

Scripture Truth



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Christ as the Revealer of the Father
The Lamb in the midst of the throne

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The long way round

In Numbers 20:1 the children of Israel found themselves in Kadesh a second time, about thirty-seven years after their first visit. On the previous occasion their parents had refused Joshua's and Caleb's pleadings to enter the Land of Promise (Numbers 14:6ff; 33:18-25¹). The older among those in Kadesh that second time would recall their aching childish feet as they had tramped back south on that earlier occasion.

Israel evidently had to revisit Kadesh, the scene of their parents' disobedience, but not to enter Canaan directly from there. Instead, Moses sought safe passage for them through the land of Edom; and when this was refused (20:14ff) they had once again to march back southwards, down the long western border of Edom towards the Red Sea – perhaps to Elath / Eilat. When we realise that this was their second retreat from Kadesh, it makes the discouragement (or, impatience, NASB) of the people more understandable, humanly speaking (21:4ff).

Then they had to make their way up the eastern borders of Edom and Moab to reach the Jordan. Surely God's real purpose had always been for them to enter the land of promise *via* Jordan. There God would do again what He had done once at the Red Sea (Joshua 4:23). This time He would not roll back the waters by means of Moses's rod, but by the ark itself, the visible sign of God's presence among them, being stationed on the bed of the very river that had seemed to block their entry (4:10). When in self-will the people had previously attempted to go up into the Land from Kadesh the ark had stayed in the camp (Numbers 14:44). Now it created their passage into the Land. As they reflected on the way the LORD had led them, how much greater reason did this give them to fear the LORD their God forever! (Joshua 4:24)

Some past lapse of faith may have caused us, too, to have to go “the long way round”. God's ways with Israel can encourage us that, with faith and obedience, the end of that “long way round” can be a “more abundant entry” (2 Peter 1:11).

THEO BALDERSTON

¹ Comparing Numbers 11:35; 13:26, Kadesh may be called Rithmah in 35:18-19, unlike in 35:36-37.

Christ as the Revealer of the Father

George Cutting

“I write to you, little children, because you have known the Father” (1 John 2:13). We can know Him as He really is: we know the Father through the Son.

God has been pleased to reveal Himself in various ways and under different characters in every age and in all dispensations. ... But it was not until Christ came, and had glorified God on the earth and finished the work which had been given Him to do, that all was told out – that the Father-name of God could be fully revealed.

Before this, clouds and darkness were round about Him; but as soon as atonement had been made by the death of Christ on the cross, the veil was rent, and believers could thereafter be set down in the light of God as God is in the light. All distance and concealment were now abolished, and all that God is, together with the name of “Father”, was fully displayed. Christ Himself, Christ as the eternal Son but as the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14), was Himself the revelation of the Father (John 14:7-9); but until the descent of the Holy Ghost there was little, if any, power on the part of those before whose eyes the revelation was passing to apprehend it. There were a few anointed eyes who beheld His glory as of an only-begotten with a Father, but John the Baptist knew Him not, except by the appointed sign of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Him; and even Philip had to be told, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (KJV).

Practically, therefore, there was no knowledge of God as Father until after Pentecost. This will be plain to the reader if we trace a little the successive revelations of God which were made to His people in the Old Testament. To Abraham, God said, “I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect” (Genesis 17:1, KJV); to Moses, “I AM THAT I AM” (Exodus 3:14); and

*God has been pleased
to reveal Himself in various ways ...
but it was not until Christ came
that all was told out*

when He entered into distinct relationship with His chosen people, it was under the name of Jehovah; and that was ever His covenant name with Israel (Exodus 6:3). Search indeed the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures, and not even the word “Father” will be found more than five or six times as applied to God, and in most of these cases it is used rather as indicating the source of existence than as implying relationship.

All the Old-Testament saints were undoubtedly born again. This is to be insisted upon, for without a new life and a new nature they would not have been able to converse with God. But it is equally true to say that they never knew God as Father, and therefore they could not be in the enjoyment of the relationship. One word from Scripture definitely and conclusively settles this point, “Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him” (Matthew 11:27).

It is, then, abundantly proved that God was not revealed as Father before the Advent of Christ. And, passing now to the New Testament, it will be seen, as already stated, that Christ Himself was the revealer of the Father, and that it is in the Gospel of John that He is presented to us in this character. In the very first chapter of this Gospel it is said, “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him” (verse 18). Not only, indeed, does this Scripture inform us that the only-begotten Son declared the Father, but it also teaches that none other but Himself could have done so, and this because of the position He ever occupied – the place of intimacy and communion which He ever, and He alone, enjoyed, as marked by the words, “in the bosom of the Father”.

This place He never left; He was in it (for it is a moral expression) as much when He was the Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, as when He possessed the glory which He had with the Father before the world was; and on the cross itself He was still there, for He himself said, “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again” (John

*“Neither knoweth any man
the Father, save the Son,
and he to whomsoever
the Son will reveal Him”*

*He who was ever in the bosom of the Father
could unfold Him
in this character and relationship*

10:17). His death in obedience to the commandment which He had received supplied, as it were, a new motive for the expression of His Father's love.

Later on in the Gospel, we find one of His disciples permitted to lean on His bosom (13:23-25), and this same disciple was the chosen vessel to unfold in his Gospel the eternal Sonship of Christ – Christ as divine; and this in some measure may aid us in understanding that none but He who was ever in the bosom of the Father could unfold Him in this character and relationship.

In divine things it is ever true as an abiding principle, that we can only tell out to others that which we ourselves know in our own souls. If we are not in the power of the thing spoken of, our words, clear as they may seem to be, will convey but little significance. The Lord Himself laid down this principle when He said, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen" (John 3:11).

Let us then enquire in what way the Lord has revealed the Father. He Himself has answered the question. "If", said He to the Jews, "ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also" (John 8:19); and again, speaking to Thomas, [then Philip],

"If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen Him. Philip saith unto Him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet thou hast no known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father... (John 14:7-9).

From George Cutting, *Christian Privileges* (London, 4th edn., n.d.), pp.77-81 Chapter 1 is the renowned tract, "Safety, Certainty, and Enjoyment."

*"If ye had known me,
ye should have known my Father also"*

The Lamb in the midst of the throne

Part 3. The Lamb

George Stevens

The third article in a series on Revelation 4 & 5.

The scroll

Chapter 4 of Revelation sets the scene for chapter 5. In chapter 4 John was in spirit rapt up to heaven, and He saw the throne of God. In earlier articles we explored the throne and its symbolic meaning; the One who sat on it; and those that surrounded it.¹

We now turn to Revelation chapter 5 in order to examine the immediate purpose of the gathering.

And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? (Revelation 5:1-2, KJV)

The sovereign God held on His right hand of favour and power a book (or “roll”). The book had writing on both sides. It sat there ready to be taken.

What was on this scroll? In the first instance we can see from 6:1ff that it contained the judgments of the seven seals. The seal-judgments cover the whole period of judgment upon this world (cp. 6:12-17). But chapter 6 describes only the effects of *opening the seals*. We can then deduce that the *contents* of the scroll are detailed in chapters 8-19. From later chapters in Revelation we can see that this roll listed the judgments that will be poured out on the earth during Daniel’s last period of seven years (cp. Daniel 9:27).

The number “seven” expresses the completeness of these hidden counsels of God. It also shows that there will be distinct divisions in this period. The first half of that period is the culmination of “the beginning of sorrows” (Matthew 24:8). The second half is “the great tribulation” (24:21). These judgments embody the wrath of God and the wrath of the Lamb (Revelation 6:16; 15:1). Once the judgments are concluded, the roll identifies the millennial reign of Christ; the final rebellion of unbelieving people; the judgment of the wicked; and the eternal state (chapters 20-22).

The events described in Revelation chapters 6ff are still future. This follows from the division of the book that the Lord laid upon John in 1:19. The

¹ See the earlier articles in this series in *Scripture Truth*, January 2018, pp. 243-6, and April 2018, pp.271-4.

“hereafter” of the last clause of this verse is matched by the “hereafter” at the end of 4:1 (“I will show you things that must happen hereafter”). In both verses “hereafter” is lit., “after these things”, and, despite ingenious attempts to deny it, the second “after these things”, at the end of 4:1, must mean “after the things concerning the seven churches that are detailed in chapter 2 & 3”. If we consider that the letters to the churches in some way comprehend the whole history of the church, then the prophecies of chapters 6ff must refer to events subsequent to at least most of the timeframe upon which the seven letters are predicated.

The question

John saw a “strong” angel issuing the proclamation of 5:2. This indicates that there are degrees of strength among angelic beings. “The angels ‘excel in strength’ (Psalm 103:20), but their might is exercised only in the path of instant obedience to the will of the Creator.”² Here is an angel who was very powerful indeed. His voice was loud, and rang out like a herald’s. All had to hear his question, “Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?”

There must have been many beings in heaven who were “worthy” in their way, but none of them was accounted worthy enough for this particular task. Only somebody of peculiar worth could open the book and release its seals. It is recorded in verse 3 that no one in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

There must have been a pause in proceedings as if time was needed for some being to step forward. Not one did. This distressed the apostle who “...wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, or to look thereon” (5:4). In spirit, John shed tears in heaven. He wept much (just as Christ had wept over Jerusalem – Luke 19:41). Why? It was God’s will that the book be opened. Were His purposes to be hindered? John’s tears expressed sadness that there was no being in the universe worthy enough to implement the counsels of God.

His sorrow was short-lived, for one of the elders comforted him with the words, “Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof” (Revelation 5:5)

² Walter Scott, *Exposition of the Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Glasgow, Pickering and Inglis, 4th edition, n.d.), p. 133.

*“Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?”
The Lion of the tribe of Juda,
the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book*

The answer

The elder was divinely informed. There was One worthy, namely the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David! These two titles speak of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Firstly, He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. In Genesis 49:9-10 we read in Jacob’s patriarchal blessing,

“Judah is a lion’s whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.”

The previous verse says that the tribe of Judah would be the head of the tribes because his brethren would bow down to him and praise him. The Lion of the tribe of Judah speaks of Christ as the Ruler or King. Like a lion, He shall be known for His strength, courage (cp. 2 Samuel 1:23; 17:10), ferocity (cp. Psalm 7.2), and boldness (Proverbs 28.1). Is it possible that as the “whelp” (Genesis 49:9), we see His life here? In the “prey”, His work at the cross? In “gone up” – His ascension? In “stooping” – His appearing? In “couching”, His reign of peace? Just a thought!

In the same context, we read that the sceptre would not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh [peace³] came. To this “Shiloh” the people would gather. This will be fulfilled completely in Christ. He is the Lion – the King of the Jews, the Ruler who came out from Bethlehem (Micah 5.2) and the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9.6). In Isaiah 33:22 we read, “For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us.” This reminds us that all judgment has been given to the Son (John 5:22).

The sceptre confirms this; it is the symbol of royal authority. It may be used to rule, to punish, or to show favour. In Psalm 45:6-7 we read, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou

³ See *A List of Proper Names occurring in the Old Testament... principally compiled from Simonis and Gesenius* (London, 1850, reprinted Kingston on Thames, n.d.), p.120. [Ed.]

lovest righteousness...” These verses refer to the Lord Jesus, the Son of God and they, along with Hebrews 1:5, reveal both His Deity and His Manhood.

This leads us to explore the title co-ordinate with “Lion” in Revelation 1:5, namely, “Root of David”. The word for “root” may be taken literally or figuratively. In botany, the radicle that forms the root is the first part of a seedling to emerge from the seed during the process of germination. It grows downward in the soil. Next, the plumule appears, and grows upwards to become the stem of the plant. It is the root that sustains the growth of the plant! When we turn to Revelation 22:16 we find that Christ calls Himself the “root and the offspring of David”. This indicates that as the “root” He was the source (or Creator) of David - existing before him. “Root” indicates His Deity. As the “offspring” of David He was of the family line of David. This emphasises His Manhood and His right to David’s throne.

The words of Jesus in Matthew 22:41-45 also confirm this divinity and humanity:

“While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?”

The question, “Whose son is he?” reveals that the Lord Jesus was not only son of David, but also the one whom the writer of the psalm calls “Adon”, or “lord”. The psalm in question is Psalm 110, and the superscription, whose veracity was obviously accepted by the Lord Himself, gives the writer as David. So David called Christ “Lord”. By His own question the Lord indicates that Christ is Son of God.

The elder of Revelation 5 went on to say that Christ had *prevailed* to open the book and to loose its seven seals (v.5). “Prevailed” reveals He had somehow been victorious. In other words He had earned the right to open the roll by overcoming. Not only who He is, as “Lion” and “Root”, but also what He has done has made Him worthy! But how, and in what, has He prevailed? Verses 9 and 10 will give the answer.

Meanwhile in verse 6 we read that John beheld, a Lamb (as if slain) standing “in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders”. This Lamb had “seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.”

*There was none closer to the throne than the Lamb!
There was none closer to God than Christ Himself!*

“The Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David” is seen by John as a Lamb, “as it had been slain”. The One who had been sacrificed previously was the One who is accounted “worthy”.

There was none closer to the throne than the Lamb! There was none closer to God than Christ Himself! He was in the midst. He was the centre of attention. God looked upon Him. The living creatures looked upon Him. The twenty-four elders did so also. We then find the attention of millions of angels focussed on Him.

Something indicated to John that this little lamb [*arnion*] had been slain. The wound of its slaughter must have been visible. This tells us that the memory of the death of Christ is revered in heaven.

In John 1 we find Jesus identified by John the Baptist as the Lamb of God. He is the fulfilment of the lamb of the burnt offering. His qualities ascended to God as a sweet fragrance (v.36). He also fulfils the sin offering, since the Baptist also described Him as the Lamb of God that took away the sin of the world (v.29).

In Revelation 5 He is the Lamb (as slain) standing. This reminds us of His own words in Revelation 1:18: “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.” This Lamb is the Conqueror who, through His sacrifice, has trodden all our foes beneath His feet. Sin has been put away! The world has been overcome! The devil has been vanquished! Death has lost its sting! Samuel Gandy wrote:

His be the Victor's name
Who fought the fight alone;
Triumphant saints no honour claim,
His conquest was their own.

By weakness and defeat,
He won the meed and crown;
Trode all our foes beneath His feet
By being trodden down.⁴

⁴ Samuel Whitlock Gandy, 1780-1851.

*He is the Lamb standing.
“I am he that liveth, and was dead;
and, behold, I am alive for evermore.”*

At present Christ is seated on His Father’s throne (Revelation 3:21). The fact that He *stands* shows that He is about to take the first step towards His earthly inheritance. He is about to take to Himself His great power and reign.

Verse 6 also tells us that the Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes. Seven speaks of completion. The horns speak of His complete power (e.g. 2 Samuel 22:3; Jeremiah 48:25), the eyes, of his complete discernment (Zechariah 4:10). He is omnipotent and omniscient! These eyes are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. This is particularly true following the resurrection of Christ. The seven Spirits refer to the seven characteristics of the one Holy Spirit. As we saw in the second article (see note 1), these characteristics are listed in Isaiah 11. However we can see the anointing of the Spirit in the work of Christ while here on earth in Isaiah 61:1-2,

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD...”

Isaiah’s words develop beyond the excerpt that our Lord quoted, and apply to Christ as the Lamb about to take the roll:

“...to proclaim... the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.”

“And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne” (Revelation 5:7). The time for Him to pour out the wrath of God had come. This would lead to the salvation, blessing, and glory of the faithful remnant among the Jews. So the Lamb (the Lord Jesus Christ) takes the roll – a roll full of the counsels of God relating to this world, including the wrath of God and the Lamb.

The Holy Spirit and the world

John 16: 7-11

Stephen Thomson

This is an excellent explanation of an important short passage of Scripture. For instructive previous articles on the Holy Spirit see two by the same writer in the April and July issues of 2015, and two by Anthony Brett in the January and April issues of this year.

John 16:7-11 forms part of the “upper room” ministry of the Lord Jesus in which He prepares His disciples for the time when He would be taken from them. The section begins in chapter 13 and continues to the end of chapter 16. However, the wonder that we are permitted to listen to the Son’s prayer to the Father, viewing the cross as already accomplished, is most precious, and confirms the Saviour’s care for His own, whom He would leave (for a little while) in the world (see chapter 17).

In the verses in chapter 16 from 7 to 11 we are told of the witness the *presence* of the Holy Spirit would be in the world. I say His *presence* deliberately, as I judge His *work* is not necessarily in view in this section. Of course the Holy Spirit would work in the hearts of men, which would lead some to conviction and faith in Christ, as well as guiding the believers of the Christian era “into all truth”. However I think, strictly speaking, this truth falls outside of the section we are considering now. Here we have, from the lips of the Lord Himself, what the presence of the Holy Spirit would mean in relation to the world (that is, the world of unbelieving men, who lie in the wicked one). Mr Darby translates the KJV word “reprove” as “bring demonstration to”, and although a demonstration has the potential to change opinions (and perhaps even in some sense the aim of doing this), yet even if it does not result in changing opinions, the fact of the demonstration having been made is still important.

We can be confident that the Lord Jesus, who is “The Truth”, tells us the truth. Perhaps it is a witness to the weakness of the disciples’ faith that He says, “I tell you the truth” (see 16:7). Certainly it shows the Saviour’s care for His own: in effect He says, “Believe me, trust what I am saying”. It was “expedient” that He should go away. Where was He going? Well, we are in no doubt that He was going “to the Father” (see v.10). The cross was the means whereby He was to be “lifted up” (John 3:14; 8:28; 12:32). This term involves much more than the physical lifting up of Jesus’ body on the cross. He was going to be glorified (lifted up into glory from where He came) by means of the cross. The work of

The judgement of the prince of this world took place at the cross; the “going away” of the Lord Jesus and the “coming” of the Holy Spirit would be the demonstration of that fact

God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) in relation to redemption was about to be accomplished, in perfection, on the cross of Calvary and, as a result, Christ would be exalted on high, in heavenly glory.

We learn from John 16:7 that as a consequence of the Lord Jesus going away, the Holy Spirit would come. This was expedient for the disciples. The meanings behind the word “expedient” are “advantageous, beneficial, profitable”. Why would this be so? Well, the One who would come was to be a “Comforter” (16:7, KJV), and in John 14:16 the Lord has already told them that the Holy Spirit would be “another Comforter”, that is, a Comforter of the same kind as they had had in the Lord Jesus Himself. Now (i.e., from Pentecost) they would be “comforted” by the Holy Spirit who would indwell their hearts. They would also be represented before the throne of God by the Lord Jesus Christ, the Great High Priest.

Being of the tribe of Judah, the Lord was not a priest in His manhood in the world (although He did many priestly acts), but, as ascended, He takes up this office, as the writer to the Hebrews tells us (7:14, 8:1,4). Although the Lord did not cease to be God as He became man, He could only be physically in one place at one time. His omnipresence is indeed demonstrated (e.g. in the case of Nathaniel – John 1:48), and we see demonstrations of His omnipotence and omniscience as He moved through this world; but He also could be absent from His disciples (e.g. Matthew 14:22). In general, He limited Himself to the conditions of manhood: the disciples could only enjoy His company whilst He was with them, and fear soon filled their hearts when He was gone from them. Now that the Holy Spirit was come, He (and it is worth noting that the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person, co-equal in the Godhead with the Father and the Son) would indwell their hearts, forever! Just like the disciples, we have the blessing of the Holy Spirit indwelling us, as well as having the Lord Jesus Christ as our Great High Priest before the throne of God. Expedient indeed!

John 16: 8 is a summary of the effects of the Holy Spirit’s presence in the world, and verses 9-11 are an explanation of verse 8. So the first part of verse 8 links with verse 9; the second part with verse 10; and the third part with verse 11. We will not comment on verse 8 other than to note (as we have already stated) that the emphasis is on, “when He is come”. It is the coming of the Holy Spirit

which will “do” the things spoken of in the following verses, and that principally in relation to the world. You will also note that the judgement spoken of is not “judgement to come” (as in the case of Paul’s reasoning with Felix – Acts 24:25). The judgement of the prince of this world took place at the cross (John 12:31); and the “going away” of the Lord Jesus and the “coming” of the Holy Spirit would be the demonstration of that fact.

Verse 9, “Of sin, because they believe not on me”. Note that this statement is in the present tense, “They believe not on me”. The world cried, “Away with Him”, they did not believe on Him then and they do not believe on Him now. If the world had believed on Him, then the Lord Jesus would have set up His kingdom on the earth at that time. Although the cross was in view before the foundation of the world, it nevertheless does not excuse man for his rejection of Christ. His own “received Him not” (John 1:11), but, as the Romans were the ruling force at that time, both Jew and Gentile are guilty of the sin of crucifying the Son of God. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the world would be proof that the Lord Jesus had “gone away” and this as a result of the sin of mankind in rejecting Him (cp. John 15:18, 24). This is what is meant by verse 9. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the world would bear witness to the world that they sinned when they rejected Jesus of Nazareth. His coming would be a testimony to, or demonstration of, this, and a reproof to the world.

Verse 10, “Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more”. The cross was a demonstration of the loving heart of God, as well as of the hate-filled heart of man. Even Pontius Pilate could witness to the fact that no fault was found in the Lord Jesus (John 19:4). Therefore the act of crucifying Jesus Christ was unrighteous. The centurion admitted this when he said, “Certainly this was a righteous man” (Luke 23:47). But in the present verse – John 16:10 - it is the thought of the resurrection and the ascension which are brought before us. Crucifixion belongs to verse 9 and there the sin of men is witnessed against, but verse 10 puts the focus on what God has done in response. He who humbled Himself and became obedient unto the death of the cross - God has highly exalted Him! (Philippians 2:9) Was God right to do this? Did Jesus deserve to be so exalted? Absolutely! And God’s righteousness is here contrasted with man’s unrighteousness. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the

*The presence of the Holy Spirit in the world
would bear witness to the world
that they sinned when they rejected Jesus of Nazareth*

world bears testimony to the fact that Christ has been raised from among the dead and is now ascended to the Father's right hand; and this satisfies the righteousness of God. Happily our regenerate minds can appreciate this, and our redeemed hearts can sing worshipfully,

To Him whom men despise and slight
To Him be glory given;
The crown is His, and His by right
The highest place in heaven.¹

John 16:10 ends with the Lord reminding the disciples that He would be out of their sight, but by the eye of faith (as the writer to the Hebrews tells us – 2:9), “We see Jesus”.

John 16:11, “Of judgement, because the prince of this world is judged”. God is the righteous Judge and He has passed judgement on the Devil, who knows his time is short (John 12:31; Revelation 12:12). He is doomed to the “lake of fire” for all eternity, and there will be no repeal of that judgement. It is final! (Revelation 20:10) So, while the sentence is yet to be served, the judgement has been made. Did Satan and his hosts rejoice as the Saviour was crucified? If so, it was short lived. The apostle Paul tells us, “None of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory” (1 Corinthians 2:8). The “wise” ones in this world knew nothing of the wisdom of God in relation to the cross. The serpent's head had been crushed!

He Satan's power laid low;
Made sin, He sin o'erthrew;
Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so,
And death by dying slew.²

The sin and unrighteousness of mankind, as well as the judgement of Satan, were demonstrated at the cross of Calvary. Christ's victory over sin and mastery over Satan, as well as God's righteousness, were demonstrated in the resurrection and ascension. And the presence *now* in the world of the Holy Spirit is the ongoing, present demonstration of the world's error in not believing in the Lord Jesus, of the fact that the Lord Jesus has gone to the Father, and hence of the fact that the world is judged.

¹ Thomas Kelly (1769 – 1855).

² Samuel Whitlock Gandy, 1780-1851.

Different standards?

The Old Testament and the New

Ernest Bartlett

This short article makes a very important point for a day when even many Christians refuse to read the Old Testament.

Some have denied the equal inspiration of the two Testaments of Scripture. They ask how certain things in the Old Testament, notably commands to kill men, women, and children, can be compatible with the New-Testament teaching of loving your enemies.

To see that this difference does not rule out the inspiration of the Old Testament, let's look at an illustration. The rule of the road in the United Kingdom is that we drive on the left: driving on the right would not only be dangerous, but illegal. In France, however, driving on left would be both dangerous and illegal. However we acknowledge both regulations as equally legitimate and founded on the principle of the rule of Law, though each to be observed in the different *places*. Similarly in relation to God's different commands for different *times*. The differences do not disprove the inspiration of the Old Testament. We shall also see that the differences are not arbitrary, but have an important reason.

Much of the Old Testament is a record of *judgment*. God commanded Noah to preach a message of judgment for 120 years, thereby giving that sinful generation an opportunity to repent. But none of them did repent, and the result was the drowning of men, women, children, and almost all non-marine animal life. Only those in the ark were rescued to repopulate the earth.

Sodom and Gomorrah likewise were destroyed, only Lot and his two daughters being saved. All the firstborn in Egypt were destroyed, both man and beast; only the firstborn of those who sheltered under the blood of the lamb being delivered. The Egyptian army that pursued the Israelites into the Red Sea were all drowned, a destruction which caused *great rejoicing* among the Israelites (Exodus 15). Samuel commanded Saul to destroy Amalek, and all that they had: man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass (1Samuel 15:3).

These cases all display the judgment of God. And God *is* a Judge (Psalm 7:11), and "none can... say unto him, What doest thou?" (Daniel 4:35, KJV). We also know that the Judge of all the earth will always do right (Genesis 18:25).

We can notice other differences too: for example, the Law teaches the circumcision of every Israelite male (Leviticus 12:3; cp. Genesis 17:10); but Paul wrote an epistle to persuade believers not to be circumcised (Galatians, esp. 5:2). The dietary requirements of the Old Testament are abolished in the New (Leviticus 11; 1 Timothy 4:4).



The New Testament is no more inspired than the Old, but it sets forth different principles, based on better promises. Its continuity with the Old Testament is one of recording the fulfilling of the Old-Testament “types”, above all those that prefigured the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Gospels were the preparation for the change which was to take place. In the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord repeatedly said, “It was said of old time... but I say unto you...” (Matthew 5:21; cp. 5:27f, 31f, 33f, 38f, 43f). What Moses had said was right and divinely inspired for that time, but in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, new principles were to be established. Now it was to be love for our enemies (5:44). We are commanded to go beyond the demands of the Law, beyond the extra mile – the maximum that the Roman soldier could demand – (5:22, 41).

The Sermon on the Mount was a preparation for the ushering in of the dispensation of *grace*, which would commence after the death of our Lord. In the Gospels our Lord took great pains to explain the purpose of His coming to His disciples, dismissing their preconceived ideas of shortly reigning with Him in the kingdom. This would indeed happen, but not before our Lord’s sacrificial death on the cross and the resultant proclamation of the unparalleled grace of God, a proclamation that commenced at Pentecost. Our Lord repeatedly stated that, instead of reigning as a royal Judge, He would be scourged, crucified, and the third day rise from the dead. But the disciples not only did not understand His words, but one of them, Peter, openly rebuked Him for so speaking (Matthew 16:21-23). On one occasion the Lord had to rebuke them when, in imitation of Elijah, they wished to call down fire from heaven on a hostile Samaritan village (Luke 9:54-55).

Not until the day of Pentecost did the disciples gain a better understanding of the gospel of grace, and three thousand souls were saved. Yet, even years after,

The New Testament is no more inspired than the Old, but it sets forth different principles, based on better promises

*Yet, although the Old Testament is different from the New, we also see the grace of God shining through its pages. However, **this** is the day in which our Lord does not judge, but saves*

Peter was still clinging to the old covenant, looking upon the gentiles as unclean. Only his vision recorded in Acts 10 caused him to see that there is “no difference” between Jew and gentile, not only as touching salvation, but also in regard to our membership of the body of Christ (see too 1 Corinthians 12:13). The basis of this is the sheer grace that has lifted all of us, Jew and Gentile, out of deadness in trespasses and sins into heavenly places (Ephesians 2:1-10). Not till Paul came on the scene was the New-Testament teaching fully taught and understood.

Yet, although the Old Testament is different from the New, we also see the grace of God shining through its pages. We see Joseph forgiving his brethren who sold him into slavery; we see David (a man after God’s own heart) loving his enemies when he mourned over the death of Saul who sought on repeated occasions to kill him. Gloating over personal enemies is prohibited in Proverbs 24:17; cp. Exodus 23:4-5. However, though there was grace in Old-Testament times, this is now the day of *grace upon grace* (John 1:16, Darby Translation) the day in which our Lord does *not* judge, but saves (Luke 12:14; John 12:47). This difference sufficiently explains the difference in character between the Old and New Testaments, though both equally inspired by God.

And we certainly should not discard the Old Testament, as there are many vital lessons to learn from it. “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4, KJV). But, as the rule of our conduct today, we must apply the New Testament, especially the epistles.

For the people of this world grace has a limited time-scale. Whilst it is the longest dispensation, one day it will end, and usher in the kingdom era, when our Lord will indeed reign as Judge (Acts 17:31; Psalm 72:1).

Whilst grace is the longest dispensation, one day it will end, and our Lord will indeed reign as Judge

Cain and Abel

F.B. Hole

Continuing a series on Genesis that commenced in July 2017.

In Genesis 3:15 God had promised that there should arise a Seed of the woman who would bruise the serpent's head and thus break his power. And this had been supplemented in 3:21 by an act of God that shed light on the way the deliverance would be brought to pass. Adam and his wife had made ineffectual attempt to cover their nakedness with fig-leaf aprons, but the LORD God had replaced these with an effectual covering: coats of skins. Skins are only available as clothing once death has come upon an animal. Here then we find the primitive revelation of a fact that man must admit: that the death sentence which righteously lies upon man must be endured by another in his place.

The divine act that revealed this fact had been followed by another, equally significant. Man had acquired the knowledge of good and evil without any power to achieve the good, but rather with an acute propensity to the evil. Lest man should perpetuate his existence in this condition he had been driven forth from the garden of Eden, and his way back to the tree of life had been barred by the cherubim with a flaming sword. This was doubtless an additional act of judgment, but it contained within itself a strong element of mercy. Supposing Adam *had* been able eat of the tree of life, what would have been the result? He would have become a deathless creature in a hell of his own devising. That would have been bad enough. But it would have caused a much worse disaster in this respect, that even by becoming Man it would not have been possible for Christ to die. Heaven and true, eternal life would have been forever closed to us. We may well thank God for the cherubim and the flaming sword!

Our first parents had now lost their innocence, lost their Paradise, and lost the happy communion with God that they had enjoyed at the beginning. They had gained the knowledge of good and evil, but only to find themselves enslaved by the evil; and they had brought themselves and the creation beneath them under a curse. Under these sad conditions the propagation of the race began, as stated in the first verse of chapter 4.

The first man to be born of woman was called "Cain" by his mother on the grounds that she had acquired him "from" or "with" the LORD. Sadly his career did not exemplify his name: in John's First Epistle we read that that Cain was "of that wicked one" (3:12; KJV). When the second son appeared the name given him was more in accord with the fallen state of mankind: Abel means "vanity", or "transitoriness". With this the record of Adam's family is broken

off until we come to the end of our chapter. Adam doubtless had many sons and daughters, but God's object in Genesis is not to give us history, but to furnish us with sufficient detail to instruct us in His governmental dealings with fallen men, dealings that were with a view to their ultimate deliverance and blessing.

When Adam was expelled from the Garden he was bidden to go forth and "till the earth." Therefore there was nothing wrong in the occupation that Cain initially followed (Genesis 4:2). Abel became a shepherd.

Yet a day came when both brothers felt they ought to render some tribute to the Creator and seek a basis of approach to Him. In the sacrificial offering that Abel brought we see the second foreshadowing, or "type", of the death of Christ in the book of Genesis. The first had been the coats of skin; now we advance a step and find that the only basis of approach recognized by God is the death of an *acceptable* sacrifice.

In Cain's offering, however, there was no recognition of this. He brought the fruit of the ground that God had cursed. Probably he brought the finest produce of the toil of his own hands, but in this there was no acknowledgment of the death-sentence that lay upon him. He was like a condemned criminal, under sentence of death, seeking to curry favour with his judge by bribing him with something nice. God cannot be bribed.

The fact that Abel's offering involved the *death* of the sheep is evidenced by the words, "and of the fat thereof." At this point Hebrews 11:4 should be read. It shows us that his offering was an act of faith - the first to be put on record. Now faith lays hold on what God has revealed. If we ask what had been revealed for Abel's faith to lay hold of, we can only refer to what we have in verse 21 of Genesis 3. Abel apprehended the significance of the coats of skins, and hence by his offering acknowledged that he was a sinner under the death sentence, and could only approach on the ground of the death of a victim. Cain had no faith, He ignored this, and approached under false pretences.

Thus almost at the start we see human life like a river dividing into two diverging and even opposite streams which have continued to this day. Hence we regard this incident as one of the most fundamental in the whole Bible. Near the end of the New Testament we read of a "Woe" that rests on those who "have gone in the way of Cain" (Jude 11), and the number of those doing this

Our first parents had brought themselves and the creation beneath them under a curse. Under these sad conditions the propagation of the race began

– even though they might wish to be called “Christian” – has greatly increased in our day.¹ Jude 11 depicts Cain’s act as the first of three steps that lead down to perishing in utter apostasy.

On the other hand Abel stands right at the head of the men of faith who are recognized in Hebrews 11. The sacrifice he offered was “more excellent” than his brother’s, and to it God bore testimony by accepting it in some manner that was visible and definite. This testimony was clear evidence to Abel that he was righteous or, in other words, right with God (Hebrews 11:4). Abel rested his faith simply on God’s testimony, and we too must rest our faith simply on God’s testimony concerning His Son and His blood (cp. Hebrews 12:24; 1 John 5:8-10).

Rejected by God, Cain became very angry with God (Genesis 4:5), and wreaked his vengeance on the man of faith whom God had accepted. The picture is true to life, for the same thing has been re-enacted times without number in the history of the world. Cain was not irreligious. Had he been, he would not have troubled himself even to make an attempt at approaching God. No! He was a religionist, and just because he was, anger and hatred filled his breast.

God was beyond his reach. He could not strike at Him. Abel was well within his reach, so the blow was effectually aimed *at him*. The most prominent example of this in the New Testament is Saul of Tarsus. He hated Jesus of Nazareth with an intense hatred, and because Christ was in glory beyond Paul’s reach he struck at His followers on earth. God remonstrated with Cain (Genesis 4:6-7); He even reminded Cain that, in spite of what had happened, his rights as the elder brother would be respected – he would still have the rule over Abel.² But God also pinpointed where the mischief lay – “sin”; and perhaps also in the same word where the remedy lay. For we are told that the Hebrew word translated “sin” also has the meaning of “sin-offering.” So it may literally have been that there was almost at his feet a lamb which he might even at this juncture have brought as a sacrifice, and thus have put himself right with God.

But God’s gracious intervention had no effect. Cain became a murderer in spite of it. He revealed himself to be “of that wicked one” and slew his brother because “his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous.” Then he proved himself to be not only a murderer but also utterly defiant of God, as his truculent reply to God’s inquiry about Abel’s whereabouts shows (4:9).

¹ A sentence showing the vast change in Britain in the seventy years since this was written! [Ed.]

² Hole follows here the translation in the King James and Darby Versions. [Ed.]

But Abel's blood from the ground had uttered its voice into the ear of God, and swiftly a special curse descended upon Cain (4:12), in addition to the curse that had already fallen upon Adam and his race (3:17-19). Adam was to obtain his food only by the sweat of his face, but Cain was to find the earth unproductive even if he laboured to till it, so that he would become a wanderer, fleeing from the face of God.

Cain protested that this curse was too great to bear (4:14). From that day to this sinful men, if unrepentant, have complained of the severity of God's judgment. Only when men are repentant do they bow and humbly own that God's judgment is just. Without a doubt there is in mankind an instinct that urges them to avenge wanton murder by the death of the murderer. Cain himself had that instinct, and anticipated that some of his brethren would slay him. But no government was yet instituted in the earth (see 9:5,6), and therefore God would allow no punitive action to be taken against Cain (4:15).

Adam had been driven out of the Garden (3:24), but Cain deliberately "went out from the presence of the LORD" (4:16). To an unrepentant murderer the presence of God was abhorrent. We read in Romans 1:28 that men and women "did not like to retain God in their knowledge". Similarly with Cain: he departed to the land of "Nod," or "Wandering," carrying with him a wife and a son; and there he built a "city," some primitive kind of stronghold. As far as he could, he defied God's sentence upon him, and showed that he distrusted what God had done to protect his life. If the earth was not going to yield its produce for him, then let others have the trouble of producing his food! Rather than wander he would settle down and protect himself!



With this we take leave of Cain, and pass on to Lamech (4:19ff), who, remarkably, was the seventh from Adam in the line of Cain, just as the Enoch who walked with God was seventh in the line through Seth. In Lamech we see the world's character taking shape, as it is defined in 1 John 2:16.

Lamech was apparently the first to break through the Divine ordinance concerning marriage of one man with one woman: he instituted polygamy. Lamech was a forceful character who intended to do what he liked, and not what God had said. Here, without any question, we see *the lust of the flesh* raising its ugly head (Genesis 4:20-22).

His two wives bore children, and in their careers *the lust of the eyes* makes its appearance, for that phrase covers man's search for what appeals to the inner eye of the mind as well as what appeals to the literal eye. In Lamech's family

there was the beginning of the acquiring of wealth, for in primitive times a man's possessions lay in his herds. There was the beginning also of the arts and sciences in music; and of applied science in manufactures, especially in brass and iron.³ Here mankind started its career of expanding inventiveness, which in our day has reached the atom-bomb stage. Man's eyes of lust have probed all too deeply into the secrets of the earth, and how much further they will penetrate before God drops the extinguisher upon all his projects by the appearing of Christ in flaming fire – who can say?

Some unfortunate young man had wounded and hurt Lamech, who, in revenge, simply rose up and slew him (vv. 23-24). When Cain had murdered, centuries before, he had betrayed some sense of having done wrong. Not so Lamech, who came home to brag to his wives of what he had done; and to make scornful allusion to God's action in protecting Cain from revenge (4:15, 24). If Cain was to be avenged sevenfold, why, Lamech would be seventy and sevenfold! He felt himself to be eleven times more important than Cain. Here was *the pride of life*, in high degree.

In this man, then, the seventh from Adam, we see both corruption and violence coming plainly to light. All evil may be classified broadly under these two heads, and evidently Lamech's polygamy and murder quickly bore their bitter fruit until, just before the flood, "the earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence" (Genesis 6:11).

So ends the depressing history of the line of Cain. The two verses that conclude Genesis 4 carry us back long before the days of Lamech (cp. 4:18), back to the birth of Seth when Adam was 130 years old. Seth was the seed appointed to carry on the line of faith, as contrasted with the line of Cain. That Seth was a man of faith we gather from the name he gave his son – Enos, signifying "mortal", "weak". One of the first signs of faith springing up in the heart is that a man acknowledges himself to be a sinful creature under the death sentence. The next thing is that in the light of this he begins to call upon the Name of the LORD. So the closing words of our chapter are very striking. In the New Testament we find that "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10: 13).

Abridged and edited from Scripture Truth 36 (1948-50), pp.76-80.

³ It is as well to point out that Lamech's sons could become "the father of all those who..." by intermarriage with the descendants of Seth, thus entering the line which, through the eight souls in the ark, populated the earth after the Flood. [Ed.]

Speaking in the assembly

Conclusion and implications

Theo Balderston

The last in a series of articles on a much contested subject.

*“Speak” in
1 Corinthians
14:34 cannot be
defined more
narrowly than all
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chapter*

The first article in this series showed that the verb “speak” in 1 Corinthians 14:34 cannot be defined more narrowly than all the types of speech that Paul instances in this chapter.¹ The many attempts to neutralise verses 34-35, whether by arguing that they are a later interpolation, or a Corinthian opinion against which Paul argues in v.36, or culturally specific to that age, are themselves demonstration of the fact that the wide meaning of “speak” in this verse cannot be evaded.

Behind all these attempts to neutralise “speak” in verse 34 is the claim that if it includes praying and prophesying this brings the verse into fatal contradiction with 1 Corinthians 11:5, “But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying disgraces her head...” (NASB). This claim overlooks the fact that listeners would interpret these verses according to how they understood Paul’s views on the subject, not on some wooden belief that the venues appropriate to verse 4 must be the venues presumed in verse 5.²

Heroic attempts have also been made to wrest 1 Timothy 2:8-15 round to a meaning that contradicts the plain meaning of “speak” of 1 Corinthians 14:34. Some say that the “likewise” at the beginning of 1 Timothy 2:9 inserts a “to pray” into the verse. But “to pray” cannot be accommodated by the verse as it stands. One recent writer implicitly acknowledged this when he rewrote verse 9 as follows:

“...likewise also I want women *to pray properly* in every place without giving undue attention to her outward appearance. She should make herself beautiful by doing good works.”

¹ “Speaking in the assembly: the meaning of 1 Corinthians 14:34,” *Scripture Truth*, July, 2017, pp. 191ff. Here it is argued that the prohibition of 1 Corinthians 14:34 does not include communal singing.

² “Speaking in the assembly: 1 Corinthians 14:34 and other Scriptures (1),” *Scripture Truth*, October, 2017, pp.246ff.

*Christians of all people should be bearing public witness
to the facts of the creation and the Fall*

But this is inadmissible. The writer has turned the infinitive form of the verb in the Greek original (“... to adorn themselves”) into the participle “without giving undue attention.” But Timothy would have used the existing grammatical form of verse 9 to help him decide what the “likewise” of the verse meant! Therefore he would never have twigged that Paul’s sentence meant what this writer surmises.

It is also argued that quietness (*hēsychia*) in 1 Timothy 2:11,12 means “calmness” rather than “silence”. Suppose, then, we substitute “calmness” into v.12 (ESV): “I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority...; rather, she is to remain calm” (!) This would be nonsense: far from being an *alternative* to teaching or exercising authority, calmness is a great *asset* to both these duties. In any case: with the exception of Judges 18:7, in places in the Septuagint and New Testament where *hēsychia* and its cognates occur *in the context of speech* they denote “silence”, not “calmness”.³ Therefore Timothy would not have interpreted 2:11,12 in the light of 2:2. In any case, this interpretation is highly derogatory to women. Didn’t the *men* need to learn “in calmness” too? (v.11)

A fourth article outlined the rationale for Paul’s prohibition.⁴ In 1 Timothy 2:13,14 Paul finds it upon the facts of creation and the Fall. And the fact that 1 Corinthians 14:34-36 comes so shortly before chapter 15 makes it likely that Paul was here warding off a false claim that believers already have all the resurrection that they will ever have (cp. 15:12 with 2 Timothy 2:18), and that, because in the resurrection condition there will be no gender distinctions (cp. Matthew 22:30), therefore vocal participation in assembly meetings should already be de-genderised.

Rather, Christians of all people should be bearing public witness to the facts of the creation and the Fall. In a world where gender is being entirely undermined, should the people of God be shying away from it? Should we be

³ This includes Acts 22:2; the crowd were anything but restful in spirit – see vv.22ff! Another argument – that *hēsychia* in 1 Timothy 2:11-12 means “deference” – finds no support in any of the c.70 occurrences of the word and its cognates in Septuagint and New Testament.

⁴ “Speaking in the assembly: the rationale of 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 1 Timothy 2:8ff,” *Scripture Truth*, April 2018, pp. 275ff.

*The primary challenge of 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 1 Timothy 2:8ff
to twentieth-century, western Christians is to their faith*

substituting our own, man-made methods of testifying to creation and the Fall for the manner that God Himself has prescribed in His word?

Therefore the primary challenge of 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 1 Timothy 2:8ff to twentieth-century, western Christians is to their *faith*. Eve and Adam were required to take God at His word and keep a commandment for which He had given them no rationale at all. Paul's rationale in 1 Timothy 2:13-14 serves for 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 too. But even *if* God had not clarified why this public silence is required, our response should still be simply to obey. We know that the entire secular programme of dethroning God and enthroning man hinges on our being wrong, and that this is the huge force behind the curled lip, the incredulous smile, the moral condemnation that our practice will meet. The devil will often cast us into despair with the thought that the case is hopeless, and that those who seek to observe 1 Corinthians 14:34 are bound for extinction, but "this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith" (1 John 5:4). The Lord told us that "In the world you have tribulation; but take courage, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). The world will often misrepresent our motives – but this is exactly what the Lord Himself told us would happen (Matthew 5:11).

The requirement of silence does not condemn women to redundancy in the things of God; far from it. The central elements in the service of God in tabernacle / temple worship seem to have been wordless except for singing; analogously in Christianity, where true worship is that done "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24). No man ever merited the commendation that Mary of Bethany's wordless devotion received (Matthew 26:13, etc.). Christians who snort, "Pie in the sky", at such sentiments need to align their thoughts with God's. The silent service of women is certainly despised today, but the day of true appraisal is still ahead (1 Corinthians 4:3-4).

And the private testimony that the women carried to the disciples concerning the empty tomb and the resurrection was in some sense the first gospel message. The rough rule of thumb may perhaps be formulated that where concern for spreading the gospel is greatest, there the opportunity for godly vocal activity on the part of women will be widest. Pentecost is the paradigm, showing that speaking of Christ to small groups of people is an activity for sisters as well as brothers. It suggests, for example, that a Christian woman-student may rightly lead a mixed evangelistic Bible study in a hall of residence. Indeed,

*In home Bible studies and prayer groups
women may participate audibly along with the men*

holding a small evangelistic study-course of the kind that have been so much blessed in recent decades will usually mandate the vocal presence of a Christian woman. What about street-tracting to reach women as well as men? (not advised for women in the absence of men!) The vital part played by women in children's and young people's work needs no emphasising.

Leaving gospel work aside, we have been careless about not going beyond what is written (1 Corinthians 4:6). There has been too much neglect of Paul's restriction of his injunction in 1 Corinthians 14:34 to "meetings of the assembly". In meetings that are distinguished from public meetings of the assembly in being by "special invitation" and not open to anyone who might walk in off the street (1 Corinthians 14:23) – such as home Bible studies and prayer groups – women may participate audibly along with the men (though not neglecting 1 Corinthians 11:5). Women should teach women (Titus 2:3ff) in settings where there can be discussion, interchange of view. Admittedly there are constraints of time which may prevent the holding of every type of meeting. The public "assembly" prayer meeting is an indispensable aspect of every gathering of Christians in the Lord's name – it is, indeed, their primary meeting according to Paul in 1 Timothy 2:1 – and there "the men pray" (v.8). In small gatherings, perhaps these should be held on Lord's days? And it would be a pity too for the public conversational Bible reading – the modern counterpart of the "asking questions" that evidently characterised the "church meeting" in Corinth – to be allowed to disappear. But ways should be sought to arrange private groups where sisters too can participate vocally. Women's meetings and conferences for mutual instruction and encouragement are also to be encouraged when arranged by godly sisters. All meetings of people in the assembly should of course be subject in some way to the *godly* "oversight" of those who are recognised as "overseers" (1 Timothy 3:1).

Thus, to plead for an upholding of 1 Corinthians 14:34 is not to recommend practices that ride roughshod over Paul's qualification, "...in meetings of the assembly", or over Priscilla's and Aquila's example in Acts 18:26. And how sad when a husband has never heard his wife pray audibly in their private prayer times together! (Such a lack is extremely inadvisable for a young couple considering marriage.) More generally, it is uncomfortable to have to record that in some places (certainly not in my own upbringing) slighting jokes were routinely told about women, who just had to smile and endure them. Certainly,

*How sad when a husband has never heard
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God ordained in Genesis 3:16 that “he [the husband] shall rule over you.” This regulation was necessary for a now-fallen world of clashing wills if lifelong marriage was to endure. (And it is a rule that should only be exercised as a last resort and in matters vital to a marriage if husband and wife genuinely and deeply disagree as to a right course of action.) But, given that this rule was made for an unregenerate world, how often has it degenerated into, “He shall *domineer* over you”, in worldly society at large! How sad that such domineering should in any degree have infiltrated Christian society too! We should recognise a vital truth: the New Testament requires wives to be subject to their own husbands (Ephesians 5:22, etc.), but it never gives the husband the right or powers to enforce this subjection. If it is not willingly tendered, it cannot exist at all. Indeed I think this is the case throughout the Bible.

This last paragraph has strayed well beyond 1 Corinthians 14:34. But this was necessary, to underline the deep difference between what Paul required in this verse, and the worldly morality with which it is so often confused.

And a word should be added on the duties of the men in the assembly. The sisters have the duty to keep silent; most brothers have something approaching a duty to take part. There are some brothers, who, for reasons possibly painful to themselves, cannot find it in them to take vocal part in the meetings. That should be respected. But these can only be a few. As to the rest, if they can, they have a duty to be available to contribute vocally. When Paul wrote 1 Corinthians 14:26 he did not write, “Only *some of you* should “have a psalm”! Moreover, the sisters do not keep 1 Corinthians 14:34 in order to listen to long silences! In assembly meetings conducted on the principle of 14:26, there should, indeed, be decent intervals between one vocal contribution and the next as brothers consider whether the Lord is leading them to lead the congregation in worship by prayer, suggesting a hymn, or reading a Scripture; or to edify the congregation by an impromptu word. But there should never be long silences! And if a brother never finds himself so led, he needs to seriously examine himself as to the reason why. “Normal Christianity” is for the brothers to participate in a prayerful, godly, orderly, Spirit-led, Christ-glorifying

*Most brothers have something approaching
a duty to take part in assembly meetings*

manner. And here the solemn, oft-repeated maxim applies: if we have not drunk of Christ during the week, our wells will certainly be unable to spring up into fountains of waters on the Lord's day.



In composing a paper on a subject such as this, one has the Lord's own words ringing uncomfortably in the ear, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith, but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others" (Matthew 23:23). There are many weightier matters in this gospel dispensation than the topic of this paper – the truths of our Lord's Person, of His atoning work, of His bodily resurrection and ours, as well as matters of "justice, mercy and faith". And yet this matter does directly relate to the central issue of our times, upon which various faithful believers are suffering loss of livelihood, etc. – the issue of gender in the light of Genesis 1:27. I have sought to show how obedience to this verse is integral to the Christian testimony in this gospel day, the day between the Lord's resurrection and ours. It is integral to the witness that is to be borne, even by persons who are "in" Christ risen, to the unchanged authority of God over His first creation, a witness more necessary today than for many centuries.

Paul himself wrote, "If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment" (1 Corinthians 14:37). Strong words. And First Corinthians was expressly written not only to the Corinthians, but also to "all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their Lord and ours" (1:2). An unknown psalmist wrote, "My flesh trembles for fear of Thee, and I am afraid of Thy judgments" (Psalm 119:120). There is a troubling lack of trembling at God's word today (Isaiah 66:2).

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Faith with Fortitude

by Beryl Harris

Now available for the Amazon Kindle

Beryl Harris writes: “When I left Sydney in 1946 as an idealistic 25 year-old with fresh nursing and midwifery qualifications, heading for the mission field in Belgian Congo, little did I know what lay before me. Perhaps it was just as well! But as I now look back after some 18 separate visits spread over 60 years, I can only thank my Lord for all that he has brought me through.

There were some uneasy, even dangerous, periods during and after the struggle for independence, as the modern Democratic Republic of Congo was born.

Many were the frustrations and many tears were shed. Thanks to the Lord’s goodness, I was away in Australia on furlough during some of the worst years.

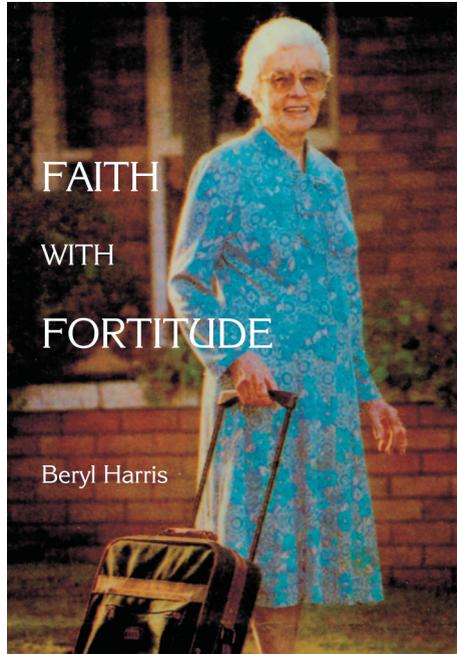
In my experience in the Congo I came across several women with the nickname Mama Ketshi (Mother of Mercy), and I count it a privilege to belong to this group. Like the rest, I was filled with a passionate concern for both the spiritual and

the physical welfare of others. A selection of my experiences are included in this book of memoirs, but there were countless others — some amazing, some painful and sad.

I commend it to you not as an example of great missionary endeavour, but as a reflection on the goodness of God who called me into special service in my youth, prevented me from “turning back”, and in the words of the Apostle Paul, allowed me to “finish my course with joy”.

*Paperback edition of 204 pages with over 90 photos and drawings
published 2015 by Chartwell Consultants, New Zealand*

STP distributes the paperback edition of this book in the UK and Europe on behalf of the publisher and still has copies available at £8.50 + p & p.



Christ's Sufferings and Glory: A meditation

Gethsemane

O precious Saviour! ne'er shall we forget
Thy sorrow unto death, Thine agony profound;
There, from Thine anguish'd form, great drops of sweat
In dark *Gethsemane* as blood fall to the ground.
And had an angel been to strengthen Thee?
Still, still the Father hears the soul-cries of the Son,
"If Thou be willing, take this cup from Me:
Yet, if it may not pass, Thy will be done".

Gabbatha

Thou didst the good confession witness, Lord:
Then in that Hall of Judgment – bound and false-accused –
Silent Thou stoodest, whilst with one accord
The crowd cried for Barabbas; Thee – the Just – refused.
And Pilate, giving sentence, washed his hands
And on *Gabbatha's Pavement* took the judgment-seat;
O wretched world! the awful verdict stands
Which seals for aye thy condemnation meet.

Golgotha

Thou Lamb of God, meek to the slaughter led,
The cup of wrath receiving from Thy Father's hand;
Our judgment fell upon Thy thorn-crown'd head...
Made sin ... Thy God forsook Thee ... darkness veiled the land.
Golgotha! there was heard Thy triumph-shout;
There, from Thy spear-pierced side, Thy precious blood did pour:
'Place of a Skull' – man's wisdom cast Thee out:
There, Wisdom all-divine our souls adore.

Glory

Thou livest now – the stone is rolled away!
And, ris'n with Thee we stand on resurrection ground.
Exalted Lord! we own Thy rightful sway,
See Thee enthroned: *with glory and with honour crowned*;
We worship Thee – glad at Thy feet we fall...
Gethsemane ... Gabbatha ... and Golgotha past!
Thy glory we behold; love's woes recall,
Till *glorified with Thee* we dwell at last.

J.Malcolm Boggon