III. Has God given to us any directions how we are to praise him? Yes, in his word (Pss. 9:1; 86:12; 109:30; Hos.14:2; Heb. 13:15).

IV. For what are we to praise God? For his great and wonderful excellencies; for what he is in himself, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Author of salvation to his saints; for what he has done, and what he has promised to do.

V. For what are we to give thanks? For all our comforts and hopes; especially for an interest in Christ, and the hope of eternal life (Eph. 5:20; Heb.13:15).

VI. What, then, is the nature of praise? It is a tribute of affection and esteem, which we give to the true God, that thus we may increase His declarative glory (Ps. 50:23).

CHAPTER II. *The Matter of Praise*

I. Is it optional with us, whether we compose the matter of our praise? No. God has prepared it for us in his word. This is regulated by divine appointment. Jehovah has provided it for his saints, and says, "Is any merry? let him sing psalms" (James 5:13). Divine appointment reigns in the whole plan of redemption, and as completely in designating the matter and manner of our praise, as in the incarnation of His Son.

II. Do we not compose our prayers from His Word, without any book especially appointed by God? Yes. In prayer we are regulated by circumstances. It is the language of dependence, and it is varied by our condition. While we are to "acknowledge God in all our ways," and to "pray without ceasing," He has, by one short and perfect form, said, "*after this manner pray ye.*" He has not given to us any book of prayers; and God has not said, "and thou, when thou prayest", pray Job, or pray Proverbs, or pray Psalms.

III. Is it proper for the ministers of Christ to compose sermons, and give their own views of His truth to the people in His name? It is. Christ has neither given to them any book of sermons, nor told them to preach Isaiah, Luke, or John; but "go and preach the gospel to every creature." "Preach the word." Without an

inspired book of sermons, they must "not shun to declare the whole counsel of God" (2 Cor. 2:15,16).

IV. Is there anything in the nature of praise which makes it necessary, that God Himself should record the matter which we are to use in this part of worship? Yes. In prayer we can in some degree know our own wants, and in fulfilment of the divine promise (Zech. 12:10), "the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities." (Rom. 8:26). In preaching, also, we may become able "rightly to divide the word of truth" until we come to "the full assurance of understanding." But in praise, God alone can determine what he will accept as "the fruit of our lips" (Matt. 15:9; Mk. 7:7; Ps. 105:2; 1 Chron. 16:9; Ps. 81:2).

V. When was praise first publicly given to God by the Church? We read of it first at the shores of the Red Sea, when "the church" (Acts7:38) was delivered from her enemies (Exod. 15:1).

VI. When did praise become a stated part of divine worship? More particularly when the worship of Jehovah was established at Jerusalem, in the days of David, who spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost; and is called by God, "the sweet psalmist of Israel" (2 Sam. 23:1,2; 1 Chron. 15:16,19,27).

VII. Was praise subsequently a part of divine worship? Yes. (Pss. 100:4; 84:4; 43:3,4; Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19).

VIII. Did David, as the psalmist of Israel, write all the psalms? No. He wrote probably more than one half of them. Yet they are called by his name, David (Heb. 4:7; Rom. 11:9) because he was employed more extensively than any other, in this part of the Word of God, as the amanuensis of the Holy Ghost.

IX. What name was originally given to that part of the Holy Scriptures which is thus called David? It was called "Tehillim," that is, hymns or praises, because it was given as the matter of divine praise to the church of God in every future age. It is also called "psalms," because many of these "spiritual songs" were, at the temple worship, sung with the psaltery. Parts of the book have other names, as Mizmor, Shir (46, title), Tehillah (145, title), Tephilah (17,86,90,102, titles),

Prayers, Shir-hammacholoth (120-134) - Odes of Ascension. They are also called, in the Septuagint, Psalmoi.

X. When were the Tehillim, or Psalms written and formed into a book? They were written in a manner similar to the other parts of Scripture (Heb. 1:1), during a period of nearly one thousand years, and were collected into one book, probably by "Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven." They stood in their present numerical order in the days of the apostles (Acts 13:33).

XI. Were other songs, beside those contained in the Book of Psalms, composed during that period? Yes, many. Such as the Song of Deborah (Jud. 5), the song of the well (Num. 21:17, 20), the 1005 songs of Solomon, and others (1 Kgs. 4:29-32).

XII. Were not these then given as the matter of her praise, or are they not commanded to be sung by the church in all future ages? No. As we read of different books in Scripture, such as the book of Gad, of Nathan, of Jehu, of Jasher, and the Epistle from Laodicea, which were not collected into the sacred canon, by the Holy Ghost, so we thus know, that by the same divine sovereignty, the songs thus noticed, or even recorded, were ephemeral as matter of praise; while the songs contained in the "Sepher Tehillim," or "Book of Psalms", and collected and placed in one book by the Spirit, are a part of "the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever," selected by infinite wisdom, and given expressly as the matter of praise to the church until the end of time. The same principle applies to any isolated and occasional hymns or songs, which may be found in the New Testament.

XIII. Were any attempts made to add to the Book of Psalms, after it was completed? Yes. The 151st psalm was fabricated, and attempted to be added to the then perfect book, nearly three hundred years before "the Christian era." (Septuagint, Ps. 151st.)

XIV. Is such an attempt authorised by God? No. It arises from the depravity of our nature, and the opposition of our wills to the divine will, and consequently forms a part of what the Holy Ghost calls "will worship," which has a show of wisdom (Col. 2:23).

XV. Is, then, this book called the Book of Psalms, by the Holy Ghost? It is so called, both by Jesus Christ and by the Spirit (Lk. 20:4; Acts 1:20; Heb. 4:7).

XVI. Was it given to the Jewish church to be the matter of praise to God? Yes (1 Chron. 16:7; 25:1,5; Ps. 81:1,2; Neh. 12:8,46. Ps. 137:3; Ezra 3:10).

XVII. Was the Jewish church in reality different from the Christian? No. They are the same church, under different dispensations (Acts 7:38; Heb. 4:2; Gal. 4:3,4).

XVIII. When Christ came "to fulfil all righteousness," and by his evangelists and apostles to complete the oracles of God, did he, or they, praise Jehovah by singing psalms? Yes, both did. (Matt.. 26:30; Mk. 14:26; Acts 16:25; Ps. 22:22; Heb. 2:13).

XIX. Did they deliver, by inspiration, any other "psalms, hymns, or spiritual songs," than those contained "in David" (Heb. 4:7)? No. One such psalm or song would be a treasure for the edification of the saints, if "the Psalms" had been simply Jewish; and yet it would not afford a precedent or warrant for uninspired men to make human hymns, and sing them as praise to God (Is. 1:12; Hos. 14:2).

XX. What is a human hymn, psalm, or spiritual song? One, of which the arrangement and composition are made by uninspired men, and not by the authority and wisdom of God, even although the sentiment be taken from, and agree with, some portion of Scripture. It has "a show of wisdom;" yet it is only man's opinion which will be opposed and contradicted by the opinion of some other man metrically expressed, in language, to his mind equally scriptural. Consequently, "of making many 'hymn' books there is no end." We have now more than one for each Sabbath in the year, all supplanting "the Lord's song" (songs), and in their turn supplanted by the poetical skill and caprice of other men. Such compositions, as matter of praise, are, moreover, purely "will worship." (Is. 1:12).

XXI. Are the psalms adapted to the condition of saints in New Testament times, as the matter of their praise? Yes. They are "an epitome of the Bible, adapted

to the purposes of devotion." (*Bp. Horne*). They are emphatically "the word of Christ," portraying especially the work of the Spirit in the soul of man, in all its stages and conditions of being, from his "creation anew in Christ Jesus" to the enjoyment of eternal glory.

XXII. Do they not present the Messiah only as a Saviour to come? No. They present his incarnation (Ps. 40:6-8. Heb. 10:5), his public teaching (Ps. 40:9. Lk.4:16-22), his death (Pss. 22:1; 31:5; Lk. 23:46), his ascension (Ps. 68:18; Acts 1:2-9), sitting down at the right hand of God (Ps. 110:1; Acts 2:34; Heb. 1:13; 10:12,13), and his whole mediatorial work, as far as it has been accomplished, as it really is (Lk.24:44).

XXIII. Do they not contain curses and imprecations upon our enemies, contrary to the command (Matt. 5:44), "Love your enemies"? No. Not upon our enemies, but upon the enemies of Christ (Pss. 69:20-25; 109:8; Acts 1:16.20.)

XXIV. Have they not grown old, and consequently become less adapted to praise? No. A book cannot be considered old while its author lives. He may, at any time, alter or remodel it; consequently, while God lives, the Psalms cannot and will not become obsolete; and for this reason they are a song ever new (Pss. 33:3; 96:1; 98:1; Is. 42:10; Rev. 5:9; 14:3; 15:3).

XXV. But are not "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs," mentioned in the New Testament, to be sung? Yes. We are commanded to sing them (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

XXVI. Were they not something different from the Book of Psalms? No. For the Colossians and Ephesians had already the Septuagint. "Moses was read in their synagogues every Sabbath day," their first Christian assemblies (Acts 13:15), and converts were Jews (Acts 18:19; 19:1,19; Col. 2:14), and therefore, when they were thus directed, they would easily understand, that the *psalmois*, *humnois* and *odais pneumatikais* were obviously the Mitzmorim Shirim, and Tehillim previously given in the Book of Psalms, by the inspiration of God. Besides, in the Septuagint (Ps. 72:20), and by Josephus (*Antiq. B. VII. chap. 12*), the Tephiloth, or prayers of David, are called hymns.

XXVII. Do not these various terms indicate different kinds of hymns, from those found in the Book of Psalms, and authorise the composition of religious poetry as the matter of praise? No. No more than the terms law, commandment, and statutes, in the 119th Psalm, denote any thing different from the word of God, and authorise, as the revealed will of Heaven, the writings of Josephus, the Koran, or the Book of Mormon.

XXVIII. When commanded to "let the word of Christ dwell in them richly" if his "word" could not be found in the "hymns and spiritual songs" contained in the Book of Psalms, could the Colossians and Ephesians remain upon the earth, until modern hymnologists could supply its supposed defects? No. Nor yet compose, without divine inspiration, hymns for themselves, of which God would assuredly accept, as the matter of his praise

Objections —

The psalms are not adapted to the departure of missionaries.

Missionaries departed probably without singing, according to scriptural example (Acts 13:3,4); and for such solemn scenes, the psalms provide matter most suitable to the condition of every missionary, or to that of any of his friends, who "let the word of Christ dwell in them richly" (Pss. 46, 56, 72, 122, etc.).

They are supposed not to be adapted to Sabbath schools. "You would not have the children learn the old psalms?"

The family circle is the Sabbath school of Scripture (Ps. 92:1,2; 118:15; Gen. 18:19; 1 Tim. 3:12; Deut. 6:7). And if for the benefit of those who have no pious parental instruction, this institution has been established, yet every teacher must be assuredly guilty, who does not teach his pupils, "the word of Christ" as the matter of their praise, that it may dwell in them richly. If human hymns had any divine authority, the varied contradictory compilations, which abound, could, even then, only train the early mind to contradictory doctrinal opinions, while none of them will enable the scholar to say, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Ps. 119:11).

XXIX. What, then, are some of the reasons why Christians should sing only "the Book of Psalms" in praise to God?

1. The command of God (James 5:13), which ought to be sufficient for every saint.

2. He has given to us no additional hymns in the New Testament, for the Book of Psalms was previously perfect.

3. Because Christ, "in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," who is "the wisdom of God," and in whom dwells all the "fullness of knowledge and of wisdom," not only made no new ones, but consoled himself, on the cross, with the words of David (Ps. 22:1; 31:5). This is the highest possible authority to every Christian, for the use of the Psalms exclusively.

4. Because the apostles, although inspired to write the New Testament, and to complete the word of God, were not "moved by the Holy Ghost" to write any more "spiritual songs." We have their Gospels, Acts, and Epistles, yet they leave us nothing with which to supplant the songs of Zion.

5. Because every human composition lacks divine appointment. The command is not, "make a psalm," but "take" one (Ps. 81:2).

6. Because the Psalms are vitally adapted to our use. When we search the other scriptures, we learn how others served God; when we sing "the Lord's song" aright, we worship him ourselves (Ps. 63:3-5).

7. Because, the psalms being given by the same Spirit who regenerates every Christian, they are precisely adapted to the growth of the soul in the divine life, being "the sincere milk of the word," by which the believer grows (1 Pet. 2:2), when he lets the word of Christ dwell in him richly.

8. Again, when "all nations shall call Christ blessed," his "watchmen shall sing together with the voice." (Is.52:8). "They shall lift up their voice, until from the uttermost parts of the earth shall be heard songs, even glory to the righteous" (Is. 24:14-16). As they shall then see eye to eye, they will sing together, in the unity of the faith, "the song of Jehovah" (Ps. 137:4), - that song which, given under the Old Testament dispensation, was "the song of Moses," and which,

being perpetuated coextensively with the reign of Messiah, is forever "the song of the Lamb." (Ps. 86:8-10; Rev. 15:3,4).

To be continued.

ALEXANDER MOODY STUART

Alexander Moody Stuart was born at Paisley in 1809. He was the son of the chief Magistrate of the Burgh and educated at Glasgow and Edinburgh Universities. Called into the Ministry, he served as a missionary at Holy Island, and later assisted Mr. Candlish at St. George's, Edinburgh, afterwards becoming the minister of Free St. Luke's, Edinburgh. He was involved in the Disruption of 1843, and became well-known as a Free Church Minister, his ministry being deeply appreciated by many. He died on 31 July, 1898.

A Memoir, partly autobiographical, was published in 1899, edited by his son, Kenneth Moody Stuart. What follows is taken from that Memoir.

"For myself, (while studying in Edinburgh under Dr. Chalmers) I was constrained to conclude that any apparent tokens of grace might be accounted for by moral training and religious teaching combined with the dictates of natural conscience without any saving work of the Holy Spirit in the heart."

"One day on going over to the Old Town to hear Dr. Gordon who told...of conversion as a process, not of building up,...but of breaking down, by one stroke after another, till the whole gave way...His words...,by the grace of God, reached my heart as no words had ever done before; and I resolved not to forget them."

"About this time I took up *Marshall on Sanctification*... and to this book, under the Spirit's teaching I owed my instruction in the doctrines of grace. The two great lessons I learned from it were: the entire sinfulness of fallen man, the utter worthlessness of all that he can do; and over against this the infinitely perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ given for all and to all who believe on Him..."

“It was the time of the Spring Communion in Edinburgh in 1829, as I sat musing sorrowfully, my Bible caught my eye...Taking it up listlessly,...I opened it without looking where; but as I read I came to these words in Ephesians 5:14, ‘Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.’ They came to me like a flash of lightening in the sudden awakening, but with infinite sweetness of light in Christ; they were spoken to me, of whom I supposed no-one could be thinking...I was lost and dead, yet not in agony, was not praying, was not even anxious, but was sleeping sadly in death...From that hour I could say, ‘Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever, for they are the rejoicing of my heart.’ His ‘word had quickened me’, and I trust that He has never taken it utterly out of my mouth.

“A mark of his pulpit ministrations (at St. Luke’s in Edinburgh) was their solemnity. The preacher seemed impressed, sometimes almost oppressed, with his position as standing between God and man, and bearing a direct message from the Divine Father, Son, and Spirit, to his hearers...One young lady came from Germany as a teacher in 1846...was arrested by the countenance of the preacher as he entered the church...When he opened the Psalm-book and the Bible (she observed), his very handling and opening of them seemed to say, ‘*These books are not my books; and these hands that hold them are consecrated.*’ She felt that he regarded the volumes as entirely of God.

“Another aged member of St. Luke’s tells how the first time she heard Mr. Moody Stuart, nearly sixty years ago, she ‘experienced such a sacred influence that she was constrained to say in her heart, ‘Surely we are very near to God!’” “The Rev. A.C. Fullerton who joined St. Luke’s in 1846, wrote: Two things in your father’s preaching particularly impressed me: viz., his earnestness and his originality. Divine truth was brought direct to the consciences of his hearers, and pressed home by incident and illustration till men were made to feel they were face to face with God, and had to decide to embrace Christ and become new creatures, or else to make up their minds to live the life of unconverted persons, knowing themselves to be such. With regard to his originality, I never

heard your father preach without carrying away with me some fresh views of Divine truth...”

“Dr. Cunningham has written: ‘In every discourse a place is found for the cross of Christ, and for the loving declaration of the glorious largeness of that Divine mercy which is high as heaven, or the words of reconciliation are pressed home by direct question and personal entreaty, well-fitted to win the ear and subdue the heart.’”

“In an old note-book. Mr. Moody Stuart wrote (in 1855): ‘The one thing I care for is the salvation of the lost, the gathering in of God’s elect to the glory of Christ, the Redeemer.’”

“In 1857, he published his exposition of the Song of Solomon. Charles Spurgeon said of it: “We do not know where to find a book (on the Song of Solomon) of equal value in all respects. This admirable author has poetry in his soul, and, beyond that, a heart like that of Rutherford, fired with love to the altogether Lovely One.””

“Among his *memorable sayings* were these: “Adam said, ‘My will’, and he took it. God’s Son lived and died in the world and said, ‘Not my will.’”

“Paul does not say (2 Timothy 4:10,11), that Demas gained the world, but that he loved it...Demas was tempted and fell: Luke was no doubt equally tempted and tried and he got the crown of glory. Paul in the many mansions above is saying, ‘Luke is with me: Demas forsook me.’”

“In the law of Moses, the sheep die for the shepherd; in the law of Jesus, the Shepherd dies for the sheep. He gave His life for the sheep because the shepherd was good, not because the sheep were good.”

“I would not give much for the assurance of some people. It just means, ‘I believe that I was converted at such a time.’ If your assurance is not founded on a present fellowship with the Son and with the Father, it is little worth.’

“Last night before falling asleep, I lay awake a long time, but had delight and communion in going over some of our Scotch metrical Psalms – 27th, 32nd, 51st, 130th, 100th, 63rd and the last verses of the 73rd. What a refreshing and enlightening thing these and other psalms are, and in the night watches I find them more helpful in the metre, because more easily remembered, and much more helpful than hymns, chiefly because the soul can rest on them as the *Word of God*.”

“In reviewing a long life, I have been retracing the two great lines, or rather perhaps three, that have marked it throughout, viz:

1. The black line of my own will and way and walk; distorted by wanderings, by stumblings, by manifold offences; by self-seeking, by back-going; full of sin and shame and destruction.
2. The bright red line of the Lord’s way with me; of long-suffering, of correcting, of leading, of restoring; of loving-kindness, of truth, of omnipotent deliverances, of enlargement and gladness in the ministry of the Word by the Holy Ghost; of providential guidance in things both great and little, and especially in the leading events of life; of gracious remembrances; of victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; of the lively hope of everlasting life.
3. A third line, it may be called, of my own way through grace; not only of what He has Himself done for me and in me, but of what I have been enabled to be and do by grace; a very chequered and unequal line, still on the whole counting all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ; and rejoicing in ‘being kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.’”

“On Sabbath morning, 31st. July, 1898, Moody Stuart gently folded his hands, as if in prayer, and fell asleep. Assuredly it was granted him to ‘depart in peace’ as he had requested, and on his entrance into the blessed company of the redeemed it seemed as if he could hardly be more engaged in the highest exercises of worship than he had been before he left this world.”

MEEKNESS

JAMES SMITH, OF CHELTENHAM

An edited extract from his book, Bread of Heaven, or Food for the Soul

“Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgement; seek righteousness, *seek meekness...*” (Zephaniah 2:3)

Meekness is the patience and quietness of the soul under injuries, insults, or sufferings. True meekness always bows to the divine authority. It views God on the throne, and acknowledges His right to require and command what he will. Meekness yields to the Lord’s hands. Meekness acquiesces in the Lord’s will. Its language is “Not my will, but thine be done” (Luke 22, verse 42).

Meekness adorns the Christian’s profession. Indeed, it is one of our chief ornaments, and therefore it is so frequently inculcated and commanded in God’s blessed Word.

Meekness prevents innumerable evils. How many sins and unpleasant scenes in our families would be prevented if we were meek? How much better would things go on, even in the world, if we were made meek? Nearly all our family disorders and church troubles, may be traced up to our want of meekness. The apostle says “Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls” (James 1, verse 21). The meek heart is prepared for its reception, and like the seed in the good soil, it grows up and brings forth fruit. It becomes engrafted on our natures, and its saving and sanctifying effects are seen in our lives.

Let us then realise our need of meekness. We shall never seek it aright until we do. That we do need it is clear. That it would be well for us if we possessed it, most would acknowledge. We never shall honour Jesus, adorn the gospel, or favourably impress those about us as we ought, without meekness.

Look at the Lord Jesus, our great example, God's meek and gentle Lamb. See Him bear the contradiction of sinners against Himself. See Him observe His own precepts, so that when He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He was persecuted, He suffered it. He could say, without fear of contradiction or reflection, "I am meek and lowly of heart." (Matthew 11, verse 29). In His life we behold the beautiful effects of meekness, and He has left us an example, that we should follow in His steps.

Trace its source. Meekness is not of human origin. It is not a plant that grows in unsanctified nature's garden. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness." (Galatians 5, verse 22,23). It is the Spirit of Christ working, subduing, acting in the man, that makes him meek. We must live in the Spirit, that is, under His subduing and sweetly controlling influences, if we would be meek. Observe the requirement: "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, humbleness of mind, meekness" (Colossians 3, verse 12). That is, not only be meek, but appear meek. Let your meekness be visible, put it on as you would some outer garment, or some beautiful ornament. Let meekness appear in your dealings with men, and in your conduct towards the saints, "But thou, O man of God, follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness" (1 Timothy 6, verse 11).

Meekness is a grace which brings numerous blessings in its train: for instance, satisfaction: "The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek him: your heart shall live for ever." (Psalm 22, verse 26). Guidance: "The meek will he guide in judgement: and the meek will he teach his way" (Psalm 25, verse 9). Inheritance: "The meek shall inherit the earth: and shall delight himself in the abundance of peace" (Psalm 37, verse 11). Elevation: "The Lord lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground" (Psalm 147, verse 6). "Their life is hid with Christ in God" and "when Christ who is their life shall appear, then shall they also appear with him in glory" (Colossians 3, verses 3 and 4). Beauty: "The Lord taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation" (Psalm 149 verse 4). Joy: "The meek also shall increase

their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel” (Isaiah 29, verse 19). There is a fullness of joy for God’s meek and lowly one and “with joy shall they draw water out of the wells of salvation” (Isaiah 12, verse 3).

Meekness is an ornament precious in the sight of God. Hence Peter, when directing the godly wife as to her attire and adorning, says, “whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting of hair, and wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel: but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price” (1 Peter 3, verses 3 and 4).

Awakened sinner, the Lord Jesus, the meek, loving, and lowly Lamb of God, calls you to Him. He says “come unto me ...and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your soul” (Matthew 11, verses 28 and 29). To all who read these lines, He says, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16, verse 31).

Submitted by Caty O

BEAUTIES FROM RICHARD BAXTER’S TREATISE, The Saint’s Everlasting Rest, 1649

“The saints’ rest is the most happy state of a Christian; or is the perfect, endless enjoyment of God by the perfected saints, according to the measure of their capacity, to which their souls arrive at death, and both soul and body most fully after the resurrection and final judgment.”

“The things contained in heavenly rest are such as these: a ceasing from means of grace; a perfect freedom from all evils; the highest degree of the saint’s personal perfection, both of body and soul; the nearest enjoyment of God, the

chief good; and a sweet and constant action of all the powers of body and soul in this enjoyment of God.”

“The more perfect the sight is, the more delightful the beautiful object. The more perfect the appetite, the sweeter the food. The more musical the ear, the more pleasant the melody. The more perfect the soul, the more joyous those joys, and the more glorious to us is that glory.”

“Art thou not, with Peter, ready to say, ‘Master it is good to be here’ (Mark 9:5). Oh that I might dwell in this mount! Oh that I might ever see what I now see! Didst thou never look so long upon the Sun of Righteousness, that thine eyes were dazzled with His astonishing glory? And did not the splendour of it make all things below seem black and dark to thee?...Believe me, Christians, yea, believe God; you that have known most of God in Christ here, it is nothing as to what you shall know; it scarcely, in comparison of that, deserves to be called knowledge.”

“Thou. Poor soul, who prayest for joy, waitest for joy, complainest for want of joy, longest for joy; thou then shalt have full joy, as much as thou canst hold, and more than ever thou thoughtest on, or thy heart desired.”

“To have this our Redeemer ever before our eyes, and the liveliest sense and freshest remembrance of that dying, bleeding love still on our souls; how will it fill our hearts with perpetual joy, to think that in the streams of this blood we have swum though the violence of the world, the snares of Satan, the seducements of flesh, the curse of the law, the wrath of an offended God, the accusations of a guilty conscience, and the vexing doubts and fears of an unbelieving heart, and are safe arrived at the presence of God!”

“Doubtless this will be our everlasting admiration, that so rich a crown should fit the head of so vile a sinner! that such high advancement and such long unfruitfulness and unkindness, can be the state of the same person! And that such vile rebellions can conclude in such most precious joys!”

“To have necessities (or needs), but no supply, is the case of them in hell. To have necessity supplied by means of the creatures, is the case of us on earth. To have necessity supplied immediately from God, is the case of the saints in heaven. To have no necessity at all, is the prerogative of God Himself.”

The poorest Christian is presently, there, a more perfect divine (or theologian) than any here. Oh that happy day, when error shall vanish for ever! When our understanding will be filled with God Himself, whose light will leave no darkness in us! His face shall be the Scripture, where we shall read the truth.”

“Our earthly paradise in Eden had a way out, but none, that ever we could find, in again; but this eternal paradise hath a way in, but no way out again.”

“O try this life of meditation on your heavenly rest. Here is the mount on which the fluctuating ark of your souls may rest. Let the world see by your heavenly lives, that religion is something more than opinions and disputes, or a talk of outward duties”

“As Moses before he died, went up into mount Nebo, to take a survey of the land of Canaan; so the Christian ascends the mount of contemplation, and by faith surveys his rest. He looks upon the glorious mansions...He hears, as it were, the melody of the heavenly choir...He looks upon the glorified inhabitants. When he looks upon the Lord Himself, who is their glory, he is ready, with the rest, to fall down and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and say, ‘Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come! Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power!’”

Lord, it belongs not to my care
Whether I die or live;
To love and serve Thee is my share,
and this Thy grace must give.

If life be long, I will be glad
That I may long obey;
If short, yet why should I be sad
To soar to endless day?

Christ leads me through no darker rooms
Than He went through before;
And he that to God's kingdom comes
Must enter by this door.

Come, Lord, when grace has made me meet
Thy blessed face to see:
For if thy work on earth be sweet,
What will Thy glory be?

Then I shall end my sad complaints
And weary sinful days,
And join with the triumphant saints
Who sing Jehovah's praise.

My knowledge of that life is small,
The eye of faith is dim;
But 'tis enough that Christ knows all,
And I shall be with him.

Richard Baxter, 1615-91

THE WITNESS OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

Frank Varley

(The inaugural address of the Bible League, Dunedin, New Zealand, published in 1929, edited and in places altered, for inclusion here in The Messenger)

What is a Witness?

One who has intimate and personal knowledge of that of which he speaks, and in a phrase well known to any who have had to do with law-court procedure, he is required to “tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.”

Who is this Witness?

Let us listen to the testimony of the Written Word to Him Who is called “the Word of God” (Rev. 19:13) and “the faithful witness” (Rev. 1:5):

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made” (Jn. 1:1-3).

“In (Him) are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge... For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:3,9).

With such testimony, it is superfluous to ask: “Is He a credible Witness?” It is unthinkable that He should do other than speak the truth.

What did He Claim for His Witness?

The Gospel of John, written to prove the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ (Jn. 20:30, 31), is pre-eminently the Gospel of the Words and Works of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and He claimed that both were the Father’s: “Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works” (Jn. 14:10).

His sevenfold claim for His words is that He had heard them of the Father (8:26), that they were true (verse 40), that He had been taught them by the Father (verse 28), that they were God’s words (verse 47), that they were spoken by commandment of the Father (12:49,50), that they were the Father’s words (14:24), and given Him by the Father (17:8).

As to His works, He is no less emphatic. They were given Him by the Father to finish (5:36), they were the works of God Who had sent Him (9:4), they were done in the Father’s name (10:25), they were from the Father (verse 32), and they were the works of the Father Who was in Him (verses 37, 38).

Both His words and His works had the full approval of the Father.

What then was the Witness of Jesus Christ to the Old Testament?

In the four Gospels we have all that God the Holy Spirit has seen fit to record of the earthly life of Jesus Christ the Son of God. Of the 89 chapters into which the Gospels are divided, two in Matthew and two and a half in Luke contain all that is told us of His first 30 years.

Eliminate from these four and a half chapters the genealogies in Matthew and Luke, and the story of the birth of John the Baptist, then we shall discover that 31 verses in Matthew and 105 in Luke contain all the inspired record prior to the commencement of the years of public ministry.

The record of the wondrous three and a half years that followed is divinely compressed into 84½ chapters of the Gospels, always remembering, of course, the closing words of John's Gospel: "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (Jn. 21:25).

In His recorded utterances, our Lord either quotes or refers to the Old Testament Scriptures over 80 times. On the evening of the Resurrection Day, to the two who walked to Emmaus: "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27).

Later, when they returned to Jerusalem, Christ re-appeared to His disciples and said to them: "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures" (verses 44,45).

Jesus Christ bore witness to the facts recorded and to the persons and places mentioned in the Old Testament as follows:

The Creation, and Adam and Eve (Gen. 1 & 2).....Mk. 10:6
The murder of Abel (Gen. 4:8).....Matt. 23:35
Noah and the flood (Gen. 6:7-9, etc.).....Matt. 24:37-39
Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Gen. 12, etc.).....Matt. 8:11

Institution of circumcision (Gen. 17:10).....	Jn. 7:22
Lot and the destruction of Sodom (Gen. 18).....	Lk. 17:28, 29
Lot's wife (Gen. 19:26).....	Lk. 17:32
Moses and the burning bush (Ex. 3).....	Lk. 20:37
Moses and the Passover (Ex. 12).....	Matt. 26:2
Moses and the manna (Ex. 16:15, 35).....	Jn. 6:49
Moses and the giving of the law (Ex. 20, etc.).....	Jn. 7:19
Moses and the serpent of brass (Num. 21:9).....	Jn. 3:14
Moses and the reinstatement of the circumcision (Lev. 12:3).....	Jn. 7:22
David, Abiathar and the shewbread (1 Sam. 21:3-6).....	Matt. 12:3
Solomon and his greatness (1 Kings 4:1-34).....	Matt. 6:29
Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:1-13).....	Matt. 12:42
Elijah and 3½ years of drought and famine (1 Kings 17:1-7).....	Lk. 4:25
Elijah and the widow of Sarepta (1 Kings 17:8-16).....	Lk. 4:26
Elisha and Naaman (2 Kings 5).....	Lk. 4:27
Murder of Zechariah the priest (2 Chron. 24:20-21).....	Matt. 23:35
Daniel the prophet (Dan. 9:27, 12:11).....	Matt. 24:15
Jonah and the great fish (Jonah 1:17 etc.).....	Matt. 12:39,40
Jonah and Nineveh (Jonah 3:10).....	Matt. 12:41
All the prophets (which include Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Micah and Malachi) in Lk. 24:27	

It will be seen from the above that, from the Creation to the Captivity, Jesus Christ bore witness to the historicity, truth and accuracy of the Old Testament Scripture. In view of much that is being said and taught to-day, it is right and good to remember that He spoke of the Creation. It is easier to believe the grand declaration with which the Canon of Holy Scripture opens: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen.1:1) than to accept the conflicting vagaries of contemporary evolutionists. So also with the record of the Universal Flood. We prefer to believe the record of the God who ordered the Flood, that "all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. ... All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth; and Noah only remained alive, and they

that were with him in the ark” (Gen. 7:19,20,22,23). Our Lord clearly and emphatically attested the historicity of that event and the veracity of the biblical record (Matt. 24:37-39).

Such is the testimony of the Faithful Witness who testified to the people of His day, “He that is of God heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God” (John 8:47).

Most clear too was the witness of Jesus Christ to **Moses and the Law**. It can be seen from the following references that Jesus Christ specifically endorsed each and every one of the Ten Commandments as given in Exodus 20:

1. Affirming the being and sovereignty of GodMatt. 22:37
2. Against idolatryMatt. 22:37
3. Against blasphemyMatt. 5:33
4. Against Sabbath desecrationMatt. 12:5
5. Against unfilial conductMatt. 19:19
6. Against murderMatt. 19:18
7. Against unchastityMatt. 19:18
8. Against theftMatt. 19:18
9. Against slanderMatt. 19:18
10. Against covetousnessMatt. 19:19.

Towards the end of his ministry, He confirmed the truth in **the Prophets**. “Behold,” said He to the Twelve, “we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished” (Lk. 18:31).

In addition to stamping with His confirmation all the prophets, our Lord specifically quoted from Isaiah, Daniel, Hosea, Micah, Zechariah and Malachi: twelve quotations in all:

- Isaiah 6:9,10in Matt. 13:14,15
- Isaiah 29:13in Matt. 15:7,8
- Isaiah 53:12in Luke 22:37
- Isaiah 54:13in John 6:45
- Isaiah 56:7in Matt. 21:13

Isaiah 61:1,2in Luke 4:18,19
 Daniel 12:11in Matt. 24:15
 Hosea 6:6in Matt. 9:13
 Micah 6:15in John 4:37
 Zechariah 13:7in Mark 14:27
 Malachi 3:1in Matt. 11:10
 Malachi 4:5in Matt. 11:14.

Furthermore, by His acts, He gave striking fulfilment of the following prophecies:

Isaiah 9:1,2see Matt. 4:14-16
 Isaiah 42:1-4see Matt. 12:17-21
 Isaiah 53:4see Matt. 8:17
 Zechariah 9:9see Matt. 21:5,6.

Just as impressive and noteworthy was His witness to **the Psalms**. He quotes from:

Psalms 8:2in Matt. 21:16
 Psalm 22:1in Matt. 27:46
 Psalm 41:9in John 13:18
 Psalm 110:1in Matt. 22:44
 Psalm 118:22,23in Matt. 21:42
 Psalm 118:26in Matt. 23:39.

No portion of the Old Testament is fuller of Jesus Christ than the Psalms. It is not too much to say that they are all Messianic, telling of either the King or the Kingdom. The King in humiliation and rejection is there, as well as the King in glory and majesty. The Kingdom as it is, and as it will one day be - it is all there.

Old Testament history, events, personages from the Creation to the Captivities, Jesus Christ set His seal on them all. He stamps with His own divine approval the Law of Moses, all the Prophets and the Psalms. He is the centre of both Old and New Testaments. The Old points forward to Him. He points back to Himself veiled in the pages of the Old Testament. We bow in reverent worship before

the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh, who Himself said: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (Jn. 5:39).

May I be allowed one personal reference in conclusion. Over thirty years ago, in the early part of my Christian life, when what is now revealed fully as Modernism cloaked itself under the high-sounding title of Higher Criticism, and was by many devout souls said to be helpful and reverent, my beloved father, Henry Varley, said to me: "The battle has only begun. It will eventually rage round the very person of the Lord Jesus." It is His Deity that is at stake. Modernism impugns His knowledge, and, in so doing, thrusts at His veracity. For our part, and as believers in Him, we boldly say, "Let God be true, but every man a liar." (Rom. 3:4).

Submitted by Ruth W

EPILOGUE

Happy New Year!

“This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.” (Exodus 12 v. 2).

Our year begins in January but for God’s people at that time it began in the month of ‘Nisan’ which approximates to our March/April.

Moses relayed to the people all that God had said concerning their new ways and customs. They had been enslaved in Egypt for some 400 years! (Genesis 15 v 3). Now, by God’s mercy to His people and His power over the Egyptians, there was to be a new year - a new life and a new destiny.

For us, a new year is another beginning of the calendar but surely our life is based on our new hope in Jesus Christ. The ‘Passover’ for born-again believers is in Christ. He is our Passover Lamb. He took our punishment – for ‘sins not his own’. “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53 v. 6).

So we may say to each other ‘happy new year’, but the Psalmist says “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered” (Psalm 32 v, 1). The Lord will guide and bless his blood-bought people as we enter another year. “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” (Romans 8 v. 32).

As we enter a new calendar year we should be rejoicing in knowing Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Lord.

Our Passover, Our New Life, Our New and Glorious Destiny.

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for ever” (Psalm 23 v 6).

Ron Morris